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# WHITE FACULTY PERCEPTIONS OF DIVERSITY AND DIVERSITY WORK

by

Ariane Hutchins-Newman

A Dissertation

Submitted to the  
Department of Educational Services and Leadership  
College of Education  
In partial fulfillment of the requirement  
For the degree of  
Doctor of Education  
at  
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Dissertation Advisor: MaryBeth Walpole

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## **Dedications**

I dedicate this dissertation to my mother, Christie Hutchins, and my grandmother, L. Audrey Hutchins, who never let circumstances define the outcome and who saw in me what I didn't see in myself. I love and miss you both.

Furthermore, this dissertation is dedicated to my daughters Bria and Tyra. I see all the greatness that you are becoming. I love you more than I could ever show you.

Lastly, I dedicate this to my twin brother, Gene Booker – the smart one. I love you.

## Acknowledgements

Someone once told me this page is the most important page you will ever write. How do I begin to thank and acknowledge everyone who helped me along this journey? During this process, my children have grown into young women, and I have found love and support in places that I could never have imagined. There have been sacrifices seen and unseen. I could not have made it this far without my village.

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## Abstract

Ariane A. Hutchins-Newman  
WHITE FACULTY PERCEPTIONS OF DIVERSITY AND DIVERSITY WORK  
2018-2019  
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Higher education has become increasingly diverse over the past 100 years. Women, people of color, and people who identify as members of the LGBTQ community have integrated and, in many cases, assimilated into the academy. However, not all groups have gained access equally. While certain groups, like women, have experienced measurable growth, African Americans have lagged in their presence within the academy. Representation of Black scholars among faculty has been constant over a nearly 20-year period. Black faculty comprised 5% of faculty in 1998 and 6% of faculty in 2015. Colleges and universities dedicate significant resources to diversity and inclusion. However, there continues to be little progress in increasing the number of African Americans in the professoriate. Women's advancement and the lack of progress for African Americans in the professoriate is the nexus of this study. Specifically, this study examined the role of unrecognized Whiteness in preserving institutional structures that marginalize African American faculty. This case study was conducted at a regional comprehensive university in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States. In addition to an online interview of White faculty, two other institutional assessments were used in this study. Key themes that emerged are Awareness, Diversity in teaching, Gender, and Structure. The study's findings suggest White faculty have varying degrees of awareness of diversity work and a lack of ownership regarding campus diversity.

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## Chapter 1

### Introduction

Higher education in America has evolved from its founding as an exclusive institution for White men of high socioeconomic status (SES) to a near-\$600 million industry (Cohen & Kisker, 2010; National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2017). The marketization of higher education, in conjunction with changes in laws and increased funding streams to pay for education, have contributed to increased diversity within the academy (Maher & Thompson Tetreault, 2011). Students and faculty alike represent an array of racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Specifically, women have steadily increased their presence in the student body since the 1970s (NCES, 2015), and in 2015, 57% of students who enrolled in college were female (NCES, 2017). Today, nearly 41% of students are racial and ethnic minorities (NCES, 2016).

Changes in student diversity notwithstanding, the professoriate has also become increasingly diverse, although not equitably for all groups. For example, inroads to the professoriate for African Americans has not kept pace with other marginalized groups, such as women and Asians (Smith, Turner, Osei-Kofi, & Richards, 2004). The most significant change in the profile of the professoriate has been the increased presence of White female faculty in the past 30 years (Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System [IPEDS], n.d.). Nationwide, White women comprise approximately one-third of the faculty on campuses nationally. Despite their increased presence in the professoriate, White women comprise nearly 50% of lower academic ranks (NCES, 2016). The advances made by women in the professoriate suggest that the increase in White women in the academy is an unspoken and perhaps unrecognized strategic practice to preserve

the White power structure in the academy (Maher & Thompson Tetreault, 2011). White women in this context serve as “an extension of White male supremacy” (Hall, 2006, p. 71). Arguably, the advances of White women have been championed to preserve the power of White men.

While White women have increased their presence in the academy, African Americans have not been able to infiltrate the professoriate. Similarly, representation of Black scholars among faculty has been constant over a nearly 20-year period. Black faculty comprised 5% of faculty in 1998 and 6% of faculty in 2015. While the percentage of African American faculty remained stagnant, from 2002 to 2015, the total number of instructional staff within postsecondary education increased by over 100,000 people (NCES, 2016). The current state of African Americans and women in the professoriate suggests the professoriate is still predominantly White and male. The disparity between White males, African Americans, and women is most noticeable within higher academic ranks, where White males comprise the majority of senior faculty (Maher & Thompson Tetreault, 2011; NCES, 2016).

The differing progress made by White women and African Americans in the professoriate is the basis of this study. While the academy is more diverse than in past decades, this diversity has been achieved to the exclusion of African Americans. As students and society in general become increasingly diverse, the persistent homogeneity of the professoriate is worth examining. To provide context for this discussion, the next section discusses different experiences of Whites and African Americans in the United States, followed by a discussion of how these differences are evidenced in society. Finally, the academy and its history of exclusion based on race and gender is discussed.

## Historical Context

America is currently more ethnically, racially, and culturally diverse than at any other time in its history. Immigration trends in recent years have resulted in nearly 14% of the United States population being comprised of immigrants (Cohn & Caumont, 2016). In addition, young adults in America are more racially diverse than ever, with 43% of United States millennials (those born after 1980) being non-White (Pew Research Center [Pew], n.d.). Throughout American history, immigrants from many countries have experienced oppression, racism, and other forms of marginalization. However, few groups have experienced the type of systemic oppression and marginalization that African Americans have. Slavery, Jim Crow, and civil inequities have caused a divide between White and Black societies in America. Despite obvious societal gains, such as the election of an African American president and increasing numbers of African Americans enrolled in college, African Americans still lag behind mainstream White America in many indicators, such as health disparities and SES (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013). This marginalization has resulted in a unique experience for African Americans. That is, most African Americans contextualize their experiences through a prism that encompasses historic and present-day oppression. Many African Americans' perspectives are vastly different from other groups' perspectives in America. One needs only to watch the nightly news to find examples of the differences in how African Americans view national events compared to how many in the White community view these same events.

In recent years, cases including those of Eric Garner in New York, Mike Brown in Missouri, and Freddie Gray in Maryland have illustrated this difference between African Americans' and White Americans' perceptions. For most African Americans, these

occurrences represent systemic problems that illustrate the war against African American men. Conversely, most Whites have evaluated each occurrence on its individual merits, failing to acknowledge or recognize African Americans' perspectives. In other words, some have argued that these events are individual occurrences and do not represent a war on Black lives (Mullainathan, 2015). In addition, these events are viewed by some in the White community as non-race events. For some Whites, such events are evaluated without considering the unspoken power of Whiteness in society.

### **White Spaces**

In comparison to African Americans, Whites in America do not think of race or racism daily (Kendall, 2002). More importantly, most Whites do not view themselves as having a racial identity (Pope-Davis & Ottavi, 1992; Reason & Evans, 2007). Likewise, some Whites are blind to incidents of racism that are not explicit or violent (Applebaum, 2010). As a result, some Whites do not believe racism exists to the degree reported by those who are marginalized by racism in society. Despite recent events in the news, such as the Bethel African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church massacre in Charleston or the White supremacy rally in Charlottesville, the racism African Americans experience is not typically hostile or violent (Bonilla-Silva, 2015). Consequently, some Whites doubt the legitimacy of discrimination when reported by people of color. The perceived lack of a racial identity coupled with the insidious manner with which racism operates in society allows Whites to function in a "White space" (Reason & Evans, 2007, p. 67), where practices that benefit some while oppressing others operate undetected.

In White spaces, Whites are so comfortable that they do not have to think about their Whiteness to navigate daily tasks at work or in society. Moreover, Whites do not



have to consider how their actions affect African Americans. Consequently, some White people do not view the world in Black and White, as do many African Americans. Furthermore, for many White people, perceived slights are individual occurrences and not the result of implicit bias or systemic racism. While inroads have been made regarding matters of race, gender, and class, changes to laws and related policies have not considered the idea of White superiority as primary to the formation of American society (Lipsitz, 1995). That is, changes have been made to address overt injustice toward and dehumanization of African Americans, but these changes have failed to acknowledge the basis for the treatment of African Americans, which is the social construction of race. Moreover, the byproducts of White supremacy are not considered when examining modern society in which African Americans live (Applebaum, 2010; Lipsitz, 1995). Thus, this study focuses on the role of Whiteness in one part of American society: higher education.

## **Background**

**The academy and people of color.** Academia is a microcosm of society; there are clear class and hierarchical structures. These structures were built on the perceived superiority of one group while subjugating all other groups. While all groups other than White men of means have been subjugated to varying degrees throughout history, the experiences of African Americans are unique in that disparities along socioeconomic criteria persist today (Williams, 1997, 1999; Williams & Collins, 2001; Williams & Mohammed, 2008; Williams & Priest, 2016). Today, higher education has evolved as an industry from its original purpose to educate White men to a multifaceted business that acknowledges the benefits of student and faculty diversity. The benefits to students,

institutions, and society explain in part why higher education as an industry has prioritized diversifying the academy (Park & Denson, 2009; Smith & Schonfeld, 2000; Whitfield-Harris & Lockhart, 2016). Students benefit from diverse learning environments in which they are not only exposed to racial and cultural differences but are challenged to consider viewpoints new and different from their own (Turner, Gonzalez, & Wood, 2008).

Also, the changing societal context in which the academy exists has shepherded a change within the academy's espoused ideology. Consequently, higher education has evolved from its segregationist foundation to a liberal industry that champions social justice issues. In addition, the academy has become more diverse in part due to the availability of grants and loans that provide access for groups such as veterans and middle- and low-income individuals (Cohn & Caumont, 2016). Noteworthy, however, is that while these programs originally provided access to an array of students from different economic backgrounds, the primary beneficiaries of these new funding sources are White men (Maher & Thompson Tetreault, 2011). Notwithstanding, the evolution of the academy and changes in funding sources have impacted the demographic profile of students who are currently enrolled in college.

*Changing student demographics.* Increasingly, the academy is charged with producing people who can compete in a more diverse world. The number of millennials (those born after 1980) (Pew, n.d.) now exceeds the number of Baby Boomers (those born 1946-1964) (Cohn & Caumont, 2016). Millennials are described as liberal independent thinkers who do not align with a specific ideology or group without reason (Cohn & Caumont, 2016). Furthermore, they do not follow the boundaries of social

norms. Racially, Millennials are disproportionately comprised of multiethnic native-born individuals and immigrants, as compared to Baby Boomers. Both subgroups of Millennials differ from the homogeneity of young adults who entered college a generation ago. Arguably, the more open, informed viewpoints with which Millennials enter college forces institutions of higher education to adjust to the range of views students bring to college campuses.

*Expanding definitions of diversity.* As students enrolled in college become more racially and ethnically diverse, academia continues to expand definitions of diversity to include gender, race, disability status, and sexual orientation and gender identity (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning [LGBTQ]). The benefit of this broader definition of diversity is that students who are educated in diverse school settings are prepared to excel within an increasingly global society (Smith, 2009; Smith & Schonfeld, 2000). In addition to ethnic, racial, and socioeconomic diversity, students are exposed to a diversity of scholarship (Tracey, 2010). This exposure to diverse perspectives challenges students and serves to create a culture of understanding (Brown, 2004).

Beyond the altruistic reasons for diversifying the academy, diversity is good business. As universities compete for a shrinking traditional (18-24-year-old) student population, diversifying the applicant pool can help institutions reach their enrollment targets. In this era of financial insecurity in higher education, the ability to use different modalities to deliver curriculum while meeting market demands forces the academy to dismantle the structures in place that impede diversity and inclusion (Giroux, 2002).

Economic drivers within the academy have the potential to override issues of inequity

and social injustice, especially when these issues are not overt and are contrary to the institutions' espoused visions of diversity and inclusion (Giroux, 2002).

*Exclusion within the academy.* The exclusionary practices that formed higher education in America have given way to policies and practices designed to include all members of the university community (Maher & Thompson Tetreault, 2011). However, implicit biases in these policies exist and are often unrecognized. The inability to identify the existence of implicit bias reflected in policy and practices within the academy thwart efforts to create diversity within the professoriate (Applebaum, 2010; Brown, 2004; Maher & Thompson Tetreault, 2011). To diversify, the academy must recognize the remnants of its history of exclusion based on race (Banks, 1984; Brown, 2004; Cohen & Kisker, 2010; Maher & Thompson Tetreault, 2011). Academia has a long history of exclusion and elitism based on race, gender, and schooling (Cohen & Kisker, 2010; Tracey, 2010). Undoing practices that are steeped in tradition will require some members of the academic community to address issues of change (Applebaum, 2010; Brown, 2004; Cabrera et al., 2016). In doing so, majority faculty must engage in a process in which they consider how they have benefited from their Whiteness and typical structures of the academy (Applebaum, 2010; Gordon, 2007; Maher & Thompson Tetreault, 2011; Pope-Davis & Ottavi, 1992). In addition, White faculty need to address how their well-meaning attempts to dismantle racism may impede diversity (Applebaum, 2010; Cabrera et al., 2016). That is, these faculty must learn to identify the reasons their efforts fail. The unspoken barriers to change must be identified and the root cause of barriers to change must be addressed (Maher & Thompson Tetreault, 2011).

***Facilitating change.*** The benefits of diversity notwithstanding, diversity initiatives represent change. People and organizations may resist change because of fear, including fear of the unknown and fear of loss (Argyris & Schon, 1974; Brown, 2004). Scholars have identified that exploration of White identity and helping White students develop their White identity serve to support a broader worldview for White students (Cabrera et al., 2016; Gusa, 2010). Similarly, it is appropriate to help White faculty identify ways they can recognize their racial identities as part of a larger effort to dismantle residual racism resulting from implicit bias in the academy (Applebaum, 2010; Brown, 2004; Gusa, 2010).

***Siloed efforts to diversify.*** One reason for the lack of progress in diversifying the academy is evident from the approach higher education takes toward achieving diversity and inclusion (Pope-Davis & Ottavi, 1992). Faculty and administrators implement change in a manner that appears to be responsive to diversity and inclusion but that fails to acknowledge the second-order reasons the academy has not diversified (Argyris & Schon, 1974; Maher & Thompson Tetreault, 2011; Pope-Davis & Ottavi, 1992). For example, an institution may develop a diversity vision, and to achieve that vision, it may offer programs that target students. Different programs that target faculty may also be offered. However, these programs are siloed and do not connect to one another. Furthermore, these offerings may take the form of stand-alone events that are not measured for their long-term impact on the organizational culture. In this example, an institutional commitment to diversity is espoused because the institution can point to specific initiatives that are designed to improve diversity (Pope-Davis & Ottavi, 1992). Yet, these efforts are also safe for the majority group. They do not force the majority to

sacrifice or give up power or share their position. Furthermore, majority faculty can share a sense of pride and accomplishment for initiating diversity plans within the university. The implementation of awareness-level programs that do not provide an opportunity for ongoing work reflect single-loop learning in that individuals may reflect during the event (Argyris & Schon, 1974).

However, these programs do not challenge faculty to the point of discomfort (Argyris & Schon, 1974; Brown, 2004; Maher & Thompson Tetreault, 2011). There is no examination of the macro issues that impede progress. For institutions to make significant inroads into diversity and inclusion, they must introduce practices that challenge institutional norms by exposing the remnants of structural racism (Brown, 2004; Maher & Thompson Tetreault, 2011). That is, the need to facilitate change must be paramount over the innate need to protect oneself or one's position. Historically, faculty have power within the academy and they have used this power to preserve elitism and exclusivity within the academy by shaping their institutions' values and norms (Maher & Thompson Tetreault, 2011). Since faculty are majority White, the intrinsic value of Whiteness is standard. Faculty autonomy allows for the governance of policy and practice under the indiscernible standard of Whiteness. Consequently, existing structures are preserved by White faculty agency and the unnoticeable manner in which Whiteness permeates the university structure (Maher & Thompson Tetreault, 2011). Moreover, the interconnected nature of these facets of the faculty and the academy maintain the regularity of Whiteness (Applebaum, 2010; Brown, 2004; Giddens, 1984; Guess, 2006). Because agency and Whiteness inform policy and practice within the academy, recognizing their importance is needed to effect change.

For change to occur within institutions, change agents must move beyond an understanding of complicit racism perpetuated by well-meaning Whites and work to identify how current efforts to diversify the academy protect the majority's standing within the academy (Guess, 2006; Gusa, 2010). Stand-alone programs that do not have measurable outcomes are touted as commitment to organizational change. In the same way, many diversity initiatives reveal that members of diversity committees engage in single-loop learning (Argyris & Schon, 1974). That is, diversity committees do not seek to understand or address racism, unequal expectations, or the experiences of faculty of color from a systemic perspective (Pope-Davis & Ottavi, 1992). Furthermore, minority members of the academic community are expected to champion diversity work; rarely are diversity efforts viewed as the charge of Whites within the academy (Banks, 1984; Brayboy, 2003; Turner et al., 2008; Whitfield-Harris & Lockhart, 2016). Thus, African Americans who try to diversify the academy lack power, and Whites who participate in improving campus diversity fail to recognize the significance of structural racism or their own complicit racism. Consequently, diversity work in the academy is relegated to perpetuating superficial awareness and change (Brayboy, 2003), consistent with single-loop learning (Argyris & Schon, 1974).

### **Existing Structures: Lack of Diversity**

This study addresses the academy's lack of significant inroads toward increasing the number of African American faculty in higher education. African Americans' experiences in the academy have been examined in the literature for decades (Banks, 1984; Brown, 2004; Gordon, 2007; Hall, 2006; Turner et al., 2008). Despite efforts to diversify academic programs, the student body, and the faculty, the academy continues to

be an alien environment for African American faculty. The daily social and professional environments of the academy serve to support existing structures, which are not always supportive for faculty of color (Maher & Thompson Tetreault, 2011; Piercy et al., 2005; Reason & Evans, 2007; Tracey, 2010; Turner et al., 2008). Notwithstanding institutions' best efforts to be inclusive, African American faculty experience a hostile culture in which they feel isolated and must identify strategies to succeed in an environment that does not consider their presence in the development of college practices (Brown, 2004; Fries-Britt, Rowan-Kenyon, Perna, Milem, & Howard, 2011; Gordon, 2007; Turner et al., 2008).

However, in some instances, an institution may achieve physical diversity but fail to achieve inclusion. That is, data may indicate that there are increasing numbers of certain groups, such as women, Asians, or African Americans. However, despite their increased presence, marginalized people within the academy report encountering hostile environments or feeling excluded as outsiders within the institution (Allison, 2008; Henderson, Hunter, & Hilderth, 2010; Turner et al., 2008). Therefore, it is important to examine the factors that contribute to non-inclusive workplace cultures, such as unspoken rules, Whiteness as normal/invisible, and the experiences of African Americans in the professoriate. Well-documented within the literature on diversity in higher education is the impact that hostile experiences within the academy have on African American faculty (Allen, Epps, Guillory, Suh, & Bonous-Hammarth, 2001; Allison, 2008; Behar-Horenstein, West-Olatunji, Moore, Houchen, & Roberts, 2012; Turner et al., 2008).

The stress African Americans experience is in part the result of a lack of inclusion and diversity within the academy, and the structures of the academy thwart campus



diversity efforts. Much of the research on marginalized people focuses on the perspective of the marginalized group to identify a remedy; the viewpoint of Whites and the role of Whiteness are not considered (Banks, 1984; Gordon, 2007). Since the power structure within the academy has its foundation in White agency (Applebaum, 2010; Brown, 2004; Giddens, 1984; Gusa, 2010), this study examined the perceptions of White faculty regarding campus diversity work and their role in creating diverse and inclusive campuses. White faculty still benefit from the founding ideology of the academy. Even when well-meaning members of the campus community endeavor to create inclusivity on campus, issues of White faculty power and normalcy are seldom considered. This study explored the ways in which White faculty view their role in creating diverse and inclusive campuses.

### **Problem Statement**

There is a schism in higher education. The students who enter college are becoming increasingly diverse and are more racially, ethnically, and socioeconomically varied than in previous generations. The increase in women and Asian students, though, have exceeded students of African American/Black and Hispanic descent (NCES, 2016). White women have increased their presence in the professoriate, too, now comprising one-third of the faculty (NCES, 2016). Like students enrolled in college, however, inroads to faculty diversity have been stagnant for African Americans and Hispanics (NCES, 1995, 2016). Historic exclusion based on race, gender, and SES in the academy was not so much espoused, but reflective of the marginalized status of anyone other than White men (Brown, 2004).

Despite the progress of women and Asians within the academy, African Americans have not been able to penetrate the professoriate substantially. The success White women have experienced in the professoriate, while not equitable throughout the ranks, is measurable. In contrast, African Americans lag in gaining access to the academy, failing to amass significant inroads into the academy in the past 20 years (NCES, 2016a, 2016b, 2017). The academy's historical structure, coupled with complicit racism and an unchallenged White worldview, serve to maintain the status quo as a barrier for African Americans' access to the professoriate (Glimps & Ford, 2010). The way that Whiteness is valued and affects campus climate is scant in the literature. This study contributes to the body of knowledge available to address factors that impede diversity and inclusion of African Americans in the professoriate.

### **Purpose of Research Study**

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore how White faculty view campus diversity and their role in creating diverse and inclusive campuses for faculty of color. Specifically, the following research questions were examined:

- **RQ 1:** How do White faculty characterize the campus climate regarding diversity for faculty of color?
  - **RQ1a:** How do White faculty characterize the campus climate for African American faculty specifically?
- **RQ 2:** How do White faculty view their role in creating inclusive diverse campus environments?
- **RQ 3:** How do White faculty consider their own race to inform their teaching, scholarship, and service to the institution?

## **Significance of the Study**

This research study sought to contribute to the existing body of knowledge regarding the barriers to achieving diversity and inclusion in the academy by examining the perceptions of majority faculty in fostering diversity and inclusion. Expressly, this research sought to understand how and the extent to which White faculty recognize how Whiteness serves to perpetuate systems and structures that serve to marginalize African Americans in the academy. Likewise, this study explored the extent to which White faculty are aware of the structures that impede African Americans while providing access and fostering Whites' success in academia (Glimps & Ford, 2010). The findings of this research can serve as a resource in future efforts to diversify the academy by providing faculty and administrators with information that allows them to question the ways Whiteness operates unquestioned in the academy (Applebaum, 2010; Cabrera et al., 2016; Gusa, 2010).

## **Conceptual Framework**

This research study employed two theories, Giddens' structuration theory and critical race theory (CRT), to provide a framework for understanding why institutions have not achieved the diversity they seek. Structuration theory states that people engage in behaviors and practices that maintain existing social structures. Therefore, people are reluctant to engage in behaviors or practices that challenge or oppose the status quo. In the academy, White male faculty benefit from a system that is designed to exclude non-Whites, females, and people with disabilities (Brown, 2004). As a result, those with power (White faculty) typically work to maintain the system from which they have benefited (Applebaum, 2010; Cabrera et al., 2016; Guess, 2006; Gusa, 2010). The use of

structuration theory also provides an understanding of why many diversity initiatives reflect only first-order change (Argyris & Schon, 1974), which is superficial and often not measurable (Brayboy, 2003; Brown, 2004).

**Critical race theory.** CRT provides context for the unremarkable way racism exists in society. Moreover, CRT examines how the intersectionality of racism, power, and the social construction of race elevate some groups of people and subjugate other groups of people. The application of CRT to explore White faculty members' perceptions distinguishes this study from previous studies. That is, there is significant research that uses CRT as a lens for subjects who are marginalized, but the use of CRT to assess White faculty perceptions is scarce in the literature (Gusa, 2010). The findings of this research may provide insight into the invisible barriers that impede diversity efforts by creating awareness of the intersectionality of structure and implicit bias. Furthermore, the study's findings may contribute to institutional policies that create campus environments that are inclusive for everyone, regardless of race or role within the institution. For this study, CRT was used to understand racism and how it manifests in society. The role of racism in society is perpetuated by social structures, which often reflect the normalcy of racism. Therefore, the use of CRT and structuration theory in tandem provide a lens to understand how the invisible nature of insidious racism, power, and reinforcement of existing structures impedes efforts to diversify the academy.

Institutions that embrace diversity are embracing change. However, a historical review of the educational system in America reveals a model that was built by reproducing itself (Brown, 2004; Gordon, 2007). The values and norms educators embrace may serve to marginalize some groups. Moreover, Bowles and Gintis (2011)

contend that the values of the dominant culture shape the expectations of students and educators alike. Diversity initiatives challenge our sense of these values and norms. For institutions to become what we envision, we must first be willing to challenge the tenets of our organizational identities. In other words, colleges are steeped in tradition, elitism, and hierarchy that have shaped their identities. The traditions of the academy serve as foundations that are rooted in Whites' value in society. In addition, the ordinary way Whiteness informs policy, practice, pedagogy, and institutional priorities is undetectable to campus stakeholders. These footholds make institutions resistant to change (Argyris, 1990; Bolman & Deal, 2008; Brown, 2004).

Therefore, the intersectionality of CRT and structuration theory help expose the role White faculty play in failing to achieve diversity and inclusion for African Americans. The regularity of Whiteness and its value in society have created a system of invisible structures that serve to advantage Whites, sometimes at the expense of Blacks within the academy (Brown, 2004; Guess, 2006). While this study did not specifically use group conflict theory or social identity theory, both theories help inform some phenomena that are stratified along racial lines (Brown, 2004). Whether the joining factor is class, gender, race, or another factor altogether, people create an identity that joins them to a group. When groups come together around a shared factor, they may exude power to reinforce existing structures and cultures. The role of group identity is salient in that it unifies people. In the case of White people, the group cannot see race or recognize racism. As a result, as a group, they are efficient in preserving racist structures that hinder diversity in the academy (Brown, 2004). Therefore, the conceptual framework for this study employed structuration theory and CRT to inform how one's awareness of one's

Whiteness may impede measurable progress in diversifying the professoriate (Brayboy, 2003).

### **Research Design**

White faculty perspectives regarding campus diversity and exclusion is stifled throughout the academy (Banks, 1984; Pope-Davis & Ottavi, 1992). For some White faculty, the academy is a progressive space characterized by a culture of equity. The academy is a place where issues of social discord and marginalization are examined, not perpetuated. For other White faculty, their Whiteness may leave them feeling as though they cannot or should not contribute to discussions of race. If institutions are going to become inclusive spaces for everyone in the academy, then White faculty perspectives must be considered. Therefore, this study used a qualitative approach to understand how White faculty view their campus climate, specifically for African Americans, and their perceptions of campus diversity and inclusion.

According to Creswell (2014), qualitative research allows research to be conducted where a problem is occurring. The researcher engages with study participants in their natural setting. Qualitative research is flexible and can be adapted to include several modalities to explain or study a problem. Additionally, the researcher's role is central to the study's design. These attributes provide a forum for stories and artifacts to serve as data sources for the study. The use of storytelling and artifacts describe what is occurring (Beaudry & Miller, 2016; Creswell, 2014; Rossman & Ralls, 2012).

A qualitative research design was appropriate for this study for the following reasons: (1) The contrast of espoused commitment to campus diversity and the reported experiences of African American faculty warranted study of the problem where it is

occurring, (2) qualitative research is conducive for the use of critical theory perspectives, and (3) qualitative research supports understanding phenomena that may not be explained by linear or positivist approaches (Creswell, 2014).

### **Strategy of Inquiry**

This study employed a case-study approach at a comprehensive university in the northeast. A case study provides the means to study phenomena that may occur holistically at an institution (Rossman & Rollis, 2012). Case studies allow for in-depth examination of a phenomenon that may occur within a larger context. For this study, a case study at one institution provided a forum to understand and explain the incongruence between espoused institutional commitments to diversity and the lived experiences of African American faculty in the academy (Beaudry & Miller, 2016; Creswell, 2014; Rossman & Rollis, 2012). The literature suggests that higher education has not met its self-imposed diversity goals (Brown, 2004, Gordon, 2007). While case-study findings are not generalizable to larger contexts, the examination of one site may provide data that can guide other institutions as they attempt to achieve campus diversity.

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

This study was conducted at a regional comprehensive university located in the northeast region of the United States. Case-study research allows for the use of an array of data sources (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Merriam, 1998; Yin, 1984). Therefore, institutional documents such as committee reports, results from diversity and environment surveys, and an inventory of current diversity work undertaken at the institution served as data sources and to provide context for this study. Since the role of White faculty specifically was central to the research problem, White faculty perceptions

were examined. Using university data, White faculty were purposefully identified to participate in an online interview to explore how they view their role in campus diversity work. White faculty were interviewed via an online open-ended questionnaire.

Demographic information was collected in the interview so that focus-group participants represented different schools, areas of scholarship, academic ranks, and length of employment with the university.

### **Limitations**

This study sought to understand the structures that impede diversity for African American faculty by examining White faculty perceptions and experiences. However, there are other stakeholders within the academy that play a role in university diversity initiatives. Yet, because this study focused on faculty, the views of support staff, professional staff, and managers were not included. In addition, student affairs administrators address campus diversity with students through training, awareness, and staff development. While some faculty may participate in these forums, they are expressly designed to address student diversity and inclusion. The scope of this study was limited to White faculty perceptions of diversity, specifically regarding the environment for African Americans. This study did not examine the intersection of academic affairs and student affairs programs or goals related to creating campus inclusion. Furthermore, this study did not assess the scope and breadth of existing diversity programs or related goals at the study site.

### **Definitions**

- **African American/Black:** When applied to a person, the term *Black* refers to a person having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa (IPEDS,



n.d.). The terms *Black* and *African American* are used interchangeably in this research based on the timeframe of the literature referenced. Also, given the different experiences of those in the African diaspora, African Americans, native-born Africans, and Afro-Caribbeans are delineated when distinguishable based on the literature.

- **Diversity:** *Diversity* is defined as an encompassing term to include race, gender, identity, and SES. Diversity is a physical occurrence that refers to a subset of a group. When possible, diversity is delineated along these lines to provide focus and context for this study.
- **Inclusion:** *Inclusion* is the practice of being included, belonging, and being considered visible. For this study, inclusion extends beyond physical diversity and represents consideration, value, and inclusion in the formation of the academy's structures, policies, and practices.

## Conclusion

Higher education has a history of exclusion and elitism. Notwithstanding concerted efforts to diversify the professoriate, the academy continues to fall short in increasing the presence of African Americans. Beyond the lack of diversity, the experiences of faculty of color reveals a misalignment with what institutions espouse regarding diversity and inclusion and institutional practices that are employed (Argyris & Schon, 1974).

An interesting reality exists within the academy as institutions expend resources to promote diverse and inclusive cultures. Efforts to improve diversity are usually stratified along divisional lines, such as academic affairs and student affairs. Furthermore,

these efforts are often not measured and do not address second-order change that is sustainable (Argyris & Schon, 1974). As a result, institutions can tout a commitment to diversity without questioning why members of the campus community believe they are marginalized. While there are many aspects to campus diversity, this study focused on barriers to achieving faculty diversity, specifically, why African Americans have not been able to increase their presence in the professoriate to the same degree as other groups.

The history of the academy as elite and White may partially explain why the academy has not increased the presence of African American faculty. Whiteness and the invisible power attached to it is reflected in policies and practices that have their footings in the racist foundations of higher education in America. Today, these practices are evident in the insidious practices and beliefs that permeate the academy. Racism in the academy is contrary to the equity and justice agenda that higher education purportedly supports. It is here, where Whiteness is not recognized but serves as the standard by which success is measured, that the structures of the academy operate. To understand why barriers to the academy exist, White faculty need to consider that they, too, are racial beings – racial beings who have benefited from the racist practices that built the academy.

In Chapter 2, the literature review, Whiteness and modern-day racism are discussed. Then, racism in the academy is contextualized by discussing how racism and Whiteness interconnect in the academy. In addition, background information regarding benefits of diversity is introduced. Finally, to help the reader further understand the

condition of the academy regarding diversity and inclusion, a primer on CRT is offered to provide a lens through which the academy can be examined.

In Chapter 3, the methodology for this study is discussed, including the study design's rationale, data collection, and analysis. In Chapter 4, findings of the study are discussed, including demographic information. Lastly, in Chapter 5, findings are summarized, the research questions are answered, and the findings are discussed and analyzed relative to the existing literature and theory. The dissertation concludes with recommendations for research, practice, and leadership, as well as a discussion of how the study findings can inform diversity and inclusion work in the academy.

## Chapter 2

### Literature Review

#### Introduction

The African American experience in America has been built on a system of oppression and exclusion. While the overt racist treatment of African Americans has given way to insidious discrimination, this discrimination has its roots in the policies and practices that built America (Brown, 2004; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). Similarly, higher education, once an elite institution designed for White men of significant financial resources, has its roots in a system of exclusion, oppression, and marginalization (Brown, 2004; Glimps & Ford, 2010). The overt practices that, at best, ignored people of color, and, at worst, purposely excluded them, are not openly practiced in the academy today. However, there is a culture within higher education that serves to marginalize and disenfranchise African Americans who enter the professoriate (Brown, 2004).

This history of elitism and the policies in place to preserve the academy also serve as barriers to diversity and inclusion (Brown, 2004). As a result, African American faculty often feel like outsiders within the academy (Henderson et al., 2010; Johnson-Bailey & Cervero, 2008). Furthermore, these exclusionary practices are so entrenched in the foundation of higher education that their racist roots are hidden by the regularity of these practices (Brown, 2004; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Maher & Thompson Tetreault, 2011).

Though in recent years the academy has made concerted efforts to diversify faculty and staff, nevertheless, diversity work has been done amidst unspoken and unrecognized beliefs and practices that devalue people of color in general and African

Americans specifically (Banks, 1984; Brown, 2004; Gordon, 2007; Park & Denson, 2009). Therefore, for higher education to overcome the residual practices and ideology that marginalizes everyone except White men with a high SES, the academy must first acknowledge there is a schism between its visible commitments to diversity and inclusion and the institutional structures that thwart diversity and inclusion (Brown, 2004; Maher & Thompson Tetreault, 2011).

Despite the racist and elitist history of higher education, the academy has made inroads pertaining to student and faculty diversity. Today, college students include both men and women who represent different races and ethnicities. Furthermore, the availability of financial aid in the form of grants and loans has made college accessible to people of various socioeconomic backgrounds (Cohen & Kisker, 2010; Maher & Thompson Tetreault, 2011). Beyond these traditional definitions of diversity, which are stratified along race and gender, institutions have broadened their definitions of diversity to include members of the LGBTQ community and those with disabilities. In contrast to the selective culture of early higher education in America, colleges and universities carefully craft inclusive messages that affirm that everyone is welcome. For some, academia is extremely welcoming; for example, in the past 20 years, women have made significant inroads into the professoriate and management (Hall, 2006; NCES, 2017). While women are more likely to hold junior academic ranks than their male counterparts, they have been nevertheless been able to increase their presence in the academy (Maher & Thompson Tetreault, 2011; Minor, 2014). Still, not all groups have not been able to permeate the organizational structure in the same way women have.

The inroads made by women notwithstanding, African Americans have not experienced appreciable gains in the professoriate (Minor, 2014). One reason for the lack of African Americans' progress in the professoriate is the climate that these faculty encounter. African Americans in academia report an environment characterized as unwelcoming and hostile (Aguirre, Martinez, & Hernandez, 1993; Alexander & Moore, 2008; Banks, 1984; Behar-Horenstein et al., 2012; Maher & Thompson Tetreault, 2011). The academy not only excludes African American faculty, but also creates a stressful environment for faculty to negotiate if they are to succeed (Aguirre & Martinez, 2002; Behar-Horenstein et al., 2012; Hall, 2006; Henderson et al., 2010; Maher & Thompson Tetreault, 2011). Thus, the dichotomy between an espoused commitment to diversity and inclusion cannot be reconciled with the experiences of African American faculty in the professoriate.

The negative experiences of African American faculty may reflect attitudes and practices of entrenched historic elitism and exclusivity within the academy (Gordon, 2007; Maher & Thompson Tetreault, 2011). Because the academy has long operated unencumbered by external constraints, practices steeped in tradition are not examined for impartiality or preference. Consequently, the ability to self-govern, coupled with the freedom to preserve the academy's traditions, help reinforce existing structures within the academy (Brown, 2004; Minor, 2014). The sovereignty of faculty also creates an organizational culture in which unwanted change does not occur (Minor, 2014). In this sense, the academy's organization reinforces historical and cultural norms. The deep-rooted history of segregation within the academy is preserved by homogeneity among the faculty, which is predominately White and male. This homogeneity, in turn, is protected

by the unspoken value ascribed to Whiteness. This silent value ascribed to Whiteness serves as a barrier to identifying the reasons African Americans have not made inroads into the academy (Brown, 2004; Minor, 2014). That is, Whiteness is invisible, and policies that seem to be neutral are contextualized by Whiteness being normal and therefore neutral (Maher & Thompson Tetreault, 2011).

Attitudinal biases of faculty and administrators within the academy continue to reinforce structures that advance Whites while subjugating people of color and women. Because these biases exist unchallenged or unrecognized, issues of campus diversity, while well-intended, typically do not examine the underlying reasons why the academy has not diversified (Maher & Thompson Tetreault, 2011). Moreover, issues of race are typically examined from the perceptions or experiences of people of color. That is, Blacks in the academy are asked how they view racism on campus (Cabrera et al., 2016; Kendall, 2002; Pope-Davis & Ottavi, 1992). Whites are not asked about their views on racism or their roles in confronting it. Similarly, when institutions embark on diversity initiatives, they make a concerted effort to include African Americans and other people of color (Banks, 1984; Brown, 2004; Turner et al., 2008; Whitfield-Harris & Lockhart, 2016). Importantly, the role of Whites in identifying and addressing racism is not typically considered in campus diversity programs (Pope-Davis & Ottavi, 1992). Scholars have documented that Whiteness exists in an invisible state that establishes societal benchmarks (Applebaum, 2010; Pope-Davis & Ottavi, 1992). Moreover, Whiteness as a social construct is used to subjugate other groups that are not White while serving to attach and uphold value to things that Whites consider important (Applebaum, 2010;

Guess, 2006; McIntosh, 1988). These broad societal understandings of Whiteness help provide context to the normative culture that is influenced by Whiteness in the academy.

In the academy, Whiteness as collateral is embedded into the institutional culture and serves to validate practices and policies from which Whites continue to benefit. Over time, the apparent oppression imposed by Whites has morphed into visible commitments to equity and parity. However, attempts to diversify the academy occur within a framework that does not consider the history of the academy or a larger societal context (Maher & Thompson Tetreault, 2011). Furthermore, the subtle aspects of White collateral go undetected even by those who are champions for equity (Applebaum, 2010; Gusa, 2010; Pope-Davis & Ottavi, 1992). Therefore, to understand the influence of Whiteness in diversity initiatives, the next section focuses on the ordinariness of being White in America. Then, the ways in which the normality of Whiteness creates an environment in which Whites do not have to identify or confront racism are explored. Lastly, how Whiteness in the academy affords Whites systemic advantages is discussed.

### **Whiteness as Normal**

In America, people are categorized as belonging to one group or another. Because of colonization by Whites, laws and cultural norms were shaped by what eventually became the dominant group (Cabrera et al., 2016). The belief in the superiority of Whites served as the foundation for America's formation. Through White supremacy, a subjugated group of "othered" people formed (Guess, 2006, p. 651). Racism, which has been pervasively dehumanizing and overt in the past, has given way to an unconscious, often invisible form of racism, the impact of which is also dehumanizing and serves to marginalize others within America (Applebaum, 2010; Dade, Tartakov, Hargrave, &



Leigh, 2015; Earnshaw et al., 2015). However, when compared to the violent racism that prevailed in other periods of American history, subtle forms of racism are typically undetectable by Whites in society. Here, America has made progress; violence based on race is condemned by many in society, and laws have been enacted to provide parity in housing, employment, and other parts of society where people of color had been legally excluded. Yet, despite these advances, Whites in America still benefit from a system of unearned privilege (Applebaum, 2010; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Hall, 2006; McIntosh, 1988). Moreover, the convergence of laws designed to provide equity do not challenge this history of White supremacy. Also, the indirect way modern-day racism manifests allow Whites to ignore the idea that racism exists or that they benefit from racist structures. As a result, society's racist norms not only go unchallenged, but they are embodied to a degree that they are invisible to White society at large (Applebaum, 2010; Gordon, 2007; Nayak, 2007; Pope-Davis & Ottavi, 1992).

**Invisible majority.** Because White people in society are not routinely confronted with identifying or addressing issues of inequity, their viewpoint is rarely sought when addressing issues of race and marginalization. Historically, issues of race have been examined from the perspective of marginalized peoples (Cabrera et al., 2016; Kendall, 2002; Pope-Davis & Ottavi, 1992). Because of the normalness of being White, White people are often viewed as raceless. In other words, the condition of being White is dominant over all other racial groups to the extent that White people can live their daily lives without considering how their actions or encounters benefit them or injure others. Furthermore, White people's actions do not represent the entire race but are accepted as the standard by which all experiences and practices are measured. Consequently, Whites

can function without engaging in a critical awareness of how their actions impact other groups of people (Applebaum, 2010; Cabrera et al., 2016; Kendall, 2002; Nayak, 2007; Pope-Davis & Ottavi, 1992; Solorzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000). This lack of awareness allows Whites to view their experiences on an individual basis and not as part of a larger societal context (Pope-Davis & Ottavi, 1992). Because of their raceless status, White people in America benefit from a system of privilege that they cannot see, typically do not consider, and cannot relinquish (Applebaum, 2010; McIntosh, 1988; Pope-Davis & Ottavi, 1992). This privileged status, which goes unrecognized and unchallenged, provides a context that must be understood to examine why diversity goals are not realized in the academy.

**The role of Whiteness in the academy.** Higher education is viewed as welcoming diversity (Pope-Davis & Ottavi, 1992). Nevertheless, while not overtly racist, there are ways in which Whites affirm their position in the academy. For example, Whites enjoy unspoken access to all spaces within the academy (Applebaum, 2010; Brown, 2004; Cabrera et al., 2016; Reason & Evans, 2007). That is, Whites are not challenged or made to feel “less than” when they enter a meeting or classroom. Their academic pedigree remains intact and is not challenged. They are received in a welcoming manner without being perceived as unapproachable, angry, or hostile (Turner et al., 2008). White people benefit from their privileged position, which serves to perpetuate a system of racial dominance and preference even when they condemn racism (Applebaum, 2010; Brown, 2004; Pope-Davis & Ottavi, 1992).

***Whites do not see race.*** Because of laws that are rooted in the historical privilege afforded to Whites, the state of being White, regardless of class, affords White people access and privileges that are not readily accessible to people of color (Applebaum, 2010; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Hall, 2006; McIntosh, 1988). While variations in access are stratified along socioeconomic lines, Whites most often do not have to think about their identities or how their actions or presence are received or interpreted (Guess, 2006). For Whites, their race is not considered as part of their daily decision-making process or in contextualizing daily events. For example, if a White person is rude or hostile, other Whites generally do not consider that this behavior is because of their race. Because their Whiteness is considered normal, they have the privilege of viewing the incident as one of interpersonal conflict and not a symptom of systemic racism that supports the implicit biases of Whites against non-Whites.

***Good Whites and complicity.*** The unnoticed nature in which Whiteness exists in society works in tandem with well-meaning White people who believe they are agents of equality to help reinforce existing practices and structures. To this end, Applebaum (2010) examines how Whiteness manifests itself in society. Building on the concept of moral guilt and metaphysical guilt, Applebaum (2010) explains that White people view racism as overtly purposeful acts that are perpetuated by bad White people. In this sense, racist acts are easily identifiable. In contrast, good White people are not racist; they are morally good. In fact, good Whites openly denounce racism (Applebaum, 2010). Furthermore, good Whites may identify themselves as champions of diversity who do not see color (Reason & Evans, 2007). The latter colorblind group of Whites does not subscribe to outward racism or recognize how their lack of awareness of indirect forms of

racism acts as a barrier to campus diversity. Therefore, since this group does not actively engage in combating racism in all its forms, they are complicit in fostering White superiority and privilege. In this sense, their guilt is not one of moral agency, but one of apathy or denial, because they are not actively engaged in recognizing and dismantling oppressive structures (Applebaum, 2010).

Additionally, good Whites can espouse a colorblind or inclusive narrative that allows them to ignore how they benefit from existing structures. In this denial, they protect their access to all spaces and preserve their safety (Brown, 2004; Cabrera et al., 2016; Pope-Davis & Ottavi, 1992). In other words, their lack of awareness of their own White racial identity, in addition to the pervasiveness of Whiteness, prevents Whites from seeing their role in perpetuating racist structures within the academy from which they benefit (Applebaum, 2010; Gordon, 2007; Gusa, 2010; Scheurich, 1993). Therefore, Whites in the academy are complicit because they are not compelled intrinsically to identify and denounce racism in all its forms, and they do not self-assess the regularity of being White as a privilege.

The construction of Whiteness in understanding race in America in general and higher education specifically has been offered to challenge traditional deficit approaches that are used to address issues of race (Applebaum, 2010; Brown, 2004; Cabrera et al., 2016; Gordon, 2007; Gusa, 2010; Nayak, 2007; Pope-Davis & Ottavi, 1992; Reason & Evans, 2007). To further understand the conditions that support the advancement of some groups while subjugating others, a broad understanding of the academy, diversity, and the benefits of diversity is needed, as is an understanding of the barriers to achieving diversity. These topics are addressed next, followed by a discussion of CRT and

structuration theory, both of which provide a framework for understanding diversity efforts within the academy.

### **The Academy**

Historically, higher education was an exclusive industry. Students who entered college were White males from privileged backgrounds. University study was specifically reserved for and designed by White males (Cohen & Kisker, 2010; Schuh, Jones, & Harper, 2011). Faculty were scholars in love with thinking and the science of knowing. Since that time, university study has broadened in scope beyond liberal arts to emphasize professional study leading to various careers. This deviation from traditional liberal arts study expanded the potential student pool (Cohen & Kisker, 2010).

**Changing student demographics.** Moreover, the profile of college students has changed to include women, people of color, and people of various socioeconomic backgrounds. Increased funding opportunities for college have allowed access to different groups of people who had previously been excluded from the academy (Brown, 2004; Cohen & Kisker, 2010). The primary beneficiaries of new funding opportunities have been White females, and women, regardless of race, now comprise the majority of college students (Lopez & Gonzalez-Barrera, 2014). Access to higher education has also evolved to include students of different races and ethnicities and from lower incomes than those for whom the academy was originally built.

**Changing faculty demographics.** Despite this shift in enrollment and increased access points into the academy for students, which is the first step in diversifying the academy, the professoriate has remained predominantly White. In 2015, 78% of faculty were White, with White males comprising 43% of the professoriate nationally (NCES,

2015). One reason for this imbalance is that to gain access to the academy, faculty, regardless of race, gender identity, or other criteria, must obtain the requisite formal education. Depending on the type of institution and the academic rank, faculty are minimally prepared with a master's degree or a terminal academic degree (PhD, EdD, etc.). While there are different levels of academic rank for faculty, those who experience the greatest success within the professoriate have at least a terminal degree and are accomplished scholars. Furthermore, the institution conferring the terminal degree, the area of scholarship, and the type of degree earned serve to delineate degrees of status and success within the academy (Smith et al., 2004; Washington & Harvey, 1989; Whittaker, Montgomery, & Martinez Acosta, 2015). Historically, women and people of color have been less able to access higher education and complete terminal degrees than are White men.

*Increased presence of White women in the academy.* However, despite these challenges, changes in laws and policies designed to increase diversity in the academy have resulted in an increase of White women in the professoriate. While gender bias and marginalization of women persists, the inroads that women as a group have made is unparalleled by African Americans. Hall (2006) explains that White women have been used strategically to maintain White dominance within the professoriate. White women possess a dual value to the academy. First, White women, because of their Whiteness, serve as a vehicle to preserve the integrity of the academy by preserving the White homogeneity of the professoriate (Hall, 2006). Therefore, institutions can espouse progress in diversity because of the increased presence of women in the professoriate. Second, because women are a marginalized group, the progress of White women allows

Whites to ignore race. In this sense, the normal value of Whiteness is ascribed to women. The advances experienced by White women are viewed as advancement for all women. The lack of progress of women of color is not considered.

In other words, because of their gender, White women are touted as the result of successful diversity initiatives. Thus, these women's race is invisible and functions outside the boundaries of the criteria considered by the academy when achieving diversity. Here, the worth ascribed to White women specifically is unspoken (Hall, 2006). Furthermore, because definitions of diversity extend beyond race, gender becomes the only measured criterion. Similarly, the success in increasing Asians' presence in the professoriate is considered another exemplar of a positive diversity outcome. These successes further affirm to universities that their efforts to diversify are working (Gusa, 2010; Hall, 2006).

**Institutional benefits of diversity.** As an industry, higher education has evolved from an exclusive environment to one that champions diversity in its many forms. Campus institutional diversity benefits the university in several ways. Students, faculty, and institutions benefit from diverse and inclusive institutions through improved student learning; students who attend institutions with diverse faculty and student bodies benefit both in and out of the classroom (Whitfield-Harris & Lockhart, 2016). Overall, campus diversity also advances the institution in several respects, including access and success of underrepresented students, campus climate and intergroup relations, education and scholarship, and institutional viability (Park & Denson, 2009).

***Benefits to majority students.*** While the implications of diversity are often discussed from the perspective of marginalized groups, the benefit to majority students is

also relevant to the discussion of campus diversity. Through interactions with people who have different perspectives, students develop critical-thinking and problem-solving skills (Smith & Schonfeld, 2000). In addition, students in diverse academic settings are more likely to reject stereotypes because of their personal interactions with people of different races, ethnicities, beliefs, and lived experiences (Smith & Schonfeld, 2000).

Significantly, White students who are educated in diverse environments and become part of the academic pipeline may place an increased value on the benefits of diverse faculty and student bodies.

### **Barriers to Faculty Diversity within the Academy**

However, the incongruence between an institutional commitment to diversity and an individual commitment to diversity is one of the insidious barriers to inclusion. The next section of this literature review explores barriers that impede diversity, including the significance of the academic pipeline and campus culture, the experiences of African American faculty, and the relationship between gender and race as a barrier to faculty diversity.

**The academic pipeline.** The number of students enrolled in college today is the pool of potential faculty tomorrow. To have a long-term impact on the number of African American faculty in the future, African American students must enter and graduate from college. Therefore, recruitment and retention of students of color is essential to growing diverse faculty populations within the academy. The absence of students of color in the academic pipeline contributes to the scarcity of African American and other faculty of color within the professoriate (Smith & Schonfeld, 2000; Whitfield-Harris & Lockhart,



2016). Accordingly, the academic pipeline has been identified as one barrier to achieving faculty and student diversity within higher education.

Consequently, the number of available African American PhD-prepared individuals (excluding education and psychology) is less than 2% (Smith et al., 2004). However, Black and Hispanic scholars with doctoral degrees (PhDs or EdDs) increased for both groups in the years 1999-2000 and 2009-2010. Blacks with a terminal degree increased from 6.6% to 7.4%, while Hispanics increased from 4.7% to 5.8% of the population with doctoral degrees. While the percentage of White people with doctoral degrees decreased by nearly 3%, Whites still comprise approximately 75% of the people with doctoral degrees (NCES, 2015, 2017).

**Terminal degree holders do not enter the professoriate.** Interestingly, the number of African Americans with terminal degrees is part of the diversity issue. Another factor that contributes to the lack of African Americans and Latinos among faculty ranks is that those who have obtained terminal degrees pursue and attain non-academic positions instead of faculty appointments (Washington & Harvey, 1989; Whitfield-Harris & Lockhart, 2016). Examination of the reasons why these potential faculty members pursue administrative and other non-teaching positions may serve to further identify barriers that impede African American and Hispanic scholars entering the professoriate. In other words, we need to understand why African Americans and Hispanics do not seek faculty appointments to the same degree that Whites with terminal degrees do.

Furthermore, the academy must identify and address discriminatory practices persisting in and permeating organizational culture that make the faculty ranks undesirable for potential faculty of color (Reskin, 2000). Herein, the contradiction

between the academy's commitment to diversity is contrasted with structures designed to preserve the elitism of academia (Applebaum, 2010; Finklestein et al, 2016; Maher, & Thompson Tetreault, 2011; Gordon, 2007; Hall, 2006; Martin, Conley, & Schuster, 2016; Park & Denson, 2009). White faculty perceptions of Black terminal degree-holders is discussed later in this literature review.

While the overt mechanisms that exclude faculty of color are not pervasive, the lack of diversity specific to African Americans is a function of the intersection of organizational structure and the innate behavior of protecting one's position or privilege (Applebaum, 2010; Brown, 2004). To preserve the benefits of Whiteness, people act instinctively to protect their positions. For example, when hiring new faculty, hirers' preference is to choose people and place value on criteria that are familiar to them or like their own. Individuals' implicit bias, in conjunction with the value placed on norms related to scholarship and educational attainment, work to protect and preserve the status quo, thereby protecting the academy's existing composition (Brown, 2004; Maher & Thompson Tetreault, 2011; Scheurich, 1993). This lens provides insight as to why those with terminal degrees choose to enter or not enter the professoriate or advance within the academy at a rate that is parallel to majority faculty (Allen et al., 2001; Turner et al., 2008).

**Experiences within the academy for faculty of color.** While the recruitment of candidates that leads to an offer of employment is the first step to achieving diversity, the experiences of African American faculty once they enter the professoriate contribute to the obstacles to increasing the number of tenured African American faculty on campus (Frazier, 2011; Turner et al., 2008). African American faculty members at predominantly

White institutions (PWIs) report feelings of isolation, hostility, lack of support for tenure, and challenges to scholarship, in addition to encountering obstacles regarding promotion and tenure (Banks, 1984; Frazier, 2011; Maher & Thompson Tetreault, 2011; Piercy et al., 2005; Park & Denson, 2009; Tracey, 2010; Turner et al., 2008). Furthermore, African American faculty members are consistently confronted with different expectations than their White counterparts, which include decreased value on their scholarship, marginalization, hostility, and exclusion in the workplace, along with increased service obligations (Aguirre & Martinez, 2002; Allen et al., 2001; Allison, 2008; Frazier, 2011; Shillingford, Trice-Black, & Butler, 2013; Turner et al., 2008). Moreover, these differences in expectations have an impact on retention and tenure of faculty of color (Allen et al., 2001; Allison, 2008). Since many of these differences are unspoken and widely unrecognized, an introduction to microaggressions is offered to provide understanding of the insidious aspects of the unspoken rules African American faculty encounter.

***Microaggressions.*** Broadly, racial microaggressions exemplify non-purposeful forms of racism. Pierce (1974) explains that racial microaggressions are characterized by assumptions and beliefs that present to the receiver as slights and verbal offenses (Solorzano et al., 2000). The inability of the perpetrator of a microaggression to see the initial act as racism is the principle problem. Additionally, the inability to reflect and assess the offensive acts once the perpetrator is made aware of them represents a chasm between who one believes he or she is and how others experience him or her (Argyris & Schon, 1974). The inability to identify the misalignment between self-perception and

others' perceptions is often seen in morally good Whites who fail to recognize when they commit a microaggression (Applebaum, 2010).

*Forms of microaggressions.* Sue et al. (2007) categorize microaggressions as micro-assaults, micro-insults, and micro-invalidations. Micro-assaults are the most overt and deliberate form of microaggression, while micro-invalidations are seemingly innocuous statements that speak to existing misconceptions and stereotypes. Micro-assaults are distinguishable often by the context in which they are used. Examples include expressing a negative viewpoint about a racial group in a derogatory or demeaning manner or referring to someone within a specific group using a slur or derogatory term. The use of such derogatory language is often done within the protection of a safe space, such as a small group or with a person who the perpetrator thinks holds the same belief or viewpoint. Seldom does the offender use the language or express the viewpoint in a large or group setting. People who use micro-assaults are aware of the offensive nature of their position or remarks and use situational context to determine the appropriateness of expressing their viewpoints (Sue et al., 2007).

Micro-insults, however, are both verbal and nonverbal messages that convey a perpetrator's insensitivity or awareness of the impact of his or her words or actions. Furthermore, micro-insults typically reveal the perpetrator's belief in the targeted group's inferiority. In contrast to micro-assaults, a person who perpetrates a micro-insult is typically unaware of the offensive nature of his or her actions or remarks, which serves to reinforce the marginalized group's perceived inferiority (Sue et al., 2007). Lastly, micro-invalidations are characterized by words or actions that devalue a marginalized person. Micro-invalidations are insidious slights the perpetrator does not identify. Common

examples of micro-invalidations occur when a person of color is told that he or she is being sensitive when experiencing an offensive event or when someone states that he or she is colorblind. Micro-invalidations fail to acknowledge or examine the experiences of people of color (Sue et al., 2007). The long-term result of insidious racism in the form of micro-assaults, micro-insults, and injuries is evidenced in increased stress, anger, feelings of inferiority, and related mental health consequences for the marginalized population (Carter, 2007; Williams, 1997). Microaggressions in the forms of micro-assaults, micro-insults, and micro-invalidations work in concert to maintain the academy's structure. The following sections explore the experiences of African American faculty and how different expectations for this population can be explained by understanding how microaggressions materialize in the experiences of African Americans in the professoriate.

### **Faculty of Color Experiences within the Academy**

Microaggressions work in the background of the academy, serving to shape African Americans' experiences in the value of their scholarship, service expectations, support, and establishing the unwritten rules of the academy. These experiences serve to preserve the existing structures and maintain Whiteness as unremarkable.

**Scholarship.** African American faculty report that they are challenged regarding their areas of scholarship, where they obtained their degrees, and where they publish (Allen et al., 2001; Earnshaw et al., 2015; Frazier, 2011; Park & Denson, 2009; Smith et al., 2004). African Americans who enter the professoriate are more likely to have scholarship in areas outside the sciences and mathematics. Their research agendas are more likely to be in Africana studies or other fields that are not held in the same regard as

more traditional areas of scholarship (Allen et al., 2001; Butner, Burley, & Marbley, 2000; Earnshaw et al., 2015; Frazier, 2011; Maher & Thompson Tetreault, 2011; Park & Denson, 2009; Smith et al., 2004). Consequently, the nature of African American faculty members' research agendas calls into question their qualifications to be part of the professoriate for White faculty (Aguirre & Martinez, 2002; Dade et al., 2015; Shillingford et al., 2013; Turner et al., 2008).

**Service obligations.** Differences in the experiences of White and non-White faculty are also evident in the differing expectations for their service to the institution. While all faculty are expected to serve the institution, such as by serving on committees and counseling students, there is an increased burden for African American faculty. White faculty members do not experience this phenomenon in service and mentoring as frequently as do Black faculty (Allen et al., 2001; Park & Denson, 2009). Such demands detract from research and scholarship, two elements essential for tenure and promotion (Allen et al., 2001; Park & Denson, 2009; Turner et al., 2008). The service obligation for Black faculty juxtaposed with the need to have a faculty research agenda is an example of one unspoken rule that may impede tenure for faculty of color (Smith & Witt, 1993; Turner et al., 2008). Such mixed messages (Argyris, 1990) can impede minority faculty members' ability to prioritize meeting tenure criteria effectively. There is a schism between the formal institutional requirements for tenure and the unwritten expectations institutions have for faculty of color. This incongruence reveals an obstacle in which a person of color may not have the insight into the organizational culture that is required for success (Brown, 2004; Scheurich, 1993).

## **Barriers to Diversity: Perceptions of White Faculty**

While institutions often affirm their commitments to diversity, there are those within the academy who believe that attempts to diversify will negatively impact the institution. For example, some majority faculty within the professoriate have expressed concerns that efforts to increase student and faculty diversity compromises academic standards (Park & Denson, 2009; Smith et al., 2004). In this sense, faculty as a body may subscribe to the benefits of diversity but believe that academic standards must be lowered to recruit and retain students and faculty of color. Herein, the belief in the implicit inferiority of people of color is revealed. On one hand, faculty value the non-academic benefits of diversity, but on the other, they do not believe there are adequately prepared people of color available for consideration for faculty appointments (Allison, 2008; Banks, 1984; Gordon, 2007).

**Perceptions of majority faculty regarding minority faculty.** Perceptions of colleagues and peers is a factor that professionals, regardless of race, cannot control. However, for faculty of color, these perceptions are in many instances clouded by stereotypes and biases, as well as a lack of awareness of Latinos and African Americans and their cultures. Some majority faculty question the appropriateness of minorities in the professoriate and may view the presence of minority faculty on campus as a burden to the institution (Aguirre et al., 1993; Allen et al., 2001). These majority faculty report that minority faculty are present in the academy due to affirmative action policies or to satisfy an institutional diversity initiative (Constellenos & Jones, 2003). In the same way, majority faculty report believing that minority faculty are suitable for staff positions, which may explain the high proportion of African Americans with terminal degrees

seeking administrative and staff positions (Washington & Harvey, 1989; Whitfield-Harris & Lockhart, 2016). The supposition that African Americans are appropriate for staff positions affirms the idea that majority faculty do not believe African American faculty are suitable for faculty appointments. This unspoken perception is contrary to public or overt efforts to diversify faculty in academia.

These perceptions of White faculty represent a lack of self-awareness regarding their own racism (Behar-Horenstein et al., 2012; Glimps & Ford 2010; McIntosh, 1988). That is, White faculty may believe in diversity and value an individual colleague of color, which allows them to ignore the fact that the system itself is racist (Brown, 2004). Moreover, this individual perspective empowers White faculty to be oblivious to racism when it exists (Scheurich, 1993). When the racist practices or structures are insidious, it may be harder for White faculty to identify racism within the academy. In doing so, White faculty would have to acknowledge that they benefit from the marginalization of non-Whites. These implicit biases support practices that contribute not only to the hostility and lack of inclusion experienced by African American faculty, but they also explain why diversity initiatives succeed only to the point where White faculty are comfortable.

**Intersection of race and gender.** While the lack of viable candidates of color in the academic pipeline and the experiences of minority faculty in the academy highlight diversity issues related to race, gender is also part of higher education's diversity edict. The historical structure that served to exclude people based on race also served to exclude based on gender (Brown, 2004). Yet, in 2013, women comprised nearly 45% of the professoriate (IES, 2015). Black women accounted for only 6.8% of that group. For



women in the academy, experiences predicated on race and ethnicity are exacerbated by gender inequities that have been ubiquitous throughout the history of higher education (Brown, 2004; Harley, 2008; Schuh et al., 2011). Women in the professoriate report experiencing microaggressions and other forms of marginalization (Pittman, 2012). While White women have been allowed into the faculty ranks (Hall, 2006), they also report experiencing isolation, limited upward mobility, unwritten rules, and different expectations and assessment criteria (Behar-Horenstein et al., 2012).

It is important to recognize that the plight of women of color in the academy is not always included in the female faculty agenda, underscoring the imperceptibly nuanced experience of being a woman of color in the academy (Allison, 2008). The increased presence of women in the academy notwithstanding, women of color are distinguishably different from White women in that they contend with barriers that impair both people of color and women. As a group, women of color continue to be plagued by a lack of opportunities (Aguirre et al., 1993), salary inequities, adversity, and the necessity to correct the “angry Black woman” stereotype (Allison, 2008). Despite the advances of some racial groups in higher education, such as Asians and White women, the academy continues to provide unequal access and inclusion for African Americans who seek to enter the professoriate. The academy’s modern-day climate provides context to examine the perpetuation of White normalcy within the academy.

### **Conceptual Framework**

The professoriate was built on a system designed to value Whiteness and not consider people of color or women. Over time, the value of Whiteness has been ingrained into the academy’s structure to the degree that the standard of Whiteness is normal.

Furthermore, diversity and inclusion initiatives within the professoriate fail to consider the role of Whiteness in their approach. Traditional diversity efforts rely on the perceptions and participation of faculty of color (Gordon, 2007; Owen, 2009; Park & Denson, 2009; Pope-Davis & Ottavi, 1992). Therefore, in understanding the barriers to achieving diversity and inclusion, the academy must be examined by not only looking at the race of the marginalized, but also by examining the unremarkable manner in which Whiteness shapes the academy. Likewise, the inability of some Whites to recognize how Whiteness shapes the academy in ways that advance their position and insidiously subjugates African Americans is needed to identify and remediate oppressive structures (Applebaum, 2010; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Owen, 2009; Park & Denson, 2009; Stassen, 1995). To that end, CRT will be applied within an understanding of White identity. Evaluating the role of White faculty in creating inclusive spaces for all is paramount in understanding the formation and perpetuation of structures within the academy. Therefore, CRT and structuration theory serve as the conceptual framework for this study. Each theory is explained briefly in the next section.

## Factors that inform structures in the academy

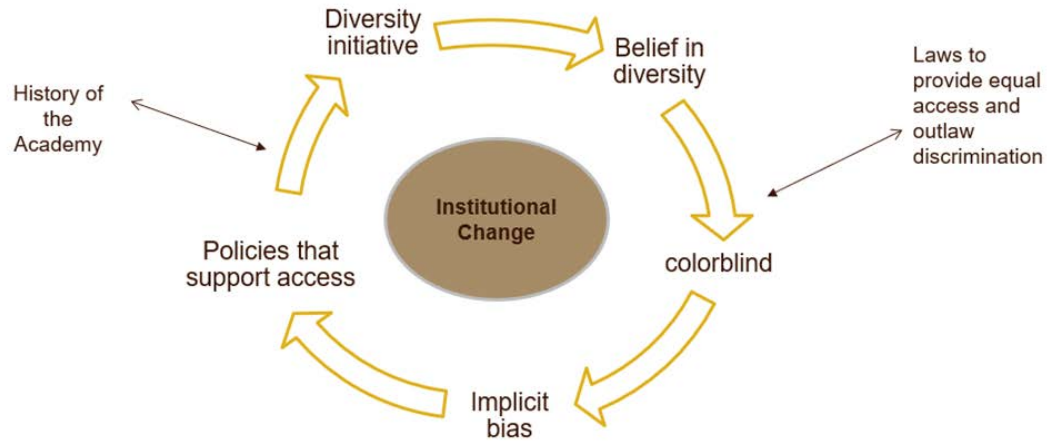


Figure 1. Factors that inform change in the academy.

**Critical race theory.** CRT has its genesis in legal studies and was developed during the 1970s post-Civil Rights era, specifically to understand the centrality of race in the matter of legal cases. Moreover, CRT was born from the need to explain the disparate treatment of people of color in the years after the Civil Rights movement waned (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). In the years since its inception, the use of CRT has been introduced into other fields of study as a tool to understand the marginalization of people of color. CRT has been used in the study of education to understand the experiences of both students and faculty (Gusa, 2010; Hall, 2006; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Before a discussion of the use of CRT in higher education can ensue, however, the theory's basic tenets will be discussed.

**Tenets of critical race theory.** Delgado and Stefancic (2012) explore the following six tenets of CRT: racism is normal, interest convergence, social construction

of race, differential racialization, intersectionality of the elements of identity, and the voice of color. Each tenet will be discussed in the next sections.

*Racism as normal.* Racism is pervasive in the United States of America. The nation's foundation was based on racism toward and the subjugation and marginalization of people of color. Yet, no group suffered the type of oppression that Africans in America experienced. Slavery and Jim Crow laws have given way to insidious forms of racism that have resulted in continued disparities between African Americans and Whites (Williams, 1999; Williams, Lavizzo-Mourey, & Warren, 1994; Williams, Yu, Jackson, & Anderson, 1997). The normalcy of racist practices and beliefs causes the continued marginalization of African Americans, so much so that the structures and application of laws, as well as the lack of access to equity in education and socioeconomics, are invisible to Whites in this country. In other words, Whites' position America and the benefits they reap from society as a group is normal and acceptable. In this sense, Whiteness is not a factor because there is a widespread belief in a colorblind society that is fair and in which all groups have equal access to succeed (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Thus, Blackness is simplified to the degree that it should not matter, in the same way that Whiteness is insignificant. This premise reinforces the idea that Whites do not view themselves as racial beings and that society has moved beyond past racist practices (Applebaum, 2010; Guess, 2006; Kendall, 2002). Furthermore, the rationalization that Whiteness is the societal norm by which everything is measured means that only instances of overtly hostile racism are visible and addressed. However, the difference between Black and White culture is evident in the ways the two groups identify and respond to events that have racial overtones.

*Interest convergence.* Historically, the most significant inroads into equity in America have occurred when the benefits to Whites have converged with African Americans' interests. For example, the *Brown vs. Board* case was foregrounded when White Americans' interests were at stake because they were worried segregated schools would impact the country's global position (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). In contrast, other civil rights issues not only purposefully excluded African Americans but leveraged other marginalized groups to further oppress Blacks in America. The women's suffrage movement purposefully excluded the condition of Black women. Moreover, White women became a tool to reinforce the superiority of Whiteness and divide White and Black women based on race, further subjugating Black women (Hall, 2006). In this sense, White women's success became increasingly valuable to White men when they were confronted with threats to usurp Whites' position in society. Similarly, tolerance toward other groups has changed as Whites cleave to their place of privilege and power in society (Hall, 2006). The benefit of White women's increased value is evidenced by their increased presence in the academy.

*Differential racialization.* The concept of race in America is fluid; racial constructs are adjusted to meet society's needs. Differential racialization allows society to change the value of one group over another, which allows for a group to be highly valued at one point in time and devalued at another (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). The stereotype that people from Mexico are lazy has given way to a perception of hardworking day laborers and migrant workers in the construction and agriculture industries. The need for low-wage unskilled laborers in these industries has led White Americans to place value on a group that had not been granted to it at previous points in time. In higher education,

universities highlight inroads to faculty diversity. However, not all groups have benefited equally from diversity work in the academy. For example, Asians have made the greatest inroads into the academy, to the exclusion of other groups (NCES, 2015), though at one point in American history, this group was only valued for its labor, similar to how Hispanic people are viewed today (Takaki, 2008). Today, there is a general social perception that Asians are good students, focused, and smart. This altered perception of Asians illustrates how the value of racial constructs morphs based on societal needs (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Williams et al., 1997).

*Social construction of race.* The concept of race in America is predicated on visible characteristics that have been used to oppress one group while elevating another (Guess, 2006). The inferiority of people of color is not based on genetics or biology, but on the value society places on one characteristic over another (Applebaum, 2010; Guess, 2006). Similarly, differential racialization allows the majority group to elevate gender over race; the value placed on one group or another can be adjusted to subjugate or improve status at different points in time. The fluidity that allows groups to have different values over time is a function of social construction rather than biological characteristics. People of color in general, and African Americans specifically, experience racial discrimination based on physical appearance, which has a perceived lower value than Whites' appearance. The connection between race, SES, and ethnicity to the inequities experienced by people of color in general, and African Americans specifically, is based inextricably on external factors rather than any inherent deficiency. Consequently, the concept of race extends beyond physical characteristics to include dimensions of race that can be both observed and not observed (Williams et al., 1994).

*Intersectionality and anti-essentialism.* People are multifaceted in that they shape their identities using different components of their composition. A person may identify as Black, female, and Jewish. In addition, she may further contextualize her identity based on her SES and/or marital status. As a result, individuals may have competing or overlapping interests based on the intersectionality of the components of their identity (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). These different components of identity may be given varying significance depending on the social context. For example, the elevation of White women over Black women and/or Black men reveals how White society changes or restructures how different groups are perceived when they benefit the majority powerbase. The value ascribed to race is considered more significant than gender. That is, White women have more in common with White men than they do with Black women. By valuing Whiteness over gender, Whites can leverage White women to advance or maintain structures that preserve White agency (i.e., the academy stays White instead of male). Advancing one subset of a group to the exclusion of another is an exemplar of the conflict people experience related to the multiple components of their identity. In this study, this aspect of CRT may serve to help readers understand how White women have been able to garner inroads into the professoriate, while African Americans have not (Hall, 2006).

*The unique voice of color.* People of color are uniquely positioned in America to tell their stories. Because of oppression, people of color can provide a narrative that would otherwise be silent and invisible to the majority culture. This research study sought to understand White faculty members' perceptions; therefore, it explores only White faculty members' perceptions. In this sense, Whiteness is racialized to give voice to

norms and viewpoints that are not questioned relative to racialized Whiteness. The use of CRT was appropriate for this study because of the pervasive nature of African Americans' marginalization in the academy. Furthermore, the use of CRT to view the structures that impede diversity in the academy offers a prism to view the ordinariness of racism in the academy.

**Structuration theory.** In addition to CRT, structuration theory framed this study. As Giddens (1984) describes it, structuration theory provides a framework to understand how societal structures are reproduced. Moreover, it examines the conditions that foster how social systems are maintained and change because of the interconnectedness of power, existing structures, and cultural norms. All societies reflect power and that power is leveraged to create cultural norms. These norms become institutionalized and are designed to be self-replicating.

Structuration theory can be used to examine race, power, and marginalization in American society. People engage in practices that help maintain social structures and hinder change to those structures (Brown, 2004). In turn, these structures provide a framework for people to establish boundaries for what is acceptable. In other words, people will act in a manner that aligns with the standard accepted by society. Typically, people will not act in a manner that challenges social norms, which are constructed by those with power within society. By adhering to these parameters, a society's structure is maintained and unchallenged (Giddens, 1984). In America, Whiteness has value. The significance of Whiteness has served to build a society that has preserved a system of privilege and reward for Whites at the expense of non-Whites. Over time, the value placed on Whiteness, coupled with racism, has shaped laws, attitudes, and beliefs that



subjugate people of color while liberating Whites. While many of these laws have been repealed, the subtle unrecognizable beliefs correlating to White supremacy allow insidious forms of racism to oppress people of color and preserve the standard of Whiteness in society. In this sense, Whiteness provides power or agency to operate in tandem with existing structures, thereby reinforcing them (Giddens, 1984).

***Equal access and lack of progress.*** In society, White people establish acceptable social rules; as a result, they benefit disproportionately from these rules. The power that Whiteness offers to Whites is typically and purposefully invisible to them (McIntosh, 1988). That is, Whites typically do not see the marginalization that continues to adversely impact people of color and women in society. This lack of awareness of others' plight in society contributes to the practices that reinforce racism (Guess, 2006). As a society, we do not ask why African Americans were disproportionately impacted by the financial crisis of 2008 (Kochhar, Fry, & Taylor, 2011). Rhetorically, those in power surmise that African Americans are bad risks; they do not question why Black Americans are at the bottom of every socioeconomic indicator.

Because laws provide equal access, many people believe racism no longer exists. Therefore, existing structures and practices, which are based on normative Whiteness, White society does not have to be acknowledged or challenged. Consequently, the lack of African Americans' advancement can be rationalized based on criteria other than race, such as education or individual organizational fit. According to Guess (2006), Whites are complicit in perpetuating racism, which is unremarkable and otherwise common, because they can look at the laws that seemingly provide access and are taught that these laws successfully assure equality and equity. Thus, they do not have to acknowledge or

address these laws' ineffectiveness, because in doing so, issues of inequity and marginalization may threaten Whites' power and position within the academy (Applebaum, 2010; Gusa, 2010).

In the same way, the marginalization non-Whites in America experience suggests that structures need to change. To force change, society must overcome the historical racism that has been legalized and practiced without question (Guess, 2006). To dismantle practices that influence the societal power base and oppressive structures, it is important to recognize how racism and White privilege influence social structures. Guess (2006) explains that "racism and White privilege are properties of the structure of race relations" (p. 660). Since racism and White privilege strongly influence diversity within the academy, this study employed structuration theory as part of its conceptual framework. Structuration theory allows for the examination of institutional practices that result from Whites' power. Furthermore, using structuration theory, which exposes the conditions that support the preservation or change of existing structures, is appropriate to examine how social routines are preserved and protected (Giddens, 1984).

To dismantle policies and practices that reflect oppressive structures in the academy, this study sought to examine how White faculty view the academy related to race, experience, and how they (White faculty) experience the academy. That is, do White faculty recognize or consider how the academy's structure informs diversity and inclusion initiatives? In addition, White faculty members' perceptions of African American faculty members' experiences must be considered to understand how they (White faculty) regard the academy's structures.

## Conclusion

Higher education in America was built during an era when African Americans did not exist. That is, the history of enslaved Africans categorized Blacks as property. The practices of Jim Crow, which included segregation and the denial of rights and privileges, afforded Whites the opportunity to shape laws, policies, and practices. These laws, which have morphed in recent decades, continue to reflect the values of American society. Accordingly, artifacts of American society, such as education and business, reflect the value of Whiteness and the insignificance of Blackness. The outwardly racist and oppressive laws of the Jim Crow era have given way to laws that purportedly grant equality to all. However, the veil of equality allows Americans to deny the remnants of its racist and oppressive foundation.

Institutions of higher education have identified campus diversity as a critical goal (Minor, 2014), but the academy has not been able to make significant inroads into faculty diversity (Brown, 2004; Finklestein et al., 2016; Turner et al., 2008). While laws and policies provide access to the academy, insidious forms of racism in the form of unspoken rules, perceived inferiority of African American faculty, and obstacles to obtaining promotion and tenure characterize the environment African American faculty encounter in the academy (Aguirre et al., 1993; Dade et al., 2015; Frazier, 2011; Smith & Witt, 1993; Turner et al., 2008).

Hidden in African Americans' experiences in the professoriate is Whiteness. The academy's policies are bound by the undistinguishable way Whiteness influences society. Ideas, beliefs, and cultural norms are all informed by Whiteness as the standard by which society is formed (Marable, 1995). The power of Whiteness is so pervasive that it is

undetectable to well-meaning White people who are committed to fairness and equity for all (Applebaum, 2010; Guess, 2006). Because fairness and equity are also measured in the context of the neutrality of Whiteness, well-meaning Whites are typically blind to their complicity in perpetuating oppressive structures. Consequently, several factors contribute to the preservation of the structures that subjugate African American faculty.

First, faculty have power within the academy. That is, they have autonomy to navigate the academy in a manner that does not challenge or disrupt the existing structures. Furthermore, faculty homogeneity allows Whiteness to remain unrecognized, thereby supporting the structures that are hostile to African American faculty. Here, the structures of the academy work in tandem with faculty members' influence to maintain faculty power within the academy (Giddens, 1984). Second, the value placed on scholarship and education is calibrated by the traditional academic standard, which has historically served to exclude non-Whites. Education and scholarship are the two areas in which Black faculty are confronted most often regarding their qualifications (Allen et al., 2001; Turner et al., 2008). Lastly, both preceding factors are normalized by the ubiquitous nature of unspoken White normalcy that reinforces seemingly fair and equitable structures.

Since existing structures are designed to reflect the values and norms of those with social power and agency (Giddens, 1984), this study looked specifically at existing structures as a barrier to achieving diversity and inclusion at a PWI. In Chapter 3, the study's methodology and research design and how they address the research questions are discussed.

## Chapter 3

### Methodology

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore how White faculty view campus diversity and their role in creating diverse and inclusive campuses for faculty of color. Specifically, the following research questions were examined:

- **RQ 1:** How do White faculty characterize the campus climate regarding diversity for faculty of color?
  - **RQ1a:** How do White faculty characterize the campus climate for African American faculty specifically?
- **RQ 2:** How do White faculty view their role in creating inclusive diverse campus environments?
- **RQ 3:** How do White faculty consider their own race to inform their teaching, scholarship, and service to the institution?

Qualitative research allows us to understand better a problem or condition. Through purposeful inquiry and analysis, qualitative research explores the interrelated nature of factors that help explain a phenomenon (Creswell, 2014). As identified in Chapter 2, many factors influence the success or failure of diversity work within the academy. Issues of access, unspoken expectations, a lack of clearly defined benchmarks for diversity and inclusion, and siloed efforts to diversify the academy have been examined in the literature (Brayboy, 2003; Brown, 2004; Turner et al., 2008). The regularity of Whiteness is common to all these factors. That is, diversity work within the academy fails to recognize the historic role of Whiteness as manifested through the purposeful exclusion of people of color (Applebaum, 2010; Brown, 2004). More important, however, is some Whites'

lack of awareness and recognition that the evolution from exclusionary practices to modern-day seemingly race-neutral or colorblind policies is girded in White normalcy (Applebaum, 2007, 2010; Brown, 2004; Gordon, 2007; Maher & Thompson Tetreault, 2011; Pope-Davis & Ottavi, 1992). Therefore, this study focused on how White faculty considered Whiteness when creating diverse and inclusive campuses for faculty of color. A case-study design was employed to answer the research questions. Since this study sought to understand the structures that impede diversity because of the normality of Whiteness, this study may be considered a critical case study (Rossman & Ralls, 2012).

The characteristics of case-study research support its use for studying how ordinary Whiteness functions as an unspoken barrier to diversity. First, the case-study research design is appropriate to answer “how” or “why” research questions (Yin, 1984). Second, case-study designs have been used to examine programs and policies within education before (Merriam, 1998). Third, case-study research calls for the examination of multiple data sources to explore a circumstance or condition that is occurring (Creswell, 2014). Therefore, a case-study research design was appropriate for this study because the normalcy and general acceptance of Whiteness may hide the effects of Whiteness on institutional policy and practices. Moreover, the deliberate colorblind approaches to addressing diversity in the academy exacerbate the impact of White privilege when it is unrecognized or unchallenged. The supposition of Whiteness as standard is discussed throughout the literature, specifically in that some White faculty may never have considered the benefits of Whiteness or themselves as racialized beings (Applebaum, 2003, 2010; Pope-Davis & Ottavi, 1992). Consequently, these faculty may not consider how colorblind approaches, while well-intended, do not address Whiteness as a barrier to

inclusion. Consequently, it is this researcher's intent to highlight a situation occurring at one institution and diversity-related factors and practices at this institution (Rossman & Ralls, 2012). Some of these factors, such as a commitment to diversity, may be thwarted by unrecognized beliefs and awareness about race that may operate in the background of institutional efforts to diversify (Applebaum, 2007; Brown, 2004; Maher & Thompson Tetreault, 2011; Pope-Davis & Ottavi, 1992).

Before discussing the process used in this study, it is important to provide an overview of the scholarship surrounding case-study research. Three prominent scholars – Yin, Stake, and Merriam – offer differing viewpoints of case-study research in education (Yazan, 2015). Yin (1984) approaches case-study research by focusing on the process of conducting the study; Yin's ideology most closely identifies with quantitative methodology (Yazan, 2015). He takes an empirical approach to qualitative research, and central to this approach is that the design process of a study is its foundation. The design process is a rigid, absolute process comprised of five components: study questions, propositions, defined unit of analysis, logic linking data to the proposition, and criteria for interpreting the study findings (Yin, 1984). Moreover, Yin identifies four criteria by which a study design should be measured, including construct validity, internal validity, external validity, and reliability, which offer a means to test the quality of the research design (Yin, 1984). The highly structured nature of Yin's approach allows the findings to be validated by multiple modes of ensuring a quality design. Interestingly, Yin's focus on process and empirical research design restricts the researcher from examining the interdependent nature of case factors (Yazan, 2015). However, his cause-and-effect

approach to research may preclude the identification of occurrences that result from multiple factors.

In contrast, Stake (1998) views case-study research as a dynamic process in which the study design is influenced by the interconnected factors comprising the case. In this sense, the case is complex, dynamic, and shaped by the totality of pieces of the case being studied (Yazan, 2015). Lastly, Merriam (1998) focuses on the case more than the research process. That is, the case is a unit that is defined and outlined by boundaries. Merriam's (1998) notion of case-study design focuses on a thing or occurrence; the occurrence happens within a set of circumstances, and these circumstances are the parameters in which the occurrences happen.

While all three scholars focus on understanding a phenomenon, Stake and Merriam focus on understanding the phenomenon rather than the cause-and-effect relationship Yin (1984) offers. Thus, this study used primarily Merriam and Stake's frameworks to understand White faculty members' perceptions on campus climate related to diversity and their perceived role in creating inclusive campuses. However, Yin's contribution regarding case-study research is also significant. Accordingly, Yin's work informed the procedural aspects of the study design.

### **Strategy of Inquiry**

One benefit of case-study research is that it allows for the holistic examination of a case. That is, by employing different methods, the researcher can explore what is occurring from different perspectives. Diversity and inclusion encompass a broad topic that is undertaken throughout the academy. Various campus stakeholders within the academy carry out committee work, policy, training, and informal practices to address



diversity and inclusion. However, these efforts are sometimes siloed, not measured, or not implemented in a manner that fosters substantive change (Brown, 2004; Maher & Thompson Tetreault, 2011; Pope-Davis & Ottavi, 1992). The various undertakings related to diversity and inclusion at one institution serve as sources of data that may help to answer this study's research questions.

Consequently, the researcher reviewed institutional documents, such as the university's diversity study and a more recent campus environment study, in addition to current university diversity initiatives. While she examined both student affairs and academic affairs diversity initiatives, she focused on diversity work done through the Division of Academic Affairs, as this study focused on White faculty perceptions of faculty diversity related to African Americans specifically.

### **Data Collection**

Case-study inquiry allows a researcher to review different sources of data to describe what is occurring within a specific context (Brayboy, 2003; Merriam, 1998; Yin, 1984). Through a review of artifacts and interviews, the researcher used multiple voices to examine the case. The researcher reviewed documents and artifacts related to diversity and inclusion at the research site, in addition to reports from the university's diversity audit and campus environment survey, to gain insight into institutional efforts to assess the state of diversity and inclusion. A list of appropriate documents for review was compiled from official webpages and institutional policies that have been put in place to address diversity and inclusion. A field journal was used during the data-collection process, organization, and analysis of findings.

Traditional data-collection modes for qualitative research include face-to-face and/or telephone interviews and focus groups (Creswell, 2014). These modes possess limitations when delicate or complex topics are being examined, however (Brayda & Boyce, 2014). When exploring delicate topics, it is important to understand both the researcher's role and the respondents' potential perceptions (Brayda & Boyce, 2014). Brayda and Boyce (2014) offer considerations for researchers who are exploring sensitive topics, including developing standard questions and employing culturally appropriate approaches to data collection. In addition, the researcher must be aware of his or her subjects' comfort levels. For example, when cross-cultural data collection occurs, the researcher must be cognizant of cultural norms, including appropriate verbal and nonverbal modes of communication. Furthermore, the measurements for data analysis must also be considered from a cross-cultural perspective (Brayda & Boyce, 2014).

One approach to mitigating challenges in researching sensitive topics is to use an online data-collection medium. For the purposes of this study, White faculty members' perceptions were collected via an online open-ended questionnaire. The use of online interviewing has been demonstrated as an effective method for replacing traditional face-to-face interviews (Meho, 2006). Specifically, Meho (2006) discusses the use of asynchronous email interviewing as a tool to gather qualitative data. Benefits of email interviewing include cost-efficiency, increasing the participant pool across geographic regions, interviewing individuals concurrently, and minimizing data transcription. Importantly, email interviewing allows the researcher to interview people who may be reluctant to answer questions or may otherwise be unable to respond face-to-face (Meho, 2006). The use of email or online interviewing mitigates challenges associated with other

interview modalities, including nonverbal communication, issues of race-based status or class, economics, appearance, and interpersonal dynamics that may influence the interviewer or respondent (Meho, 2006).

While online interviewing has advantages, challenges and disadvantages of online interviewing include the potential of interviewing people with limited technological proficiency or limited writing ability (Meho, 2006). These two criteria were less concerning for the present study, as the target population was minimally prepared with terminal degrees in their respective fields. In addition, the ubiquitous use of technology throughout higher education makes it unlikely that individuals would have difficulty answering online questions. Participants were also offered an opportunity to be interviewed in-person upon completion of the online interview process. The participants for this study were comprised of faculty from a comprehensive university located in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States, which will be called State University for the purposes of this study.

**Questionnaire distribution.** The questionnaire was distributed electronically to all faculty at the research site, regardless of race and academic rank. Two follow-up reminder emails were sent one week apart. In addition, the online instrument remained open for one extra week to improve the likelihood of increased completed responses. Responses were reviewed and filtered for years of service and race. Given the study's nature, the online interview provided anonymity that encouraged honest responses. Participants were offered an opportunity to participate in an in-person interview. Respondents who were interested in participating in an in-person interview were advised to email the researcher at her student email account. However, none of the White online

respondents opted to participate in an in-person interview. One respondent who identified as African American volunteered for an in-person interview. However, the responses of African Americans were not used in this study, so the respondent was not interviewed.

**Document authenticity.** Documents used for qualitative research must be authenticated to ensure the trustworthiness of the findings (Merriam, 1998). To ensure the documents used in this study were authentic, primary sources were used. These sources included official reports from standing committees and diversity audits (Merriam, 1998).

### **Data Analysis**

The primary sources of data for this study included responses from an online open-ended questionnaire, institutional reports, information from the university's website, university-wide emails, and university policies. Once compiled, data were organized by type (report, interview response, etc.) and then reviewed to identify themes. During this phase of analysis, the study's purpose and research questions were used to maintain focus (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1998). In addition to the research questions, the data from the two previous assessments, which represent two distinct periods of time, were triangulated to support the themes from the online interview.

Yin (1984) prefers this data analysis method and stresses the importance of building the analysis into the research design, thus using study proposition as a guide to inform data analysis. This analysis strategy provides a framework to include some data and exclude other data (Yin, 1984).

### **Confirming Study Findings**

The nature of case-study research allows for concurrent data collection and analysis (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1998). The researcher used the study purpose and

research questions to guide the relevance of data as they were collected (Yin, 1984). Once collected, data were categorized and vetted for their alignment with the problem statement and research questions. The researcher then analyzed the study's findings for trustworthiness and validity. Qualitative researchers may employ various strategies to ensure study findings are trustworthy and credible (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006; Merriam, 1998; Rossman & Ralls, 2012; Shenton, 2004; Stake, 1998). The following three strategies were used for this study: (1) triangulation of the documents reviewed in data collection with content from interviews and notes from the researcher's field notes journal, (2) discussion of the researcher's biases and the steps undertaken to limit the impact of these biases on the study, and (3) evaluation of the study findings for alignment with existing literature (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006; Stake, 1998).

### **Study Location**

State University, a regional comprehensive university located in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States was utilized as the study site. As of the fall 2017 term, the institution employed 331 faculty, and of this number, 236 (71%) identified as White, while 23 (7%) identified as African American. Interestingly, a definition for *African American* for faculty is not available in the data dictionary the institution uses. The school does, however, use the IPEDS definition of *Black* or *African American* for student self-identification purposes. A search of the IPEDS database defines *Black/African American* as "a person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa" (IPEDS, n.d.).

Therefore, for this study, the broader definition of African American encompassing native Africans and Afro-Caribbeans was used in this study. It should be

noted, however, African Americans' nuanced experiences are distinctly different from those of Africans or Afro-Caribbean people. These differences are evident in how people of African descent not born in America recognize and respond to racism. Moreover, there are intragroup dynamics between African Americans and others within the African diaspora that are rooted in the differences in each group's lived experiences and societal contexts (Rogers, 2001).

### **Ethical Considerations**

Research studies that examine issues of social justice or the human condition must do so in a transparent manner that is guided by right and wrong (Rossman & Ralls, 2012). Much of the literature regarding ethics addresses issues of participant consent, anonymity, and respect (Creswell, 2014; Rossman & Ralls, 2012). The researcher's role in reporting case findings is equally important (Creswell, 2014; Merriam, 1998). One pitfall of case-study research is that the researcher can assume many roles, including the position of advocate, teacher, or evaluator (Stake, 1998). The way data are analyzed and reported can be influenced by how the researcher views his or her role. Therefore, it is important that the researcher does not report findings in a manner that supports only his or her position. A clear discussion by the researcher about his or her biases and position can help reveal potential ethical concerns. The use of documents to understand what was occurring at the study site helped this researcher augment the information provided via the online open-ended questionnaire.

**Consent and confidentiality.** Prospective participants were provided with information explaining the purpose of the study, Institutional Review Board (IRB) approvals, and information about the researcher, as appropriate. Since the questionnaire

was distributed electronically, the interview invitation included language that explained to participants that their participation in the interview implied consent. Participants were informed that they could exit the interview at any time, and the only required questions were the demographic questions at the end of the interview. Prior to administering the online interview, the researcher conferred with the director of information technology at the study site, who confirmed that the electronic medium used would not collect respondents' identifying information. Individuals who expressed a desire to be interviewed in-person were directed to email the researcher at her university-provided email address.

***Institutional Review Board (IRB).*** As required by policy, the researcher received approval from the IRBs at Rowan University and the study site. One modification to increase the number of reminder emails was submitted and approved by both boards. The nature of the study and the sources of data were provided to both boards for consideration (Creswell, 2014; Rossman & Ralls, 2012).

***The role of the researcher.*** The issue of campus diversity has become salient for the researcher during her time in higher education. Initially, she was interested in the health consequences of the environment African Americans encounter at PWIs. However, in researching the experiences of marginalized groups within the academy and the advancement of other groups such as women and Asians, seemingly to the exclusion of African Americans, an interesting outcome of campus diversity work arose. Concurrently, the researcher became aware of inconsistencies in the literature between outward commitments to diversity and African Americans' lived experiences.

Scholars have previously studied researchers' insider and outsider positionality (May, 2014; Rhodes, 1994; Sin, 2007). While the literature regarding African American researchers and White subjects is limited (May, 2014), the discussion on the advantages and disadvantages of being an in-group versus an out-group researcher is well-developed (May, 2014; Rhodes, 1994). The advantages of conducting research as an in-group member include shared language, shared experiences, perceived credibility, and trust between the researcher and subjects (May, 2014; Rhodes, 1994). The likeness between the researcher and subjects allows those being interviewed to share their experiences in an environment they perceive as safe. Moreover, when discussing experiences, there is an implicit understanding between the interviewer and interviewee of common life experiences (May, 2014). This condition has been evidenced in studying both Black and White people within group research. For example, Blacks may feel more comfortable speaking with a Black researcher about interactions they perceive to be race-based, while Whites may assume that a White researcher shares their viewpoint and subsequently reveal biases or truths based on their comfort with the researcher.

In contrast, this common understanding may also serve as a barrier to the interviewer's deeper examination. Because of his or her shared experiences (and presumed shared worldview) with the study subjects, there is a lack of probative inquiry because of a tacit understanding of things members of the same group experience (May, 2014; Rhodes, 1994). Consequently, unique occurrences may not be captured because the interviewer fails to delve deeper as a result of his or her implicit understanding of an incident (May, 2014). Interestingly, the double-consciousness by which Blacks negotiate both Black and White worlds that DuBois (1903) mentions explains the competency



Blacks use to enter White society. Because of this duality, Black researchers have an aptitude to integrate into White spaces with an ease seldom experienced by Whites entering traditionally Black spaces (Rhodes, 1994).

As an African American female, the researcher is aware that all interactions with colleagues are racialized. Conversely, based on discussions with White colleagues, the researcher understands that her colleagues' interactions with her are not contextualized by race. It is noteworthy that the researcher is a light-skinned African American who has benefited from light-skinned privilege, which she proposes has allowed her greater access to Whites than if she were darker-skinned. For example, some Whites have told the researcher that she is not completely Black or that her experience is less than that of some Blacks because she is light-skinned. Such reduction of the researcher's Blackness has made her hyperaware of both her privilege and her Blackness. Through continued self-reflection on her position as an African American female and triangulation of the data, the researcher has attempted to mitigate the impact of her position on her analysis of the study data.

The basis of this study is the saliency of unexplored Whiteness on institutional structures as reflected in policy and practice. To understand the role of Whiteness, Whiteness must become a racialized concept. Therefore, the researcher found it necessary to racialize her own identity to understand the intricacies of factors influencing diversity work in the academy. From the researcher's perspective, the concept of Black racial identity is more familiar than the concept of White racial identity. She approached the research assuming this was the case for Whites within the academy, as well.

## Conclusion

Higher education in America has evolved from its beginnings in which people of color, women, and those who could not afford to attend college were excluded to an industry that makes concerted efforts to provide access to people formerly excluded. Despite these efforts, progress has not been equitable for all groups. The lack of advancement for African Americans is starkly different than the experiences of other minority groups, such as White women and Asians. Moreover, as definitions of diversity broaden to encompass LGBTQ people and people who are disabled, African Americans' experiences have become lost amidst colorblind approaches that ignore racial and gender oppression. The unspoken value of Whiteness in the academy, in conjunction with sincere attempts to employ race-neutral approaches to diversify the environment, reinforces structures and policies that impede the change these institutions envision.

Therefore, this study explored what has occurred at one institution regarding efforts to increase the representation of African Americans in the professoriate. Since the historic unspoken value of Whiteness normalizes many of the academy's policies and structures, White faculty members' perceptions within the academy provide a lens that is less-often considered. This phenomenon was examined to explore how White faculty view their role in creating diverse and inclusive environments for African American faculty. The findings of this study may help shape diversity endeavors at the research site and beyond.

## Chapter 4

### Findings

The purpose of this chapter is to present the findings of the online interviews and to summarize the findings of the 2008-2009 Campus Diversity Study and the 2017 Climate Environment Study conducted at State University. State University is a public regional comprehensive university located in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States. The institution was built on the idea that liberal-arts education should be available at public-education prices. Despite the formation of comprehensive professional programs and growth in recent decades, the institution maintains its commitment to liberal-arts education. Accordingly, the institution focuses on teaching and student-centered ideals.

As of fall 2017, 331 faculty were employed at the institution, and of this number, 236 (71%) identified as White, while 23 (7%) identified as African American. Preliminary data for 2018 revealed that the university employed 344 faculty, and 311 of them were tenured or in tenure-track positions. Of the 344 faculty, 187 (54%) were female and 157 were male. Tenured and tenure-track faculty comprised 166 (53%) females and 145 (47%) males. Regardless of academic rank, 28 (8%) faculty were African American, 13 female and 15 male (8%). When academic rank was considered for the 2018 faculty cohort, 23 (7%) African American faculty were tenured or tenure-track, 9 females and 14 males. There were 238 (69%) White faculty in the fall 2018 cohort.

State University is like other institutions in that it has made a concerted effort to address diversity. The institutional commitment to diversity and inclusion, which extends beyond required compliance with anti-discrimination laws, is evidenced through

institutional efforts to address these issues for various stakeholders, including faculty, staff, and students. Examples of institutional commitment to diversity and inclusion include dedicated webpages for the Diversity and Inclusion Office, which serves as the compliance arm of the university, and a diversity initiatives webpage. Included on the official Diversity and Inclusion Office webpage are links to pages that detail campus-wide initiatives to address diversity and inclusion.

There is also an Honoring Diversity page that features links to diversity initiatives on campus and provides opportunities for members of the campus community to get involved. The page provides links to resources, such as various reports from campus-wide programs and campus initiatives carried out through the university's Diversity Excellence Committee, which oversees much of the strategic work to address diversity on campus. In addition, university discrimination policies and procedures and a statement on diversity and inclusion are provided on the Honoring Diversity page. The statement on diversity and inclusion provides an overview of diversity and inclusion projects on campus. Definitions of the terms *diversity*, *inclusion*, and *equity* are embedded in the 2017 update of the university statement on diversity. The webpage also serves as a hub for users to explore cultures, get involved, and access program and academic centers within the institution.

Despite the allocation of resources to diversity and inclusion, the university has not made significant progress recruiting and retaining African American and other minority faculty. According to institutional data records, between 2006 and 2018, there

was a numeric increase of 10 African American faculty (from 18 in 2006 to 28 in 2018).<sup>1</sup> The total number of faculty during this same time period increased by 103 (from 233 in 2006 to 344 in 2018). While there was an increase in the number of African American faculty in most years, the percentage of African American faculty remained approximately 8% between 2006 and 2018. Similarly, the percentage of Asian and Hispanic faculty remained consistent during this span, with Hispanics comprising approximately 5% of the faculty and Asians increasing from 10% in 2006 to 11% in 2018. However, White faculty during this period decreased from 77% in 2006 to 69% in 2018. People who identify as two or more races have remained approximately 1% of faculty. Data collection of multi-race individuals began in 2010 with the adoption of additional IPEDS categories. International faculty increased by 1% from 2013 to 2018. The university did not provide international faculty data prior to 2013.

Women, however, made significant gains during the time period between 2006 and 2018. According to institutional reports, the number of women on faculty surpassed the number of men during that time span. In 2006, women comprised 48% of the faculty, but by 2018, they had increased to 53%. The increase in the number of women compared to the relatively unchanged representation of African Americans during a period of growth is consistent with national trends regarding the presence of African Americans in faculty appointments. In 1995, nationally, women comprised 40% of the professoriate.

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<sup>1</sup> There was a change in IPEDS categories for Black and African Americans during this time period. The term *African American* now encompasses anyone in the African diaspora.

By 2015, the percentage of women, regardless of academic rank, increased to 49% (NCES, 2017).

The significant change in the academic presence of women juxtaposed with the lack of progress relative to African American faculty during a period of overall faculty growth was the impetus for examining one institution as a case study to explore why African Americans have not benefited from coordinated strategic efforts to diversify the institution. The discord between espoused commitments to diversity and progress and recruiting and retaining African American faculty was explored through an online assessment of faculty and a review of existing data to answer the following research questions:

- **RQ 1:** How do White faculty characterize the campus climate regarding diversity for faculty of color?
  - **RQ1a:** How do White faculty characterize the campus climate for African American faculty specifically?
- **RQ 2:** How do White faculty view their role in creating inclusive diverse campus environments?
- **RQ 3:** How do White faculty consider their own race to inform their teaching, scholarship, and service to the institution?

In addition to the two previous university-wide assessments conducted in 2008 and 2016 respectively, this study employed an online interview of all faculty at the institution. Regardless of rank or tenured status, faculty were included in the initial distribution list and an invitation to participate in the study was sent to their university email address. Since this study sought to understand White faculty members' perceptions,

the responses were filtered to include only those faculty who identified as White. In addition, two documents that assessed campus climate relative to diversity and inclusion were examined for this study: the 2008 Campus Diversity Study and the 2016 Campus Environment Survey. In the next section I review the two existing campus assessments first and then turn to the data I collected.

### **Campus Diversity Study**

In 2008-2009, State University hired an external consultant to conduct a campus-wide study specifically to examine diversity and inclusion at the institution. The study was executed to assess campus culture for various groups. Specifically, State University wanted to measure if the campus culture for groups within the university aligned with the institutional vision of diversity and inclusion. To that end, faculty, staff, administrators, and students were included in the study. Of the 789 people who participated in the study, 391 (50%) were students, 169 (22%) were faculty, 48 (6%) were administrators, and 175 (22%) were staff. Since the number of racial and ethnic minorities was small, the racial and ethnic subgroups were combined into one group. Therefore, data analysis was based on two groups: Whites and People of Color. Study findings were also categorized into students and employees. The employee sector was not separated by faculty, staff, or administrator status. Since data from this report were over ten years old at the time of the present research study, a summary of findings of the 2008 Campus Diversity Study is offered to provide a historical lens by which to examine the institution. The themes presented were identified as a result of the assessment. Data were not reevaluated for this study.

**General environment.** Regardless of ethnicity or race, 68% of employees reported that they believed employees at State University were treated fairly. When stratified by race/ethnicity, 70% of Whites and 57% of respondents of color believes employees were treated fairly regardless of race or ethnicity, 27% were neutral, and 16% of people of color disagreed that employees were treated fairly regardless of race. The results were not disaggregated along gender lines.

**Diversity and inclusion on campus.** Perceptions of inclusion on campus was stratified along racial lines. Seventy-five percent of White employees reported feeling included on campus, in contrast to the 88% respondents of color who stated that more inclusion was needed. Interestingly, the LGBTQ group also recognized that more inclusion was needed, specifically for people of color. Participants in the study also recognized the lack of African Americans throughout the organization and identified the need to invest in employee professional development. Furthermore, respondents revealed that there was a lack of understanding regarding needs related to diversity and the contributions that people of color could make.

**Fairness and equity.** Less than half (49%) of the people of color who participated in the study felt that college policies were applied fairly to all people regardless of their racial and ethnic background, whereas 67% of White respondents believed policies were applied fairly regardless of race. Thirty-three percent of White respondents reported that people of color had advantages based on race, while 62% of people of color who responded did not agree that they had advantages based on race. Sixty percent of White respondents and 38% of people of color felt White people had advantages because of their race.



**Narratives of people of color.** The experiences of faculty of color were also captured as part of the Campus Diversity Study. Below are direct quotes captured during the 2008 study:

- [State University] has shown me that you cannot get too comfortable because people are always ready to pull you down before they help you up as a man of color. I struggle to be recognized for work done; being made to feel less than qualified to do similar jobs; that I need to do things better than other (Whites) who had the jobs.
- Common courtesy; not speaking being ignored feeling as if you are below someone. Fear of discussing race/ethnicity in class or among faculty. Many students bristle at discussions of racism and classism. They have not been as reactive in a negative way to sexism and ableism content and discussions.
- Speaking with an accent has been very challenging. If I say a word wrong people look at each other and laugh. It gets to the point that I am afraid to speak. It is more than just that they do not understand me, they make fun of me.

### **Campus Environment Survey**

In 2016, State University designed and conducted a Campus Environment Study. The initiative was spearheaded by a subcommittee of the university Diversity Excellence Committee to examine the campus climate from different perspectives. The purpose of the study was to assess the campus climate. Various stakeholders, including faculty, staff, and administrators, were surveyed about their perceptions of campus. A separate assessment for students was conducted in 2018, but since student perceptions are outside

the scope of this study, the findings from that assessment were not included in this study.

Broadly, the faculty/staff survey sought to answer the following four questions:

- Overall, how comfortable are you at [State]?
- Overall, how comfortable are you with the climate in your program/work unit/academic unit/school setting?
- Overall, how comfortable are you with the climate in your classes?
- In the past year, have you seriously considered leaving [State University]?

While the campus-wide assessment garnered input from various internal stakeholders, this study focused on data provided by faculty. The respondent pool from the 2016 assessment was comprised of 43% staff, 38% faculty, and 19% administrators. Sixty-eight percent of the faculty respondents were women and 34% were men. Twenty-two percent of respondents were from underrepresented minority groups. Participants self-identified their races and were allowed to select all races with which they identified. A total of 373 faculty and staff responded to the survey in its entirety. Of them, 43 (9%) respondents identified as African American. As with the 2008 study, due to the small number of respondents in racial and ethnic minorities, the groups were combined to comprise one larger group of underrepresented minorities. Eighty-eight (22%) of the respondents were underrepresented minorities. Thus, the perspectives of people who specifically identified as African Americans were not available in either the 2008 or the 2016 study.

**General environment.** Most employee respondents (77% of men and 69% of women) reported that they were comfortable or very comfortable at State University.

However, women and underrepresented minorities reported higher levels of

dissatisfaction than did Whites and men. Fifteen percent of women reported feeling uncomfortable and two percent of women reported feeling very uncomfortable. Similarly, the majority of underrepresented minorities (54%) reported feeling comfortable or very comfortable at State University. However, 20% of underrepresented minorities reported feeling uncomfortable, and 8% reported feeling very uncomfortable on campus. In contrast, 10% of White employees reported feeling uncomfortable and 1% reported feeling very uncomfortable. When stratified by position, 72% of senior faculty (associate or full professor) and 76% of junior faculty (assistant, instructor, or adjunct) reported being comfortable or very comfortable. Faculty data were not stratified along racial lines.

Similar findings were evident at the work/program level, with women and underrepresented minorities feeling less comfortable than men and Whites. Twenty-three percent of women at the program level reported feeling uncomfortable or very uncomfortable. Twenty-five percent of underrepresented minorities at the program level reported feeling uncomfortable or very uncomfortable.

**Comfortable in the classroom.** When asked specifically about the classroom, most female respondents (62%) reported feeling comfortable or very comfortable, 35% were neither comfortable nor uncomfortable, and 4% reported feeling uncomfortable. Twenty-two percent of men reported that they were neither comfortable nor uncomfortable in the classroom. None of the female respondents reported feeling very uncomfortable in the classroom. Similarly, 60% of underrepresented minorities reported feeling comfortable or very comfortable in their classes, while 7% reported feeling uncomfortable. Responses were stratified along racial lines regardless of role within the university: 32% of underrepresented minorities and 30% of White respondents reported

feeling neither comfortable nor uncomfortable in the classroom. None of the underrepresented minorities reported feeling very uncomfortable. According to the findings, there was no difference based on respondents' academic rank, staff, or administrative status.

**Consider leaving the institution.** Women and underrepresented minorities reported higher percentages of considering leaving the institution than did Whites and men. Over one-third of female respondents (36%) reported that they had considered leaving the institution within the past year. In contrast, 28% of men reported considering leaving the institution during the same time. Nearly half (47%) of the underrepresented minority respondents reported that they had considered leaving the institution within the previous year. However, 53% of underrepresented minorities did not consider leaving the institution.

**Exclusionary behavior.** Over half of respondents (59%) reported that they had not experienced any exclusionary or hostile behavior at State University. Of the 23% who reported exclusionary behavior, 21% believed race was often or very often the reason for the behavior, and 13% believed gender was often or very often the reason for the behavior. Job class was another factor considered in the assessment. While not direct recipients of exclusionary behavior, 36% of respondents reported they had observed exclusionary behavior (intimidation, being ignored, or otherwise being excluded) toward an individual or group.

***Exclusionary behaviors based on race and gender.*** Respondents who believed they had been excluded based on race characterized their experiences as negotiating an environment with unwritten rules and serving as the voice for their race. Staff ( $n = 79$ )

were identified as the largest group to experience exclusionary behavior. Faculty ( $n = 65$ ) were the second largest group to be viewed as recipients of exclusionary behavior. Percentages of respondents are not available, as participants were allowed to select more than one behavior that they deemed exclusionary. Underrepresented minorities also believed they had to work harder to receive the same level of recognition as others. Women reported that they worked harder than their male counterparts and that there were unwritten rules as to how to work with colleagues and within the institution. Faculty were asked to rate their perception of unwritten rules in colleague interactions on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = strongly agree, 2 = agree, 3 = disagree, 4 = strongly disagree, 5 = not applicable). Minority respondents ( $M = 2.16$ ) were more likely than White respondents ( $M = 2.59$ ) to agree that there were unwritten rules regarding interactions among colleagues within their work units.

***Unfair practices that impact diversity.*** Sixty-three (43%) of those who answered the question regarding bias in hiring reported that they had observed practices they perceived as unfair or unjust. Forty percent ( $n = 59$ ) of those who answered the question reported that they had not observed unfair behavior, and 18% did not know. According to the final report, the most-often cited reasons for unfair practices were (in order) race ( $n = 28$ ), ethnicity ( $n = 18$ ), personal relationship ( $n = 18$ ), and age ( $n = 15$ ). Unfair practices relative to promotion and reappointment were more often believed to be based on race, ethnicity, and age.

**Faculty and staff narratives.** Qualitative data were collected as part of the assessment. Faculty members' statements provided examples of and context for the quantitative data. The following excerpts were taken from faculty responses.

*Work environment and racism, discrimination, and favoritism.* One respondent stated:

It seems that the campus preaches diversity off the mountain tops and does not deliver. Faculty of color are brought in and disillusioned and the faculty within the schools make it a living hell for them to get granted tenure. They are never good enough. Little micro-aggressions are prevalent throughout and students suffer as a result. This needs to be fixed if [State] is going into [Bay City]. False promises are just that, false promises.

Another wrote about the resistance to change within the institution:

Expectations of the amount of time faculty will give to administration and service is very high with few benefits. New ideas and opportunities are not welcomed or supported. There seems to be no real funding for programming. Women faculty are not supported or respected in certain programs.

When faculty were asked about experiences that were hostile or exclusionary, one responded,

Faculty members challenging my credentials and teaching because white students didn't get the grade that they (the students) felt that they deserved. When I started on the job people would walk by and not speak – they were exclusionary. Would meet in groups and exclude me. When I would ask questions about work, individuals would respond, but were purposefully vague – sending me to others in the university – only to find out that the information was in the person that I originally asked.

## Online Interviews

In fall 2018, an online interview comprised of seven open-ended questions was sent via email to 311 tenured and tenure-track faculty. Two reminder emails were sent at one-week intervals to those who had not attempted to complete the interview. Seventy-one faculty started the interview, for a 22.6% beginning response rate, and 39 completed the interview, for a 55% completion rate. Thus, the total response rate was 13%. Completed interviews were filtered to include only responses from faculty who identified as White. Twenty-eight (72%) of respondents who completed the entire interview identified as White, and of that number, 22 (79%) were female. The options offered for gender and race were consistent with IPEDS categories and did not include mixed-race or non-binary gender identities. However, the respondents were asked an open-ended question to describe their racial backgrounds. One White respondent identified as Hispanic.

Demographic information was solicited at the end of the questionnaire to deracialize participant responses (Teclaw, Price, & Osatuke, 2012). Participants were asked to select their race based on IPEDS classifications. Participants could select more than one race, though only people who identified as White were used in this study. Therefore, the pool of respondents considered for analysis was comprised of 28 White faculty members, 22 females and 6 males. While respondents were offered the opportunity to participate in an in-person interview, only one African American volunteered to be interviewed and no White respondents volunteered. Consequently, no in-person interviews were conducted as part of this study.

## **Coding the Data**

Once data were collected, the researcher conducted a preliminary read-through of the responses. During this reading, no codes were assigned. However, reflective statements were recorded in a journal (Saldana, 2009). During a second reading, data were evaluated for common themes. Keywords or ideas were further stratified into broad themes related to specific questions. For example, the significance of gender emerged as a theme and was coded as “Gender.” The intersectionality of Whiteness/race and gender emerged as subthemes (coded as “W” or “G”). Respondents who addressed issues of gender were coded as positive. The following final list of themes emerged: awareness, diversity in teaching, gender, and structures. Subthemes that emerged are provided in each corresponding thematic discussion.

**Awareness.** Faculty awareness of diversity on campus emerged as a theme. Specifically, awareness of diversity work, the role of gender, and White normalcy emerged as subthemes. Respondents revealed varying degrees of awareness of diversity work itself. Some respondents were able to recite programs, initiatives, or institutional resources that addressed diversity. The specificity of awareness regarding specific programs was mixed.

**Degrees of awareness.** Faculty demonstrated different degrees of awareness of diversity-related programs on campus. None of the respondents articulated the university’s diversity vision or the impact programs had on changing the institutional culture. Respondents mentioned the following diversity initiatives: student clubs and affinity groups, the Campus Respect Everywhere campaign, diversity search program, gender equity studies, disability working group, university diversity committee, and the



Best Practices Work Group for the Recruitment and Retention of Faculty of Color.

Awareness of diversity seemed to occur on a continuum of lower awareness to higher awareness.

*Lower awareness of diversity work.* One response from a White female faculty member with 5-10 years of service demonstrated a lack of specific knowledge of diversity work on campus: “I know that there are many, but I can’t name them.” Another mid-career White female faculty member offered, “I know that there are clubs for African Americans and LGBT, but I don’t know their names.” A White male who had been with the institution for more than 15 years stated, “There are so many it is difficult to keep track of them all.” Lastly, one female faculty member who had been at the university for more than 20 years demonstrated a broad and general level of knowledge that diversity work was occurring: “There are probably specific committees and projects that I don't know about.” A female faculty member with 5-10 years of service stated,

I know there are committees and I know of the [Diversity and Inclusion Office] is very active on campus especially with hiring but also other ethical issues involving diversity. I also know that there is a very active student group that is involved with culture and diversity.

A junior faculty member described her familiarity with campus-wide initiatives in a general sense:

There are committees for diversity issues in hiring, retention and climate for faculty, staff and students. There are also student clubs/organizations that focus on support for students of underrepresented minorities and LGBTQ

students/staff/faculty. These organizations sponsor events throughout the year, such as a diversity dinner and speakers.

Lastly, a female faculty member who had been at State University for more than 15 years reflected on her awareness of diversity work at the institution: “I have seen several onetime events announced via email. There are so many events announced through email that it is hard to know exactly how many address diversity.”

*Higher awareness of diversity programs.* In contrast, some faculty could recite specific programs, as with one faculty member with over ten years of service to the institution, who identified programs designed specifically to increase campus diversity: “Multicultural month, HR training for faculty, [Diversity Search] program, nondiscrimination training, [Academic Division Diversity Grant].” Another stated, “[Diversity Search members]: oversee search process to support enhancing diversity among faculty, staff Multi-cultural events: enhance awareness and sensitivity to issues of diversity MLK day of service: encourage community engagement and diversity, [Day of Unity] [sic].” Lastly, a mid-career female faculty member with more than 15 years of service noted,

[Diversity Search] program, Diversity committee (not certain of title), Diversity mini grants (I think continue), [campus environment surveys], groups to support African American young men, Latinx students, African American faculty and staff, LGBTQ students, Women’s Center, committee to consider needs of community members with disability-related needs (accommodations), student fraternities and sororities and other clubs focused on various racial, ethnic, and religious groups.

***Effectiveness of existing initiatives.*** While some faculty demonstrated that they were aware of diversity work at the institution, they were not sure of the effectiveness of existing programs. A senior faculty member challenged the University's efforts to address diversity and inclusion: "The University's efforts that are intended to enhance diversity and cultural sensitivity are shallow and ineffective." Another faculty member also questioned the impact of existing programs that address diversity at the institution:

This semester, I would say that the [Campus Respect Everywhere] campaign is the main activity that is happening here on campus that discusses diversity, although I cannot say confidently that this campaign is doing all that much to actually address systematic racism or diversity issues here at [State]. I know that we have a [Diversity and Inclusion office], but to be honest I have no idea what that office actually does or what its activities are. Beyond these two examples, I am not sure.

***Levels of involvement.*** Nearly one-third (32%) of the respondents reported that they were not directly or deliberately involved in diversity-related activities. Faculty responses revealed a continuum regarding awareness and involvement in diversity work on campus. For some faculty, campus diversity was a low-priority endeavor in which they do not participate. When characterizing their involvement in campus diversity, 6 of the 28 respondents (21%) were brief and offered responses including "None," "I do not at the current time," "N/A," "None," and "None, unfortunately." One faculty member expressed an interest in diversity but has not actively engaged in any related activities:

I am interested in learning more about the challenges my peers and students face, so I do read the occasional article or report which comes across in a news feed.

However, I have not actively sought out information on this topic.

A male faculty member with fewer than five years with the institution explained his level of involvement:

None. I serve on many committees here at [State], but rarely (if ever) do they discuss diversity issues here on campus. The closest I ever came to was hearing about issues [State] has at supporting and retaining diverse faculty when I was going through [Faculty Professional Development]. But we didn't then actually go into any discussion about HOW to fix these problems, just that these problems exist.

A female member of the faculty with fewer than five years at State University offered, "I do not currently participate in any committees that address diversity as a core mission of the committee, although it is a regular topic of conversation within our department in terms of recruitment of students."

Another stated, "I don't think much of my race in terms of my teaching, research, and service. I just try to work with my strengths to inform these areas and address any weaknesses I have," while another reflected, "No affect [sic] except to try to learn more about any different race or ethnicities."

***Prioritizing diversity.*** In contrast, 16 respondents (39%) were able to chronicle their involvement to support diversity and inclusion on the campus through service. A senior male faculty member with more than 15 years with the university noted, "I am faculty co-chair of the institutional [Diversity Excellence Committee]. I work closely

with many faculty members across the disciplines to address diversity initiatives on campus.” Another female faculty with more than 15 years with the university noted,

I have been invited to participate on an ad hoc basis on the [Academic Affairs Diversity Task Force]. I was part of a search committee [...] that addressed diversity issues in the interviewing and hiring process. I am a member of a [Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Work Group] that considers gender through an intersectional lens, but it is focused currently more on student issues that [sic] faculty or staff per se.

Seven respondents reported on their service as part of a faculty search process that supports addressing campus diversity, and three other people identified the Diversity Search program specifically. Interestingly, one respondent reported a high level of involvement related to diversity, but she did not provide specific examples of her involvement: “I am on 11 committees at the university/school/program level. They all address culture on some level.” In contrast, there were faculty members identified specific programs in which they actively participated on campus: “I am faculty co-chair of the institutional [Diversity Excellence Committee]. I work closely with many faculty members across the disciplines to address diversity initiatives on campus.” A female faculty member explained her role with several diversity initiatives on campus: “[Diversity Search Program], will soon join [Faculty Professional Development] advisory board and work on promoting endeavors through that office to address diversity, [Gender Equity Studies] faculty member.”

*Unrecognized Whiteness.* While awareness of diversity initiatives is important, the White normalcy or norms emerged as a subtheme of the Awareness theme. Eight faculty responses suggested a lack of awareness of both the regularity of Whiteness and the power attributed to it. One of the most direct statements articulating this position came from a White female faculty member who, in speaking about how her race informed her work as a scholar, stated, “It doesn’t, since I’m in the majority.” Another person who also did not consider race in performing her work responded, “Not at all. My teaching, research, and service are fueled by my motivation and drive to exceed [sic], not my race.” One faculty member responded, “I don't know how it informs campus diversity as I have not been a member of committees addressing this unless disabilities is [sic] considered diversity.”

Fourteen respondents offered varying degrees of insight relative to the impact of Whiteness on their work. Some acknowledged their privilege, but they did not use this awareness consciously to inform work or service, as noted by a senior female faculty member with over 21 years at the university: “I don’t personally do much to effect change in this area, although when I’m on search committees I try to give extra attention to diversity candidates.”

In contrast, a White female faculty who recognized the need to address issues of diversity and equity indicated that she did not have time to dedicate to service on campus: “It inspires me to want to do more/be better, but I am typically too busy with professional and personal responsibilities to engage at the university.” Six respondents did not directly or indirectly provide information that would suggest any degree of awareness or influence of Whiteness on their work at the institution.

**Diversity in teaching.** Faculty most often reported incorporating or addressing diversity issues through their teaching, but many did not specifically consider their Whiteness in their teaching, service, or scholarship, seeing diversity as somehow disconnected from themselves. One faculty member responded, “I am not sure that my ethnicity shapes or informs campus diversity work. I know I work hard to be inclusive.” A White female faculty with 15-20 years of service described how she approached inclusivity in her work: “I am not sure my race has shaped my research [...] but I am sure it drives / impacts my questions and methodology (this could also be an example of white privilege), but I don’t think about it.” She further explained how race influenced her teaching and research: “Whereas I am very aware of it with my teaching and service and make conscious decisions (take diversity, race, ethnicity, etc.) into account with my teaching and in my service.” Another respondent said,

I was raised in a family that discussed inequities in our community and the differences in experiences and privilege of people of different races and socioeconomic status. I strive to use that perspective to be cognizant of the lack of level playing field among my students and set up mechanisms in my classroom to counteract that to some degree. At the same time, I am aware that I have advantages in how I am viewed as an authority in my classes. I don’t think I use race much to inform my research and service activities.

A White faculty member who identified as Western European also personalized her approach to being inclusive by considering her background:

I do not consider my ethnicity in any three of these domains, although I sometimes share cultural and religious experiences from my practice and my

family as examples when teaching my students. I do think that my own familial background, since my family members represent diverse faiths, ethnic backgrounds, skin colors, sexual preferences, and disabilities, has informed me of the struggles of those who do not share my beliefs, skin color, sexual preference, or may have a disability.

Yet another responded,

As an individual, I try to keep diversity issues in mind when teaching. I try to be fair to all students in class discussions, grading, etc. My research interests don't involve diversity issues, nor has my service to the institution been involved with diversity issues. The exceptions are when I serve on search committees and other committees that might involve minority candidates.

Another said,

I can show that even though I am a member of the majority, I embrace other cultures. I include issues of diversity in all of the course I teach in my program as well as my [Liberal Arts Education] course. I try to get students to view events beyond the lenses of their own cultural identities.

One faculty explained her sense of duty to challenge western norms in her teaching:

Being white, I see it as my responsibility to defer to the experiences of my colleagues of color to understand the ways this institution treats faculty of color. It is then my responsibility to relay this knowledge and experience to other colleagues and students. For me, it is my ethnic and religious background (and not racial background) that makes me sensitive to the need to be especially vigilant in guarding a safe space for faculty of color and in extending our understanding of



phenomena (natural, social, etc.) beyond that defined by a white, western narrative.

Another faculty member responded,

I think that I try to incorporate the need for self-reflection among students – such as dialog about the advantages and disadvantages one might experience in certain situations based on race, class, gender, etc. Also, reflect on how one’s own perception/behaviors may positively or negatively influence others.

**Gender.** A third theme to emerge was the significance of gender. Most of the respondents (78.5%) were female, and gender was noted in the responses. They wrote about the power that men had in the organization, as well as women’s perceived value (or lack thereof) within the institution. Because of the increased value respondents attributed to gender over race in their statements, the intersection of gender and race emerged as a theme. The systemic value ascribed to being male was reflected in the following statement from a female faculty member: “Men have systemic advantages over women.” Another female faculty member with more than five years at the university noted, “As a woman I do feel that I am not automatically granted respect from colleagues and students (especially males).” However, some faculty identified an area where race and gender intersect with each other. For example, a White female faculty member stated,

I believe that there are “old boy networks” in place in all institutions which offer the advantage of “openness/acceptance” based upon familiarity. Those of different race, gender, religion, etc. must distinguish themselves in a positive way to gain the acceptance that so easily comes to those of the familiar race, gender, religion, etc.

Although she was mistaken about the facts, a female faculty member with more than five years at the institution characterized the intersection of race and gender as follows:

I see discrepancies both racially and by gender. For example, female faculty, though almost 50% of the faculty body, make up less than 14% of the full professor faculty. Racially, things are [sic] even more disparate with a very small percentage of diversity among assistant faculty members.

A mid-career female faculty member explained, “I know women faculty of color who believe they are discriminated against and from the stories they have shared with me, they are.” Another mid-career White female faculty member explained her viewpoint and addressed the climate for women relative to race:

I think that the current political climate has further perpetuated the concept of “white privilege” and in particular, “white male privilege” and [State University] is not immune to this. Although not to the extent that white men enjoy, I would say that men of color also enjoy privileges and opportunities on [State’s] campus that are not available to women.

In contrast, there were faculty who ascribed more importance to gender than to race. A White female faculty member stated, “I find that my gender informs all of the above much more so than my race.” Another explained, “As a scholar/writer, most of my work has focused on gender and gendered violence; however, I am interested in writing more about class and race.” The following response also supported the saliency of gender among respondents:

I think men do overall less service and get more credit for service they do, that often is less emotionally and time labor intensive. I think faculty of color carry and LGBTQ faculty and faculty from some religious backgrounds do extra service work, especially extra mentoring work that is often time consuming and emotionally tough yet counts little towards reclassification, promotion, etc.

A senior faculty member with more than two decades of service shared this viewpoint, remarking, “In my years at the University, it seems that (among the faculty) Caucasian males ‘rise through the ranks’ much faster than Caucasian women and/or individuals of color.” Other responses that support the unspoken value of Whiteness were exemplified by a female faculty member’s statement that “I feel white males still get preferential treatment when it comes to leadership roles.”

Some faculty recognized a change in the university power base to include more women in key administrative roles. A few respondents articulated this shift. One female faculty respondent noted,

I am aware and sensitive to white privilege. I believe white men are still dominate [sic] in the workforce and at our university. I have recently seen a slight change in our administrative leadership including African American men and women in high ranking roles. There’s still work to do.

Another faculty member who observed that student affairs championed systemic change within the institution also noted the intersection of race and gender:

Often, it is the Division of Student Affairs that leads the way to systemic changes. However, the institution’s executive branch has recently included many women into leadership roles. Those leadership roles are predominantly not African

American nor Hispanic. Based on gender, there are fewer males than female faculty. Of the seven schools on campus, 5 current deans are female. The male dominated landscape in that area is changing. However, there are no African American, Hispanic or Asian representatives in those administrative roles.

The intersectionality of gender and race was also suggested by one faculty member, who acknowledged that she had a voice in the change process when she discussed the university climate:

As a white woman, I try to use my privilege to argue for resources and policy changes for diversity work. [State] is overwhelmingly white and majority male, especially in administration/leadership. If I want the culture to change, I have to be part of that change. This includes recruitment and hiring processes, this includes mentoring and professional development; this includes advocating for a new vision for what higher ed looks and acts like.

Another faculty member said,

Clearly, since I am white, there is privilege to that – so all I can do is make sure I am aware of that and shape my behavior accordingly. Similarly (but not the same) the fact that I am a woman innately shapes the roles I am asked to take on (quality and quantity) and how I am perceived.

**Structures.** The lack of progress in relation to African American faculty at the institution is deeply rooted in its structures. Several faculty respondents noted the relationship among race, gender, and the perseverance of existing structures. A senior female faculty member with more than 21 years at the institution stated,

Race and gender issues are entrenched in the academy, as in all areas of American society, on a systemic level. Members of the faculty and administration know this intellectually, but many of us are not as aware of it as we should be on a daily basis.

A male faculty member with fewer than five years of service to the institution stated,

When a campus here is teaching mostly white students, and our faculty and staff are predominantly white, it means there is less room and opportunity for non-white voices to be present and to be heard. As such, there will be less of a need, a burn, an energy on campus to serious[ly] tackle the issues of institutional racism.

When our president is a white man, our provost is a white woman, most of the other [...] administration are white men and women, we see that the gate keepers are part of the privileged group that benefits from these practices. So, in all honesty, what is their motivation to change the culture on campus? They have advantages because they are in the highest positions of power. And nearly every member of the Board of Trustees is white, so from the highest level of authority within this university, there are voices that need to be heard, that aren't even present.

Respondents also recognized the systemic power and advantages men had within institutional structures. A White female respondent said, "I believe that there are strong systemic advantages to white males in the tenure evaluation procedures and job promotion paths." A female faculty member with more than 15 years of service to the institution explained, "We live and work in a patriarchal white, male, heterosexual, able-

bodied dominant culture. This gives people with these characteristics' [sic] advantages. These advantages are built into institutional structures and norms." A male faculty member with more than 21 years at the institution stated,

I do believe some groups have systematic advantages over other groups because of the power of having the majority vs. the lack of power of the minority groups.

There are also inherent biases held by the majority that minority groups are not as capable as the majority which affects (often unconsciously) the advancement of the minority.

Impact of *race* on structure. The role of Whiteness as a racial characteristic and its impact on structures was less often mentioned by respondents than was gender. However, the intersection of race and gender was evident in the viewpoints expressed by a White female faculty member, who stated, "Race and gender issues are entrenched in the academy, as in all areas of American society, on a systemic level. Members of the faculty and administration know this intellectually, but many of us are not as aware of it as we should be on a daily basis." A White male faculty stated, "I think that white people like me never feel like we need to negotiate a racialized workplace. We don't think about race. This is a microcosm of larger problems."

***Recognized Whiteness.*** While there were faculty who did not consider their race related to pedagogy, service, or diversity work within the institution, there were also faculty who did consider their race. Interestingly, seven respondents noted that they tried to be inclusive of other groups. The intersection of race and gender was again revealed as a theme in the positionality of White men and their impact on reinforcing existing structures, as a White male faculty member articulated:

I would say that because I am a white man teaching at a predominantly white institution, I am continuing to contribute to the white-majority of faculty here at [State University]. And as such, by having hired me, a white man, my racial background is continuing to impact campus diversity work by having fewer non-white faculty/faculty of color present to have their voices heard and have their experiences known in the sculpting of campus diversity work.

A mid-career faculty member with 15-20 years of service stated,

As a white woman, I try to use my privilege to argue for resources and policy changes for diversity work. [State] is overwhelmingly white and majority male, especially in administration/leadership. If I want the culture to change, I have to be part of that change. This includes recruitment and hiring processes, this includes mentoring and professional development; this includes advocating for a new vision for what higher ed looks and acts like.

Climate for African Americans. White faculty were asked to characterize the climate for African Americans at State University. Five faculty reported having little contact with African American faculty and therefore could not assess the climate for these faculty. For example, two faculty members stated plainly, “I don’t know,” and others were more reflective in their responses. One faculty member with more than five years of service said,

Unfortunately, I work in a very non-diverse program (and school, really) and therefore cannot speak to this. However, from brief conversations with African American colleagues who are friends or following them on FB and social media, I know there are issues.

A second responded, “Probably not qualified to describe the climate as I’m not African American. They are probably underrepresented as faculty but probably not as a whole at the university.” A third added, “I have limited contact with black colleagues as the [sic] is only one in my unit who is fulltime faculty.”

*Negative climate for African American faculty.* One respondent reported having limited contact with faculty, yet believed that the culture was negative for African American faculty: “I see relatively few African American colleagues around the campus. While I do not know from personal experience, I would think it can be uncomfortable, frustrating, and/or wearisome to be a minority on the predominantly White campus.”

Other comments were seemingly benign but acknowledged that the experiences of Black and White faculty were different, as when one faculty member described the climate for Black faculty: “It is different. African American Faculty members are treated differently.” A second faculty member characterized his or her impression of the campus climate for African Americans as follows: “From listening to my colleagues, I have the impression that the climate for African American faculty is not good and even possibly hostile.” A junior female described the climate from her viewpoint:

My impression is that there are some supports for African American faculty in terms of a small but supportive community of other faculty of color and mechanisms for reporting discrimination. However, some African American faculty report experiences of racial bias on campus. The surrounding community within a short commute of campus is also predominantly white and not particularly welcoming.



The intersectionality of gender and race was presented by a White female with more than 10 years with the university, who characterized the climate for women as “hostile, especially for African American women.”

*Increased service to the institution.* A recurrent theme regarding the climate of the institution for African American faculty as taxing was reflected in respondents’ recognition of this group’s increased service obligation, lack of support, and marginalization within the campus community. A White female faculty member with fewer than five years of affiliation with the institution noted,

I imagine that as a small group of faculty, they feel made responsible for all things Black, and that sounds exhausting. They seem to get tasked with all the, diversity stuff and I imagine many want to do that work, but I wonder if they feel tokenized if not out [sic] taken advantage of to make the university look diverse as a marketing tool.

This sentiment transcended years of affiliation with the institution among respondents. Two White female faculty members, each with over 15 years of service to the university, mentioned the service obligation. One said,

My sense from conversations with African American faculty is that it is difficult because there are so few, because they are asked/tasked with additional service requirements in the attempt of committees to be more diverse, that they are stretched thin in terms of advising and mentoring students, and that they experience direct and indirect racism both in the classroom, from colleagues, and as a result of institutional structures.

A second echoed,

I think the climate is inadequate in terms of numbers of African American faculty hired and then retained. Inadequate attention is paid to the burdens of service, so often teaching about diversity, being asked to be on committees so that there is representation, and more. Also, concerns from African American faculty are too easily dismissed. And while individuals may be respected, even leaders, that does not mean there are not still real problems.

A White male faculty with more than 15 years with State University characterized the climate for Black faculty as follows:

Across the disciplines, the very few African American faculty members often take on multiple service roles that often hinder their research agendas. It is an unfair workload distribution in which they often excel but at a very high cost as it is used against them when it's time for advancement in rank and range adjustment.

*Neutral, supportive, or positive climate for African American faculty.* Six faculty reported that the environment for African American faculty was similar to the environment for White faculty or was supportive. General impressions of progress were reflected in the statement, "I think there has been [sic] many positive strides, but we are not quite there yet." Other responses described the favorable climate for African Americans: "Our program faculty welcome African American faculty." A White female faculty member with over 15 years of service stated, "I don't believe some groups have advantages over others." One person perceived the overall university climate as favorable, despite limited knowledge about the climate for African Americans: "I think it

is supportive at least in a verbal sense, beyond that I am not knowledgeable enough to comment.”

The three data sources used for this study provide a temporal picture of what is occurring at State University. The historical value of three distinct assessments is valuable for several reasons. First, each assessment’s findings revealed that people of color and women experience the institution differently. Second, the viewpoints of various campus constituents were presented and may be used to inform future diversity work at the institution. Lastly, the favorable climate reported during each assessment illustrates that there is institutional capacity to build on the positive culture experienced by stakeholders, even though marginalized groups experience the institution differently.

## Chapter 5

### Conclusions and Implications

State University is a regional comprehensive university located in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States. As of fall 2017, 331 faculty were employed at the institution. The racial and ethnic composition of the university was as follows: 236 White, 36 Asian, 23 African American, 18 Hispanic, 12 international, and one American Indian. Four people identified with two or more races. The university has received several awards for its diversity and inclusion initiatives. In addition, on two occasions since 2008, the university has allocated time and resources to assess the campus environment for faculty, staff, and students. Diversity initiatives on campus are structured so they are part of the institution's overarching diversity and inclusion vision. Subcommittees of the State University's Diversity Excellence Committee include benchmarking, social justice, and decolonizing the curriculum. A 2018 report from the university's Diversity Excellence Committee chronicles the accomplishments of the university related to diversity and inclusion since 2017. Specifically, the report describes how current programs align with the larger university strategic themes. Key accomplishments outlined in the document include establishing grants to support faculty diversity, creating partnerships to build an academic pipeline to college for underserved groups, and providing opportunities for underrepresented students to participate in research.

This study evaluated three sources of information: the 2008 Campus Diversity Study, the 2017 Campus Environment Study, and an online interview of tenured and tenure-track faculty conducted as part of this study. There were some noteworthy

differences in the methodologies of these assessments related to study participants. The 2017 Campus Environment Study was conducted by an internal working group, while the 2008 Campus Diversity Study was conducted by an outside consultant. Due to the low number of people in various racial and ethnic groups, people of color were combined to form one group in both studies. In addition, participants were able to self-identify their racial backgrounds and select all categories with which they identified. In contrast, the online interview conducted as part of this study allowed respondents to answer an optional open-ended question about their racial and ethnic backgrounds and required them to answer a question about their racial backgrounds that allowed them to select only one racial category. The categories for the required question were congruent with IPEDS categories. The responses for the required race question were filtered for those who identified as White. Therefore, a key difference between the Campus Environment and Campus Diversity Studies analyzed for this study and the online interview conducted in this study is that the two prior assessments considered the responses of various stakeholders within the campus community, while the online interview considers only the viewpoints of White faculty. Accordingly, the 2008 Campus Diversity Study provides input from faculty, staff, and students, while the 2017 Campus Environment Study provides responses from faculty and staff. Where possible, faculty responses were extracted and used for comparison.

Finally, it is noteworthy that the primary focus of the online interview was to understand the perceptions of White faculty, whereas the other two assessments detailed everyone's responses and then made comparisons based on race, gender, and roles within the university. Lastly, the two previous assessments solicited perceptions of diversity and

inclusion, as well as campus climate. The online interview conducted for this study only sought White faculty members' perceptions of diversity on campus.

Thus, it was within this context that the three assessments were evaluated. Several themes were common to the 2008 and 2017 assessments and the online interview. The themes of gender and climate for people of color were identified in all three assessments. The online interview identified subthemes to these themes, as well.

### **Gender**

The role of gender emerged in all three assessments. The Campus Diversity and the Campus Environment Studies asked specifically how comfortable people felt on campus. While the two studies used different terms to capture climate for respondents, both tried to gauge how respondents experienced the campus and its community. While general perceptions of the campus were favorable, in both assessments, women viewed the campus climate as limiting and, in some cases, hostile. In the 2017 Campus Environment Survey, 17% of women reported feeling “uncomfortable” or “very uncomfortable.” The 2008 report did not provide data on discomfort based on race. Overall, women were more likely to report that they felt disrespected, subservient, and overworked more than men. The White women who responded to the online interview in the present study also spoke of being disrespected, lacking power, and having an increased work burden compared to men. Interestingly, when White women were asked specifically about the role of race in the online interview, some responded that gender was more salient than race.

Despite White female faculty members' perceptions of having no power within the institution, White women outnumbered men in key administrative roles. At the time

of this study, White women at State University occupied five of seven academic dean positions, and the Provost was a White woman. Of the nine-member Board of Trustees (not including ex-officio members and student trustees), four were women, three White and one Hispanic (race unknown). As stated in Chapter 4, the number of women in the faculty at State University outnumber men; 51% of full professors were women, and women comprised 52% of full professors who were White. Five percent of full professors were African American women.

In all three assessments between 2008 and 2017, women stated that they were marginalized within the community. Therefore, a possible future study may question why White women as a collective body believe they do not have power or agency within the institution, despite their ability to permeate different levels of the organizational hierarchy. Moreover, it is important to question why these women still report experiencing hostility, disrespect, different rules, and microaggressions. Noteworthy, however, is that the standing of women with full professor rank at State University was contrary to the national statistics in 2017, in which, regardless of academic rank, 47% of faculty were women, with 33% being full professors and 52% being assistant professors (IPEDS, 2019).

**Intersection of race and gender.** In both the Campus Environment and Campus Diversity Studies, respondents reported that women and people of color were marginalized more than Whites. The findings were not stratified by gender. Therefore, the researcher is unable to compare the perceptions of White women related to race and gender in either of the assessments to the findings of the online interview. In the online assessment, narratives from White females revealed that some were aware of White

privilege. However, White women consistently identified gender as the primary impediment to their success and the reason for adverse working conditions. The significance of awareness of White privilege will be discussed later in this chapter.

### **Climate for People of Color**

As stated, the 2008 and 2017 assessments combined the results for underrepresented minorities, while the online interview for this study specifically solicited the perceptions of White faculty regarding their role in campus diversity. Integral to the discussion of White faculty involvement and perception is how this group perceives the climate for African American faculty.

Respondents to all three assessments recognized that the climate for people of color at State University was less favorable and sometimes hostile. All three data sources identified differing expectations regarding service, unwritten rules of engagement/access, and disparities in the value of people of color on campus. These findings, which were identified at three moments in time over a ten-year period, supports not only the literature regarding African Americans' experiences in the academy, but also reveals a pervasive and persistent unspoken culture that African American faculty must negotiate to be successful (Banks, 1984; Behar-Horenstein et al., 2012; Turner et al., 2008; Washington & Harvey, 1989). Exemplars of conditions faculty of color encounter that are also extensively noted in the literature include increased service obligations and challenges to their chosen areas of scholarship. Moreover, faculty at State University also identified the impact these differing expectations have on tenure and promotion (Allen et al., 2001; Banks, 1984; Park & Denson, 2009; Tracey, 2010; Turner et al., 2008).



**White faculty members' perceptions.** White faculty members' perceptions of how African Americans experience the academy has been studied by scholars and characterized as a lack of suitability for academic appointments, as well as appointments based on affirmative action or quota-based programs (Banks, 1984; Gordon, 2007; Gusa, 2010; Washington & Harvey, 1989; Whitfield-Harris & Lockhart, 2016). Some have suggested that these perceived deficiencies are in part the result of unrecognized implicit bias based on race. In other words, White faculty are sometimes unaware of their own racism (Behar-Horenstein et al., 2012; Glimps & Ford, 2010; McIntosh, 1988). Applebaum (2003) explains that this lack of awareness contributes to complicit racism in the academy. Complicit racism is carried out by morally good Whites who give themselves permission to employ race-neutral policies and practices.

Applebaum (2003) also explain that morally good Whites abhor racism and often view themselves as supportive of diversity. There is a significant flaw in this approach of morally good Whites to opt for race-neutral approaches to achieve diversity and inclusion, however. By employing a race-neutral approach, these faculty members do not have to address how they benefit systemic practices within the institution. In addition, race-neutral approaches are safe in that they do not require those with power to give up their positions or access within the institution. Moreover, the seemingly equitable nature of a race-neutral lens allows these same faculty to explain occurrences where Blacks are marginalized as events related to the individual and not the result of implicit bias or microaggressions. Furthermore, for morally good Whites who do not have time for diversity (as noted in Chapter 4) or because of race neutrality, race is not recognized as a problem. Yet, many of these same faculty acknowledge there are disparities based on

race within the institution. Their inability to reconcile disparity with race neutrality gives them an avenue to rationalize this dissonance as individual occurrences and not reflective of a systemic problem (Bonilla-Silva, 2015; Lewis, 2004).

One key finding from the online interview that was not identified in the review of the two earlier campus-wide assessments is that White faculty who participated in the online interview reported being aware of the disparate treatment of African Americans. In addition, several recognized African American faculty experienced an increased burden on service to students and the institution. Likewise, White males and females alike acknowledged that White males ascend to the upper academic ranks more easily than females or people of color. This latter theme was recognized in the Campus Environment Survey and the Campus Diversity Survey, as well. White dominance within the university was also recognized in both the Campus Environment Survey and the online interview, as evidenced by respondents who noted that White voices (especially White male voices) were more highly valued and heard by administration. Similarly, in the Campus Environment and Campus Diversity Surveys, women and people of color reported feeling invisible or unheard within the institution.

White faculty responding to the online interview reported that Whites (especially White males) had the greatest influence in the university. Some White faculty recognized their power and protected status, and some characterized the climate for African Americans as less than equitable, or in some instances hostile. Yet, these faculty did not report feeling compelled to change the imbalance. This recognition and lack of action can be interpreted as complicit racism. Herein, complicit racism goes unrecognized and unaddressed within the institution. In other words, White faculty recognize their

positionality within the institution and the climate for African American faculty, but they do not use this awareness to effect change within the university (Applebaum, 2010; Stassen, 1995). Instead, White faculty who address institutional inequity by being aware of differences and being inclusive of everyone choose not to evaluate the systems and structures that contribute to some African Americans' negative experiences in the professoriate. This approach allows White faculty to believe they are morally good and inclusive by working to create a more equitable environment without giving up their positions within the institution. In this sense, Whiteness is not identified as a criterion by which they (White faculty) evaluate inequities on campus or the basis for valuing scholarship and service, which allows these faculty to ignore inequities or opt for more tolerable methods to address disparities within the institution (Applebaum, 2010; Bonilla-Silva, 2015; Brooks-Immel & Murray, 2017; Brown, 2004).

### **Conceptual Framework**

**Structuration theory: Existing structures.** Giddens' structuration theory (1984) offers a framework to assess the relationship between organizational structures, cultural norms, and the practices individuals employ to preserve those structures. White faculty members' inability to challenge the worldview of those in power is arguably rooted in their incapacity to see Whiteness as a race with the same power to uplift as Blackness has to marginalize or subjugate. Nowhere is this more evident than in the voices of White women. Historically, White women in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and continuing throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century have been outspoken champions of equality. However, the fight to gain parity for women was for *White* women. Black women were not considered part of the suffrage movement, which focused on uplifting middle-class White women. For many in the

movement, to address issues of Black women's rights would have racialized the women's rights issue, and inequality along racial lines regardless of gender would have had to be acknowledged and addressed by suffragettes, which they were not willing to do (Dill, 1983). This same approach of ignoring racial equality in the context of gender equality is evident in the current state of diversity and inclusion in the academy.

For example, in the online interviews, White women respondents reported noticing inequities along racial and gender lines. In addition, they affirmed that White males held the power within the institution. One female respondent characterized the institutional climate for African Americans as "hostile, especially for African American women." Another White female faculty member recognized the intersectionality of gender and race and noted, "Though there are a few managers of color, admin is mostly White, and very male. White women are the second most privileged group." Despite these reflections, the issue of gender emerged as an important issue, as noted by one White female faculty member who said, "I think that the current political climate has further perpetuated the concept of 'White privilege' and in particular, 'White male privilege' and [State] is not immune to this."

The inroads made by women into the professoriate and key administrative roles appeared to go unrecognized by many of the White female respondents. In contrast, the perception that people of color benefited more from existing policies and practices was noted in the 2008 Campus Diversity Study, in which nearly one-third of White respondents stated that they believed people of color benefitted from systemic advantages. Several online interview respondents noted similar beliefs. With rare exceptions did White female or male faculty understand that they could use their

increased presence within the institution to try to change existing structures. One woman responded,

As a White woman, I try to use my privilege to argue for resources and policy changes for diversity work [...] If I want the culture to change, I have to be part of that change. This includes recruitment and hiring processes [...] this includes advocating for a new vision for what higher ed looks and acts like.

This faculty member's insight highlights the potential change women can facilitate as they become aware of both their changing positionality and power within the university. By virtue of their increased presence throughout the organization, women potentially have access to policy branches of the institution in ways that they did not previously. Furthermore, because of their increasingly diverse roles within the institution, the values of the institution have the potential to change as the organizational culture adapts to women's increased presence and power. This systemic change in the organization reflects new norms that are the result of women gaining access to parts of the academy in a way they have not previously (Giddens, 1984). For this reason, White women in the academy must not only become aware of the plight of people of color in the academy, but they must also develop a sense of activism and ownership to meet the needs of those groups who do not have the same access. However, if White women continue to view gender as more oppressive than race, then the racial norms of the academy will persist. In this scenario, Whiteness as property will be silently valued by women in the academy (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995).

For the increasing number of White women in key leadership roles at State University, the inability to identify an opportunity to address or change norms within the

institution as reflected in the preservation of existing structures is consistent with Giddens' (1984) theory. Furthermore, for women who have amassed increased presence at State, their failure to recognize the potential of this positionality to influence structures for other groups supports the saliency of gender oppression over race. There are two belief systems working in tandem that allow State University to ignore the lack of progress in diversifying the institution with respect to African Americans. First is the belief that gender oppression is a more important issue than racial oppression. When gender and race are both identified as factors that negatively contribute to the campus climate, the saliency of gender takes precedence over race. Here, the issue that has a direct impact on Whites is the more relevant issue. Issues of race are acknowledged, but they are not championed by Whites.

Second, the less-articulated belief that enough is done to advantage people of color on campus allows some Whites to ignore the experiences of Blacks in the professoriate. Many respondents noted that there were some differences or, at the minimum, they did not have enough interaction with people of color to have an informed opinion. From this standpoint, it is problematic that a group with power within the institution, a group for whom the academy was designed, does not challenge the injustice in the same way that issues of gender oppression have been challenged; and for the most part, White faculty did not identify a need or methods to interact with faculty of color on campus. This complacency allows morally good Whites to perpetuate complicit racism (Applebaum, 2010).

In other words, some White faculty hold the belief that it is a shame they do not interact with African Americans on campus, but they do not question why there are few

on campus or why they individually have limited contact with Black faculty who are on campus. Those who do question the lack of interaction with faculty of color explain it as a lack of faculty in their program or school. That answer suffices and is acceptable to these faculty. Additional analysis should be done to explore how this belief is maintained in the face of stagnant advancement for people of color during a period of accelerated faculty growth. In the 2008 Campus Diversity Study, one-third of respondents believed that people of color had advantages within the institution because of their race. Two respondents to the online interview stated that they believed African Americans had advantages, and several were neutral about or saw some improvements regarding the climate for African American faculty. The intersectionality of race and gender was once again revealed by a White male respondent, who attributed his perception of systemic advantages for people of color to fear.

The belief that the institution already shows preference for people of color to assist them or provide equity on campus reveals a framework in which this additional analysis should be done. Given that 33% of Whites (faculty, staff, students) in the 2008 study believed people of color were systemically advantaged within the academy provides additional context to examine the lack of progress in hiring and retaining African American faculty. The further examination of White faculty members' perceptions and stagnant hiring practices within the confines of complicit racism in maintaining existing structures is also worthy of consideration (Brooks-Immel & Murray, 2017).

The intersection of complicit racism (Applebaum, 2010), preferential treatment, and the relatively unchanged presence of African American faculty within the institution

presents an opportunity to study three factors that help preserve existing structures. Broadly, since the findings from the three assessments relative to African American faculty members' experiences and the hiring trends for African Americans at State University are consistent with national trends and the experiences noted in the literature (Banks, 1984; Brooks-Immel & Murray, 2017; Gusa, 2010; Turner et al., 2008), a larger study might provide data that allow for a broader application of findings.

Furthermore, unrecognized Whiteness or a lack of racialized White identity allows for well-meaning Whites to be inclusive of others and believe that is sufficient. Tatum (1997) discusses the fact that many people view racism as individual acts and believe they are not racist as long as they are nice to everyone. In the online interview, respondents failed to recognize themselves as racialized beings (Guess, 2006; Gusa, 2010). Therefore, by providing or supporting access to the academy, which is deeply rooted in White social norms, and including diverse topics or discussions in their classes, White faculty can espouse that they support and, in some cases, advocate for diversity and inclusion, without having to address the continued injustices they see. Here, Whiteness is not recognized or considered in evaluating systemic advantages, organizational norms, or the value/contributions of people of color. Furthermore, because these faculty do not challenge their worldview or critically think about the inequities in the institution, they do not challenge the structures that inform institutional practices and norms, thereby preserving their positionality while being inclusive of others and maintaining their sense of moral goodness (Applebaum, 2010; Giddens, 1984).

Still unspoken in White normalcy are the ideas that in some instances support a deficit mindset in which Whites recognize the need to discuss race only in the context of



disparity. African Americans' contributions are not woven into pedagogy or curricula. White faculty in the online interview who stated that they were aware of their White privilege stated that they used this awareness to be inclusive of others. One White female faculty member's response captures the deficit mindset:

I have started to try to be more mindful of privilege because I believe it is a real and an important issue. When I discuss things like access to healthcare or socioeconomic status we talk more about race. I feel it is important for me to be more mindful of this. I have also tried to educate myself more on microaggressions so that I can be aware and mindful not to impose these.

Here, the contributions of non-Whites and norms within groups of non-Whites are not considered. The only time race is considered is in the context of disparity between Whites and others. For others, statements acknowledging that little consideration of Whiteness are not evaluated for their potential impact on people of color within the organization. Some respondents in the online interview reported that they did not incorporate race into their teaching, scholarship, or service, while some recognized that they did not have to think about race because they benefitted from White privilege. For example, a male faculty member reflected "I don't think about it much in the terms of my scholarship and service work because I am, as a White man." The respondent's observation that he "doesn't have to think about it" gives him permission to not think about the impact that ignoring diversity in his research has on students, other faculty, organizational norms, and related structures.

Significantly, none of the respondents stated that they approached their scholarship, teaching, or service in ways that highlighted the contributions of people of

color. Moreover, none identified that there was a need to learn about others or examine topics from other world or cultural views. Embedded in these statements may be the mutual exclusivity that exists between diversity and excellence. There is an unspoken belief that in order to achieve diversity, an institution must sacrifice excellence (Aguirre & Martinez, 2002; Banks, 1984; Maher & Thompson Tetreault, 2011). Beliefs that African American terminal-degree holders are better suited to administrative appointments or student development roles and perceptions that their areas of scholarship lack validity suggest that the academy cannot be diverse and still maintain academic excellence; these ideas are reflected in implicit beliefs that African Americans are deficient (Aguirre & Martinez, 2002; Allen et al., 2001; Banks, 1984; Maher & Thompson Tetreault, 2011; Park & Denson, 2009; Shillingford et al., 2013; Turner et al., 2008). The historic contributions of people of color to various areas of scholarship such as science, medicine, and math are ignored and seldom woven into academic curricula, programs such as Africana and Latino studies aside.

**Critical race theory.** Delgado and Stefancic's CRT (2012) provides a lens that challenges the invisibility of Whiteness in society. To apply CRT in this study, Whiteness must be racialized. That is, the recognition of invisible Whiteness allowed for Whiteness to be identified as a factor to examine its role in maintaining structural norms. By applying the tenets of CRT, Whiteness can be racialized to examine its impact on organizational structures and norms.

**Racism is normal.** Racism is entrenched in the history of America. In post-civil rights America, overt racist practices waned, but in recent years, the reemergence of violent and outwardly espoused vitriol against people of color in America suggests to

some that the theoretical underpinnings of racism in America did not end. They were simply pushed underground, thereby allowing for the appearance of a more tolerable and arguably inclusive America (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). The remnants of America's racist past are steeped in White supremacy and entitlement, so much so that some Whites dismiss the role of White superiority as the foundation of institutions, cultural norms, and values, which allows for the normalcy of widely held belief systems to be deracialized (Hiraldo, 2010; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995).

In this study, microaggressions and systemic disparities were identified by participants in all three assessments. Nonetheless, the contexts for these disparities were not considered. Faculty reported their attempts to be inclusive of African American faculty, failing to realize that they expected African Americans to assimilate into a White institutional and societal construct (Aguirre et al., 1993; Allen et al., 2001; Brooks-Immel & Murray, 2017; Osanloo, Boske, & Newcomb, 2018). In addition, the normalcy of less-overt forms of racism exists to a degree where they are almost invisible and thus acceptable and normal. Microaggressions and implicit bias are not outward forms of racism. Often, they are not purposeful or deliberate (Osanloo et al., 2018; Sue et al., 2007). Moreover, because of the unspoken value of Whiteness, some who attempt to be inclusive commit microaggressions and use implicit bias to inform or ascribe value to people or things. In Chapter 4, one female faculty member characterized African American faculty members' experiences in the following way: "Inadequate attention is paid to the burdens of service, so often teaching about diversity, being asked to be on committees so that there is representation, and more. Also, concerns from African American faculty are too easily dismissed."

The well-meaning attempts to be inclusive or achieve diversity fail to consider the role of a White standard by which everything is unknowingly measured (Guess, 2006). Namely, racism exists to the degree it is acknowledged. Therefore, if those with power and access do not consider these less-overt forms of racism, then the normalcy of insidious racism will persist under the veil of invisible Whiteness (Applebaum, 2010). More importantly, racism in this acceptable state will remain normal because of its acceptability. For some, the indirect nature of racism allows for the emergence of gender as the main issue requiring attention. For systemic change to occur, there must be acknowledgement that issues of race and diversity must be evaluated from a different lens. For example, one faculty member reflected on the need to broaden his or her lens:

Well POC [People of Color] should not have to do all the work. I think it, is my job to advocate for an equitable and inclusive environment for all [...] So instead of saying to POC how can I support you I think I can look right at my own demographic.

The need to understand how other White people think and view the world is important to the diversity and inclusion discussion. Arguably, there is a need to evaluate both overt and insidious forms of racism. Moreover, by creating awareness of different forms of racism, members of the academy can begin the process of evaluating how racism in all its forms perpetuates inequity in the academy (Applebaum, 2003, 2010; Argyris, 1990; Brown, 2004). The remarks of one White male faculty respondent identify the potential impact insidious racism can have on an institution:

I do believe some groups have systematic advantages over other groups because of the power of having the majority vs. the lack of power of the minority groups.

There are also inherent biases held by the majority that minority groups are not as capable as the majority which affects (often unconsciously) the advancement of the minority.”

The insidious form of racism noted by this faculty member underscores the normalcy of racism within the academy.

***Interest convergence.*** Consequently, the intersectionality of race and gender presents an opportunity for White female faculty to address systemic oppression throughout the institution. However, the faculty respondents in this study did not see how both racial and gender oppressive structures were based on White male dominance (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). In the 2017 Campus Environment Survey, 82% of the respondents characterized State University as either respectful or very respectful for African Americans. Seventeen percent viewed the campus as disrespectful or very disrespectful, and 56% of respondents noted that the institution was completely or mostly free of bias, while 15% noted that they regularly or constantly encountered bias. Though the results were not delineated along gender lines, the findings help provide context for faculty and staff perceptions at State University.

However, the online responses from White faculty in this study were stratified based on gender. Although White female faculty reported observing racism on campus that marginalized and created hostile experiences for African Americans, they did not advocate for people of color. Sixteen White female respondents acknowledged that the climate for African Americans on campus was different than it was for Whites. Still, none of the respondents recognized that they played a role in improving the climate. They may not recognize the unspoken value placed on their Whiteness (Applebaum, 2010; Brooks-

Immel & Murray, 2017). The inability of White female faculty to recognize systemic oppression on the basis of race in the same way they recognized oppression based on gender gave them permission to be complicit in racism on campus. Unspoken and perhaps unseen was that these women had either deliberately or inadvertently failed to champion issues of racial inequity on campus because of Whites' standing on campus (Applebaum, 2003, 2010). White women have not found common ground with other marginalized groups, such as African Americans. That is, White women have not found a reason to increase the value of African Americans in the same way White males increased the value of White females to preserve White power and related norms.

*Differentialized racialization.* Differentialized racialization allows the assignment of value of one race at different points in time (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012).

Understanding the value ascribed to other faculty, such as Asians, may help start a dialogue regarding the lack of value attributed to Black faculty. Also, differentialized racialization can be used as a lens to help Whites within the academy understand how they have power, as value is correlated to the inherent worth of Whiteness in American society.

For this study, it may be argued that White women have garnered value as the academy has become more diverse. While originally designed for White men by White men, the academy has increased the value of White women, possibly to maintain the structure and norms of higher education (Brown, 2004; Hall, 2006). In this sense, White women once had no value, but now Whiteness among women has held increasing value in the academy in recent years (Hall, 2006).

Similarly, the social construction of race is not challenged in institutions of higher education. That is, some Whites hold an unrecognized deficit mindset of non-Whites. For example, in the online interviews, White faculty stated that they tried to be inclusive of others, which suggested that they (White faculty) were willing to accept and allow people of color access to their arena. Absent from the responses was the value that people of color possess or the desire of Whites to be included in the spaces people of color occupy (Gusa, 2010; Stassen, 1995). Race in society is constructed to subjugate some while uplifting others (Williams & Priest, 2016). Historically in America, race has been used to uplift, secure status, provide access, and ascribe value to Whites (Williams, 1999). Concurrently, race has been used to desecrate, deny access, destabilize, and devalue African Americans. Consequently, the poor SES many African Americans experience in the form of poor academic performance, low employment rates, and poor health is attributed to a deficiency within the group and not the once-espoused value of Whiteness in society (Williams, 1999; Williams et al., 1997). Since outward and legal forms of stratification and oppression of people based on color has long since been repealed, White people as a collective body can state that there is parity for everyone, irrespective of race. The race-neutral or race-equity lens many Whites adopt allows them to ignore their historic advantage and preserve the societal structures based on the social construction of race (Applebaum, 2007; Bonilla-Silva, 2015; Brown, 2004; Gordon, 2007; Guess, 2006; Gusa, 2010; Lewis, 2004).

***Intersectionality and anti-essentialism.*** Individuals are the sum of their parts. A person may identify with many groups based on race, gender, lineage, and other factors that form one's identity. One's sense of identity may come into conflict with another

where these parts intersect (Accapadi, 2007; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Hall, 2006). A woman of color may find her sense of identity relative to her gender at odds with her racial identity. Part of this conflict may be because historically, issues of gender excluded issues of importance to women of color (Hall, 2006). The intersectionality of race and gender was identified in this study. With rare exceptions, White female respondents did not consider the voices of women of color. To the contrary, White women appeared to have a monolithic view of womanhood that failed to consciously consider the plight of women of color. Specifically, *womanhood* was coded language for *White* womanhood. The concerns of those who comprise the female diaspora and the issues or concerns important to them were not considered.

***The unique voice of color.*** The final tenet of CRT is the unique voice of color. CRT allows those without a voice to be heard. In the online interviews, White faculty did not often consider their own race in their teaching, scholarship, or service. When respondents did use race to inform teaching, scholarship, or service, their awareness of race was used to include people of color and others into their cultural norms. Beyond statements that acknowledged an awareness of White privilege, which allowed White faculty to discuss the inclusivity of others, none of the respondents used their awareness to challenge their worldviews. In other words, faculty did not connect their awareness to Black faculty members' negative experiences, despite recognizing that unfair treatment exists. Pope-Davis and Ottavi (1992) suggest that White faculty should examine and discuss their racial identities. Moreover, these faculty should reflect on the role their racial identities plays in racism and the campus climate. Therefore, the application of CRT to Whiteness allows for Whiteness to be racialized and gives it a voice. Racializing



Whiteness in diversity work within the academy provides an opportunity to purposefully deconstruct what it is to be White and to examine the historic role of Whiteness as property within the academy (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Hiraldo, 2010). That is, racialized Whiteness has the potential to provide a deliberate conversation about how Whiteness works to inform, construct, preserve, and define what society or, in this case the academy, views as important or valuable.

Furthermore, by applying this tenet of CRT, the absence of the voice of color may become apparent to Whites. Purposeful and deliberate conversations about being White and how Whiteness informs policy and structure has the potential to initiate second-order change within the institution. In doing so, the conversation shifts from asking the marginalized to address the diversity problem to engaging the beneficiaries of the existing structures to effect the change the institution espouses that it wants (Argyris, 1990; Argyris & Schon, 1974; Maher & Thompson Tetreault, 2011; Pope-Davis & Ottavi, 1992).

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided this study:

- **RQ 1:** How do White faculty characterize the campus climate regarding diversity for faculty of color?

Over a ten-year period, three different assessments were conducted to measure State University's climate. Each assessment used different instruments and methodologies and had a different purpose. While the genesis of these studies was different, common themes emerged across assessments. Among the similarities, all three assessments revealed that people of color experience an environment different from that

of Whites. Further stratification along gender lines emerged in each study. Also present in each report was the finding that some Whites believe enough is being done to address diversity and inclusion for people of color.

There are, however, some differences in the methodologies that are worth considering. First, in the 2008 Campus Diversity and 2017 Campus Environment Surveys, the findings for Whites were juxtaposed with information provided by people of color in general. All minority groups were combined in each of these studies to comprise one group of underrepresented racial minorities. These two assessments provided faculty and staff members' voices. The Campus Diversity Study also included students in the final report, while the Campus Environment Study conducted a separate study that targeted students within the institution. The findings were also delineated along gender and racial lines. In contrast, the online interviews conducted for this study purposefully sought the voices of White faculty only. However, because of the number of White females at State University, the role of gender emerged as an unanticipated variable. White males' views, while present, were dwarfed by the number of White female respondents.

The triangulation of the three assessments revealed that at each point in time, respondents recognized that the climate for people of color was ripe with microaggressions, hostility, lack of respect, and unequal burdens on service to the institution. These findings are consistent with the literature regarding campus climate for faculty of color (Applebaum, 2007, 2010; Glimps & Ford, 2010; Gordon, 2007; Turner et al., 2008). While the Campus Environment Survey and the Campus Diversity Survey both quantified the perception that people of color were more likely to characterize the

climate as hostile or otherwise negative, the fact that White faculty in all three assessments expressed awareness of the imbalance along racial lines supports the experiences reported by people of color.

The following research questions were not addressed in the Campus Diversity Study or the Campus Environment Study. Therefore, unless otherwise stated, the online interviews informed answers to these research questions. As appropriate, the Campus Diversity Study and the Campus Environment Study are used to provide context for what has been occurring at State University.

- **RQ1a:** How do White faculty characterize the campus climate for African American faculty specifically?

In the online assessment, most White faculty recognized that the environment for African American faculty was different than it was for Whites. The range of awareness varied from acknowledgement that African American faculty experienced microaggressions and increased service to the university to those who believed that African Americans were well-supported on campus. However, few faculty provided specific examples of unequal treatment that they had observed; rather, they described the climate in general terms. Five respondents commented that they did not have enough interactions with African American faculty to offer a position from an informed perspective. Of those who stated that they did not have sufficient interactions to respond, some used phrases and terms such as “uncomfortable,” “hostile,” “not well represented,” and “there are issues.”

Two people responded by focusing on how African American faculty were received on an individual level instead of the climate African American faculty

experienced campus-wide: “From my point of view, all faculty are considered equally and if any judgment is made, it is on their commitment to their work versus their ethnicity.” Another respondent stated, “In our program, we welcome African American faculty.”

Overall, White faculty acknowledged that African American faculty experienced the campus differently than they did. While the Campus Environment Survey did not ask White faculty to assess the climate for African Americans specifically, White respondents felt more comfortable than underrepresented minorities on campus. In the 2008 Campus Diversity Study, 26% of respondents of color reported that they felt like outsiders within the college community. Twenty-four percent were neutral, and 50% of people of color did not feel like outsiders on campus. In contrast, in 2008, 33% of White respondents reported that they believed people of color had systemic advantages on campus. This perception was also espoused in the online interviews conducted as part of this study. The Campus Environment Survey did not specifically identify that people of color had systemic advantages. Rather, when asked if policies and practices were applied fairly and equitably, respondents noted that policies were not applied equally, and most often, the reason for unequal application was based on race.

- **RQ 2:** How do White faculty view their role in creating inclusive diverse campus environments?

White faculty stated that they contributed to creating inclusivity on campus by being inclusive of others. However, most of the respondents did not state specifically how they achieved that inclusivity. Some who responded were cognizant of their standing but did not see the imbalance between Whites and Blacks on campus. Faculty were,

however, able to identify opportunities to be inclusive of others in the classroom. In some instances, faculty also reported being aware of their White privilege and how they used that awareness to discuss inequity in society. In addition, some faculty responses focused on highlighting disparities between groups. None of the respondents identified an opportunity to highlight other groups' accomplishments. A range of responses echoed the inclusivity-for-all sentiment to those who felt marginalized despite their attempts to be inclusive. One faculty member stated, "I am not sure that my ethnicity shapes or informs campus diversity work. I know I work hard to be inclusive and have been marginalized and falsely accused on two separate occasions for doing so."

White faculty members' unrecognized roles in creating inclusive environments was evident in some respondents' views that they did not have a role in creating inclusive environments because of their race, as noted in Chapter 4 by a female faculty member who stated that she was "in the majority," while another female faculty member responded, "Not at all. My teaching, research, and service are fueled by my motivation and drive to exceed, not my race." Interestingly, like the question about campus climate for African Americans, one White faculty member expressed that he did not have any special value or make contributions because of his race: "My race probably makes me less likely to be asked to serve on diversity committees and task forces." Here, the respondent articulated the invisible nature of how Whiteness permeates the institution; he did not see diversity as his issue. Others cited that they did not have basis for an opinion regarding the climate for African Americans because of their limited interaction with them. Each of these respondents did not see that they had a role, nor did they take ownership of diversity initiatives on campus. Therefore, the tenet of CRT that addresses

the unique voice of color may present an opportunity to use awareness of White racialized identity to reframe discussions and dismantle oppressive structures with faculty who do not believe they have anything to contribute to the diversity discussion because of limited interactions or their majority status (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Gordon, 2007; Gusa, 2010 Hall, 2006).

- **RQ 3:** How do White faculty consider their own race to inform their teaching, scholarship, and service to the institution?

In the online interviews, some White faculty reported that they did not consider their own race or others' race in teaching, scholarship, or service. A White female faculty member who ethnically identified as Hispanic reflected in Chapter 4 regarding the role of her race in informing her teaching, scholarship or service,

I do not consider my ethnicity in any three of these domains, although I sometimes share cultural and religious experiences from my practice and my family as examples when teaching my students. I do think that my own familial background, since my family members represent diverse faiths, ethnic backgrounds, skin colors, sexual preferences, and disabilities, has informed me of the struggles of those who do not share my beliefs, skin color, sexual preference, or may have a disability.

A White female with over 15 years of service explained, "I don't think much of my race in terms of my teaching, research, and service. I just try to work with my strengths to inform these areas and address any weaknesses I have."

In each of these responses, the purposeful consideration of race was personal. Their inclusivity of others was based on their personal experiences and was therefore

optional. However, some faculty did consider their own race in teaching, service, and scholarship: “I think as a White male consistently discussing diversity in the classroom it demonstrates that this is an issue everyone should be concerned about.” In contrast, other faculty members characterized their application of race in service, research, and scholarship the same way as one White female with over 15 years at State University:

I can use my own unearned privilege to try to advocate but must be careful lest I insult or be too often unaware of my own privilege. I must be careful to listen, even when that is hard. I have started investing more time into teaching myself about race from multiple standpoints.

A White junior female faculty described the role of race in her service to the institution as that of an advocate and purposefully learning about race from different viewpoints. A junior faculty member who viewed it as her job to include others explained how she used racial awareness to inform her pedagogy:

I can show that even though I am a member of the majority, I embrace other cultures. I include issues of diversity in all of the courses I teach in my program as well as my [Liberal Arts] course. I try to get students to view events beyond the lenses of their own cultural identities.

While these faculty do consider their race in teaching and scholarship, they embrace a sense of duty to be inclusive and in some cases consider other perspectives. However, absent is the realization that there is a need for systemic change. In this sense, these faculty are complicit in perpetuating systems that marginalize African American faculty (Applebaum, 2010). To “embrace other cultures” or to “listen” even when it is difficult to do so underscores that there is both an awareness of disparity and a lack of

understanding that becoming more aware or accepting does little to improve the environment for those marginalized by White norms within the institution (Applebaum, 2010; Bonilla-Silva, 2015; Gordon, 2007).

Other faculty respondents also noted unfairness based on race within the institution. These faculty failed to recognize the long-term impact on those who were marginalized by existing structures rooted in the value ascribed to Whiteness (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). The imbalance relative to race and inclusion at the institution will persist as long as some faculty view diversity work as optional or not their problem. That is, faculty in this sense do not have to acknowledge or participate in diversity work. Consequently, they (White faculty) will continue to benefit from existing structures and thus are not compelled to change these structures.

The perception that diversity work is optional was evident in faculty members' assertions that conveyed awareness but not a compelling duty to resolve the problem (Applebaum, 2003, 2010). In addition to diversity work being a low priority, as noted by some faculty, due to time constraints, faculty reported that other issues like gender or professional obligations held greater importance. This sentiment was espoused by one faculty member who reflected in Chapter 4, "It inspires me to want to do more/be better, but I am typically too busy with professional and personal responsibilities to engage at the university." Also, the apparent importance of gender oppression over racial oppression, specifically related to African Americans, is worthy of further examination. As long as White faculty have the option to use their race to inform their teaching, service, and scholarship, systemic change will not occur. Furthermore, if the need to achieve equity for one group (i.e., women) is valued more than the need to achieve



equity for another group, then Whiteness will continue to operate in the background, informing and validating what is acceptable and normative for the institution.

### **Implications**

Institutions dedicate substantial resources to achieving physical or structural diversity and creating inclusive environments. Despite the often seemingly strategic attempts to diversify, the academy has failed to make significant inroads in increasing the number of African Americans in the professoriate (Gusa, 2010; Hall, 2006; Maher & Thompson Tetreault, 2011). Regardless of race, many people within the academy state that they are dedicated to inclusion and diversity. Typically, universities apply a one-size-fits-all model to address diversity and inclusion, which is a barrier to achieving diversity for specific groups because it is not stratified based on different groups' needs (i.e., the reasons that women cannot infiltrate the academic ranks may be different than the reasons African Americans cannot permeate the organization).

The Campus Diversity Study and the Campus Environment Study did not challenge the institution's norms, either. That is, the barometer and systems continue to operate at the institution without question. Institutions will continue to have problems diversifying the professoriate as long as diversity initiatives occur within a framework that was not designed to be diverse or inclusive ((Brown, 2004; Cohen & Kisker, 2010; Schuh et al., 2011). Also, diversity efforts continue to be carried out as siloed events that are not integrated across divisions within the university. Measurable diversity goals were not identified in any of the documents examined as part of this study. The absence of concrete diversity goals suggests that those endeavoring to do diversity work within the academy are not accountable for that work (Pope-Davis & Ottavi, 1992). This possibility

supports some people's perceptions that diversity work is optional or a project done only when there is time. There is a systemic misalignment between institutional commitment to diversity and the context in which the work occurs. This study's findings are consistent with issues identified in the literature. Because of the two prior assessments, connections can be made regarding State University's climate and culture. While the findings are specific to State, they are in many cases consistent with national trends and the findings cited in existing literature. Therefore, this study's findings may be used to inform practice, research, and policy at State University specifically, as well as contribute to the body of knowledge regarding diversity work in higher education as a whole. In addition, infusing future campus-wide leadership and professional development with a curriculum may be considered to assess the intersection of racialized identity, power, and existing structures.

### **Opportunities for Practice**

Diversity work undertaken on college campuses is one arena where underrepresented minorities have a voice. People of color are typically looked at as the only ones with expertise or a valuable perspective on diversity, and Whites are not often asked about their opinions regarding these initiatives (Banks, 1984; Brown, 2004; Pope-Davis & Ottavi, 1992; Turner et al., 2008; Whitfield-Harris & Lockhart, 2017). In the online assessment conducted for this study, some White faculty expressed viewing themselves as having no role or a minimized role in diversity initiatives. Despite the fact that White faculty at State University recognized African American faculty members' experiences are hostile and burdensome, some respondents reported that they would have liked to do more diversity and inclusion work if they had more time. Increasing the

number of African Americans in the academy is a touted institutional goal. However, as the respondents to the online interview noted, gender was perceived to be a bigger issue relative to diversity. Even though women have increased their presence in the academy both nationally and locally in a way not actualized by African Americans, the academy has not addressed its lack of progress relative to people of color. Measurable success relative to the number of African American faculty at State University was not addressed.

Similarly, institutions give themselves permission to use broad language to define diversity and celebrate inroads to diversity for some groups, such as women and Asians (Smith et al., 2004). These successes allow institutions to ignore the continued plight of African Americans in the professoriate. Despite the perception of White women in the academy, in general, Whites are not marginalized by academic systems. To the contrary, their collective power allows for the preservation of structures from which they benefit. Therefore, there is no sense of urgency relative to racial diversity. In this sense, the lack of daily reflection or consideration of race or racism is consistent with the role racism plays in the lives of White people nationally (Kendall, 2002; Reason & Evans, 2007).

Institutions can achieve other important goals such as growth, strategic planning, and fiscal viability without addressing issues of diversity. Diversity initiatives are displayed prominently and serve as a symbolic representation of institutional commitment to diversity. These endeavors are typically low-threat to the powerbase and therefore operate within acceptable boundaries. University race-neutral policies that give the illusion of equity also provide a context for doing diversity work (Cabrera et al., 2016). If institutions truly want to achieve the diversity they espouse, leaders within the organization must make racial diversity a goal with measurable benchmarks.

Moreover, leadership must critically consider what role Whiteness and complicit racism play in thwarting systemic change (Applebaum, 2010; Bonilla-Silva, 2015; Brooks-Immel & Murray, 2017). This analysis can be done within the existing institutional infrastructure. Existing initiatives dedicated to diversity and inclusion may consider purposely applying the tenets of CRT to considering the role of Whiteness in creating social norms and preserving structures (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). For example, expectations of service for faculty of color, whether to support the institution's vision or to provide mentoring to students of color, may be reviewed to identify how unilateral acceptance of White power within the institution helped establish these expectations. In addition, the application of CRT will force leadership and people throughout the institution to challenge complicit racism (Hiraldo, 2010). For example, faculty in the online interview reported seeing or hearing of unfair treatment of Black faculty, but none of the respondents stated that they had purposely addressed the inequity. In their silence, they were complicit (Applebaum, 2007; Brown, 2004; Guess, 2006). The application of CRT will guide those who work within the existing structure to challenge the normalcy of racism. Through exploration, faculty may learn to value African American faculty members' service and scholarship differently or more. Those doing diversity work through a strategic engagement process may probe to identify the role of Whiteness in creating and supporting institutional values, and this same ideological lens can be applied to examine why this work has not achieved the goals the institution has set forth.

## **Research**

The findings from this study serve as a discussion starter. An institution embarking on creating a diverse and inclusive culture may consider asking those whose voices are not heard or considered during the formation of diversity initiatives. Minimally, questions should be reframed to ask about the role of Whiteness in diversity work and the preservation of institutional structures that may marginalize people of color. To delve into unrecognized Whiteness, an opportunity exists for institutions to purposefully engage White faculty in the process of developing their own racial identities. While not used in this study, Helms' (1990) White racial identity framework may be used to help White faculty examine their racial identities. Since diversity work is done at the intuitional level, institutions embarking on it should consider finding out the roles gender and race play within the institution (Hall, 2006). Furthermore, existing efforts within the institution should be evaluated to assess the level of awareness, engagement, and value that all stakeholders place on diversity work, with special emphasis on White faculty. For those who are not aware of diversity initiatives or participate on a limited basis, the reasons for limited awareness and barriers to participation should be explored on the institutional level.

## **Policy**

Changes in policy should be carefully considered, but before institutional policies are changed, an opportunity exists to examine and identify the norms that serve to inform college policies. Arguably, changes in policy that achieve structural change are uncomfortable. Changes in this sense should not be immediate but carried out after deeper assessment, where the institution identifies the barriers to achieving the diversity

goals it seeks. Incremental change may be tolerable. Meaningful and deliberate change, albeit incremental, requires new learning regarding the role of Whiteness in the academy. Therefore, policy change to dismantle oppressive structures should evolve as awareness of racialized Whiteness increases. Through thoughtful and deliberate identification of barriers to change within organizations in general, and higher education specifically, deep cultural and structural changes may occur (Argyris, 1990; Brown, 2004; Fullan, 2001; Guess, 2006; Helms, 1990). As policy adoption becomes deliberate to change cultural norms and power shifts, institutional structures will align with the institution's emerging ideological framework.

### **Leadership**

The researcher's work in higher education provided her with an opportunity to serve the institution. Through service related to diversity work on campus, she has encountered colleagues who are truly dedicated to issues of diversity and equity. From this perspective, these individuals, many of whom are White, provide access to start discussions regarding the role of Whiteness in the preservation of institutional norms and structures. In recent years, initiatives such as decolonization of the curriculum have started discussions that challenge the current ideological framework. In addition to providing a counter-narrative, existing resources such as the various committees and working groups that address diversity provide fora in which some of the additional research relative to racialized Whiteness may be addressed. Moreover, presenting these findings to said committees may provide information that will inform these groups' priorities and direction.

The second area the researcher would address is those White faculty who believe in diversity but are not actively involved in diversity work on campus. The barriers to engagement around diversity in general, and African Americans specifically, and their intersectionality must be examined, recognizing that there may be multiple reasons for indifference related to campus diversity. In other words, complicit racism must be called out and addressed in a manner that does not chastise but recognizes why apathy or indifference occurs. Argyris's (1990) and Applebaum's (2007, 2010) work provides the framework necessary to institute change. First, developing a shared understanding and ownership of the climate for people of color and creating an understanding of power and privilege in the academy will focus institutional efforts in this area. One area that should be addressed is the incongruence between knowing the climate African Americans face and the seeming lack of responsibility to address the inequity. A second area to explore is the lack of priority given to the plight of African American faculty. Faculty in this study reported that they were too busy to consider diversity work or that the issue of gender was more important to them. For State University, institutional data suggest that women have made inroads into the academy and stratify academic rank in a manner that exceeds national trends. While women continue to be marginalized in the academy, their increased presence is measurable.

### **The Change Process**

Some people may challenge or debunk the introduction of racialized Whiteness within the academy. However, it is imperative that leadership (both formal and informal) work on raising awareness and creating understanding about racialized Whiteness before initiating change. Resistance to change is inherent to organizations (Argyris, 1990;

Bolman & Deal, 1991; Fullan, 2007). In some sense, the academy broadly, and State University specifically, may be ripe for facilitating change. First, the institution is committed to diversity, as evidenced by the human and financial resources dedicated to diversity. Second, higher education as an industry is an arena where innovation and change occur often. These two conditions arguably serve as the foundation for deeper-level change to occur. Kezar (2001) examines change within higher education using a holistic approach in which she examines change in six domains: evolutionary, teleological, life cycle, political, social cognition, and cultural. According to Kezar (2001), the process of understanding why change is needed is fundamental to the change process. Therefore, work in this area should focus on the cultural, political, and social cognition domains of change. Given the role of understanding racialized Whiteness, Bolman and Deal's (1991) work may be helpful to help faculty work through issues of fear and personal resistance. In addition, the Human Resource lens Bolman and Deal (1991) offer has the potential to address issues that impede structural change. By questioning and dismantling existing structures, the institution and its change agents are forced to examine contradictions between institutional commitment, individual values/principles, and the campus environment. Through such assessment, State University can embark on a path toward substantive change that reflects double-loop learning which challenges the positionality of espoused beliefs and actions (Argyris & Schon, 1974). The existing workgroups at State University have both the capacity and infrastructure to undertake a change process. However, the Diversity Excellence Committee or a subcommittee of the group needs to prioritize the change process as a strategic initiative to achieve diversity and inclusion relative to African Americans. This



distinction is significant, as the committee's approach is broad in its work to be inclusive and increase diversity of all marginalized groups, and it fails to consider the unique challenges relative to African Americans that persist. Moreover, the current work undertaken by committees is to increase awareness and provide resources. Current diversity initiatives overlay the existing infrastructure without questioning the appropriateness of that framework to achieve the vision. The researcher's role on the main university-wide diversity committee, as well as the Diversity Assessment and Academic Advisory subcommittees, provides her venue to start the discussion regarding the change process.

### **Conclusion**

Higher education has become increasingly diverse over the past 100 years. Women, people of color, and people in the LGBTQ community have integrated and, in many cases, assimilated into the academy. However, not all groups have gained equal access. While certain groups, such as women and some people of color such as Asians, have experienced measurable growth, African Americans have lagged in their presence within the academy. During its formation, access to the academy was restricted to White males of substantial economic means. A confluence of factors, including increased financial aid in the form of grants and loans, programs such as the GI Bill, and the marketization of higher education has provided access for other groups (Cohen & Kisker, 2010). Yet, access to the academy has not meant assimilation into the academy.

While the marginalization of women and people of color in the professoriate is well-documented, African Americans' experiences are unique (Allen et al., 2001; Banks, 1984). No other group has failed to gain access to the academy as have African

Americans. Issues including the academic pipeline, devalued scholarship, increased service burden, tokenism, and unwritten or unspoken rules impact African Americans more than any other group (Banks, 1984; Brown, 2004; Park & Denson, 2009; Turner et al., 2008). To increase the number of African American faculty, the academy must challenge its norms and move into uncomfortable arenas. Moreover, for African American faculty to become truly part of the academy, structural change must occur. Such change must challenge the invisible nature of Whiteness that permeates all levels of the academy. We must challenge colorblind approaches to diversity and challenge those who engage in complicit racism to become active champions for diversity and, more importantly, inclusion.

The purpose of this study was to explore White faculty members' perceptions of diversity and related work using an award-winning institution with a visible commitment to diversity as a case study to explore how White faculty view and value this work. White faculty members' perspectives regarding diversity are far less-often sought than the perspectives of marginalized groups. Because of higher education's historic racist and classist foundation, the remnants of racism exist today, operating quietly in the margins of the academy. Whites within the academy hold unchallenged, and in many cases unrecognized, power within higher education. White women specifically fail to see their progress compared to the progress of African Americans within the academy. In addition, some do not recognize how they benefit from the status of their Whiteness over their gender. The importance of normalized Whiteness continues to benefit White female faculty so much that they view gender as oppressive, even when they (White women) recognize unequal treatment of people of color. The normalcy of Whiteness is not

challenged or recognized (Applebaum, 2003). Consequently, structures based in White superiority are protected by their perpetuation within the academy (Applebaum, 2010; Brown, 2004).

The potential implications of evaluating the academy's diversity work from a developing sense of racialized Whiteness has the potential to compel Whites within the academy to question their power and complicity in the perpetuation of structures that marginalize African Americans and other groups within the academy. However, for change to occur, those with power (and those who benefit the most from existing structures) must be willing to address their fear of losing power and position. Moreover, as a group, Whites must address how colorblind and other approaches toward diversity support the preservation of existing structures. The change process will be slow and incremental. However, before engaging in this process, institutions should embark on the slow and deliberate work of self-reflection. Through this process, the academy can identify barriers to achieving diversity, recognize complicit racism, and contextualize existing barriers within structures that were not designed to support or improve diversity.

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## Appendix

### Online Open-Ended Interview Questions

1. Please list and/or describe any campus activities that you are aware of that specifically address diversity on campus.
2. Please describe/list any service or committees that you participate in that address diversity on campus
  - a. Describe your role.
3. From your perspective, describe our campus climate for African American faculty specifically.
4. Please describe your racial background.
5. How does your racial background shape or inform campus diversity work?
6. How do you consider your own race to inform teaching, research, and service to the institution?
7. To what extent and how do believe some groups (based on race or gender) have systemic advantages over the other groups within the university?