EXPLORING THE EXPERIENCES WITH AUTHENTICITY OF BLACK NEW STUDENT AFFAIRS PROFESSIONALS WORKING AT PREDOMINATELY WHITE INSTITUTIONS

by

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(Under the Direction of Merrily S. Dunn)

ABSTRACT

The study explored the experiences with authenticity of Black new student affairs professionals and how their identity status influences their experiences at predominately White institutions. The existing scholarly literature has focused on Black professionals in higher education in general; very few studies have focused on authenticity and Black professionals at predominately White institutions. The research questions that explored this phenomenon was: (1) What are the Black new student affairs professionals' perceptions of being authentic?, (2) How do Black new student affairs professionals' experience their identities at a predominately White institution?, and (3) What strategies do Black new student affairs professionals' use to succeed at a predominately White institution? A qualitative approach was used to provide an understanding of the experiences with authenticity of these Black new student affairs professionals. The study included eight Black new student affairs professionals working at predominately White institutions across the United States. The data revealed experiences with being authentic, racial battle fatigue, burden of identities, tokenism, and feelings of separation while navigating their professional identity at a predominately White institution. This study also

highlighted how these Black new student affairs professionals experience resiliency, advocacy, and community building to contribute to their success as professionals.

INDEX WORDS: Authenticity, Black Man, Black Woman, New Professional, Predominately White Institution, Student Affairs

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the past, present, and future generations of Black student affairs professionals. Those who have positive and negative experiences as a Black professional at a predominately White institution. Thank you for trusting me with your narratives about your lived-experience with authenticity at a PWI.

This study is also dedicated to my mother, Regena Y. Taylor, I do what I do to always make you proud! I love you mommy!!!

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

"Don't let the expectations and opinions of other people affect your decisions. It is your life, not theirs. Do what matters most to you; do what makes you feel alive and happy. Do not let the expectations and ideas of others limit who you are. If you let others tell you who you are, you are living their reality — not yours. There is more to life than pleasing people. There is much more to life than following others' prescribed paths. There is so much more to life than what you experience right now. You need to decide who you are for yourself. Become a whole being. Adventure."
— Roy T. Bennett

I was acutely aware of the lack of Black staff working at predominately White institutions (PWIs). However, when I searched for my first full-time professional post-graduate school experience, I intentionally applied to work at PWIs. During my undergraduate college years, there was approximately five professional Black staff in the Division of Student Affairs that I can recall, not including the graduate assistants. For my master's program, I was grateful to witness leadership of a division from a Black man serving as the Vice President of Student Affairs. As a Black new student affairs professional working in residence life at a private, faith-based predominately White institution in the southeastern region of the United States, I felt a sense of community, as there were a number of Black professionals across the division.

I remember talking with a co-worker about his experience and how he has been able to feel like he can be himself as the only Black man in his department. He explained various levels of authenticity, support, challenges, and barriers. He also shared his excitement for the increasing number of Black new professionals joining the institution, as he explained, "it's great seeing people who look like me." I cannot recall the basis of the conversation and flow, but I remember those words, "it's great seeing people who look like me." I did not immediately

process why seeing people who look like you in the workplace was so important as a professional. However, as I remained in student affairs and began to supervise Black staff, I have a better understanding of how I experience identities through intentional reflection of being authentic.

As years progressed as a new professional, I was beginning to develop authentically in the workplace. Student affairs conferences and institutes (specifically New Professionals Institute), interactions with co-workers, and advice from mentors and supervisors began to shape me as a professional, and more important, as a person. Hence, the desire to explore further Black new student affairs professionals working at predominately White institution.

Similar to the truth of when I was a new professional, I hear stories of how Black new student affairs professionals, on similar campuses, are unable to be their authentic selves due to people's feelings of loneliness, discomfort, and safety. Recognizing the positive and negative experiences of Black new professionals' authenticity, I designed a research study to explore and share these authentic experiences.

Specifically, I am interested in the experiences with authenticity of Black new professionals working at predominately White institutions. I approached this study from a constructivist paradigm (Jones et al., 2014; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The constructivist paradigm will guide the research as it allows for meaning to emerge as participants share their stories (Jones et al., 2014).

Statement of the Problem

Achieving authenticity involves owning one's personal experiences, emotions, needs, wants preferences, or beliefs and responding with personal values, rather than neglecting them (Snyder & Lopez, 2002). Student affairs professionals face a dilemma when authenticity and

professional identity conflict with how they see themselves in the field. Such conflicts can be challenging for new professionals, specifically Black new professionals. Authenticity, being true to oneself, has been demonstrated to associate with several positive psychological experiences such as life satisfaction, general well-being (Goldman & Kernis, 2002; Wood et al., 2008), and relationship satisfaction (Lopez & Rice, 2006).

As a psychological construct, the study of authenticity has primarily been neglected (Wood et al., 2008). However, authenticity has been studied and discussed from different perspectives, such as a stable personality trait (Goldman & Kernis, 2002; Wood et al., 2008), a situational state (Sheldon et al., 1997), relationship satisfaction (Lopez & Rice, 2006), and a leadership style (Walumbwa et al., 2008). Previous empirical psychological studies have conceptualized authenticity as a stable trait. Lenton et al. (2016) prompted a new area of research around authenticity as a situational state that varies depending on the changing situations and social identities. Situational and state theorists demonstrated that individuals reported different personality characteristics and levels of felt authenticity when asked to imagine themselves taking up different social roles (Sheldon et al., 1997). People exhibit different personalities and behaviors under different situations, and that experience of authenticity may depend on the most salient identities in a given context (Sheldon et al., 1997).

Purpose of the Study

This study explored the experiences with authenticity of Black new student affairs professionals. It provided qualitative data on the ways race, gender, and sexual orientation identity status shapes how Black new student affairs professionals function in their psychosocial environment. It sought to show positive and negative experiences with authenticity of Black

new student affairs professionals working at predominately White institutions and give attention to perspective that is often over-looked.

The findings of this study can be applied to individuals who identify as Black or African-American who aspire to be professionals in the field of student affairs at a predominately White institution and how race, gender, and sexual orientation identity plays a role in their authentic experiences personally and professionally. By highlighting the experiences of being Black new student affairs professionals, this study can be beneficial for future Black professionals to understand the demands of the work, the importance of being grounded in their self-concept of being authentic, and what it takes to be successful in this field. Future Black professionals in student affairs can utilize the data in current research to assist in their success as a Black professional working at predominately White institutions.

The study can also provide insights to supervisors of Black professionals on how to recruit, retain, and foster success among Black student affairs professionals working at predominately White institutions. Furthermore, this research may inspire institutions to think about how to develop inclusive campus-wide policies, hiring practices, and support initiatives for Black student affairs professionals. By identifying how race, gender, and sexual orientation are just a few identity constructs that shape authenticity of Black new student affairs professionals and understanding how they respond and cope with the working at predominately White institutions.

Research Questions

The following three research questions guided this study in exploring experiences with authenticity of Black new student affairs professionals working at predominately White institutions.

1. What are the Black new student affairs professionals' perceptions of being authentic at a predominately White institution?
2. How do Black new student affairs professionals' experience their identities at a predominately White institution?
3. What strategies do Black new student affairs professionals' use to succeed at a predominately White institution?

Significance of Study

The personal and professional experiences of Black new student affairs professionals employed at predominately White institutions (PWIs) served as the focus of this study. The study explored the experiences with authenticity and the intersections of identity related to race, gender, and sexual orientation. By using collective narratives, Delgado & Stefancics' (2001) Critical Race Theory (CRT), and Schlossberg's (1989) theory of marginality and mattering, the majority population will be able to understand the experiences of Black new student affairs professionals working at a PWI. It is crucial to recognize internalized racial oppression among Black people by which individuals adopt the racially oppressive beliefs and behaviors enacted toward Black people in the larger society (Bailey et al., 2011).

A significant body of literature documents Black faculty experiences within PWIs in the United States (Griffin et al., 2014; Patton & Catching, 2009). They are much less known about Black staff and their experiences at a PWI. Therefore, there are limited research studies regarding Black staff in student affairs, specifically related to authenticity and Black new student affairs professionals. Black student affairs administrators play a significant role in the development of their race as well as other underrepresented groups. All leaders within postsecondary education should care about the experiences of Black new student affairs

professionals because their experiences of racism, prejudice, lack of quality mentorship, discrimination, exclusion, and tokenism can and do negatively affect their retention, satisfaction, and belonging (Husband, 2016; Louis & Freeman, 2015; West, 2017).

Further, this information can be beneficial in understanding how to better recruit, support, and retain these professionals. In addition, each narrative provides an unique experiences at different types of PWIs that can be useful for Black professionals in higher education who aspire to embark on careers in student affairs..

Guiding Frameworks

I used dual guiding frameworks for this study: Critical Race Theory (CRT) (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017) and Schlossberg's theory of marginality and mattering (Schlossberg, 1989). Together, these frameworks highlight the lived experiences of the authenticity of Black new professionals in student affairs. These frameworks are essential as they complement each other. I anticipate participants in the study will be able to verbalize their experiences of authenticity because of their race, explicitly connecting the tenets of CRT. Marginality and mattering will provide the familiarity of language to conjure the breadth and scope of their experiences. This study is vital for PWI administrators as they develop and deliver resources for Black staff as well as understanding the lived experiences of Black new student affairs professionals.

Research Methods

To accurately address the authenticity of Black new student affairs professionals, I used qualitative research methods. Specifically, narrative inquiry serves as a methodological framework to understand the participants' lived experiences. Creswell (2007) stated that "we conduct qualitative research when we want to empower individuals to share their stories, hear their voices, and minimize the power relationships that exist between the researcher and the

participants in a study" (p. 40). Sharing the stories or providing a voice for Black new professionals is the essence of the study. As a result, the narrative inquiry will allow me to explore the authentic personal and professional experiences of Black new professionals working at a PWI.

Definition of Terms

Authenticity- individuals, considered authentic strive to align their actions with their core values and beliefs with the hope of discovering and then acting in sync with their true selves (Sussex Publishers, n.d.). Jim Clemmer (1999) describes being authentic as "ringing true to me" (p. 65).

African American/Black- Ethnically and racially identifying terms can be challenging to define and use due to concerns of being politically correct and non-offensive to marginalized groups (Newport, 2007). Therefore, in the context of this study, the terms *African American* and *Black* will be used interchangeably to describe the participants of the study. Participants of this study will self-report themselves as *African American* or *Black*, understanding that those terms refer to having African descent or ancestry (Ghee, 1990).

New professional (NP): A professional staff member with one to five years of professional experience in student affairs (Amey & Ressor, 2009).

Predominately White Institutions (PWIs)- abbreviated as PWI or PWIs, predominately White institutions are colleges and universities where 50% or more of the overall student population is White (Brown & Dancy, 2010).

Summary

Black professionals play a significant role in the growth of diversity at institutions of higher education. However, retaining Black staff can be challenging due to race, gender, and sexual orientation discrimination. This qualitative study explored the experiences with

authenticity of Black new student affairs professionals working at predominately White institutions. Narrative inquiry, CRT (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017), and Schlossberg's (1989) theory of marginality and mattering, served as the methodological and interpretative lenses. Participants had the opportunity to share and interpret their own stories of authenticity and experiences of being a Black new student affairs professionals working at a predominately White institution.

This study is presented in five chapters. The current chapter, chapter one, provides an introduction that details the needs of this study, its purpose, the research questions, its significance, its theoretical frameworks, research-design assumptions, and definitions of terms. Chapter two, the literature review, will explore the literature on authenticity, social identity theories such as race, gender, and sexual orientation, as well as campus environments. Chapter three, the methods section, provides explanations for the purpose of the study, the research question and design, a description of the target population and sample, procedures and how participants were selected and protected. It also details the data collection process, provides data analysis, role of the researcher, and ethical considerations. Chapter four highlights the unique experiences of each participant in this study. In addition, this chapter explored the emerging themes that the participants represent. Finally, chapter five restates the summary of the results, discusses results in detail, provides conclusion, implications for practice, and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Honesty and transparency make you vulnerable. Be honest and transparent anyway.

- Mother Teresa

This study explored the experiences with authenticity of Black new student affairs professionals working at predominately White institutions (PWIs). This study is at the individual level of analysis. It focuses on how Black professionals, one to five years in the student affairs field, define authenticity, experience their identities, and strategies used to succeed as a Black new student affairs professional. I have identified the various constructs to facilitate this study, including (a) new professional, (b) race, (c) gender, (d) sexual orientation, and (e) institution type. These constructs served as the basis for exploring the experiences of Black professionals in student affairs.

This chapter covers three major areas: literature on authenticity, identity development theories related to race, gender, sexual orientation, and racial and ethnic challenges at PWIs. The social identities mentioned are not exhaustive but a few salient identities to frame how identities intersect. For this study, Black and African-American are used interchangeably.

Introduction

Across psychological theorists, definitions and ideas of authenticity vary. The varies can best be attributed to whether authenticity is appropriately conceptualized as an individual-difference variable or a relational construct (Lopez & Rice, 2006). Many of the preliminary research on authenticity by Harter et al (1996) operationalized authenticity as "acting in ways

that reflect the real me or my true self" versus "acting in ways that are *not* the real me or my true self" (Lopez & Rice, 2006, p. 363).

The concept of authenticity needs to be explored before we can understand its nature in relationships. There are many words used to describe or define authenticity. Merriam-Webster defines authenticity as true to one's personality, spirit, or character (Merriam-Webster, n.d). The Oxford dictionary definition of authentic is of undisputed origin; genuine (Oxford, n.d). However, this open expression which may seem effortless, often is more difficult in the professional realm. Jim Clemmer (1999) describes being authentic as "ringing true to me" (p. 65). Clemmer (1999) describes the path of authenticity as a lifelong journey to get to know oneself. Learning self involves examining our thoughts and actions. Gardner et al. (2005) state that being authentic is to honor who you are. Thus, much of the literature describes a focus on self-awareness as a key to authenticity.

Understanding Authenticity

Maslow (1968) suggests that authenticity occurs when individuals discover their inner nature of sufficiently satisfying higher-order psychological needs. Essentially, after gratifying their physiological needs, individuals then satisfy their "being" or growth-oriented needs. Focusing on growth-oriented needs presumably results in acceptance of one's true or intrinsic nature, furthering one's path toward self-actualization (Maslow, 1968). Understanding this view, authenticity depends upon knowledge and understanding of one's needs.

Similarly, Rogers (1961) emphasized that authenticity emerges when congruence between one's self-concept and immediate experiences. To be one's true self involves a sense of connectedness between one's self-knowledge and experiences. Authenticity is rooted in one's self. Authenticity may be conceptualized as a dynamic process of discovering and exploring

one's potential, emotion, motivation, and so forth to accept with meaning or purpose. When true self is congruent with experience, one becomes fulfilled.

Although much has been written about authenticity historically, very little empirical research has examined it directly. However, some research has focused on establishing what outcomes emerge when a false self is represented. This research has typically examined behavioral aspects of inauthentic experiences. For example, such people may *monitor* (observe and control) their self-presentation and expressive behavior (Synder, 1974). According to Synder (1974), the goals of self-monitoring may be (a) to communicate accurately one's true emotional state using an intensified expressive presentation; (b) to communicate accurately an arbitrary emotional state which need not be congruent with actual emotional experience; (c) to conceal an inappropriate emotional state adaptively and appear unresponsive an unexpressive; (d) to conceal an inappropriate emotional state adaptively and appear to be experiencing an appropriate one; (e) to appear to be experiencing some emotion when one experiences nothing and nonresponse is inappropriate.

Researchers continue to examine further the congruence between one's core self and behaviors. Deci & Ryan (1985) researched the importance of need satisfaction in questioning authenticity (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Their research continued with the self-determination theory (SDT). SDT is a theory of human motivation and personality that concerns people's inherent growth tendencies and innate psychological needs. Research on SDT evolved from studies comparing intrinsic and extrinsic motives. According to Deci & Ryan (2000), three psychological conditions to motivate self to initiate behavior. These needs are said to be universal, innate, and psychological and include the need for (1) competence, (2) relatedness, and (3) autonomy (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

Further explaining competence is to provide positive feedback, meaning positive feedback leads to a fulfillment of proficiency. Relatedness can best be summed up as connecting with others. And autonomy is giving people a choice to follow their inner interests (Deci & Ryan, 2000). These needs are central to one's core to be authentic.

Four Components of Authenticity

Overall, with other research studies, authenticity is linked to psychological adjustment. Specifically, authenticity involves the following discriminable components: (1) *awareness, (2) unbiased processing, (3) behavioral action, and (4) relational orientation* (Goldman & Kernis, 2002; Kernis, 2003). The first component, *awareness*, refers to awareness of and trust in one's motives, feelings, desires, and self-relevant cognitions. It includes, but is not limited to, being aware of one's strengths and weaknesses, characteristics, emotions, knowledge about one's inherent contradictory self-aspects, and their roles in behavior (Goldman & Kernis, 2002). An important factor to mention about awareness is that it is not reflected in self-concepts wherein inherent polarities are unrecognized or denied (Campbell, 1990). Goldman & Kernis (2002) suggest that awareness involves knowledge and acceptance of one's multifaceted and potentially contradictory self-aspects (i.e., introverted, and extraverted) instead of rigid acceptance of only those self-aspects deemed internally consistent with one's overall self-concept. Individuals with a positive self-concept believe in their self-worth (high self-esteem). They think they generally can accomplish things (high self-efficacy), are emotionally stable, and think they're in control of their lives (Judge, Locke, Durham, & Kluger, 1998). In supporting linking positive self-concept with awareness, the awareness component of authenticity is positively and significantly associated with self-esteem (Goldman & Kernis, 2002).

A second component, *unbiased processing*, refers to the processing of self-relevant information. It involves "not denying, distorting, exaggerating or ignoring private knowledge, internal experiences, and externally based evaluative information" (Kernis, 2003, p. 14). unbiased processing of self-relevant information. Csikszentmihalyi (2003) suggests that individuals who exhibit unbiased processing of self-relevant information should interpret task feedback and estimate their skill level better. Kernis (2003, p. 14) notes that unbiased processing,

> Involves objectivity and acceptance of one's positive and negative aspects, attributes, and qualities. Some people, for instance, have great difficulty acknowledging that they may not be very skillful at a particular activity. Rather than accept their poor performance, they may rationalize its implications, belittle its importance, or completely fabricate a "new" score. Others may have difficulty accepting and incorporating the various "ground" aspects of personal qualities……

Kernis's (2003) views on the unbiased processing stage of authenticity are consistent with ego defense mechanisms; inauthentic individuals seek "clearly inferior opponents" and avoid situations that may invalidate their ability.

A third component is a *behavior or action*. Authenticity means acting according to one's values, preferences, and needs instead of working merely to please others or to attain rewards or avoid punishments by acting "falsely" (Kernis, 2003, p. 14). However, instances may exist where individuals may present alternative presentations of self. Authentic individuals were sensitive to “fit” between expressing true self and the environment they are a part of (Kernis, 2003). Theoretically, authentic behavior involves behavior that reflects self-determination (i.e., autonomy and choice) instead of controlled behavior (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

The fourth component of authenticity is a *relational orientation*. Relational orientation refers to valuing and striving for achieving openness and truthfulness in relationships. Goldman & Kernis (2002) stated, “relational authenticity involves an active process of self-disclosure and the development of mutual intimacy and trust so that intimates will see one’s true self-aspects, both good and bad” (p. 19). To achieve authentic relationships, one must be genuine in building relationships with others and not “false” in their attempts to be close to others (Kernis, 2003).

Authentic Identities

This portion of the literature review recognizes identity and identity development theories as they have been constructed in higher education throughout the years. It is essential to explore the roots of theories surrounding identity development and how they define or make up an individual over time. The purpose of this portion of the review of the literature, there are three categories of identity development that are salient in my research focus. First, I will describe a new professional. My research needs to lay out the new professional and the "needs" based on research in higher education. Then, I will explore identity development theories related to race, gender, and sexual orientation.

New Professionals in Student Affairs

There are hundreds of new professionals that represent the present and future of the student affairs field. Many may have graduated from a master's preparation program in student affairs, higher education, or equivalent to prepare them for the profession. Some may have previously worked before entering the profession, while others embark on their first professional job post master's program.

New professionals in student affairs, often referred to as entry-level professionals, are commonly defined as individuals working within a student affairs unit at a college or university

who possess fewer than five years of professional experience (Renn & Hodges, 2007). However, some research studies delimit the number of years of a new professional. Because new professionals represent the present and future of the student affairs profession, research has increasingly focused on the transition and needs of the group.

New professionals are taught academic foundations for practice in student affairs and how to solve job-related problems they may encounter. Yet, instruction on professional and personal needs, environments (i.e., work and city, state), and institutional culture are not always discussed. Emerging professionals embark on a journey that may or may nurture their growth in the field. Marsh (2001) states, "It is through the first professional job experience that the young adult learns about the requirements of work and they differ from the demands of graduate school in terms of productivity, reliability, and decision-making" (p. 47). Few studies have examined the needs and struggles of new professionals to transition their authentic selves from learning to a priority of productivity and performance.

Few studies state that new professionals must continue in the learning process (Barr, 1997). Janosik and Creamer (2003) describe the transition as a complicated rite of passage. Research suggests this identity shift from graduate student to professional can be filled with unique challenges (Dean, Saunders, Thompson, & Cooper, 2011; Strayhorn, 2009). These challenges may not be limited to just one, but all may impact a new professional's authentic identity. Barr's (1990) research identified five tasks new professionals face: (a) obtaining and using information, (b) establishing expectations for performance, (c) translating theory to practice, (d) mapping the environment, and (e) continuing professional growth. Renn and Jessup-Anger (2008) outlined significant challenges faced by new challenges: creating a

professional identity, navigating a new institutional culture, learning from their experiences, and receiving guidance from mentors.

Often the responsibility to develop as a professional becomes the sole province of the new professional. "As a new professional, a great deal of information will need to be mastered in a relatively short period" (Barr, 1997, p. 491). While new professionals need to take an active role in their development, research shows that this combination of supervisors and new professional responsibility facilitates more remarkable growth. The supervisor and employee (i.e., new professional) must take responsibility for competency development, communication, and professional growth (Janosik & Creamer, 2003).

Identity and Identity Development Theories

Identity development theories have been constructed in higher education for years. Scholars have been working with the concept of identity development to enhance learning and development since the landmark document "The Student Personnel Point of View (SPPV)" (Patton et al., 2016). Also, as stated in Patton et al. (2016), the earliest identity models used in higher education came from Erik Erikson (1968) and Arthur Chickering (1969), which provided a foundation in student affairs. Erikson's perspective on development is summed up in the life span eight-stage model of human development. Erikson's first four stages capture childhood and one's transition into adolescence and emerging adulthood. The fifth stage represents identity development, and the remaining three stages represent the culmination of adulthood (Patton et al., 2016). Chickering's (1969) earlier research has been revised with new findings with his work with Linda Reisser. Chickering & Reisser (1993) developed seven vectors to describe the psychosocial issues that students in college face, including; (1) developing competence, (2) managing emotions, (3) moving through autonomy toward interdependence, (4) developing

mature interpersonal relationships, (5) establishing identity, (6) developing purpose, and (7) developing integrity (Patton et al., 2016). This pioneering research will guide the review of the literature below regarding race and ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation.

Race

In this section, I explored identity development theories related to race and ethnicity by Atkinson, Morten, and Sue (1998), Sue and Sue (2003), Cross and Fhagen-Smith (2001), Torres (2003), and Phinney (1990). These studies reveal that race does play a vital role in the identity formation of an individual.

The racial identity development of people of color has attracted many researchers. Atkinson, Morten, and Sue (1998) developed the racial and cultural identity development (RCID) model. This model comprises five stages. Sue and Sue (2003) later revised this model (Sue and Sue, 2016). The reformed model is a framework to understand the attitudes and behaviors of diverse people. The five stages are described in: *conformity, dissonance, resistance and immersion, introspection,* and *integrative awareness*. At each level, there are four corresponding beliefs and attitudes. These beliefs and attitudes are an integral part of identity. They are manifested by (a) the self, (b) others of the same minority, (c) others of another minority, and (d) majority individuals (Sue and Sue, 2016). As cited in Patton et al. (2016), in *conformity* level, individuals' identity with White culture internalizes negative stereotypes about themselves or their racial/ethnic group, with no desire to learn about their cultural heritage. *Dissonance* is described as when individuals' experiences contradict their White worldview. Individuals begin to question the racial discrepancies and therefore have an increased interest in their racial/ethnic group. *Resistance* and *immersion* involve constantly exploring one's own racial/ethnic identity. Individuals resist White culture and immerse themselves in their

racial/ethnic group to form a new identity. In the *introspection* stage, individuals' identity the negative qualities amongst their own racial/ethnic group and explore ways to share their unique identity. The last stage, *integrative awareness*, integrates their knowledge and experiences into their new identity whereby they accept themselves, appreciate their contributions, and balance their unique identity with other identities (Patton et al., 2016).

The RCID model serves as a foundation for understanding the stages and orientations found in other identity development models (Patton et al., 2016). Cross and Fhagen-Smith (2001) identified six sectors of development: (1) *infancy and childhood in early Black identity development,* (2) *preadolescence,* (3) *adolescence,* (4) *early adulthood,* (5) *adult nigrescence, and* (6) *nigrescence recycling*. In sector one, *infancy and childhood*, includes family income, traditions, practices; social networks; and historical events that contribute to the socialization experiences of Black children. In sector two, *preadolescenc*e, development is fostered through parental teachings and their enforcement outside the home. In sector three, *adolescenc*e, Cross, and Fhagen-Smith indicated as they enter adolescence, many Black children accept their identity formation because of the socialization they received to this point. Adolescence reaches an identity status to determine their Black self-concept based on their own beliefs. As stated in Patton et al., their authenticated identity may reflect low race salience, high race salience, or internalized racism. The first three sectors that emerged in preadolescence and explored during adolescence are presented in early adulthood. In sector four, *early adulthood*, adults have established a clear reference group orientation that values race and Black culture. Sector five represents Cross's (1991) original model, *nigrescence* (Patton et al., 2016). Nigrescence involves four stages: pre-encounter, encounter, immersion-emersion, and internalization. The

final sector, *nigrescence recycling*, occurs when one's preexisting Black self-concept is called into question (Patton et al., 2016).

There is no universal ethnic identity model for all Black or African American people. The ethnic identity of African American and Afro-Caribbean college students is framed in Torres's (2003) ethnic identity development model on Latino students' (Patton et al., 2016). Torres found that there are two salient categories of ethnic development, situating identity and influences of change. As stated in Patton et al. (2016), conditions for situating identity are the environment where students grew up, family influence and generational status, and self-perceptions of status in society. Within the two categories, there are three prominent influences: the environment where they grew up, family influence and generational status, and self-perception and position in society (Torres, 2003). Also, two possible processes can signal a change in ethnic development: cultural dissonance and changes in relationships (Torres, 2003).

Phinney (1990) developed a model on ethnic identity based on Erikson's theory of development. Phinney identified three stages, focusing on the process of ethnic identity formation: unexamined ethnic identity, ethnic identity search, and ethnic identity achievement. In stage one, unexamined ethnic identity, individuals have not explored their ethnicity. In stage two, ethnic identity search, individuals reach this level when they come across a situation that causes them to explore their ethnic identity. In stage three, ethnic identity achievement, individuals begin to accept, internalize, and have a clearer understanding of one's ethnicity (Phinney, 1990). In these stages, the exploration of an individual is to become aware of self and ethnic issues.

In conclusion, a common factor in racial and ethnic development is the environment. As cited in Patton et al. (2016), Root (1995) identified several external factors that influence racial

and ethnic development, which are: the history of race within one's geographical region, generation, sexual orientation, gender, class, family functioning, family socialization, community, personal attitudes, and physical appearance. Any of these external factors can alter an individual's authentic self. The various models mentioned are foundational theories on how one views an individual from a racial and ethnic lens.

Gender

In this section, I described identity development theories related to gender by Lev (2004), Bussey (2011), Bem (1983), Downing and Roush (1985), Davis (2002), Saltzburg and Davis (2010), and Singh et al. (2014). These studies reveal how gender does play a vital role in the identity formation of an individual.

The relationships between sex, gender, and gender identity are essential to understand identity formation. In Lev's (2004) binary model, "if a person is a male, he is a man; if a person is a man, he is masculine, if a person is a masculine male man, he will be attracted to a feminine female woman; if a person is a female, she is a woman; if a person is a woman, she is feminine; if a person is a feminine female woman, she will be attracted to a masculine male man" (p. 94). The binary model is linked to one another by assumptions of causal relationships. According to Lev, these concepts overlap and influence each other in people's development. Lev's conceptualization of binary applies to sex, gender identity, gender role, and sexual orientation. Lev's study, one of many, establishes that gender is an area of identity formation that impacts one to be authentic.

Bussey's (2011) model is a guide to understand personal, behavioral, and environmental influences on gender identity. "Gender identity involves the self-representation of a gendered self, mediated by self-regulatory processes. Gender identity is informed by knowledge of one's

biological sex and of the beliefs associated with gender, how one is perceived and treated by others depending on one's gender, and an understanding of the collective basis of gender" (Bussey, 2011, p. 608). Gender identity involves more than acquiring knowledge about one's gender; it is an ongoing process across the life span and as society views gender over time (Bussey, 2011).

Bem's (1983) gender schema theory focused on how a person approaches gender individually and societal expectations. According to Bem, "girls and boys have typically come to prefer activities defined by the culture as appropriate for their sex and also to prefer same-sex peers" (p. 598). For example, societal expectations or norms reinforce that you should embrace sports, firetrucks, and masculinity as a young boy. As a young girl, you should embrace pink as a color, barbie dolls, and femininity. Bem's study is essential to this literature review because it focused on societal expectations concerning gender, which impact one's authentic self.

Downing and Roush (1985) introduced a model of feminist identity development for women. They used Cross's earlier model on Black identity development as a guide to their research because of its "heuristic value" (p. 698). Their analysis identified five stages: (1) passive acceptance, (2) revelation, embeddedness-emanation, synthesis, and active commitment. Like Cross's model, a woman in Downing and Roush's identity development is based on experiences and encounters in these stages. The moments in these stages are linked to establishing an authentic identity.

Davis (2002) explored the social construction of men's identity development. Five themes emerged from the study: (1) the importance of self-expression, (2) code of caveats, (3) fear of femininity, (4) confusion about and distancing from masculinity, and (5) a sense of challenge without support (Davis, 2002). Davis found that men did not often think about their

gender roles, and they felt unsupported by gender roles and expectations. This is important for men to navigate as they become more entuned with themselves.

Non-binary and gender-expansive individuals are essentially an understudied population. Despite the number of people identifying as non-binary, much of the transgender-related academic literature available focuses on transgender men and women. One reason for this gap in research is the conflation of sexual orientation and gender identity (Fiani & Han, 2018). Satlzburg and Davis (2010) sought to further inquire into the experiences of non-binary people. The researchers' participants reported experiences of feeling isolated and alone in their non-binary experience and described the limited awareness that their mental health providers had regarding transgender experiences. In a study conducted by Singh, Meng, and Hansen (2014), the importance of language and defining one's gender arose. One of the key themes the researchers present is the importance the transgender people in their study (both binary and non-binary place upon the "ability to self-define and theorize one's gender" (p. 211). The approaches employed by Singh et al. (2014) and Saltzbug and Davis (2010) present opportunities for participants to set the terms used to describe and understand them, rather than expecting participants' identities and experiences to be pre-determined.

In conclusion, as people move through their development, they gain a greater understanding of self and gender. People often struggle with the concept of femininity and masculinity and living in the societal norms that have been set. Who sets these rules? As individuals continue to work with gender identity, it will impact who they are. If a person is a man, he can be masculine or feminine; if a person is a woman, she can be feminine or masculine. The achievement of commitment and acceptance of self will lead to a more authentic self.

Sexual Orientation

In this section, I examined identity development theories related to sexual orientation by Dillon, Worthington, & Moradi (2011), Worthington, Savoy, Dillon, and Vernaglia (2002), Cass (1979), D'Augelli (1994), Morales (1989), and McCarn and Fassinger (1996). These studies reveal how one's sexual orientation does play a key role in identity formation.

Dillon, Worthington, & Moradi (2011) state that sexual identity development is a "universal process" (p. 649). Sexual identity, sexual orientation, and sexual orientation identity are used interchangeably with nonspecific ways to the same meaning: the sense individuals as gay, lesbian, bisexual, heterosexual, asexual, or other terms (Patton et al., 2016). Dillon et al. attribute sexual orientation identity as "sexual behavior with men or women; social affiliations with lesbian gay, bisexual (LGB) individuals, or heterosexual individuals and communities; emotional attachment preferences for men or women; gender role and identity" (p. 650). There is a combination of factors that contribute to sexual identity as part of one's authentic self.

Worthington, Savoy, Dillon, & Vernaglia (2002) studied and developed a model for heterosexual identity development. Worthington et al.'s (2002) study suggests that one's progression through sexual identity development is influenced by biological, psychological, and social factors. There are six influences identified on heterosexual identity development: *biology, sexual prejudice and privilege, culture, microsocial context, religious orientation, and gender norms* and *socialization*. Additionally, this model discussed that the biopsychosocial context is divided into *individual identity* and *social identity*. Individual identity comprises perceived sexual needs, preferred sexual activities, preferred characteristics of sexual partners, sexual values, sexual orientation identity, and preferred modes of sexual expression. Social identity comprises group membership identity and attitudes toward sexual minorities (Worthington et al., 2002). These influencers and factors contribute to heterosexual identity development.

Cass (1979) developed one of the early studies of LGB identity development. Cass's linear model incorporates cognitive (knowledge of self) and affective components (feelings toward self). The six-stage model is *identity confusion, identity comparison, identity tolerance, identity acceptance, identity pride*, and *identity synthesis* (Cass, 1979). In stage one, *identity confusion*, generally individuals have assumed identity with the heterosexual or gender-conforming majority. The individual comes into question with their identity through thoughts, emotions, physical reactions, and other experiences. In stage two, *identity comparison*, involves social alienation, a feeling of being out of place or difference. The individual will create strategies to deal with differences. In stage three, *identity tolerance* is where an individual exemplifies a level of commitment. The individual may seek out the LGB subculture for support. In stage four, *identity acceptance* involves more interaction or connection with the LGB community. The fifth stage, *identity pride*, is where the individual identifies within the LGB community. In stage six, *identity synthesis* is where one's LGB identity becomes one aspect of the self instead of an overriding independent identity. The newly developed identity is part of many identities (Cass, 1979). Cass's stages of identity development are not the same for everyone, and not everyone will move into each stage, if at all.

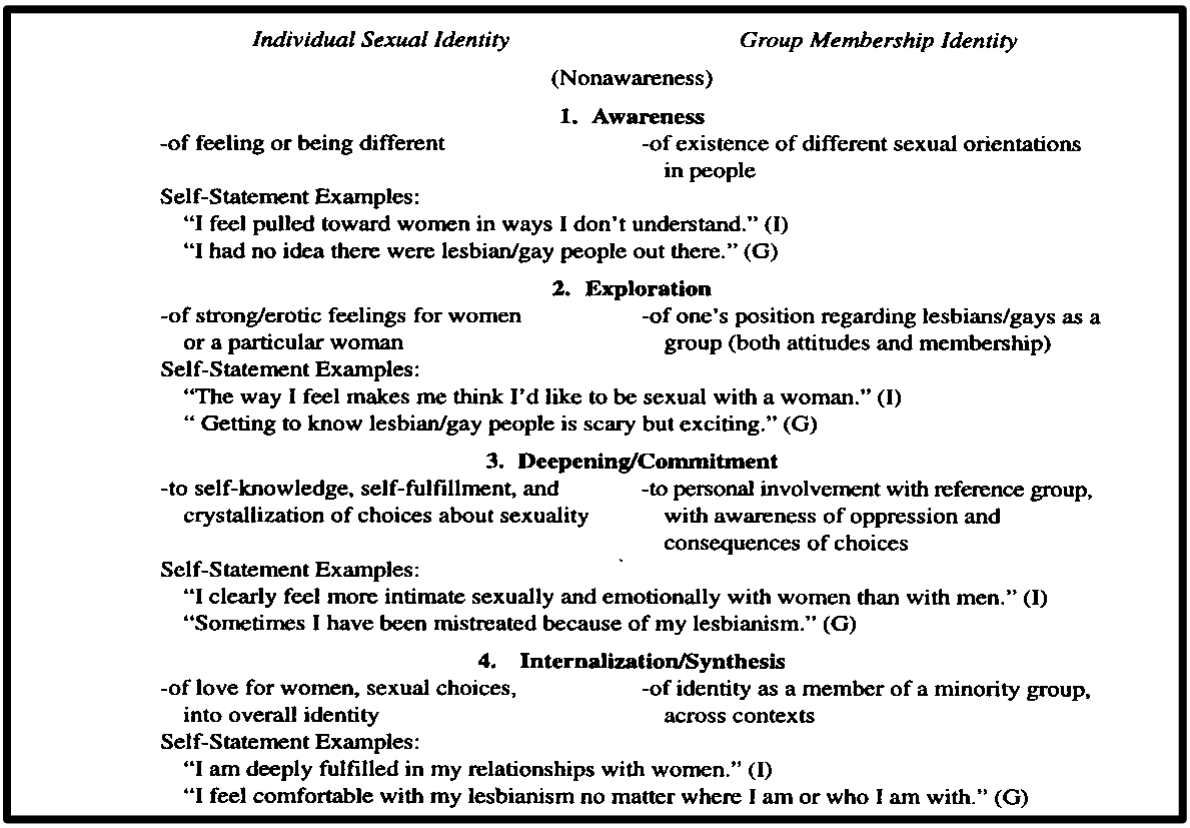
D'Augelli (1994) developed a lifetime model of LGB identity development. This model is based on the idea that identity is a "social construction" (D'Augelli, 1994). D'Augelli argued that LGB people develop over a lifetime of experiences. He proposed six identity development processes: *exiting heterosexual identity, developing personal LGB identity status, developing an LGB social identity, becoming an LGB offspring, developing an LGB intimacy status,* and *entering an LGB community*. The first process, *exiting heterosexual identity*, is grounded in assuming that all individuals are born innately heterosexual. Exiting heterosexuality involves

recognizing that one must adopt a new identity and inform others that they are LGB. The second process, *developing a personal LGB identity status,* involves developing a "sense of personal socio-affectional stability that effectively summarizes thoughts, feelings, and desires" (D'Augelli, 1994, p. 325). Individuals can develop their identity status by learning from others in the LGB community. Process three, *creating an LGB social identity*, is to develop an affirmative support network where one can express one's sexual orientation and receive social support. *Becoming an LGB offspring* is the fourth process. This process involves disclosing one's LGB identity to parents and discussing the familial relationship after the disclosure. *Developing an LGB intimacy status* is the fifth process. The process involves the "emergence of personal, couple-specific, and community norms, which should be more personally adaptive" (D'Augelli, 1994, p. 327). The sixth process, *entering an LGB community*, involves a commitment to political and social action and changing social barriers. D'Augelli states that this is a process that some will never reach, and others may lead to a varying degree (D'Augelli, 1994). All these processes affect LGB development throughout a person's life to be authentic.

Morales (1989) proposed an LGB identity development model for ethnic minorities. This model builds upon the strengths of identity models such as Cass (1979). Morales developed a model comprised of five states: denial of conflicts, bisexual versus gay/lesbian issues, conflicts in allegiances, establishing priorities in loyalty, and integrating the various communities. In-state one, denial of conflicts, a person tends to minimize the validity and reality of discrimination they experience as an ethnic person. A person may feel like their lifestyle, and sexual preference has minor consequences in their life. In-state two, bisexual vs. gay/lesbian issues, some ethnic minority gays and lesbians prefer to identify as bisexual. Conflicts in allegiances are described in state three. This is when a person is aware that they are a part of an ethnic minority group and

being gay or lesbian. This may present anxiety and a need to keep these lifestyles separate. Establishing priorities in allegiance is the fourth state. There is a primary connection to the ethnic community, and feelings of anger and rage develop from the rejection of the LGB community. The final state, integrating the various communities, is when a person needs to integrate one's lifestyle and create a multicultural perspective (Morales, 1989).

McCarn and Fassinger (1996) developed an LGB identity model that focuses on individual sexual identity and group membership identity. McCarn and Fassinger described four phases in each of the two processes of development: awareness, exploration, deepening/commitment, and internalization/synthesis (see Figure 1).



Individual Sexual Identity	*Group Membership Identity*
(Nonawareness)	
1. Awareness	
-of feeling or being different	-of existence of different sexual orientations in people
Self-Statement Examples:	
"I feel pulled toward women in ways I don't understand." (I)	
"I had no idea there were lesbian/gay people out there." (G)	
2. Exploration	
-of strong/erotic feelings for women or a particular woman	-of one's position regarding lesbians/gays as a group (both attitudes and membership)
Self-Statement Examples:	
"The way I feel makes me think I'd like to be sexual with a woman." (I)	
" Getting to know lesbian/gay people is scary but exciting." (G)	
3. Deepening/Commitment	
-to self-knowledge, self-fulfillment, and crystallization of choices about sexuality	-to personal involvement with reference group, with awareness of oppression and consequences of choices
Self-Statement Examples:	
"I clearly feel more intimate sexually and emotionally with women than with men." (I)	
"Sometimes I have been mistreated because of my lesbianism." (G)	
4. Internalization/Synthesis	
-of love for women, sexual choices, into overall identity	-of identity as a member of a minority group, across contexts
Self-Statement Examples:	
"I am deeply fulfilled in my relationships with women." (I)	
"I feel comfortable with my lesbianism no matter where I am or who I am with." (G)	

Figure 1: Four Phases of Development

Source: McCarn & Fassinger (1996), p. 521

Essentially, every individual goes through the four processes at different points and may recycle through them (McCarn & Fassinger, 1996). A person is dealing with individual and group membership development simultaneously through awareness of internalization.

Intersectionality and Multiple and Intersecting Identity Theories

Dill and Zambrana (2009) describe intersectional as "an analytical strategy—a systematic approach to understanding human life and behavior that is rooted in the experiences and struggles of marginalized people" (p. 4). Both individual and group identities are complex—intersectional allows us to see individuals from their multiple identities. As cited in Dill and Zambrana (2009), Collin's (2000) language on intersectionality explores and unpacks relations of domination and subordination, privilege, and agency in the structural arrangements through which various services, resources, and other social rewards are delivered. In other words, identities are multiple and varied; therefore, individuals will experience different feelings related to oppression and privilege. For example, while one Black gay male administrator can feel oppressed at an all-male institution by students, another Black heterosexual male administrator can feel privileged at an all-male institution by students. As a result of this difference is how we make meaning of identity and the environment that could impact meaning-making.

Multiple and Intersecting Identity Theory Models

Multiple and intersecting identity theories illustrate the relationship between socially constructed identity dimensions such as race and ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and social class (Abes et al., 2007). Identity development cannot be understood in isolation and depicts living with multiple identities as the core sense of self (Jones & McEwen, 2000). A group of theorists (Reynolds & Pope, 1991; Jones & McEwen, 2000; Abes & Jones, 2004; Abes et al.,

2007; King & Baxter, 2005) developed models that incorporate multiple and intersecting aspects of identity in which the person is centered, and identities overlap and impact each other.

Reynolds and Pope (1991) created a Multidimensional Identity Model (MIM) to explore the impact of marginality, isolation, and internalized oppression. The MIM is divided into four possible ways for identity resolution for individuals belonging to more than one oppressed group: identify with one aspect of self (society assigned-passive acceptance), identify with one aspect of self (conscious identification), identify with multiple aspects of self in a segmented fashion, and identify with combined aspects of self (identity intersection) (1991). This model served as a framework for additional MIM to come after it.

Jones and McEwen (2000) developed an MMDI to capture an individual's identity construction at its core and draw upon the influences of their environment. The core sense of self is at the center of the model, which consists of personal attributes, characteristics, and identity. The core is surrounded by influences of the environment such as family background, socio-cultural conditions, recent experiences, career decisions, and life planning (2000). "Influences of socio-cultural conditions, family background, and current experiences cannot be underestimated in understanding how participants constructed and experienced their identities" (p. 410). This model offers another option for thinking about multiple identities and how contextual influences impact identity development.

Abes and Jones (2004) viewed multiple dimensions of identity through a meaning-making capacity. As cited in Abes and Jones (2004), this meaning-making concept was based on Kegan's (1994) theory about how individuals make meaning of their lives. "Meaning-making structures are organizational assumptions that determine whether identity is constructed through external expectations or an internally generated sense of self" (p. 619). Abes et al. (2007)

reconceptualized their earlier model also to include the meaning-making capacity of identities. These models are essential because they integrate a relationship between meaning-making and identity development and the impact of the environment on identity development.

Drawing from several models of research, King and Baxter-Magolda (2005) developed a model of intercultural maturity in conjunction with understanding multiple dimension identity. King and Baxter-Magolda define intercultural maturity as multidimensional and consisting of a range of attributes, including understanding (the cognitive dimension), sensitivity to others (the interpersonal dimension), and a sense of oneself that enables one to listen to and learn from others (the intrapersonal dimension). The model (2005) links the three domains of development (cognitive, interpersonal, and intrapersonal) with three levels of development (initial, intermediate, and mature).

All these theorists and models reveal that one singular approach to identity development is not enough (Reynolds & Pope, 1991; Jones & McEwen, 2000; Abes & Jones, 2004; Abes et al., 2007; King & Baxter, 2005). Models of identity development were initially intended for the majority group (e.g., whites, men, heterosexuals). Exploring various developmental processes of oppressed individuals because of their group membership (e.g., Blacks, women, gay men, etc.) is integral to their authentic well-being. Individuals can move through stages of identity in different forms and may return to stages or skip stages throughout their lives. These stages are not limited to the "context" of age, religion/spirituality, cultural background, socioeconomic status, abilities, and environment. To value an individual, we must work to do research that values the multiple and intersecting identities.

Conclusions and Implications of Race, Gender, and Sexuality and Identity Development Theories

Overall, these studies reveal that identity categories have an impact on an individual. In other words, these identity categories construct and define various aspects of one's identity. The more we can understand ourselves and others, the more we can understand and support it. However, this does not mean adding race, gender, and sexuality together to make a person; research is dedicated to how identities intersect.

Specifically, three concepts of identity development are essential to this literature review when considering how race, gender, and sexual orientation intersect. First, identity models include aspects of defining the self. Next, several models highlight group membership and the environment to form an identity. Finally, the results of these models suggest that when these identities intersect (e.g., Black heterosexual male vs. Black gay male; Black heterosexual female vs. Black bisexual female), identity development is altered. It is necessary to research the authentic person further as each person should not be treated the same.

Challenges at PWIs

Identity development theorists including Cross and Fhagen-Smith (2002), Sue and Sue (2003), and Phinney (1990) are instrumental to the approach of this study. Ultimately, I believe the dominant ideology directly shapes the identity of Black professionals. With that in mind, many Black professional staff members have a unique quest for developing their identity as new professionals, notably at predominately White institutions (PWI).

Given the small amount of literature on this topic, Black professionals face challenges striving for and maintaining their student affairs positions (Jackson, 2001). The following factors have been identified as significant challenges for Black professionals in higher education: racism, recruitment and retention issues, and isolation.

Racism

Historically, Black higher education professionals have been discriminated against in PWIs because of their race (Guillory, 2001). Lorde (1984) defined racism as the "belief in the inherent superiority of one race over all others and thereby the right to dominance" (p. 450). Due to this racial discrimination, many Black professionals believe that higher education institutions, particularly PWIs, remain an alienating place to work (Watson, 2001). In higher education, the notion of white privilege poses an issue. White Americans have not consciously considered the problems of race and how it affects every aspect of African American lives (Holmes, 2003).

Scheurich and Young (1997) identified four forms of racism which included: (1) individual racism (overt and covert), (2) institutional racism, (3) societal racism, and (4) civilization racism. According to Holmes (2003), “what is known is that working in a White institution often takes a mental toll” (p. 52). This has a profound impact on the Black new professional experience.

Recruitment and Retention Issues

Recruiting African American administrators begins with the institution’s recruitment and hiring practices (Jackson, 2001). Over the last few decades, minority employment at institutions of higher education has increased. However, these numbers are still lacking.

The positions Black professionals are recruited for at PWIs are not a true reflection of their intellect and administrative ability (Jackson, 2001). Institutions should identify strategies to recruit entry-level Black staff and maintain and encourage for upper-level executive positions. Due to the lack of promotion, Black administrators lack professional networking with other administrators and faculty members (Henry & Glenn, 2009). Rusher (1996) maintains that networking is extremely useful in recruiting and retaining minority staff. Another promotion issue facing Black administrators is their being overly committed to other university obligations

(Guillory, 2001). These types of responsibilities are generally bestowed upon many student affairs administrators, specifically Black professionals.

Isolation

Isolation is a factor for many Black administrators. Wiley (2001) shared, "black administrators enter into organizations wanting to fit in and then often discover that fitting in may require leaving because they realize that fitting in often necessitates a loss of identity" (p. 144). The staff of color describes their presence as tokenized in their field because of underrepresentation and others being unwelcoming (Turner et al., 1999). In addition, feelings of isolation are prevalent for Black administrators when they cannot access networking opportunities. Allen and fellow researchers (2000) stated that marginalization on campuses reduces access to networks, resources, and experiences necessary for success. These factors caused staff of color to feel isolated and unsupported in their work environments (Jayakumar et al., 2009).

Given that higher education institutions have gradually become more diverse, the following section will provide an overview of the campus environment that impacts the Black professional experience. Although Black professionals face challenges at PWIs, institutions need to create an inclusive campus environment.

Campus Environment

Facilitating an inclusive campus environment is not only important for students, but it is just as crucial for student affairs practitioners. The following section outlines multiple sectors of the university that can positively influence the campus environment. The proposition for facilitating inclusive campus environments results from Strange and Banning's (2015) campus ecology framework.

Strange and Banning (2015) campus ecology framework focuses on how the physical dimensions of campus influence individuals. According to Strange and Banning, person-environment fit encourages involvement and engagement, which yields success. They dissect the campus environment into four components which include physical environments (building and space designs), aggregate environments (the influence of people), organizational environments (mission, strategic goals, and hierarch), and constructed environments (varying perceptions based on vantage point).

According to Strange and Banning, "social constructions can evoke strong feelings of exclusion and hostility" (p. 154). The four components of physical environments, aggregate environments, organizational environments, and constructed environments conceptualized by Strange and Banning (2015) play a part in an individuals' overall experience. Each of these environments influences behavior and should be considered in an individuals' experience. The physical environment is the most salient and contains the most visual components of the campus. Physical structures, outdoor spaces, landscape, artifacts, and accessibility are variables in this category. Strange and Banning (2015) stress the significance of the non-verbal communication conveyed through physical spaces on campus. Signals inside and around the space allow students, faculty, staff, and patrons to understand the accepted tone on campus (Strange & Banning, 2015). These environments are often planned based on dominant expectations. Careful consideration and intentionality regarding creating inclusive environments for marginalized populations are crucial.

The aggregate environment focuses on the human characteristics people are attracted to, satisfied within, and retained by those environments. These characteristics consist of demographic and psychological information, including vocational interests, personality types,

learning styles, talents and strengths, engagement, and a synthesis of concepts (Strange & Banning, 2015). Attention to this area is imperative and increases the likelihood that Black staff will find reliable individuals to support their development (Jackson, 2001).

Next, organizational environments relate to the university's mission, strategic goals, and organizational structure (Strange & Banning, 2015). Many institutions of higher educations have a desire to increase or promote diversity and inclusion initiatives. This aspiration on the campus environments is significant because when adequately adopted, the effect influences every aspect of campus, from students to professional staff.

Finally, socially constructed environments focus on the experiences individuals have and the meaning they create through social interactions (Strange & Banning, 2015). Institutional culture becomes salient; therefore, rituals, symbols, and other collective activities have a powerful influence on an individuals' experience. At best, it is presumed that campuses adopt a multiculturally competent approach to Strange and Banning's (2015) campus ecology framework to create a positive perception of the campus environment.

Chapter Summary

This chapter provided a thorough overview of the relevant literature on the authenticity of Black new professionals in student affairs working at a PWI. Additionally, the literature review provided an analysis of challenges at PWIs and institutional and campus climate culture. The following chapter will review the methods and data collection.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

The purpose of this qualitative study is to explore the experiences with authenticity of Black new student affairs professionals working at predominately White institutions. Specifically, I explored the experiences with authenticity of eight Black new student affairs professionals. Using narrative inquiry as the methodology and semi-structured narrative interviews as the method, this study illuminates counter stories of Black new professionals. The following research questions guided my inquiry:

1. What are Black new student affairs professionals' perceptions of being authentic at a predominately White institution?
2. How do Black new student affairs professionals' experience their identities at a predominately White institution?
3. What strategies do Black new student affairs professionals' use to succeed at a predominately White institution?

These questions were crafted based on the theoretical framework that is briefly reviewed in the section that follows and served as a guide for the overall methodology, methods, analysis, interpretation, representation, and conclusion.

Research Paradigm/Theoretical Framework

This study employs a constructivist paradigm to illustrate and explore authenticity of Black new professionals in student affairs working at a PWI. Constructivist researchers focus on understanding and reconstructing the meanings that people (including researchers) hold about the

phenomenon being studied (Jones et al., 2014; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Constructivists create knowledge through interaction between the researcher and the participants (Jones et al., 2014; Guba & Lincoln, 1994), using dialogue and reasoning as the primary methods of investigation. Finally, constructivist researchers frequently return to the data, asking for clarification to the participant on what they meant and trying to integrate meaning-making to the researcher (Rudestam & Newton, 1992). Thus, for this study, in-depth interviews were conducted with eight Black new professionals. For this dissertation study, the theoretical framework compromises Critical Race Theory (CRT) and theory on marginality and mattering.

Frameworks

Bolman & Deal (2017) described a frame as a set of ideas and assumptions that you carry in your head to help you better understand a particular thing. I will be incorporating in this study a dualistic guiding framework, CRT, and theory of marginality and mattering. Together, these frameworks comprehensively highlight the lived experiences of Black staff in student affairs.

Critical Race Theory (CRT)

Critical Race Theory (CRT), described by Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic, studies the relationship between racism, race, and power (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). CRT initially began as a legal movement to confront racial issues in the law, it has since become widely used throughout many disciplines. The central tenets of critical race theory include: (1) racism is normal, (2) racism advances White people both materially and physically, there is little incentive to eliminate racism, (3) race and racism are social constructions, meaning they result from social relations and thoughts, not biological reasons, (4) dominant group racialize different groups of people at different times shifting the popular image and stereotype, (5) no person has just a single identity that is defined but has multiple and possible overlapping or conflicting identities,

and (6) people of color have a unique voice and assumed competence to speak about race and racism due to their histories of experiences of oppression (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017).

CRT exerts racism is ordinary. It is prevalent in the workplace and Black staff experience the effects of racism continually. There is an opportunity to explore the lived experiences of Black new professionals' staff in White spaces through this lens because it mandates a path rooted and led in Blackness. As in the declaration of Moore and Wagstaff (1974), this study is designed to be discriminatory, biased, and prescriptive. It is discriminatory because it focuses primarily on Black educators [as administrators]. It is biased because it reports and discusses only the perceptions of Black faculty members and administrators in predominately white colleges and universities. It is prescriptive, we hope because it provides information and techniques that may be used by the academic [and higher education] community in attempting to relate to its newest members, Black educators. (p. ix)

This is significant because this study seeks to make a meaningful contribution to higher education and critical race studies. By using CRT as one of my guiding lenses, I am not researching whether racism exists against Black new professionals at PWIs, but rather how Black new professionals thrive despite its existence. Furthermore, "Black identity is affirmed both as a racial consciousness and political awareness of what it means to be Black in a white-dominated society and the resistances that are required for Black survival" (Dei, 2017, p. 67). This heartfelt statement captures the core of my study.

Theory of Marginality and Mattering

Nancy Schlossberg (1989) introduced the theory of marginality and mattering to determine how students were creating community at colleges and universities. It is about exploring the inclusion of ethnicity, age, gender, social class, sexual preferences, religion, and

politics, to name a few. Marginality can be experienced when people are in transition and feel as though they do not matter. The state of being marginalized can be temporary or permanent. Like Pinderhugher (1989), Schlossberg references biculturalism to explain the feeling of a person feeling lodged between two worlds. Black student affairs professionals working at PWIs know what it is to be in a state of two worlds. The result is the physical feeling of dissonance, which has also been described in the RCID model (Sue & Sue, 2016). Whether it is referred to as code-switching, the aftermath leads to feelings of marginality—fragmentation and confusion. "Institutional racism, cultural insensitivity, and marginalization are just a few of the manifold encumbrances that define the experience of an African American administrator at predominately white colleges and universities" (Guillory, 2001, p. 113). This statement is directly applicable to the authenticity of the Black staff. Black staff who are tokenized or hired into positions that lack power are predisposed to be marginalized.

Rosenberg and McCullough introduced the concept of mattering. "Mattering is a motive: the feeling that others depend on us, are interested in us, is concerned with our fate, or experience us as an ego-extension exercise a powerful influence on our actions" (Rosenberg & McCullough, 1981, p. 165). Although their research focuses on adolescents, they suggest that "one problem of retirement is that when one no longer matters, others no longer depend on us" (p. 179). When people feel they belong, they do not feel marginal. In his examination of Black male college students' sense of belonging at PWIs, Strayhorn (2012) found that engagement in purposeful activities fosters a sense of mattering with positive interactions and a welcoming racial climate on campus. Like Black male college students, Black staff are seeking a similar sense of belonging on campus. A temporary or permanent state of marginality and feelings of not mattering will not achieve authenticity. Describing marginality and mattering is not enough.

The final component of Schlossberg's theory is helping people deal with marginality so that they do matter. This has been described as creating rituals or ceremonies to reinforce a sense of mattering and belonging of Black staff at an institution.

This framework allows me to discover, through their articulated experiences, how Black new professionals make meaning of their authentic selves, their work, and more. Furthermore, marginality and mattering typically focus on college students, and this study focuses on student affairs staff.

Methodology

Crotty (1998) described methodology as the strategy or rationale for selecting various methods. As discussed in the theoretical framework, a prominent tenet of CRT is the privileging of storytelling to illuminate lived experiences (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Therefore, rather than using numbers to reflect participants' experiences which would be quantitative; I believe that data should be presented in the forms of quotes, interview transcripts, memos, documents, and journal reflections in search of truly understanding their experiences (Bodgan & Biklen, 2007).

Qualitative research can be used as an intentional tool to learn about people's feelings, thoughts, and experiences (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). Creswell (2007) stated that "we conduct qualitative research when we want to empower individuals to share their stories, hear their voices, and minimize the power relationships that often exist between a researcher and the participants in a study" (p. 40). Incorporating narrative inquiry will allow me to better understand the participants' personal experiences by allowing them to tell their stories and make meaning of their stories.

Narrative Inquiry

The purpose of this narrative study is to "experience the experience" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 80) of selected individuals within student affairs who identify as Black/African-American, a new professional, and working at a predominately White institution. The phrase "experience the experience" is a reminder that…narrative inquiry is aimed at understanding and *making meaning* of experience" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 80). Creswell (2007) defined narrative research "as a study of stories or descriptions of a series of events that accounts for human experiences" (p. 234). Clandinin and Connelly (2012) define narrative inquiry as an umbrella term that captures personal and human dimensions of experience over time and takes account of the relationships between individual experience and cultural context. The strength of narrative inquiry derives from the participant's voice; it focuses specifically on the individual's life stories while reducing the researcher's interpretation (Marshall & Rossman, 2015).

Narrative inquiry has many different facets. Connelly and Clandinin (2004) provided a guide to conducting a study using narrative inquiry as a methodology that included formatting research questions, selecting one or more participants, seeking to understand the story's context, analyzing the story, and restoring these to fit within the research framework, and conferring with the participant(s) to build relationships and affirm their engagement. Rapport is particularly important in the narrative inquiry because of the aspect of co-constructing knowledge.

Reissman (2008) asserts that writing a narrative text contains several layers that overlap. These levels include:

> Stories told by research participants (which are themselves interpretive), interpretative accounts developed by an investigator based on interviews and fieldwork observation (a

story about stories), and even the narrative a reader constructs after engaging with the participant's and investigator's narrative. (p. 6)

Narrative inquiry allows participants to speak of their experiences without externally imposed constraints (Wang & Geale, 2015). Hence, capturing the authenticity of personal and professional experiences of Black new professionals in student affairs was the focal point in the study. To collect descriptive narratives, I will use in-depth interviews to capture the participants' overarching experiences.

I want to understand each of my participants' unique stories about what it means to be authentic and their experiences as a Black new student affairs professional working at a PWI. Narrative inquiry allowed me to understand how each participant perceives authenticity, understand challenges, and identify strategies and the meanings of those constructs. In return, participants had the opportunity to interpret their experiences in their own words. By conducting in-depth interviews, I was able to comprehend and understand authenticity and how each participant combats challenges they experience as a minority at a PWI.

Subjectivity/Positionality Statement

In studying Black student affairs professional's authenticity, I must acknowledge what experiences I bring to the research. Acknowledgment of my experiences provides context for the reader to understand the motivation behind this research. As a researcher engaging in a narrative study of Black new professionals being authentic in the workplace, I have many examples of when my authentic self was jeopardized. I am a Black male who holds many identities that have impacted my experiences and decisions as a professional. I have eight years of full-time experience in student affairs, and therefore, no longer considered a new professional.

As a Black man working at a predominately White institution (PWI), I recognize my experiences of being authentic varies from my peers who also work at a PWI as well as those who work at historically Black colleges & universities (HBCUs). I will also point out that the environment and/or geographic location of a professional contributes to an individual's authentic self, especially as a Black professional. Throughout my student affairs career, I have become increasingly reflective of my personal and professional experiences. My leadership education and experiences combined with current events with racial injustice, Black staff fatigue, and a sense of belonging led me to the topic of Black staff authenticity. I have experiences of being inauthentic and feeling disconnected even as a Black professional working in the south. I have felt varying levels of being authentic and inauthentic in my roles and therefore has impacted self as well as my decision making.

As a mid-manager, I have witnessed as well as being a part of conversations with colleagues who have shared examples of when their authentic self was threatened as a new professional. I have interviewed, hired, and trained Black staff. During an interview, I recall asking a Black man identifying candidate what is he looking for in his first job. Simple question, right? His response had no connection to him as an individual rather the students he would be working with. As much as I tried to unravel his response, he was unable to articulate his needs and wants personally and professionally. During another interview with a Black woman identifying candidate, she was able to articulate her experience at PWI being supervised by a new supervisor who was a White male. She shared her moments of being silenced as a Black woman and feeling isolated, unvalued, and unseen. She was able to articulate her needs and wants based on her experiences. Using life stories can help supervisors understand the events and experiences of Black professionals. The narratives in this study will provide opportunities

for supervisors to make connections between events, behaviors, feelings, and reactions or responses to situations. By reflecting on these, supervisors can further develop their understanding of supervision to support Black new professional staff authenticity.

My genuine interest in exploring the authenticity of Black new professionals is to further the support of Black professionals in student affairs. I am mindful of my positionality as a Black man who is a mid-manager in the field as a doctoral student during the study. I recognize the privileges I hold to complete this study and believe readers will find value to help improve experiences of Black new professionals in the workplace to be their authentic selves.

Research Design

Using qualitative research allowed me to seek answers to questions by examining the individuals that inhabit higher education settings (Berg, 2009).

Setting

Before interviewing each participant, I focused on building a rapport. The purpose of establishing rapport between researcher and participant is to both generate rich data while at the same time ensuring respect is maintained between researcher and participant (Guillemin & Heggen, 2009). Having a good rapport with participants may provide better information and data access for the researcher due to the trust and understanding built because of a good relationship. Rapport is the ability to appreciate other's opinions, to understand and accept other's feelings (Knight, 2009).

I relied on three strategies to establish rapport. These strategies include: (1) asking basic warm-up questions to get to know the participant, (2) showing the participants respect by keeping an open mind to their opinions and feelings, (3) and maintaining my tone throughout the interview to mirror participants. Additionally, I interviewed each participant via Zoom in their

environment, thus allowing the participants to feel comfortable to exhibit more natural responses. Human behavior is influenced by the setting in which it occurs, meaning that participants should be interviewed in settings where their thoughts and feelings are explored (Marshall & Rossman, 2015). Therefore, I interviewed each participant in their own space via Zoom.

Participants and Recruitment

The target population for this study is Black new student affairs professionals who are employed full-time at predominately White institutions at the time of the study. "Black" is used in this study as opposed to "African-American" because the term "African-American" is restricted to those who have origins in America. The term "Black" is inclusive of those who are in the United States but have origins from other nations or identity as Black but do not identify as someone of African descent. A new professional is defined as a professional staff member who has one to five years of professional experience in student affairs (Amey & Ressor, 2009).

To obtain potential participants, participant recruitment will be a two-part process. First, I utilized social media outlets such as Facebook and GroupMe. Recruiting through Black communities on social media was beneficial because I was to address the target audience first-hand, control frequency, and create the ability for others to share with other potential participants and post in other social media channels. I used personal group affiliations for the following outlets for recruitment:

- BLKSAP (Black Student Affairs Professionals)- Facebook (12.7K members)
- NPHC Higher Education Professionals- GroupMe (1,671 members)
- Black Men in Student Affairs- GroupMe (834 members)
- BLK SEAHO Connection- GroupMe (391 members)
- NUPES in Higher Education- GroupMe (214 members)

In the Facebook and GroupMe groups, I posted a message in each group, which will include information about the study. The following statement will be in the invitation: I am recruiting participants for my dissertation study on experiences with authenticity of Black new student affairs professionals working at PWIs. My hope is for the results of the study to provide insight to student affairs leaders as they design strategies to support Black new student affairs professionals. If you are someone or know someone who identifies as Black, new professional (1-5 years), and employed full-time at a PWI, please encourage them to participate (See Appendix A).

The last method I used was snowball sampling. Berg (2009) describes the basic strategy of snowball sampling as "first identifying several individuals with relevant characteristics" (p. 51). Snowball sampling does not take a lot of time and it provides the researcher the opportunity to communicate better with the samples (Naderifar, Goli, & Ghaljaie, 2017). I accomplished this by asking each participant at the end of their interview of names and referrals of other Black new student affairs professionals working at a PWI who they believe would add to the strength of the study (Berg, 2009). To maintain participants' institutional confidentiality, I created a pseudonym for their name and respective universities.

Data Collection Plan

The primary method of data collection included open-ended, semi-structured interview questions conducted via Zoom. Further, I recorded the zoom meetings to obtain and ensure interview data accuracy. I interviewed each participant one-time and did not need to conduct any follow-up meetings. The interview explained the purpose and the objectives of the study which was scheduled for up to 60 minutes. Jones et al., (2014) state that it is important to use multiple sources of data collection to maintain dependable data. These multiple sources include field

notes, thoughts, and interpretations of the interview through journaling. I used field notes, thoughts, and reflective journaling to formulate follow-up interview questions, if needed.

Conducting narrative interviews requires an important relationship or type of rapport between the interviewer and interviewee. Establishing a rapport with each participant ensured that each participant feelt comfortable sharing their individual experiences. I conducted each interview informally by beginning with a social conversation on the participant's background utilizing the demographic questionnaire. Obtaining the demographic and biographic information before the interview allowed the researcher to have a basic understanding of each participant. It is important to ask appropriate questions related to the study while conducting narrative research to capture the story of the participants (Creswell, 2007). All interview questions were aimed at understanding the participant's background, understanding authenticity, race, gender, sexuality, and institutional culture.

Data Analysis Plan

Analyzing data is an ongoing nonlinear process (Merriam, 2009). For this research study, data was reviewed and analyzed following the interviews. Merriam describes this process as ideal in conducting qualitative research because it helps to avoid the potential of being overwhelmed by massive amounts of data.

Following the transcription process of the zoom interviews, the narrative thematic approach outlined by Riessman (2008) was used to analyze the transcriptions. The four-step approach was selected because the identification of themes creates a more holistic and detailed understanding of the participants' experiences of the authenticity of being Black at a PWI. In the first step, I reviewed all the transcriptions thoroughly to obtain a general understanding of their experiences, especially related to authenticity.

In the second step, I journaled the experiences of each participant with their demographic information. Each transcript was examined individually, and then drafts of the participants' narratives were composed. During this step, I focused on comments and stories related to the participants' experiences of authenticity and being Black at a PWI. I used quotes to ensure the participants' voices are accurately presented.

In the third step, I analyzed the sentences, paragraphs, codes, and notes collected in the word documents to identify potential themes. The transcripts were referenced to analyze the sentences and paragraphs to prevent fragmentation of the data (Riessman, 2008). This step will allow me to find overall arching themes among all participants for the research study.

In the last step, I identified themes and selected which would be used in the research study. This allowed me to decipher through the data to identify themes that emphasize each participant's experience as well as a shared lived experience of being Black and authentic while working at a PWI.

Trustworthiness

There will be minimal risk associated with participating in this study. Research participants participations was strictly voluntary, and they were allowed to stop the interview and/or participation at any time without penalty. This study required participants to do a historical and self-reflective process that might have a significant degree of discomfort during the interview process. I offered a $25 gift card to a vendor of their choice as a token of appreciation for participating. I conducted a verbal review of the risks, benefits, and confidentially during the review of the consent to participant form. Confidentially was discussed and ensured. To maintain confidentially, each participant was assigned and referred to by a pseudonym.

I co-constructed meaning-making with each participant through the interviews. One way this will be accomplished is through semi-structured interviews. This allowed participants to guide the interview and share in the meaning-making process. The following details specific precautions that I employed to increase trustworthiness.

One measure to enhance trustworthiness includes reflective journaling. Patton (2002) suggested maintaining a journal on insights, areas of improvement, new questions, frustrations, and other reactions and reflections. The second step in increasing trustworthiness, I conducted member checks. Using Chase's (2005) and Patton's (2002) recommendations, I communicated with each participant and provided them with a copy of the transcribed data collected and offered opportunities for each participant to clarify if they felt that the data was a misrepresentation of what they intended. Seven out of the eight participants confirmed that their transcript of the interview was accurate. In addition to strengthening the rigor of the study, this also aided in facilitating a collaborative relationship with the participants. My third, and final, precaution to enhance trustworthiness is peer review. This method allows a qualified researcher to take the data and findings that have been collected and extensively review the information for accuracy, credibility, reliability, and overall trustworthiness (Pitney, 2004). As the researcher, I selected individuals that have prior experiences and knowledge as a Black new professional working at a PWI. These individuals were able to validate the themes I was drawing from the findings to make scholarly recommendations for future considerations.

Factors to Consider

As mentioned earlier, achieving authenticity involves owning one's personal experiences, emotions, need, wants, preferences, or beliefs (Synder & Lopez, 2002). This will be evident as participants'' describe their experiences. Another factor to consider, identifying as Black may

not be an individual's salient social identity. A person's salient identity is the identity that is most marginalized. Race is a valid part of the overall experience that Black professionals face working at a PWI and that each participant has a story to tell about their experiences of being authentic at a PWI.

Summary

This chapter discussed the research methods used as well as the research questions by which guided my study. In this qualitative research approach, the study of authenticity and Black new student affairs professionals working at predominately White institutions was guided by CRT, marginality and mattering, and narrative inquiry. Findings from this study intend to facilitate more higher education institutions to understand the experiences of Black new student affairs professionals as they could foster an environment of authenticity, vulnerability, and belonging. Secondly, findings in this study should foster validation for Black new professionals in student affairs that there is a place of belonging to succeed in this field. The following chapters will describe the findings, implications, and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Chapter four illustrates the data gathered from eight Black new student affairs professionals. As detailed in chapter three, I used a qualitative research approach to narrate the participants' experiences. Further, I served as the primary data collection instrument using semi-structured in-depth interviews to gather their experiences with authenticity at a predominately White institution (PWI). Data from the study was collected from Zoom interviews between myself and the participants.

Most of the literature on Black student affairs professionals focuses on their experiences. To honor the participants in this study, I will illustrate their experiences through collective themes gathered from eight Black new student affairs professionals. This chapter will be presented in two-folds: (a) introduction of participants and (b) presentation of narrative findings from the research questions. Three themes emerged that provide a broad overview of the commonalties of each participant shared about their experience. Themes were developed by grouping more specific concepts from each interview into additional subthemes (See Appendix E).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this narrative research study was to explore the lived experiences of Black new student affairs professionals working at predominately White institutions. In particular, the study focused on participants' lived experiences with authenticity as a Black new student affairs professional. Research conducted on Black new student affairs professionals working at a

predominately White institution offers context on the systemic barriers that impact a positive experience selecting student affairs as a career choice.

Participants

The eight participants in this study, as reflected in Table 1, were recruited via social media and professional networking platforms, and all met the selected criteria to participate in the study:

- Self-identify as Black or African-American
- Employed full-time for at least one year to five years in higher education or student affairs position
- Employed at a predominately White institution (PWI)

The participants' demographics varied between gender, sexual orientation, and current position. In addition, institution type varied among public, private, and liberal arts institutions geographically between east, north, west, mid-west, and southern regions of the United States. It should be noted that longevity of employment impacted how much each participant was able to share about their experiences with authenticity as a Black new student affairs professional. For those who had been employed for three years or longer, they were able to provide several scenarios with their experience with authenticity. Newer professionals did not have a lot to share but still provided candid responses. At the end of each interview, each participant thanked me for providing a space to be heard, valued, and appreciated.

Table 1:

Pseudonym	Sexual Orientation	Current Position	# Of Years	Institution Type	Geographic Location
Damien Allen	Heterosexual Man (he/him)	Community Director-University Housing	5	Public flagship	Eastern

James Powell	Heterosexual Man (he/him)	Greek Life and Leadership Coordinator- Greek Life	2	Public	Southern
Eve Westin	Heterosexual Woman (she/her)	Area Coordinator- Housing & Residence Life	4	Private, liberal arts	Northern
May Williams	Queer Woman (she/her)	Coordinator of Student Outreach- Dean of Students & Family Programs	3	Public flagship	Midwest
Brandan Clark	Gay Man (he/him)	Program Coordinator- Center for Student Involvement	2	Private, religious flagship	Western
Belle Davis	Heterosexual Woman (she/her)	Residential & Student Life Coordinator- Residential & Student Life	2	Private, fine arts	Northern
Britt Taylor	Bisexual Woman (she/her)	Professional Academic Coach- Academic Success	1	Public flagship	Southern
Kendrick Smith	Gay Man (he/they)	Resident Director- University Housing	1	Public, secondary campus	Southern

Damien Allen (he/him)

Damien Allen is a professional who works in the functional area of housing and residence life. He has been a student affairs professional for approximately five years, currently serving as a Community Director at a public flagship PWI in the eastern region of the United States. Damien identifies as a Black heterosexual male who is married and recently became a father. Damien studied Criminal Justice during his undergraduate years at a PWI in the south and attended another public PWI for his graduate studies. Damien described his graduate program as practitioner-based. Following graduate school, Damien joined the staff at a top-ranked research flagship PWI where he was able to experience what it means to be Black at a PWI as a full-time professional. Having attended a mid-size PWI in the south during his undergraduate years, Damien had unique experiences that shaped his authenticity. Damien was your traditional

college student on campus with residence life and fraternity life. As a student leader, he had an opportunity to connect with the Vice President of Student Affairs and other campus administrators. They identified as Black professionals, giving him a glimpse of student affairs.

Damien shared some of his highest moments he had in college that connected him to student affairs. Black professionals who served as mentors kept him engage to view student affairs as a future career goal. As Damien entered the field, Black professionals were not as visible on his campus and he began to feel a sense of isolation and later on in his work feeling tokenized. As we explored further his experiences, Damien was able to reflect on the multiple experiences of racial battle fatigue, tokenism, and feelings of separation as a Black new student affairs professional. Damien remains resilient as he hopes for intentional staff support for Black professionals in student affairs.

James Powell (he/him)

James Powell recently finished his second year as a new student affairs professional at his alma mater, a public predominately White institution in the southern region of the United States. As an undergraduate student, he was actively involved in his social fraternity and worked in several paraprofessional staff roles as a resident assistant and student ambassador. After completing his undergraduate programs, James received an offer to work as the Intramural and Outdoor Recreation Coordinator and obtain a master's degree. James could not pass up this offer and enrolled in an online program while working full-time. James has transitioned into his current role as the Greek Life and Leadership Coordinator. Like Damien, the opportunity to receive a master's degree paid for by the employer was a motivator to enter student affairs.

James went on to share that he was the “it guy” on campus in his undergraduate years. Returning back to his alma mater was an easy decision because he had a good relationship with

administration at the university. However, the relationships he had with others also created difficulty in how he showed up in spaces. His colleagues would view him as the student version instead of his professional identity. The expectations they had of him warranted a yes to projects and deliverables and James did not want to disappoint others.

He struggled to explain and identify some of his experiences with authenticity as a Black professional, but reflected on various accounts of his experiences as a student. This can be attributed to transitioning to full-time employment at his alma mater. I could tell James did not want to disappoint the administrators who provided an opportunity, however, a sense of community of Black professionals is needed to continue to be successful in student affairs.

Eve Westin (she/her)

Eve is the Black new student affairs professional with the most seasoned professional of the woman-identifying participants. She is in her fourth year as a student affairs professional working in her second position as the Area Coordinator for a private liberal arts institution in the northern region of the United States. Like Damien, Eve is also a parent and a live-in professional. Eve's authenticity is a make-up of her identities; she is quick to note with great pride that she is a Black woman, married to her partner, and a mother of a Black son. Eve also shared that she has been in student affairs all her life. The unique narrative Eve provides is that she grew up in student affairs, both parents working in the field of higher education. Her broad, birds-eye view of student affairs as an adolescent to a young professional exposed Eve to various experiences to develop authentically.

Eve's perspective as a Black new student affairs professional is embedded in the make-up of all the identities she holds. As a Black mother living in a residence hall with a young toddler she is often viewed differently because of this identity. Being a parent in student affairs is not an

anomaly, but being a live-in parent has illuminated attention towards being a mother. The opportunity to talk to other mothers or Black mothers who, like her, are working in student affairs does not exist at her institution. Eve speaks on various accounts of her identities and feelings of separation with a desire for community and advocacy from her peers and supervisor.

May Williams (she/her)

May identifies as a Black, queer, immigrant woman from the Bahamas. In her third year as a student affairs professional, May serves as the Coordinator of Student Outreach and Parent & Family Programs at a large public flagship university in the Midwest. May has an array of experiences working in student affairs, ranging from residential life to academic success. She is dedicated to serving her students and community while extending various student service programs to support students, specifically, international students, Black students or students of color, and first-generation students. Further, May recognizes the double discrimination (Henry & Glenn, 2009) of being both Black and a woman, which profoundly affects the career progression of many African American women administrators. As she admitted, "It is just really difficult, and I encountered a lot of adversity that I didn't expect to." May did not hold back in her interview from delivering raw encounters in the workplace. Despite the awareness of intersectionality, May has refused to let being a Black woman at a PWI interfere with her student affairs career progression.

May is deeply connected to the communities in which she interacts. May has been able to develop personal and professional relationships in the workplace through connections with other Black staff at the institution. The people in these spaces have helped May be resilient in the face of the adversity from racism and oppression she encounters day to day in her previous and current position. She is appreciative of the community she has been able to build with the

Black community. Community members serve as pivotal influences on her decisions and approaches to her work. May speaks of the need for intentional hiring practices to increase Black staff at predominately White institutions.

Brandan Clark (he/him)

Brandan provided straightforward experiences of being a Black, gay, military-raised man from the southeast region of the United States. Brandan speaks proudly of all his identities and how they mold him to be the man he is today. Brandan described himself as the "overinvolved student," a term commonly used by student affairs practitioners for students involved in everything on campus. His path into the profession started as a peer mentor, student photographer, orientation leader, student body Vice President, and more during his undergraduate years at a school in the south region of the United States. His traditional path to student affairs allowed him to grow authentically through the support of family and mentors. Brandan shares he has lived worldwide because his mom and dad are affiliated with the military. He has been exposed to various cultures and identities that he feels have prepared him for the field. Brandan attended one of the older college student personnel programs at flagship research, theory, and practical-based institution, where he made connections with peers and mentors that keep him grounded. Currently, Brandan serves as the Program Coordinator at a private flagship religious university in the western region of the United States. The racism and microaggressions he has experienced as a paraprofessional and professional attributes to his authenticity as a Black new student affairs professional and his desire to present himself in the workplace.

Brandan shared much about his experiences with me as a Black gay man. I appreciated his vulnerability and transparency about the racism and microaggressions he faced as a Black professional. Brandan continues to seek support within his institution by taking the initiative to

build community for not only himself, but for the other Black staff at the institution as well. Brandan also talked about the need for more Black staff at his institution, representation matters for not only the students but for staff recruitment and retention. Having more Black staff, specifically within the division, would have made some of his experiences not so isolating.

Belle Davis (she/her)

The second student affairs professional who also identifies as an immigrant to the United States is Belle Davis. She was born in Nigeria before moving to a small town in New Jersey. Before going to college, Belle shared her family was one of few Black families in town, and she had to quickly understand how her identities are being perceived in the world. Belle identifies as a first-generation, Black, heterosexual, immigrant woman. She currently serves as a Residential and Student Life Coordinator at a private fine art university in the northern region of the United States. Like May, she has another lived experience with family values and traditions from another country. The learned behaviors, values, and traditions are a part of her authentic being.

Belle appeared nervous throughout the interview. She mentioned experiences with racial battle fatigue, tokenism, and isolation, without providing full details of what those experiences looked like. Belle did not appear to be connected to her department and institution, as there were not many positive experiences shared. Belle displays resiliency day to day, especially as she questions if her supervisor even notices the lack of representation of Black staff in the department. I believe this interview provided Belle an opportunity to reflect on her experiences and what it means to be authentic in the midst of tribulation.

Britt Taylor (she/her)

Britt Taylor, one of the youngest participants, is new to student affairs as a recent graduate in 2020. Britt's unique experience is that her professional career began during the

COVID-19 pandemic. Britt is a first-generation professional from a small town in North Carolina. She shares, "I do identify as a queer woman who identifies as a fat woman." Currently, Britt is employed as a Professional Academic Coach at a public flagship university in the southern region of the United States. While most participants did not consider student affairs the "chosen" career path, Britt's career in student affairs is relatively traditional. She knew she loved everything about college and wanted to remain in a college setting. Her motivation in choosing student affairs equated to her love and passion for community and mentorship.

Although Britt's interview went by quickly she did mention experiences with tokenism and isolation in the workplace. She manages a balance between work from home and in-person work which is different from the other participants who have experienced in-person work at the initial portion of the student affairs career. Britt desires to be in a space where she can succeed and navigating work spaces via Zoom has created challenges. Britt hopes as she continues to grow and develop as a professional her colleagues will no longer label her as the young professional but as a professional who is competent and able to contribute to student success initiatives.

Kendrick Smith (he/they)

The final participant, Kendrick Smith, works in residence life. Kendrick also went to one of the older college student personnel programs for their graduate studies. They serve as a Resident Director on the secondary campus of the primary institution, where they are one of two Resident Directors. At the current moment, they are the only Resident Director on the secondary campus as the department is in the middle of a search process. They are approaching year two as a full-time practitioner at a large public land grant institution in the southern region of the United States. Currently, Kendrick is the only new professional in the department and the only Black

professional. Kendrick identifies as a Black gay male who followed a traditional path into the field. They attended a public university on the eastern shore of the United States, where they served as a resident advisor and orientation leader for three years. Like Damien and James, a selling factor for Kendrick to go to graduate school in student affairs was the opportunity for tuition costs to be supplemented with an assistantship. Kendrick shares that as a full-time professional in housing, they been provided many opportunities to work with college students in various capacities related to programming, conduct, crisis, and more.

Kendrick was able to talk about their experience as a Black professional and how burdensome it has been navigating racism and oppression in the workplace. Kendrick questioned the field and if they had the resiliency to manage the racial discrimination. Kendrick's candid experiences are not gone unnoticed as the need for advocacy and community would allow Kendrick to feel appreciated and valued as a Black new student affairs professional.

Part II: Analysis of the Findings

Part I of this chapter honored the essence of narrative inquiry research. It presented the stories of eight participants around their lived personal and professional experiences with authenticity as a Black new student affairs professional working at a PWI. Based on the descriptive narrative of each participant, three central themes emerged across the interviews conducted: (1) Navigating Authenticity: True to Self, (2) My Life: See What I See, and (3) Survivor: I'm Still In It For Now. The first theme, Navigating Authenticity: True to Self, reflects the descriptive perceptions of being authentic as a Black new student affairs professional. The second theme, My Life: See What I See, addresses how each participant experienced their identities in order to be authentic as a Black new student affairs professional (racial battle fatigue, burden of identities, tokenism, and feelings of separation). The last theme, Survivor: I'm

Still In It For Now, illustrates the strategies used for success as a Black new student affairs professional (resilience, advocacy, and community building). The subthemes are based on the interpretation of the researcher and are supported by direct quotes from the participants.

Theme One: Navigating Authenticity: True to Self

This theme is titled Navigating Authenticity: True to Self because the participants described their individual authentic experience as a Black new student affairs professional. Authentic experiences are described as an experience that is emergent, unscripted, and unique, and when reflected on serves as a learning tool (Aguirre, 2017). Experiences with authenticity is a lifelong process, therefore, participants who have been a new professional for three or more years have been able to label their experiences as they navigate being a Black new student affairs professional at a predominately White institution.

During the interview process, participants responded to a series of questions regarding their lived experiences as a Black new student affairs professional working at a predominately White institution (See Appendix D). Each participant spoke about their experiences at PWIs. Collectively, words such as lonely, isolating, and difficult described how these Black new student affairs professionals perceive being authentic at a predominately White institution. These sentiments were shared among all participants despite campus size (small, medium, large), institution type, (public, private, liberal arts, or flagship), and geographic location (eastern, western, Midwest, northern, or southern). Britt and Kendrick went even further to describe their experience as "showing up as the full me." They expressed their journey as a professional working at a public flagship university and the difficulties in finding community as "it's hard when you don't know people who are like me here."

Many participants attributed their experience with authenticity to involving a connectedness between one's self-knowledge and experiences. The campus environment, in general, may not be a conducive and inclusive environment for Black professionals. Eve provided her definition of being authentic as a Black heterosexual woman working at a private liberal arts institution in the northern region of the United States:

> I define that as being able to be me unapologetically. I think that is holding to all of what makes me who I am and being able to show up as that individual and not any type of version that I've created, whether that's what society has created or whether that's what I created. Also, the need for fit so essentially just making sure that my identities are showing up as equally as possible. I do not want to exceed any part of myself, tone down any aspect of myself, or heighten any aspects of myself to fit the surroundings.

Eve further shared that working at a PWI was not "unfamiliar territory" for her, as she attended one for undergraduate studies. Eve recognized and acknowledged her identities to support students to be authentic. Her definition is a framework "to mold and assists students in becoming their best selves or best versions of themselves no matter the path they take." Brandan echoed this framework on making an impact on the students around him. He continued to mention, "I want to be able to impact them in a way that is positive and helps them go into the world as equipped and knowledgeable on a range of topics."

Being accepted was a phrase used when Brandan defined authenticity. He shared how important it is for him to be accepted in the workplace and not have to filter who he is in any way:

> For me, it's no matter what being able to be yourself. And that means everything that comes with who you are. Your holistic identity, whether it is for me, being Black, being

> gay, coming from the southeast region of United States, being a military brat. It is important knowing my personality is accepted.

James is a full-time professional at his alma mater. Professionals at the institution have interacted with James as a student and professional. James shared how he battles with how others perceive him to be authentic. He said,

> I think authenticity is just being yourself and being able to joke around while feeling comfortable in your skin. Never feel like what you are saying will be judged. Not feeling judged for being in a space that I feel comfortable with being myself.

However, the implications of being Black were not the only concerns Damien described when he defined authenticity. Damien provided his definition of being authentic as a Black heterosexual man working at a public flagship PWI in the eastern region of the United States:

> I think showing up as myself, without having to think about, institutional fit. I think that was a term that I struggled with. What is fit? Can I have my hair down and not have any comments? Can I talk how I usually talk? Can I show up as myself without it being an issue?

Damien continued to share experiences with support from a supervisor when navigating authenticity—having a Black supervisor who could offer support compared to a White identifying supervisor who did not attempt to provide support. May and Belle shared similar experiences when defining authenticity related to fit. May shared,

> I would define it as not having to think twice before I open my mouth. In general, sometimes, you have to pause to make sure you're making sense and that you're coherent. I think there's a level to it—levels on a day-to-day interaction. When you factor in authenticity, a certain level of compromise comes into place between being yourself

> authentically and coherently. So, for me, authenticity is being felt, not just being understood.

Belle shared,

> Authenticity has several layers: being authentic to yourself, others and being truthful. Sometimes you have to say what people need to hear. You may be authentic to yourself but not necessarily authentic to what you feel needs to be said to others by telling the truth.

The participants in this study shared their desire to be true to themselves. Being true to yourself has challenges when your identities are not appreciated. Identity is not limited to race, gender, and sexual orientation but includes hair, skin tone, dialect, being a parent, and more. Being true to self is being authentic even with racism and microaggressions are all around you.

Theme Two: My Life: See What I See

This theme is titled My Life: See What I See because each participant has their single story to share. In a 2009 Ted Talk delivered by Chimamanda Ngozi, we learned of what she calls "the danger of a single story" – knowing only piece of what makes a person who they are and subsequently making assumptions based only on that information (TED, 2009). To avoid the dangerous single-story phenomenon, it is important to not use each participant story as the single story about individuals who identify as Black, woman, or gay as part of their intersectionality.

Racial Battle Fatigue: Participants describe feelings of racial battle fatigue. Smith, Allen, and Danley (2007) described racial battle fatigue as a way to "address the physiological and psychological strain exacted on racially marginalized groups and the amount of energy lost dedicated to coping with racial microaggressions and racism" (p. 55). The performance of

racism and microaggressions in the lives of Black identifying people creates a level of stress and racial trauma that is often not experienced by other racial groups. It was overwhelmingly evident in the narratives of all the participants the topic of structural racism and its impact on their journey as a Black new student affairs professional. May, who grew up in the Bahamas, recalled,

> Coming from a predominately Black space in the Bahamas, I didn't necessarily have to think about my identity as a Black person or even an immigrant until I was in the US.

May shared a feeling of having to be coherent and to take a pause when engaging with her White colleagues. Because racism remains invisible, most White people unconsciously perpetuate its permanence (Collins & Jun, 2017; Lynn & Dixson, 2013).

This type of covert racism was evident in most of the participants. Damien shared a story when asked about his early experiences as a Black new professional at a PWI. He noted a White woman colleague in a supervisory role who did not think highly of him. She made comments about his performance when working with Black students. Someone shared with him that she said, "Damien sucks; he is not getting any of his administrative things done." This experience shocked him as a new professional because his colleague did not take the time to understand what was going on but instead decided to gossip about him when she was in a supervisory role to develop him. Damien did not know how to respond or react to the lack of understanding and support in the workplace from his White identifying supervisor. Structural racism was a significant theme throughout the collective narratives even as they transitioned from student to professional. During his interview, James also referenced experiences with being authentic that involved racism, microaggressions, and isolation in the workplace. James described the following story,

> I remember going to a function on campus with Dr. Lance Johnson. He walked away for a second, and someone called out Dr. Johnson. I was looking around and realized this White man was talking to me. Dr. Johnson and I look entirely different. Dr. Johnson is older, taller, longer, and has facial hair. And that was the first time I realized this White man did not care who I was and could not tell the difference between James and Dr. Johnson.

Overall, James has a unique experience as a Black new student affairs professional of being authentic at a PWI. Since he remained at his alma mater, James does not have that separation from student to professional that the other participants have. However, that does not discredit his experiences of how challenging it can be to your authentic self while being Black at a PWI.

The shared experiences of fatigue in fighting racism and microaggressions were present throughout the participants' stories. To remain true to their story, I have chosen not to filter out language in the narrative from Kendrick. Kendrick shared,

> During an on-call duty night, I remember talking to a student, and they were breaking policy regarding alcohol and drugs. I spoke to the student in their room, and there were about 8-10 people in the space. In the room were a group of White males, and one of them randomly shouted out at me, “look, it's the nigger of the building.”

Kendrick added,

> How do you navigate dealing with that while also holding students accountable? As the only Black male in the department, that was a lot. I was stuck in between do I want to continue with this process or do I want to say fuck this job.

These negative interactions can impact the mental, emotional, and physical fatigue of battling racism and microaggressions. Microaggressions can diminish self-confidence, drain personal

and family coping resources, suppress the body's immune system, and deflect essential time and energy away from various forms of self-care (Smith et al., 2007). When asked about their professional experiences, the participants shared a glaring reality of having White identifying professionals call them by another Black identifying staff member name without remorse. Eve shared,

> Being one of the two Black individuals in our office, there have been several times where me and my other colleague, who also identifies as a Black female, have been mixed up. There have been times where they have come to fix my computer and said her name when addressing me.

This can be tough for any professional. How can one be authentic and colleagues do not even see you in the workplace? These challenges only continued for Eve and others to remain authentic "true to self" in the workplace.

Burden of Identities. CRT analyzes the role of race and racism in perpetuating social disparities between dominant marginalized racial groups (Hiraldo, 2010). The fifth tenet of CRT states that no person has a single identity defined but has multiple and possible overlapping or conflicting identities (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). As a result, individuals' identities intersect and impact how they are viewed, understood, and treated in society. For this research, through the data collection of exploring the experiences with the authenticity of Black new student affairs professionals, the participants were able to articulate their lived experiences of their identities and how they intersect to be authentic. The multiple identities that Black professionals have been essential to note, thus the importance of bringing forth the awareness of racism and microaggressions in the workplace.

The interview protocol asked how participants experienced their identities to identify the multiple identities participants consider to their "true self." Eve shared that she is a "Black female, married to her partner, and a mother of a Black son." These were the salient identities that were important to her. She believes the work you produce in the workplace to support students should speak volumes about who you are as a professional. However, Eve shared that although she tries to present herself as hardworking, she struggles with how others perceive her stating,

> I think it's really important that my work speaks for me, as I sometimes struggle with what other identities will show up the most when someone hears my name or sees me in a space. There are times where I feel as if my mother identity pops up before my work identity. I have heard things like, oh, that's the one with the kid, right? I am the only individual in my office who has a child.

Eve is proud to be a mom. However, this identity should not be a determining factor or point of conversation in work.

The intersections of these identities carry a lot of burdens. Although May does not identify with motherhood, she shared other challenges of being a Black new student affairs professional. May is often encouraged to smile or soften her approach to avoid being perceived as an angry Black woman. There are times when May will address the racist comments and remarks in a meeting, but instead of receiving support from her White colleagues in meetings, they would pull her to the side after the meeting to thank her. The lack of support in navigating White spaces is challenging when you are the only Black woman and the only Black person. As a Black woman, May explained,

> I consistently found myself having to educate down. People are assuming I am the spokesperson for Black people or anything DEI-related. It got to a point where I did not feel valued in the space or anything other than my experience related to DEI.

May also shared that she feels she must code-switch often in the workplace. Code-switching, also known as dialect shifting, is the process of interchanging two different dialects depending on social and cultural context (Justice & Redle, 2014). In essence, it's the language, mannerisms, and body language used in the company of peers from different classes and races. As a Black woman from the Bahamas, May shares that her White colleagues hear an accent and automatically assume that Jamaica is the only island in the Caribbean. May said, "I spare myself having to educate or experience the ignorance of code-switching."

Britt shared feelings of inadequacy with the burden of being a new professional. Britt stated,

> People often expect me not to know things because I'm typically the youngest person on my teams. I never took a break after school. But people still make comments like, "I'm surprised that you know that information or have done this before." They question my experiences.

Brandan is one of the two participants who identify as gay. He shared,

> I had to test the waters and figure out what the climate is? What does it look like? Are there a lot of professionals of color, but specifically Black ones? And what does that look like? What is the climate on things deemed professional? How is the environment here? How authentic can you be? And for myself, when is it too much? When are you going to be asked to tone it down? I think about it often, like, will I be perceived as a professional?

The participants share their frustration and exhaustion with having their "seen" identities showing up in the workplace with their "unseen" identities. Identity conflict is problematic when there is a high degree of dissonance experienced that one feels they cannot satisfy role requirements of each identity (Gibson et al., 2021).

Tokenism. This theme was another central theme that emerged from the data analysis. Most of the participants shared stories of being tokenized. Bell's (1980) theory of interest convergence is a critical component of CRT (Milner et al., 2013). Interest convergence is the notion that White people will allow and support racial injustice/progress to the extent that there is something positive in it for them or a "convergence" between the interests of White people and people of color. The participants in this study experienced various levels of frustration and fatigue being the only Black staff professional in their department or division. Tokenism can be traced back to an article in 1963 by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. He discusses tokenism of the American society, specifically America's satisfaction with a mere modicum of freedom as opposed to absolute liberation (Valdary, 2015). Tokenism is defined as the practice of doing something (such as hiring a person who belongs to a minoritized group) only to prevent criticism and give the appearance that people are being treated fairly (Merriam-Webster internet). The participants in this study shared the stress of being the token.

Damien was asked to support the men of color program at his current institution at the time of departure of the VPSA. The housing department primarily supports the men of color program, and the director of his department expressed that Damien should oversee the men of color program. Battling the assumptions in the workplace, work fatigue as a new professional to perform well, and tokenism, Damien felt as though he could not advocate for himself. Brandan shared,

> I am often tapped to participate in things that highlight my story, who I am, and put me out there in the community. Some people would call me a token. Now I have to know the difference between being an advocate and being in spaces that I need to be in or assisting them in checking a box.

Belle shared challenges with being authentically related to being tokenized. Belle commented on the challenge of not being yourself,

> I think it's the idea of having to bite your tongue all the time. For example, in a meeting with a colleague and having to be the one ready, to tell the truth, and say what needs to be said—and maybe being the one to notice some subliminal—or having to do the specific type of work when it pertains to supporting students. It can be a massive cause of burnout. Things make it challenging, and I don't know if it's tokenism.

Most of the participants feel the pressure and challenge of supporting DEI initiatives because they may not address the community's needs if they do not. The shared sentiment from May and other participants,

> Is it because I'm Black? Is it because I'm Black and I look young?

The participants in the study shared the pain, frustration, embarrassment, anger, and fatigue they feel daily as a Black man or Black Woman working at a PWI. It is increased when the intersectionality of their other identities is being considered.

Feelings of Separation. Another theme that emerged from the data is feelings of separation when working at a predominately White institution. When asked, all participants spoke of being disconnected or isolated as a regularly occurring phenomenon at their institution. Damien shared his experience regarding their isolation:

> At my first institution (large research flagship Big 10 institution), I had to navigate the system and did not have the initial support to learn politics. I had a problem with not having the freedom to be my own professional but to walk into spaces being strategic instead of being my authentic self. It also felt isolating when colleagues would tell me I should not talk to another Black male staff member on campus because of his reputation. I was fearful that my reputation could be dampened if I was seen talking to him.

This created separation from peers who identified with Damien. While all the participants in the study spoke of isolation as being one of few Black professionals in the room, Eve feels that isolation can also be self-inflicted. From her own experience, Eve admitted that isolation in the workplace is led by herself.

> Being one of the only Black individuals in the workplace, there's not a lot of trusts here. They don't understand how to support me or advocate for me at tables where I am not seated. My guard is more up than I think would be if I worked alongside a colleague who either looked like me or understood my lived experience.

Brandan described his graduate program as having a "really healthy environment." He shared an abundance of Black people to support him when things went sour or weird. However, as a full-time professional at his current institution, Brandan explained,

> I had a community to go to. They were like Big Sisters, Big Brothers, the aunties, and uncles too. For me, it was hard to leave that and come here because now I'm the only Black student affairs professional that works in the student involvement and leadership realm. Within the department, it's just me. That's hard because, in the whole division, there are not many of us. We don't have the opportunity to connect because of proximity. Not having other Black staff in proximity is hard when you want community.

Speaking on these experiences was difficult for Belle as she had to recall moments again where she sat in silence due to the behaviors of others. Being the only Black staff member, in addition to identifying as a woman, Belle shared,

> I am the only person of color on our student services staff. It's hard to find a colleague to who I can relate and who understands the work I do. I found a colleague at the institution, but they don't necessarily do my job. So, there's a disconnect.

Belle's story above highlights the struggles of a new Black professional who has not even had the time to process experiences with the authenticity of being Black at a PWI. The "isolating feeling" she described is comparable to Britt at her institution.

> I have good connections with my co-workers at work because we can talk about work things. But I haven't made connections outside of work because the city is also White. I'm either hanging out with my co-workers doing general things like going to the zoo or the park, or I'm in my apartment by myself all weekend because I don't know people like me here.

Britt shared the experiences within the institution as well as the environment of where the institution is located.

Kendrick also shared their experience of being the only Black staff member in their department and the importance of knowing who is an ally and who will support you unconditionally.

> There is a challenge of being yourself versus this sort of façade that you have built up. The professional façade that is built up is to appease those around you and make everyone feel comfortable.

The “façade” Kendrick described is similar to May's illustration of what she perceived as a new professional among the senior-level Black administrators.

> When we look at Black senior-level leaders, sometimes it feels like the word sell outcomes out a lot. It feels like as you move up in higher education, you kind of has to learn to start compartmentalizing. You may hear Black senior-level leaders say, well, no, you can't say that you got to play the game, you got to infiltrate the system. But it's as part of infantry in this system to get to where you are and hold back parts of yourself. If I have to lose parts of myself or compromise my integrity of who I am, do I even really what to do this?

Ultimately, May sees these events among other Black senior-level administrators navigating their authenticity at a PWI create dissonance. However, she continued to share:

> I feel like I can only be authentic in certain spaces. When you have Black senior-level leaders, who are selling out or not advocating the way they need to because they are trying to play the game, they are trying to protect their livelihood. It puts us in this awkward phase like, maybe you don't want this to be this way, but you have to protect yourself in your position.

Theme Three: Survivor: I’m Still In It For Now.

This theme is titled Survivor: I’m Still In It For Now because achieving authenticity is over a life span. Haight et al. (2002) introduces thriving as a life span theory which is described as a positive concept that exists as a continuum. A thriving person is living life full—individuals grow and develop at different rates and in different ways based on interactions with the environment and the ongoing development of self. Each participant attributes their success for survival by identifying the factors needed to thrive.

Resilience. The participants from the study come from different backgrounds and have unique journeys. The similarities of their collective identities are identifying as Black, new professional in student affairs, and working at a PWI. They all shared stories of experiencing racism and microaggression as a professional in student affairs. These stories range from White students shouting, "look, it's the nigger of the building" (Kendrick), identified as "that's the one with the kid, right? (Eve), assuming you are incapable of knowing information because of being the youngest professional in the room (Britt), by the way, you look "the one with the locs" (Damien), or the assumption the only island in the Caribbean is Jamaica (May).

Navigating the stories of Black professionals working in student affairs through the lens of marginality and mattering reinforces the need for institutions to develop sustainable initiatives to support Black professionals. Marginality is when a person changes roles or experiences transition. These feelings of marginality promote contradictions in the person's mind (Schlossberg, 1989). For instance, Damien shared how he chose to present himself in the workplace:

> I try to be happy and smile as much as possible. However, I know that I've already been judged with my look as far as my locs, even down to my name. I think that goes back to authenticity. Do I have to change who I am in Black spaces? Usually not. There are Black traditions like when you walk into a room you say hello to people but always be on your best behavior. I found that my personality seems to get me in more doors than just having good work. I think the agreeable Black person type helps you, right? But for me, I'm starting to grow kind of exhausted, just not being myself.

Consistent with Damien, James tries to present himself in a happy, smiling, and respectful manner in everyday interactions. James is also navigating being the “yes” person from undergraduate and balancing that with being a professional.

> Generally, I am happy and motivated to come to work every day. Never have any altercations with anyone, never saying no, being the people pleaser. There are days when I'm like, I don't want to do this task, but if I don't do this task, I know someone else will say no, they won't do it, and then it's going to be me who must do it anyway. So let me go ahead and put everything I was doing down to help you. I often find myself in positions like that, making me a people pleaser.

Belle alluded that she is aware of the image she has to establish to survive. According to Belle, it begins with monitoring her behaviors in and around her department as the only Black staff member to "fit in." Belle stated:

> I present myself as someone who approaches things like, if you don’t have something nice to say, don’t say it at all. I tend to be quieter. Many of my colleagues are White; we grew up different, talk differently, and think differently. I think I'm more of an observer. I just try to fit in where I can.

Additionally, Belle admitted that there is intentionally behind her decision to be reserved to survive at her institution.

Other participants in the study revealed that they use their personalities to be politically and socially savvy. Brandan shared,

> My personality of being funny, sassy, and outspoken has allowed me to show up. I try to be 100% myself. This really shows up well in meetings and the appropriate setting, and I rely on that in my day-to-day interactions.

Despite the unintended perception, Brandan insisted that he stays true to himself and does all he can to remain neutral and maintain relationships as the only Black professional in his division.

Advocacy. Advocacy was another theme that the participants discussed, and they felt that they had a purpose in the field of student affairs for students and other Black-identifying staff members. The narratives of the eight participants in this study provide examples of their "why" in student affairs. Each participant shared experiences of self-advocacy or when they needed to advocate for others in their own words. They learned advocacy from their own experience to survive while Black at a PWI. May shared,

> I am going to have a slightly different experience from a Black man. Things will look different when you throw in sexual orientation or gender expression. As Black women, we are typically perceived as more aggressive. Black men are more widely received in spaces.

Britt also shared,

> Men, especially cisgender men, have an easier time kind of navigating areas because they get to show up as “cool.” Whereas Black women, we cannot be too sassy, can’t ask too many questions, can’t be too much. They will see us as a threat. They have to get rid of threats. Black men are like the perfect type of Black person.

The narratives provided by May and Britt encourage the need for self-advocacy when they are in spaces navigating racism, microaggressions, selection and hiring, and pieces of training. Damien and Brandan shared the need to advocate and support Black women in the workplace. Damien shared,

> I believe my colleagues who identify as Black Women have more challenging conditions. There are higher expectations of Black women. There's a lot of tone policing. I try to be

> an advocate. I will advocate for them in spaces and help to protect them when they say they need it.

Brandan as a Black man added,

> When it comes to being a Black woman and student affairs, I think based on my friends and the people I care about, they have struggled with authentically showing up because they are not deemed as bubbly and outgoing. They are seen as standoffish and rude. It's rooted in the angry Black woman thing, right?

Black staff shouldn't be the only ones advocating and protecting one another in the workplace. Black staff should be able to bring their full identities to work and not feel as though their stories and experiences are not being valued and appreciated.

Community Building. All the participants responded to the question that asked for them to share what strategies Black new student affairs professionals use to succeed at a predominately White institution. Community building and strong relationships were very evident in the participants' narratives. All the participants shared a common need for a community of support, and some equate the care and understanding from a supervisor. One of the participants, Belle, shared,

> Sometimes I feel like asking my supervisor if he's ever taking the time to be hesitant or question the requests he asks of me or whether he is intentional in supporting me as a Black woman. I am the only one in the room who identifies as Black, but no one addresses it or about it. My identity doesn't go away after you all hire me.

Additionally, Eve stated,

> It is necessary to understand yourself as a professional. You need to understand what exactly it is you need to be supported. I found the supervision relationship to be very

> important. If I am going to be supervised by a White individual, I need them to understand how my identity shows up as a professional. I need advocacy from them.

A few participants also spoke about the community of support at their institution with Black Faculty and Staff Support Groups. May stated,

> I knew a few other professionals of color when I got hired. We would hang out and do a lot of things. The community is what has kept me here, specifically with those other Black young early career professionals. There's a Black Faculty and Staff association here, but they are older or senior level. Their experiences and interpretation are different, so being open and honest is necessary. If I couldn't find community and connect, I would not know what keeps me at the institution.

Eve added,

> I got involved in a Black faculty and staff group that meets once a month for a staff luncheon. I quickly found that most of them were in a different age group than I. I didn't connect as much. I found that new individuals started working here, and I would reach out more to create my circle.

Belle shared,

> Lean into building stronger connections with Black staff members, especially other Black women, and talk about the hardships of working at an institution or living in a place like this. The general things that my White counterparts wouldn’t understand.

Additionally, Kendrick shared,

> A good support system of individuals who look like you and have similar identities. Have individuals at your institution but have no affiliation with your institution, whether they are in higher education at a different institution or do not work in higher education at

all. Having the support system, you can talk to and express yourself wholeheartedly without being judged, or fear of having some sort of repercussion come towards you.

Brandan shared the importance of community outside of work,

> Find community in and outside of work. Sometimes it gets hard when we are frustrated and want to forget about a really good friendship with a colleague and vent about things. Leave work at work. It is important to have your board of directors, the people that are like mentors, who help me authentically show up.

Participants all felt that building a community of support around them was paramount as they did their work. Community allows them to "let your hair down and be yourself," as Damien describes.

Participants each provided advice for Black new student affairs professionals to succeed at a predominately White institution while remaining authentic:

Damien,

> Navigate the city you are in. For Black men, find your barbershop. Find some friendship. Be honest with your abilities and your boundaries—document everything. Ask questions.

James,

> Remember your goal. Remember what you're doing why you started this in the first place. Remember your purpose. If your purpose is to help a student group, do your best always to help that group and do what you can to impact.

Eve,

> Your circle of support is important, whether people look like you or have the same experience. But people who at least understand or are willing to learn.

May,

Know that politics run a lot deeper than you could ever imagine, especially at public institutions. Prepare yourself for that and find your community. If you cannot find your community, you need to go somewhere else.

Brandan,

Don't be afraid to go somewhere where it looks completely new to you. Moving here helped me grow as a professional because I had to be uncomfortable with not knowing anything but willing to learn. Students who look like you will see you and know you are there for them.

Belle,

Try hard not to give up opportunities to be authentic to yourself. You may have to conserve your energy and don't feel pressured to be the one to address the needs of students. You do not always have to be the one. Find ways to conserve or protect yourself while remaining authentic to who you are.

Britt,

Don't just look at the university but look at the town and the relationship between the university and the city. Make the best decision about where you will live in the town. Microaggressions are inevitable. It's just something that's going to happen.

And Kendrick,

Be as confident as you can be in your identities and abilities. You were hired for a reason and bring that to the table.

Researcher Reflection. The themes that emerged from the narratives of these participants describe their resiliency in the face of systematic racism experienced while working

at a PWI. From dealing with systematic racism, microaggressions, and isolation, participants shared their narratives of being authentic and how these experiences impacted their lives. The skills and experiential knowledge learned over time as a new professional offers valuable contributions to the profession. To be a Black new student affairs professional working at a PWI can be difficult, especially remaining authentic to be true to self. Discrimination in the workplace indeed inflicts pain, frustration, anger, annoyance, and displeasure with the profession. However, these participants and others work relentlessly to liberate the next generation.

Chapter Summary

In Chapter four, a total of eight participants were interviewed who self-identified as a Black new student affairs professional working at predominately White institution. Participants' responses were categorized into overarching themes that highlighted different areas of their shared experiences. The data that was collected and analyzed provided three themes which include: (1) Navigating Authenticity: True to Self, (2) My Life: See What I See (racial battle fatigue, burden of identities, tokenism, and feelings of separation), and (3) Survivor: I'm Still In It For Now (resilience, advocacy, and community building). I addressed research questions of perceptions of authenticity, experience with identities, and strategies for the success of Black new student affairs professionals at predominately White institution to be authentic.

In the following chapter, Chapter five, I will summarize the findings in relation to the existing literature, the theoretical framework, and the research questions of this study. Lastly, implications and recommendations are discussed based on the findings and suggestions from participants.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

This study aimed to explore the experiences with authenticity of Black new student affairs professionals working at predominately White institutions (PWIs). The findings presented in this research provided salient narratives of the experiences of eight Black new student affairs professionals employed at PWIs. I used five constructs to facilitate this study: (a) new professional, (b) race, (c) gender, (d) sexual orientation, and (e) institution type. Each construct served as a characteristic in exploring the authentic experiences that Black professionals in student affairs encounter. Moreover, incorporating literature about race, gender, and sexual orientation served as a foundation for holistically understanding how individuals experience their identities to be authentic.

I used narrative inquiry as the qualitative research method to guide this study. To explore and create narratives, I used semi-structured interviews. I structured the data from each participant's explanation of their experiences and the researchers' interpretation of those descriptions.

The following three research questions guided this study in exploring the experiences with authenticity of Black new student affairs professionals working at predominately White institutions:

1. What are the Black new student affairs professionals' perceptions of being authentic at a predominately White institution?

2. How do Black new student affairs professionals experience their identities at a predominately White institution?
3. What strategies do Black new student affairs professionals use to succeed at a predominately White institution?

This chapter presents a summary of the findings that was in chapter 4. The narrative accounts consisted of eight participants for approximately 10 hours of in-depth, semi-structured, and transcribed interviews. Further, I will describe the emergent themes from participant interviews and participant narratives. Additionally, I will provide implications, recommendations for further research, and conclusions drawn from this study.

Study Overview

This research study explored experiences with authenticity of eight Black new student affairs professionals employed at PWIs. The study addressed (a) the perception of being authentic at a PWI, (b) the identities one holds to be authentic at a PWI, and (c) the strategies Black new student affairs professionals use to succeed in their institutional environment. I also used critical race theory (Delgado & Stefancics, 2017) and the theory of marginality and mattering (Schlossberg, 1989) as an interpretative tool to investigate the findings to better understand Black professionals' experiences with authenticity at a PWI. I chose new professionals as a sample because of the increased number of new student affairs professionals leaving the field (Frank, 2013).

Summary

As each participant shared their narratives through open-ended, in-depth, candid descriptions of the experiences with authenticity as a Black new student affairs professional working at a PWI, several themes emerged. The first research question on the perceptions of

being authentic at a PWI produced a common theme: Navigating Authenticity: True to Self. The second research question on the experiences with their identities at a PWI consisted of four themes: My Life: See What I See (1) racial battle fatigue, (2) burden of identities, (3) tokenism, and (4) feelings of separation. From the final research question on the strategies used to succeed three themes emerged: Survivor: I'm Still in it for Now (1) resilience, (2) advocacy, and (3) community building.

Navigating Authenticity: True to Self

Developmental theory suggests that the participants in this study were in a stage of evolving authentically (Erikson, 1950). The participants defined what it means to be authentic based on who they were, how they dealt with others, how they solved problems, and what they understood to matter in their lives. By learning from their experiences, the participants understood what it means to be authentic. This represents the process of how they are developing authentically. More specifically, when Black new professionals encounter experiences of racial battle fatigue, the burden of identities, tokenism, and feelings of separation, they evaluate these experiences and use them to define their authentic development. Thus, responding to these challenges helped develop strategies to succeed at a PWI. For these authentic Black new professionals, authenticity involves being "true to self" (Rogers, 1961; Clemmer, 1999; Kernis, 2003).

Establishing an identity as a student affairs professional requires navigating the personal with the professional realm. This is different for every Black professional, but all are affected by their uniqueness. In contrast to the nature of authenticity, inauthenticity occurred for the participants when they excluded their own needs to meet the needs of others, acting incongruently with their true selves. Hence, it shaped the inability to be authentic. Goffee and

Jones (2005) argue that a person cannot be authentic independently. According to Goffee and Jones, authenticity is defined mainly by what others people see in you and can, to a great extent, be controlled by you. The challenge for inauthentic Black professionals was the perception of being authentic in conflict with how others perceive them.

The findings in this study indicated that new Black professionals recognize what they value to be authentic. The participants emphasize the importance of being true to themselves regardless of challenges and barriers. Racial battle fatigue, the burden of identities, tokenism, and feelings of separation will exist, but there is survival for the new Black professionals through resilience, advocacy, and community building.

The findings also showed that the participants were inauthentic at one point in time. As mentioned by several participants, being inauthentic is having to behave in ways that are based on pleasing others. To be authentic, individuals have to live following their own choice, not based on the expectations of others. Finally, this study found that intersectionality contributed to the authenticity of being Black at a PWI. The multiple-identities played a significant role in how each participant developed authentically. Their identities helped define their values, which ultimately served their survival being Black at a PWI.

My Life: See What I See

The findings documented the voices of eight Black new student affairs professionals, exploring their experiences of being authentic at a PWI. The following subthemes emerged: (a) racial battle fatigue, (2) burden of identities, (3) tokenism, and (4) feelings of separation. These themes reflected one of CRT's critical tenets; no person has a single identity defined but has multiple and possible overlapping or conflicting identities (Delgado & Stefancics, 2017).

Racial battle fatigue. Racial structures are present politically, socially, and economically (Bryant-Davis & Ocampo, 2005) and result from socio-political dilemmas Black people find themselves victims of (Newton, 2009). The participants in this study report the pain, frustration, anger, and embarrassment they feel navigating through a racist system every day. Some of these stressors occurred to them in the form of feeling devalued, unappreciated, tokenized, and isolated.

Existing literature on Black staff highlights how oppression in campus environments influences Black staff's ability to thrive in the profession (Hawkins & Larabbee, 2009; Steele, 2018) and sacrificing authenticity to fit to maintain employment preservation (Kayes, 2006). This study allowed me to engage the narratives of Black new student affairs professionals to expand the literature on the Black staff experience. Existing literature illustrates the experiences on faculty or students of color. The impact of racism profoundly resonates with Black student affairs professionals. When one experiences racism in the workplace, we all experience racism. When one encounters a microaggression, we all feel anger, frustration, and pain. Participants in the study equally share the fatigue of navigating their identities at a PWI with colleagues and students. Even after pursuing student affairs as a career choice to support students of color who look like them, there is still stress in the profession with racialized treatment. The feeling of racial battle fatigue by all participants is congruent with the literature on the permanent of racism and its impact on their personal and professional experiences (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012)

Burden of identities. The literature reviewed for this study explored the many identities that Black professionals may have, although it was not exhaustive literature on identities to be authentic. Much of this literature discussed how participants' identities are represented, starting with race. I intentionally aimed to provide an avenue for each participant to share salient

identities they identified to be authentic. Hence, the focus is on the participants' identities and their challenges.

The burden of identities experienced in the participants' lives as they struggled through their environment to be Black, man, woman, father, mother, gay, queer, young, and professional. Howard-Hamilton et al. (1998) evaluated the relationships between workload, burnout, and stress among full-time student affairs administrations and the correlation to gender. This study found that marriage and having children is more stressful for women than men. They suggest that women are "leaving the profession because it is difficult to juggle raising a family as well as working nearly 50 hours a week" (p. 90). The results of this study are consistent with Eve's narrative as a Black new student affairs professional who is married and identifies with motherhood.

One participant shared that he can get by faster than a Black woman as a Black man. Another stated that being young, people are shocked by the intellect and knowledge they bring to the team. Another participant shared that their work ethic should show before the identity of being a mom at work. Participants share the intersections of their different identities and how they impact them today. Reflecting on the critical tenets of CRT, the intersectionality of their various identities of race, gender, and sexual orientation (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017) is a burden for them.

Tokenism. The literature did not explore the concept of tokenism for this study. However, tokenism was highlighted in the findings. Some participants shared experiences of being tokenized in the workplace with extra tasks outside of their work duties in committee work and mentoring students because of their identity. Another participant added that they were not compensated for the additional workload. Delgado & Stefancic (2017) shared that the concept of

interest convergence through racism can advance White elites and working-class people by giving them a reason to feel superior to Black people. Several participants shared that their presence at their institution has an alternative institutional benefit because their presence adds diversity. Diversity means more than adding a staff member of color to your team. Steele (2018) conducted a qualitative study to understand the experiences of the staff of color at PWIs. Participants experienced a sense of "tokenism" and, at times, felt undervalued.
Others have shared that they are hired because they are the only ones in their department or division. A variety of reasons were shared where participants even questioned tokenism in the hiring process.

Feeling of separations. Feelings of separation or isolation came about from feeling invisible or only visible to other people of color. This aspect of their experience relates to the literature of understanding the campus environment. Osajima (2009) mentioned that being minoritized at a PWI can lead to feelings of otherness and isolation. More than half of the participants cited examples of isolation during interviews; I was surprised that the participants did not shy away from sharing their loneliness and need for other Black staff on campus. I was reminded of my experience early on as a new professional being the only one.

The participants also shared having to work harder at communicating across cultures to White colleagues who did not want to understand the experiences of Black staff and students. One participant shared traumatic experience in an interview setting with her White colleague who made an offensive racist remark to a candidate. In addition, several participants cited the impact of workplace isolation on navigating their institution. Strategies for success need to be developed quickly to survive at their institution.

Survivor: I'm Still in it for Now.

Despite the dominant narrative of structural racism experienced by the participants to be authentic, the participants voiced additional themes to reinforce a sense of mattering and belonging as a Black professional at a PWI. The following subthemes emerged: (a) resilience, (2) advocacy, and (3) community building.

Resilience. Although this research does not explicitly explore the literature on strategies to be successful of Black professionals, resilience was identified by participants as a strategy for success. Throughout the study, the participants expounded on coping mechanisms (Pearlin & Schooler, 1982) or strategies for success they used and continued to sustain in the field. The first was finding their inner strength to follow their values and choose their battles. One participant explained taking a break from providing input to reduce trauma sharing. Another participant stated having to remind themselves of their way to support other Black students and those who need them. The second was feeling motivated by the Black students on their campus. One participant shared a desire to impact that will help them positively. Another participant shared their motivation as being the person they can lean on and finally, surrounding themselves with people who provided them a space to feel seen. One participant shared creating their circle to encourage, motivate, and support.

Despite the fatigue of racism, the burden of identities, tokenism, and feelings of separation, they all found unique ways to be resilient in their day-to-day to be as authentic possible as a Black new professional working at a PWI. Sobers (2014) study found that keeping their thoughts positive was a coping mechanism or strategy for the participants. The participants did not let their circumstances stop their momentum. They told their stories, learned from their experiences, and continued to move forward.

Advocacy. In this study, participants reported a similar desire to advocate for other Black professionals to support one another effectively. Furthermore, all the participants encountered an experience when they were the only ones and had to advocate for themselves or others of marginalized groups. The participants in this study felt like their experience as a Black professional provides them with an opportunity to challenge the status quo in today's society.

Taking the time to understand how to advocate and self-advocate to survive the struggles of being Black at a PWI. For example, the myth of the "angry Black woman" must be demystified, debunked, and replaced with the image of an assertive and socially savvy Black woman who exudes a strong, balanced self-identity who advocates on her behalf and for others (Henry, 2010).

One participant shared that if he struggles as a Black professional, the following Black professional shouldn't struggle with the same thing. The need to challenge the system is required for other Black professionals and Black students to benefit from an unfortunate experience. Another participant shared being fully transparent in recruiting other Black professionals, recognizing microaggressions are everywhere.

Community Building. The concept of community and building significant relationships were salient in the participants' narratives. In a narrative study of 25 African American women, Mitchell (2018) found the importance of developing strong professional relationships to navigate challenges in the workplace. Relationships, whether with family, a community of people, colleagues, or a network, normalized the participants' experiences and provided safe spaces for the African Americans to be their authentic selves to build trust with others. The participants in this current study indicated that being around other staff members of color who look like them provided a level of support for growth and development. Brandan recalls having a solid support

system of Black professionals in his graduate program, and currently, at his current institution, it is non-existent. Several participants spoke about the importance of networking and building relationships with Black professionals during their onboarding.

Phillips (2021) study shared the vital need for affinity spaces for Black-identified staff, especially in predominately white areas. These spaces allow Black colleagues to lean on one another for support, discuss unique challenges. Black professionals face and provide a sense of belonging to the institution. The community impact for Black professionals is like seeing all your family at the reunion during the divisional holiday celebration. May shared she is thankful for the community because she would leave the institution if she did not have it.

Implications

The findings in this study suggest several implications. Black new professionals play a significant role in the growth of diversity at higher education institutions. However, due to race and gender discrimination, retaining Black staff can be a challenge. The intensity and emotion evoked by the eight participants during their interviews were powerful for both the participants and the researcher. Having been a Black new professional was beneficial in understanding their experiences. There were many emotions and experiences that I could directly relate to. While the participants described their harrowing experiences, they invariably followed up with ways in which they were able to cope and manage their experiences as Black professionals in student affairs. The information gathered may help develop resources, services, and programs to support the needs of Black professionals at PWIs.

The participants in this study shared experiencing moments of hope or optimism for an enriched and supportive campus environment for Black staff. Findings revealed that many Black new professionals rely on various strategies to help them overcome the challenges of being Black

at a PWI. Many of these strategies include depending on supportive networks to navigate negative experiences of racism, microaggressions, and isolation. Participants elaborated on the importance of having other Black staff overcome the feelings of separation and isolation. The future implication is pivotal at understanding the experiences of Black professionals at PWIs. Institutional-wide support groups for minority administrators can be implemented. These support networks can be in the form of social engagements, professional development, or university-wide mentor-mentee programs. Additionally, these programs can benefit Black new student affairs professionals.

With the increase of students of color on college campuses, higher education institutions, particularly PWIs, should better recruit and retain Black faculty and staff. As the participants shared, it is vital Black students see Black staff on their campus. Further implications include the need for higher education to be strategic in increasing the diversity of staff members, especially senior-level positions. Black professionals are often overlooked for senior-level positions at PWIs, or they are tokenized to be the only ones at the table.

Recommendations for Practice

Participants suggested several ways for higher education institutions, specifically predominately White institutions, to better retain, validate, and support Black identifying staff members. From the findings, it was clear all participants were appreciative of their educational path into student affairs. The desire to support students of color in navigating their experience in White spaces was a part of their why; however, more intentional effort towards their professional experience was discussed. First, "being true to self" has layers, as the participants shared in the study. Black professionals in particular struggle with feeling inauthentic at work. Research by Patricia Faison Hewlin shows that many minorities feel pressured to create "facades of

conformity," suppressing their personal values, views, and attributes to fit in with organizational ones (Hewlin et al., 2015). They might straighten their hair, conform with coworkers' behaviors, use alternative name to delete an ethnic-sounding name, and suppress emotions related to workplace racism. As a result of all the above, and more not listed, Black professionals feel less supported, engaged, valued, and committed to their jobs than their non-Black peers.

Second, higher education institution, specifically, predominately White institutions, should encourage open conversation about race. Stories and statistics of racism over the years still exist, which means that race matters and needs to be discussed in the workplace. These types of conversations are uncomfortable; however, institutions need to examine who has been excluded. Senior leaders- most of whom are White men- need to not avoid talking about race or other issues of inequality. To create a culture of authenticity will require the top-down directive and modeling by allowing people are allowed to share ideas, asks questions, and address issues without reprisal. Supervisors will need to invite Black staff to share their experiences--- good, bad, and ugly. Overtime these informal and formal conversations will create a level of trust where Black staff may feel their experiences are not silenced or ignored.

Third, campus stakeholders such as student affairs practitioners, faculty, staff, and administrators who have access to existing supporting structures aimed at supervising and leading staff can determine whether these services include Black staff with intersecting identities. Majority of the participants in the study discussed the need for intentional training for supervisors on how to develop professionals, particularly professionals of color. This training is to ensure that all supervisors are providing employees with equitable opportunities across campus. Supervisory staff, both those who supervise professionals and students, need to focus on how to lead and develop those they oversee. Most trainings take a broad approach to

diversity, attempting to serve minority groups such as women, LGBTQ+, and those with accessibility needs. To improve these shortcomings, is to require White men and White women to take up the mantle by assigning them roles involving diversity and inclusion programs. Challenge White staff to be present in spaces to understand White privilege, intersectionality, racism, and microaggressions, in addition to, what does allyship truly mean. Shift from antibias training on when White staff deliberately display racism in the workplace and hold them accountable for their actions. An emphasis on the importance of intercultural competence of White supervisors in regards to working with staff of different backgrounds to help address and assess any current bias that they may hold.

Fourth, Black staff need spaces to grow and develop and to experience failures and success without being subsumed in narratives of racial limitation. This requires recommending Black staff for promotions and stretch opportunities. With many qualified and ambitious Black educated individuals vying for such opportunities, politics often plays a role. Some participants expressed being overlooked for positions despite their qualifications of degree completion and years of experience. Once institutions understand the reality of the Black experience, they will embrace and champion opportunities that help to level the playing field. This will be hard and uncomfortable but this will not only benefit Black staff but other underrepresented and marginalized groups.

Fifth, higher education institutions must increase their recruitment and retention efforts of Black staff or staff members of color. Participants mentioned multiple factors that affect the lack of recruitment and retention at predominately White institutions. Predominately White institutions should conduct diversity audits to learn where racial unfairness might hide. This will require HR to sort staff based on their job types and levels within the institution to uncover

discrimination or inequality in the workplace. PWIs must be intentional in focusing on race and racism to uncover the inequality of promotions, pay, and turnover. This includes developing a new hiring plan and not relying on what has always been done. Hire people from historically Black colleges and universities, and not just Black people from elite institutions. Be purposefully in hiring Black staff to work at PWIs with equitable opportunities for promotion and pay.

Finally, some participants expressed the lack of representation at the senior administrative roles and the importance of Black leaders serving as mentors to navigate being Black at a PWI. An institution-wide mentoring program for Black new student affairs professionals could address both of these issues. The mentorship program would include a senior level administrator being partnered with an entry-level staff member of similar identities. Being paired with someone with similar identities may help with navigating authenticity at a PWI. If Black senior administrators do not exist, there needs to be an affinity space for Black-identifying staff members toe stablish connections with others beyond their departments and units. Beyond providing space, substantial funding needs to be provided to these affinity spaces without "hawk eyes" creating roadblocks for why Black staff members need the space.

Recommendations for Future Research

There are still areas for future research. First, this study focused on the experiences with authenticity of Black new student affairs professionals working at predominately White institutions. Future studies exploring Black staff members experiences should be expanded to have more participants to understand the Black experience. This research can be extended to exploring the experience with authenticity of Black new student affairs professionals working at historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs). Research on the comparison of the Black

experience at a PWI and HBCU may provide insight to higher education administration on the best practices to support Black staff. The results could inform where the emphasis for support and retention strategies should be placed.

Second, since the study's participants are Black, the sample of the participants does not reflect the people of color population that are characterized at predominately White institutions. The term people of color refer to those groups in America that are and have historically targeted by racism. This includes people of African, descent, people of Asian descent, people of Latin American descent, and indigenous peoples (sometimes referred to as Native Americans or American Indians). Many people refer to these groups collectively as non-Whites" (Tatum, 2017, pg. 94-95). Furthermore, more research should be conducted on Black identifying international staff members, as their views on race and ethnicity may be different from African-Americans.

Third, the study should also be replicated by gender and sexual orientation. This leads me to wonder if narrowing down research on specific identities such as Black heterosexual man, Black heterosexual woman, LGBTQ+ identifying, or non-binary identifying have an impact on their experiences with authenticity at a PWI. Differences in gender, sexual orientation, and the intersection between should be explored. In addition, replicating with position type, institution type, and geographic location.

Finally, the participants of this study identified as new professionals. The narratives they shared accounted for the beginning phases of experiencing with authenticity on predominately White campuses. This leads me to wonder about the experiences with authenticity of mid-managers, senior-level administrators, vice presidents, and presidents of predominately White institutions.

Conclusion

This study aimed to explore the experiences with authenticity of Black new student affairs professionals working at predominately White institution. As a group, all participants represented new professionals at their respective institutions. I interviewed eight participants first by conducting in-depth interviews via Zoom. The data resulted in hours of transcribed narrative data about being Black at a PWI. The study's findings revealed strategies to succeed at a PWI and suggested that individuals' identities and environment influenced their strategy.

To be authentic, all the participants in the study shared coping mechanisms or strategies used to manage racism, microaggressions, and isolation at a PWI. The collective narrative is to remain true to self regardless of how your identities are presented in the workplace. It is essential to point out that each participant identified strategies that have been successful for them; they recognize the resiliency they must have to advocate for themselves and others. This also includes if the environment, institution, or city they live in provides the community with a sense of belonging.

While Black people face racial and gender discrimination of being Black and female, or an additional layer such as Black, male, and gay, not all their experiences are highlighted in negativity. Their experience with authenticity has been challenging; significant awareness of who they are and how they desire to remain true to themselves allows them to flourish. This study can have powerful results for all student affairs practitioners in higher education settings. These findings can facilitate an environment that will support Black professionals and help institutions embrace an inclusive work environment, thus providing resources and services for retention. Hence, supervisors of Black new professionals, regardless of race identity, need to understand their needs, thus reexamining their commitment to developing authentic leaders.

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Appendix A

Recruitment Information

Hello,

My name is Des'mon Taylor, and I am a doctoral candidate in the Student Affairs Leadership program at the University of Georgia. Under the direction of Dr. Merrily Dunn, I am recruiting participants for my dissertation study on experiences with authenticity of Black new student affairs professionals working at PWIs. My hope is for the results of the study to provide insight to student affairs leaders as they design strategies to support Black new student affairs professionals. If you are someone or know someone who identifies as Black, new professional (1-5 years), and employed full-time at a PWI, please encourage them to participate. You can send them the advertisement below and/or send them the following link: https://ugeorgia.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_4OQ2Bg6niHfaWRo for more information and to take the questionnaire. The prospective participant questionnaire should take no more than 10 minutes to complete. If you have any questions, please contact me at des'mon.taylor@uga.edu.

Best,
Des'mon Taylor

Appendix B

Study Email Invitation

Hello Participant,

My name is Des'mon M. Taylor; I'm a doctoral candidate in the Student Affairs Leadership program at the University of Georgia. I would like to invite you to participate in my research study to "Explore the Experiences with Authenticity of Black New Student Affairs Professionals Working at PWIs". More specifically, explore the perception of authenticity and success strategies for Black new professionals. You were selected as a possible participant from the prospective participant biographical and institutional data form created for this study.

As a participant, you will be asked to participate in an interview that should las no more than 60-minutes. Open-ended interviews will be conducted to accurately obtain an understanding of experiences with authenticity of Black new student affairs professionals working at PWIs. If you agree to participate, one interview will be scheduled at your convenience in the fall 2021 semester. Interviews will be recorded via Zoom platform and any audio recordings will be destroyed after transcription is completed.

All data collected will be confidential. Your name will never appear on any document. Instead, pseudonyms you selected will be used in place of the participant's names. Quotes will be used to support themes in the study. In addition, with your participation you can expect your experiences and data to further add to the research on Black student affairs professionals.

If you would like to know more information about this study, an informed consent form can be obtained by sending an email to des'mon.taylor@uga.edu. I will be sending you an informed consent form via email. If you decide to participate after reading the letter, please contact me via email or telephone and we can set up an appointment to schedule the interview.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 352-875-6164; des'mon.taylor@uga.edu or my advisor, Dr. Merrily Dunn, at merrily.dunn@uga.edu.

Thank you for your consideration,
Des'mon M. Taylor, M.Ed.
Doctoral Candidate, Student Affairs Leadership, Ed.D. Program
Department of Counseling and Human Development Services College of Education
University of Georgia
Pronouns: he/him/his

e: desmon.taylor@uga.edu

APPENDIX C

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA
CONSENT LETTER

Informed Consent
Exploring the Experiences with Authenticity of Black New Student Affairs Professionals Working at a Predominately White Institution (PWIs)

Researcher's Statement
You are being asked to take part in a research study. Before you decide to participate in this study, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. This form is designed to give you information about the study so you can decide whether to be in the study or not. Please take the time to read the following information carefully. Please email one of the researchers if there is anything that is not clear or if you need more information. When all your questions have been answered, you can decide if you want to be in the study or not. This process is called "informed consent." You are welcome to print this form for your records.

Principal Investigator:
Dr. Merrily Dunn
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Co-Investigator/Primary Researcher:
Des'mon M. Taylor
Doctoral Student
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desmon.taylor@uga.edu

Study Details
This study is being conducted to learn more about
professionals working at a predominately White institution, and to fulfill part of the requirements of the co-investigator's doctoral dissertation.

To be eligible to participate in the study, you must identify as Black, identify as a new professional with 1-5 years at a higher education institution, and currently employed at a predominately White institution. If you agree to participate, you will be asked to verify your complete participant biographical and institutional data form and participate in a one-on-one interview session for 60 minutes via Zoom. Verification of the participant biographical and intuitional data form should take 5 minutes for most participants. Completion of the interviews are scheduled for 60 minutes.

Risk and Discomforts
The following foreseeable risks or discomforts may arise during the course of the study:

- Psychological Risks:

- Examples are: feelings of stress/discomfort, sadness, anger, guilt, anxiety, or loss of self-esteem due to the research questions posed
- Measure to minimize risk:
  - Coding procedures will be used to minimize risk of identifiable information
  - Contact information for PI Dunn will be provided, in addition to referral information to the University Counseling Center, to mitigate risk should any topics discussed in the interviews create any psychological stress for the participants.

Benefits
Participants will:

- Be provided a platform to share their personal experiences about being authentic as a Black student affairs professional working at a PWI.
- Explore their identities through reflection of their experiences, by providing insight into their realities as student affairs professionals
- Learn how their experience may impact the practice of student affairs, specifically selecting, hiring, and retaining Black professionals
- Receive a $25 gift card to a vendor of their choice at the completion of the study.

Audio/Video Recording
The interviews with participants will be audio recorded to assist the researcher with accurate transcription of the interviews. The recordings will be kept by the primary researcher for maximum of one year, at which point they will be destroyed.

Please provide initials below if you agree to have this interview (audio) recorded or not. You may still participate in this study even if you are not willing to have the interview recorded.

_____ I do not want to have this interview recorded
_____ I am willing to have this interview recorded.

Privacy/Confidentiality
All your personal information and identifiers will be removed through the study. During transcription of the interview, pseudonyms will be provided for each participant. Only researchers will have access to specific identifiable information obtained through data collection. Results of the study may be published, but at no point will the specific identifiable information of participant be released. The audio recordings of interview will be stored with the researchers for no more than one year, at which point will be destroyed. Researchers will not release identifiable results of the study to anyone other than individuals working on the project without your written consent unless required by law.

Taking Part is Voluntary
Your involvement in the study is voluntary, and you may choose not to participate or stop at any time without penalty or less of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You are free to discontinue participating in the study at any time. If you choose to stop or withdraw from the

study, the information/data collected from or about you up to your point of withdrawal will be kept as part of the study and may continue to be analyzed.

If you have Questions

If you have any questions about the study, feel free to contact me, via phone at (352)875- 6164 or via email at desmon.taylor@uga.edu. The main researcher conducting this study is, a doctoral graduate student in the Department of Counseling and Human Services within the College of Education at the University of Georgia. Please ask any question you have now. If you have questions later, you may contact Merrily Dunn, PhD at merrily@uga.edu. If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights as a research participant in this study, you may contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) Chairperson (706)542-3199 or irb@uga.edu.

Research Subject's Consent to Participate in Research:

To voluntary agree to take part in this study, you must sign on the line below. Your signature below indicates that you have read or had read to you this entire consent form, and have all your questions answered.

Participant Name: _____

_____ _____

Participant Signature Date

Consent obtained by _____ _____

Initials of researcher Date

Appendix D
Research Questions

1. What are the Black new student affairs professionals' perceptions of being authentic at a predominately White institution?
2. How do Black new student affairs professionals experience their identities at a predominately White institution?
3. What strategies do Black new student affairs professionals use to succeed at a predominately White institution?

Interview Guide

A. What are the Black new student affairs professionals' perceptions of being authentic at a predominately White institution?

Tell me about your perceptions of being authentic at PWIs.

a. How would you define authenticity?
b. Why did you decide to become a student affairs professional? What attracted you to the field?
    i. Why did you decide to work at a predominately White institution?
c. How do you try to present yourself (or interact with) others in your workplace?

B. How do Black new student affairs professionals experience their identities at a predominately White institution?

Tell me how you identify in terms of your identities to be authentic.

a. What challenges, if any, do Black professionals face at a PWI campus to be authentic? As a woman or man is there a difference? If so, what are the challenges?
b. What challenges, if any, have you experienced with racism and/microaggressions in working at a PWI?
c. What challenges, if any, have you experienced in the recruitment and retention in working at a PWI?
d. What challenges, if any, have you experienced isolation while working at a PWI?

C. What strategies do Black new student affairs professionals use to succeed at a predominately White institution?

Tell me strategies you use for success as well as strategies supervisors can use to support your success.

a. How do you interact with other Black faculty/staff at your institution, if any? How does your interaction differ with your non-Black counterparts at this institution?
b. What do you believe is necessary to sustain as a Black new student affairs professional at a PWI?
c. What advice would you offer that will help a Black new student affairs professional working at a PWI? What experiences and/or challenges may they expect?

Thank you for participating in this interview. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Appendix E

Theme One— Navigating Authenticity: True to Self	
True to Self	1. Showing up as the full me 2. Being able to be me unapologetically 3. Being able to be yourself 4. Feel comfortable with being myself 5. Showing up as myself, without having to think about it 6. Being felt, not just being understood 7. Being truthful
Theme Two—My Life: See What I See	
Racial Battle Fatigue	1. Supervisory comments due to race and students I work with 2. Did not care who I was (all Black people look alike) 3. "nigger in the building" 4. Mixed up person due to race
Burden of Identities	1. My identity as a Black person and an immigrant 2. Being a mom, wife, and parent 3. Angry Black woman, code-switching 4. Youngest person in the room 5. Tone and mannerisms
Tokenism	1. Oversee everything Black 2. People calling me the token 3. Questioning tokenism 4. "Is it because I'm Black"
Feelings of separation	1. Did not have initial support 2. Being the only 3. Only person of color 4. Isolating feeling 5. Make others feel comfortable 6. Compromise, protect self
Theme Three—Survivor: I'm Still In It For Now	
Resilience	1. Agreeable Black person 2. Yes person 3. Don't have something nice to say, don't say it all
Advocacy	1. Black woman = more aggressive, Black man = widely received 2. Protect the Black woman
Community Building	1. Supervisory relationship 2. Faculty & Staff Support Groups 3. Create circle of support 4. Community outside of work