DISSERTATION

EXPERIENCES OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN FEMALE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

PRESIDENTS USING A STUDENT AFFAIRS PATHWAY:

A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

Submitted by

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ABSTRACT

EXPERIENCES OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN FEMALE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

PRESIDENTS USING A STUDENT AFFAIRS PATHWAY:

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This study explored the lived experiences of African-American women who became community college presidents from a student affairs pathway. The duality of the purpose of this study was to understand the making of a community college president per the "pathway" of student affairs, while simultaneously exploring a viable alternative to the "the pipeline" to the community college presidency for African-American women seeking the community college presidency.

An interpretative phenomenological paradigm involving 10 participants with in-depth interviews was the methodology. The use of Willig's (2001) qualitative method of inquiry guided the data analysis. Five structural elements emerged from the data that described their lived experiences. These elements were summarized as: (a) Personal Pillars, (b) Professional Factors, (c) Advice, (d) Challenges, and (e) the Student Affairs Pathway. The conclusions drawn from the study involved race, gender and the pathway. One conclusion from this study was that these African-American women presidents did not allow race, gender, their student affairs background or other obstacles to hinder them from achieving the presidency. The second conclusion was that they had lived experiences that demonstrated that the student affairs pathway to the community college presidency for African-American women was viable.

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DEDICATION

To African-American women in student affairs

and

To Benjamin and Reaber Humphrey
You were and are my heroes…thank you for giving me the tools to fly!

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CHAPTER 1—INTRODUCTION

"I was once told I had to get out of student services to be president…."
Sylvia Manlove (July 2008, *WIH*)

Background

African-American women have been pioneers in the education of Black and other ethnic and racial groups as well as Caucasians, even though historical references reflect little about their roles (Berry, 1982; Collier-Thomas, 1982; Guy-Sheftall, 1982; Howard-Vital, 1989; Mosley, 1980, Evans, 2007). Their involvement dates back to slavery times (Collins, 2000; Journal of Blacks in Higher Education (JBHE), 2005, JBHE, 2009).

According to a U.S. Census Report, attainment of education has been lower among the Black population than the non-Black and White populations (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2007). African-American women have outpaced African-American men regarding the conferring of degrees across all levels for undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral degrees (JBHE, 2009). In 2009, there were 121,113 black women enrolled in graduate school compared to 45,738 black men; hence, black women accounted for 72.6% of all African-American graduate school enrollments (Journal of Blacks in Higher Education, JBHE, 2009. Across race, college completion rates have been higher among women than for men indicating the majority of college degrees being awarded will be to women (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2007).

Despite degree attainment, very few African-American women reach the community college presidency (American Council on Education, (ACE), 2001, 2007; 2012; Hamilton, 2004b). In 1997, there were 49 African-American presidents of which approximately seven were African-American women (American Association of Community Colleges (AACC), 1997).

Twenty-seven percent of two-year colleges had female presidents in 2001; yet African-American women represented only 4.5% of all two-year college presidents (Weisman & Vaughn, 2002). In 2006, only 6% of all presidents were African-American and a third of these presidents were women (ACE, 2007). Overall as presidents, women are most likely to head associate's degree colleges, followed by baccalaureate degree colleges, master and doctoral degree granting colleges and universities (ACE), 2007). From 1986 to 2006, two-year colleges had the greatest increase in the percentage of women who were presidents, from 8 % to 29% (ACE, 2007). In 2011, women rose to 33.3% of associate degree college presidents (ACE, 2012). Both women and minorities are underrepresented overall as college presidents (ACE, 2002; 2012; Hamilton, 2004b). Moreover, in 2001, racial and ethnic minorities were found to have diminished overall as presidents, particularly among African-American and Hispanic groups (ACE, 2012).

Eddy and Cox (2008), in their study of six community college presidents, found male norms still govern the organizational structure of community colleges. Males continue to be in the community college presidency position more often than women and minorities. In 2006, the average community college president was Caucasian, male, and 58 years old (Weisman & Vaughan, 2007). In 2007, the Chronicle of Higher Education described the typical college president profile as being "white, married, gray-haired and male." By 2011, women had made some gains, but males continued to lead the majority of community colleges (ACE), 2012).

However, Weisman and Vaughan (2007) found that 84% of community college chief executive officers plan to retire within 10 years. Many presidents are among those planning to retire. Non-traditional pathways (pathways other than from academic positions) to the community college presidency are being reviewed (ACE, 2012; Birnbaum & Umbach, 2001). The traditional path to college presidencies, inclusive of community college presidencies, has

been first through having held a previous position as president. The second most prevalent pathway was through the academic route such as the chief academic officer or provost (ACE, 2012). Similarly to men, women presidents overall in higher education have obtained a presidency by a traditional path. The third pathway to the presidency was from other senior leadership positions at the executive levels within the institution such as the chief financial officer or administrative positions (ACE, 2012). African-American women tend to work in higher-level student affairs positions (ASHE Report, 2009). Non-traditional pathways are one way to recruit minorities, particularly African -American women. Like women, minorities need to prove themselves in all the traditional ways; which means a faculty or scholar route is the most frequent (ACE, 2012; ASHE Report, 2009). Minorities have had little success with obtaining faculty appointments through the academic route (Birnbaum & Umbach, 2001; Vaughan, 2008). Wolverton, Bower, and Hyle (2009) revealed that women who had earned doctorates were still less likely than their male colleagues to have junior faculty ranking.

However, African-Americans and Hispanics leaders are more likely to hold senior leadership positions in student affairs and are more likely to become presidents through this pathway than Whites do (ACE, 2012). African-American women student affairs professionals outnumber their African-American male counterparts as leaders within higher education (Association for the Study in Higher Education (ASHE), 2009; Jackson, 2003). This means there is a greater chance for African- American women to obtain higher-level leadership positions at colleges and universities through non-traditional routes such as business and student services (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2007).

Statement of the Problem

Traditionally, community college presidents have come from an academic pathway. Vaughan (1989) and Kubala (1999) both discovered the most common position held prior to the presidency was an academic officer. Similarly, research conducted by the American Council on Education suggested the most traveled pathway to the presidency was an academic position (ACE, 2007; 2012; Weisman &Vaughan, 2007). More than half of all presidents in 2006 were either presidents or provosts in their immediate past positions before becoming a college president (ACE, 2007). Previous presidents and persons who served as chief academic officers are the two typically ways persons advance to the community college presidency (ACE, 2007; 2012).

According to the literature, the third most common position held before becoming a community college president is the chief student affairs officer or other executive positions within the community college (ACE, 2012; Vaughan, 1998; Weisman & Vaughan, 2007). In 2006, 8% of community college presidents came from a student affairs background (Weisman & Vaughan, 2007). Hispanics and African Americans are much more likely than Caucasians to have been the chief student affairs officer as far as career path before becoming a college president (ACE, 2007, p. 23). There is little investigation on the non-traditional pathway of student services/student affairs to the college presidency. Similarly, very little research has been conducted regarding the promotional gains of African-Americans at the executive levels in administrative positions (Jackson, 2004, ASHE Report, 2009).

Since the student affairs pathway is not a traditional path to the community college presidency, and because African-American women in student affairs are rarely researched culturally and professionally, this study focused on African-American female presidents, their

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lived experiences, and the student affairs pathway to community college presidencies (Weisman & Vaughan, 2007, Henry, 2010). In addition, this study addressed the duality of enhancing the understanding of access to the community college presidency for African-American women per the "*pathway*" of student services, while simultaneously exploring student services as a viable alternative to the "*the pipeline*" to the community college presidency.

This study can serve as a resource for African-Americans female leaders currently in student affairs positions. The willingness of African-American women to share their journey may better prepare future leaders and women of color who are interested in the community college presidency. As an interpretative phenomenological study, it is intended to assist universities and colleges in understanding the experiences of African-American women related to these phenomena.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to understand the lived experiences of African-American women and their journey from student affairs positions to the community college presidency. The participants were African-American women community college presidents. The following research questions guided the study in exploring the journey of these African-American women.

Research Questions

Central Question: *What are the common and individual experiences of African-American women community college presidents who made their journey through the pathway of student services/affairs?*

Sub-questions*:*

1. *What were their career paths? What were the roles and responsibilities within student services that lead the women to pursue the community college presidency?*

2. *What do they believe are the most critical experiences (must haves) for females who have worked in student services and desire to be a community college president?*

3. *What were some of the challenges or obstacles these college presidents faced to get to the presidency?*

4. *How did these African-American women discern and respond to obstacles in their career path to the community college presidency?*

5. *What role did mentors play in the establishment of the professional goals of these women in their journey?*

6. *What were the significant opportunities presented to them and how did they take advantage of them?*

7. *What important choices did they face? How did they make their decisions? What decision criterion did they use?*

Researcher's Perspective

In qualitative research, the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection, which indicates the need to identify biases and assumptions (Merriam & Associates, 2002; Patton, 2002). Qualitative research allowed me to share the perspective of a Black feminist in which knowledge was gained by the experiences of hearing the stories of others (Collins, 2000). Despite my biases as an educator working in student affairs, my experiences were helpful in shaping the study. As an African-American woman and student affairs professional, I have

experienced the process of moving up the ladder in the field of student affairs. It is the student affairs experiences that I had most in common with the participants. In addition, I have experienced moving beyond the glass ceiling, being the first and only administrator of color within institutions of higher education and feeling like a token.

I have worked in higher education and student affairs for over 17 years by working my way through the hierarchical levels. Some of my experiences (for example, feeling isolated and being an outsider) have been similar to other African-American women in leadership that I have read about in the literature. I think that the reason that I am most interested in an African-American woman's journey is that by sharing experiences, those coming after can learn what others say and understand the process to accomplishments. It goes back to an African proverb "*each one must teach one*." While my own biases did reveal themselves along the journey of this research, I think it is important to share what my observations are of those biases. First, I know what it is like to be the first African-American female in student services at a Predominantly White Institution (PWI). It has been very difficult with no true mentors or support system. Reflecting over my personal journey and experiences has made me realize that I have to continue to keep my biases in front of me. African-American women have come a long way, and with this research, there is a potential underlying benefit of easing their leadership quest as they navigate toward the presidency.

Another important observation to this research study is the dual multicultural role that I play in higher education. I am both female and African-American, which offers very interesting dynamics. African-American women have had to endure both sexism and racism in their rise to leadership. Research that is more informative will need to be shared in order to assist initiatives to recruit, retain and engage African-American female faculty and administrators.

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Finally, I believe that it is important to understand your past in order to see your future. In 2006, while conducting a research paper on African-American women leaders I became frustrated. I became frustrated because I could not find any literature on African-American women in higher education, other than women with a faculty background. In addition, it became very frustrating that some of the articles were more than 40 years old. As I searched and debated my dissertation topic, I remembered that my frustration with the research paper. It is my hope that this dissertation will contribute to the body of knowledge concerning African-American women in higher education and the profession of student affairs.

Delimitations of the Study

This study as with most qualitative research provides a glimpse of the experiences of African-American community college presidents who came from the background of student affairs. This study was limited due to purposefully selecting African-American female community college presidents who had at least two years of student affairs experience in their pathway to the presidency. The delimitations are discussed in more detail below:

1. African-American women were selected because there is limited research concerning them in the community college presidency. Researching one group allowed for a more focused research study.

2. The second delimitation refers to the pathway of student affairs. Research data indicated that other pathways to the presidency needs to be reviewed (Birnbaum, 2001; ACE, 2012). Persons of color are more likely to become presidents through administrative leadership roles within student affairs (ACE, 2012; ASHE Report, 2009).

Assumptions

The participants openly shared their experiences and answered the interview questions honestly. Participants openly provided support information regarding their experiences as community college presidents.

Definition of Terms

- African-American and Black (used interchangeably) refer to a person of a darker hue (due to the presence of melanin) born in the United States of America and having African ancestry.

- Student Affairs and Student Services are terms that are used interchangeably. These terms refer to the profession of student development that makes up several student services support areas: enrollment services, judicial, housing, residence life, student activities, career services, counseling, and admissions. The purpose of using these terms interchangeably is that at some community colleges this area is termed services, rather than student affairs. The term student affairs is more encompassing of all aspects of student development inclusive of services (Evans, Forney, & Guido, Patton, & Renn, 2010)

- Lived experiences are those occurrences that are specific to the quest of the community college presidency

- The president is the chief executive officer of a two-year college campus. Other titles that refer to the president are: Chancellor and CEO/Provost of a campus.

- The "pipeline" theory refers to the nominating, selecting, and developing of a large pool of candidates who are from underrepresented groups with the intent of preparing these candidates for leadership roles in institutions of higher learning.

- Pathway in the context of this dissertation refers to the career progression of community college presidents' after their terminal degree. More specifically, it described the actual position-to-position upward movement of these college presidents.

CHAPTER 2—LITERATURE REVIEW

The study of women in leadership has been the topic of considerable writing and research over the last 30 years; particularly research on their roles and leadership styles and how it differs from their male counterparts (Carli & Eagley, 2007). Although there are numerous articles written concerning women leaders; there are few articles written about African-American women leaders and their migration to the community college presidency from a background in student affairs (Benjamin, Dukes, Gnage, & Scott-Skillman, 2010; Henry, 2010). The goal for women as leaders is to be genuinely included at the table within higher education (Valverde, 2003, p.105).

Approach and Organization of Review of the Literature

The literature review included articles from the past 40 years because of the scarcity and sporadic research articles on the topic of African-American women administrators in higher education, especially in the student affairs area (Henry, 2010). Taking this approach to the literature review provided a richer contextual lens for the reader. The four sections that follow reviewed relevant literature that focused on student affairs, African-Americans, women in higher education, and the community college presidency.

More specifically, Section I explored the profession of student affairs and its role and functions, the academics within student affairs, African-Americans and women in student affairs, and student affairs as a pathway to the community college presidency. Section II reviewed African-American women and higher education and the lack of research on the topic. Barriers faced by African-American women in leadership positions in the 1980s: hiring concerns, relationships with others, race and gender, and mentoring for African-American women and persons of color were explored. Section III focused on Black women and minorities with respect

to the community college presidency. Section IV addressed research on African-American women college presidents.

Section I: Perspective of Student Affairs Work

As student affairs might be a viable pathway to the community college presidency, it is important to give a perspective of student affairs as a profession. Career paths that cluster within the area of student affairs arose from work areas such as advising and counseling, which developed on college campuses during the student personnel movement of the late 19th and early 20th centuries (Cohen & Brawer, 2003; Evans, Fanz, & Guido-diBrito, 1998). After World War II, more career pathways emerged through the process of administrative and management functions as colleges and universities grew in size and complexity (Cohen & Brawer, 2003; Birnbaum, 1988). The number of administrative and management positions continued to expand to meet the evolving needs of institutions and their student population. Factors that contributed to growth and practice in the field of student affairs included the expansion of colleges and universities, inclusion of women and students of color, the importance of extracurricular activities, and research on the growth and development of college students (Evans, & et al, 1998; Handbook of Student Affairs Administration, 2009).

Recent trends are influencing the field, including integration of student developmental theory, focus on student learning, student engagement, civility, and student involvement, and issues of crisis management (Evans, Forney, & Guido, Patton, & Renn, 2010). There are core beliefs and principles of student affairs practice that have persisted throughout its history, mainly to have "concern for the whole person (Rodgers, 1990, p. 27). "Student development describes a theory and practice which examines student growth (Evans et al., 1998, p. 4). The most important early documents that attempted to capture the emerging complexity of the field were

the *Student Personnel Point of View*, published in 1937 by the American Council on Education. It was reviewed and rewritten in 1949. Other published documents over the years include *Principles of Good Practice for Student Affairs* (1998) and the *Handbook of Student Affairs Administration* (2009).

Roles and Functions of Student Affairs in Colleges and Universities

In its broadest definition or role, student affairs within post secondary education are considered "education outside of the classroom" (Evans et al., 1998). These out-of-class activities can include advising, counseling, management, or administrative functions at a college or university (Evans et al., 1998). Traditionally, student affairs included a mixture of functions within departments such as advising and leading individuals and groups, counseling, supervising, training, planning, and program development (Evans et al., 1998; Evans, Forney, & Guido, Patton, & Renn, 2010). Student affairs work also includes financial management, experiential learning and teaching, fundraising, grant writing, entrepreneurship, outcomes assessment, and cultural assessment (Evans & et al, 2010). Student affairs include offices like judicial affairs, residence life and housing, financial aid, counseling centers, advising centers, Greek affairs, student activities, leadership development, community service, advocacy, and support programs (Evans et al., 1998, p. 254; Evans & et al., 2010). In some institutions, athletics is also under the administrative leadership of student affairs. Student affairs professionals work in nearly every type of institution including private liberal arts colleges, public colleges and universities, research universities, women's colleges, historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUS), tribal colleges, urban institutions, rural institutions, for-profit institutions, professional schools within institutions, and 4-year and 2-year colleges (Handbook of Student Affairs Administration, 2009).

According to Keim (2008), community colleges have increased their need for positions in student affairs due to vast diversity of positions. Keim (2008) determined the demographics and educational backgrounds of public two-year college student affairs officers. The study found that 52% of Senior Student Affairs Officers (SSAO) was men and 48% were women. Ninety different titles were identified among the 300 SSAO; 48% had doctorates and 48% had masters. The Ed.D. was the most common terminal degree for those in the study. The study concluded that women continued to progress in percentage of two-year colleges as SSAOs. It was recommended that titles be revamped and solidified at community colleges. According the author, more research should be conducted on two-year colleges and student affairs overall.

Edwards (2005) examined the key functions of chief student affairs officers at public community colleges in New England. The primary focus was to determine whether there were contrary views held by chief student affairs officers and presidents regarding the relative importance of those functions, particularly leadership. The findings suggested that because SSAOs were part of the college management team, leadership was natural and expected of them. There was no evidence of disagreement between presidents and SSAOs regarding their perceptions of which SSAO functions were important.

Academics of Student Affairs Work

Student affairs work also includes some academic efforts, which makes it a viable pathway to the community college presidency. Magolda (2005) reflected on the relationship between academic and student affairs and found that "student affairs professionals often undervalue their experiences as experts" (p. 19). Similarly, Sandeen (2004) illustrated that professors and department chairs are no longer the only sources in higher education that create learning experiences for undergraduate students. Sandeen (2004) indicated student affairs

professionals are no longer considered service workers, but active contributors to student learning. He discovered that "administrative and academic leaders should transcend traditional classroom boundaries, which includes the total life of the student" (p. 31). He also revealed that student affairs are constantly changing in its role, which has become as diverse as student populations themselves (Sandeen, 2004). Student affairs has continued to expand its interests and student affairs professionals will be expected to contribute to advancing student learning experiences (Sandeen, 2004). Moore and Marsh (2007) shared that "student affairs' professionals play an increasingly important role in formal and information instruction" (p. 3).

Degin and Sheldahl (2007) illustrated unique opportunities that occur on a small campus between academic and student affairs. The authors gave an example of how a small liberal arts school moved from having boundaries between faculty and student affairs to a road of collaboration. They did so by allowing the student affairs professionals and faculty to serve as faculty advisors and to encourage academic support for both inside and outside of the classroom. Their reasoning was the institution of living learning communities further increased the opportunities for student affairs professionals to collaborate with the faculty.

In conclusion, student affairs can continue to expand the growing number of learning opportunities to work with faculty and academics particularly with first-year experience programs. Student affairs can also provide a strong foundation for leading by having a "hands on" helping role (Moore & Marsh, 2007). However, across most campuses today, there is a barrier between faculty and student affairs professionals, indicating that potential for partnerships abound if the barriers can be eradicated (Moore & Marsh, 2007).

African-Americans and Women in Student Affairs

Similar to other fields in higher education, student affairs is an area in which race, equity, gender, and mentoring concerns continue to be voiced and explored by researchers**.** Zamani (2003) revealed in an overview of extant literature, African-American student affairs professionals that the "majority of faculty and chief student affairs administrators are White males" (p. 94).

Jackson (2003), using an analysis of the 1999 National Association of Student Personnel Administrators Salary Survey, indicated that African-Americans constituted approximately 8.4% of student affairs administrators within two- year colleges, four-year colleges, and four-year universities. Jackson (2003) focused on the representation of African-Americans in student affairs, examining individual and institutional characteristics. Of the African-Americans in student services, 30% (126) held doctorates, 60% (251) held master's degrees, and 8.6% (38) held bachelors' degrees. African-American females outnumbered males in student services positions as "11.7 % were employed in two-year institutions" (Jackson, 2003, p.14.) The majority of African-American student service administrators served in public institutions (Jackson, 2003). The largest percentage of African-Americans in student affairs positions were employed at institutions that enrolled 10,000 to 19,000 students. In this study, African-American held 48.6% of the directors level or higher. The top positions held by African-Americans were in the areas of counseling, student center management, and housing (Jackson, 2003). In the study, the number of African-Americans serving as department chairs was less than for White academic administrators (Jackson, 2003).

Similar to Jackson (2003), Flowers (2003) investigated the representation of African-American student affairs administrators at colleges and universities. In this study, descriptive

statistics revealed that African-American student affairs administrators were underrepresented (Flowers, 2003). Data taken from the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) salary survey and the National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSA) were used for this study. The preliminary findings revealed that the percentage of African-American student affairs administrators was lower than the percentage of African-American undergraduate students attending colleges and universities (Flowers, 2003, p. 35). Applying the theory of representative bureaucracy, where leaders who are policymakers make decisions that represent the demographic composition of the public (Flowers 2003), the author implied student affairs administrators should be representative of the student enrollment. However, the foundational premise of this theory is void in cases of institutions of higher learning, where the percentages of students of color are low. The theory of bureaucracy revealed most institutions of higher education have not become "culturally transparent," such that students regardless of their race, nationality, ethnicity and other background parameters have the potential to succeed (Flowers, 2003). To the contrary, many of these institutions of higher learning are "culturally rigid," such that the adaptations, from the student perspective, are difficult to overcome (Flowers, 2003). Consequently, increased representation of underrepresented groups at the staff, faculty, and administrative levels has assisted more students at being successful at such institutions (Flowers, 2003). Flowers (2003) attempted to provide a measurable way to show progression on how to increase the numbers of African-American administrators for others to understand the underrepresentation of African-American student administrators. As per Zamani (2003a), African-Americans in senior student affairs positions could easily influence and support the progress of students. Zamani's (2003a) review of literature indicated African-American students

have a greater degree of growth, sense of belonging, and receive degrees at higher rates in community colleges where African-American faculty and staff are employed.

Discrimination in student affairs exists whether dealing with gender or race. Blackhurst (2000) studied the career satisfaction and perception of sex discrimination among women in student affairs. The method used was a random sample of 500 women student affairs administrators selected from the NASPA Member Handbook. The participants identified themselves as mid-level managers, senior administration, entry level, or undergraduate positions. Respondents were comprised of 83% white, 12% black, 2% Asian American, 2% Hispanic, and 1% Native American; their ages ranged from 23 to 65 years old.

The findings showed career satisfaction in student affairs was high. Three hundred and fifty (70%) of the women surveyed were satisfied with their jobs. However, the highest levels of satisfaction were White women and women in senior level positions. Among the lowest level of satisfaction were reported by Hispanic American and African-American women. The findings also indicated women student affairs professionals perceived moderate to high levels of sex discrimination. The perception of sex discrimination appeared to be dependent on both race and age. In addition, based upon an analysis of the variance, the women of color perceived more sex discrimination (Blackhurst, 2000). Asian and Hispanic-American women perceived sex discrimination more often than White women in the study did. The perceptions were not related to position title, parenting status, or relationship status. However, it was concluded that more research on perceived sex discrimination was needed, as was additional research on the increased gender sensitivity of supervisors, administrators, and policymakers, both inside and out of student affairs.

Holmes (2003) investigated the experiences regarding race of mid through senior level Black female administrators employed by predominately White, public, research institutions in the Midwest. The study's focus was on whether race and gender shaped their academic roles and the issues they experienced as Black female administrators in a predominately-White setting. Purposeful sampling was used. Twelve participants with at least three years experience within student services agreed to share their experiences. Holmes (2003) revealed that due to issues related to race and gender, some of the women experienced alienation and isolation. Holmes (2003) indicated the findings of burden of being Black, woman, and token indicated how race and gender influenced their experiences. The women felt race dictated their actions both in and out of the university. In conclusion, Holmes (2003) indicated that the study implied that women in this study had unpleasant experiences similar to those expressed by other Black women in earlier studies regarding race and gender.

Like Holmes (2003), Clayborne and Hamrick (2007) examined and conceptualized leadership from the point of view of personal and professional experiences of African-American women in mid-level student affairs positions at 2- and 4-year Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs). Participants portrayed their own leadership experiences, including their most recent professional leadership. Mid-level administrators were targeted because of their prior professional experience as well as future career possibilities of senior leadership positions in student affairs. This was a phenomenological study focused on the leadership experiences in the lives of these women and the meanings attached to them (Clayborne & Hamrick, 2007). Purposeful strategies included criteria and referral sampling. Six participants were from 4-year institutions, while four were from 2-year institutions (all of which were at PWIs in a Midwestern state). Their years of experience ranged from six to 15.

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Three themes emerged from this study. The first was the participant leadership approaches. The leadership approaches for the respondents included leading by example, collaborating with staff, and leading from the heart (Clayborne & Hamrick, 2007). The second theme was professional experiences and challenges. The mid-level professional experiences were deemed as buffering. A drawback was the lack of contact with senior level administrators concerning the politics surrounding policy. The respondents revealed two challenges regarding their leadership development as student affairs professionals: limited grooming or training from their supervisors and limited access to resources (Clayborne & Hamrick, 2007, p.133-134). The third theme revealed that none of the participants named coworkers as part of their key support structure. However, spiritual connections and family members were primary support systems. The participants had personal experiences of isolation and ineffectiveness and a lack of mentoring opportunities. In conclusion, it was recommended that future research be conducted on the differences and similarities of supervising and mentoring with emphasis on supervisors' expectations of employees (Clayborne & Hamrick, 2007).

While sex discrimination and support structures are some of the issues for women in student affairs, another one is salary disparities. Reason (2003) conducted a quantitative study that examined mean salary differences related to gender for African-American student affairs officers using 1999-2000 NASPA Salary Survey data. Forty-three African-Americans participated in the study; the sample included 23 women and 20 males. An examination of the salaries indicated gender and institutional size significantly affect mean SSAO salary for African-American respondents. African-American women student affairs officers made significantly less than African-American men did. African-American women tended to work at smaller institutions, which pay lower salaries than larger institutions. African-American men

also tended to stay in their positions longer than African-American women did. The author revealed that higher degree attainment did not translate into higher salaries for the respondents whether they were men or women (Reason, 2003). Consequently, these two factors appeared to have the greatest influence on salary disparities among African-American men and women. However, as a part of the author's recommendations, a challenge was given to higher education leaders to resolve compensation inequities due to gender within common institutional sizes.

Hirt, Strayhorn, Amelink, and Bennett (2006) conducted a qualitative study that examined the work of 70 student affairs administrators (67% women, 33% male) at historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs). The authors used the Hirt Model for professional life, where the nature of work was defined as: (a) pace of work, how work is done; (b) process or procedures to get work done; and (c) work environment. The findings revealed work for professionals was stressful and challenging, and that change on campus took time. Historically, HBCU administrators had a keen sense of the community and constituents they served and considered it a privilege and a reward to encourage the success of Black students (Hirt, Strayhorn, Amelink, & Bennett, 2006).

While some researchers have focused on both males and females in student affairs, Henry (2010) focused on African-American women. Henry (2010) purposed to add to the body of knowledge regarding African-American women in student affairs, as women student affairs are rarely researched and little information is available about their experiences. Henry (2010) interviewed three African-American administrators in student affairs regarding their experiences to answer questions regarding (a) what are some of the positive work-place factors for African-American women in student affairs? (b) what are some of the work-place challenges faced by African-American women in student affairs? (c) do African-American women in student affairs

experience or perceive racism in the workplace? (d) what advice do African-American women in student affairs offer to new African-American women entering the profession? (e) what services and resources can colleges and universities offer to assist African American women in student affairs?

The findings indicated that this research was consistent with other studies regarding African-American women in the academy. The positive work-place factors were the support from supervisors and staff. The work-place challenges were a lack of understanding of the worldview of African-American women and discrimination and stereotypes in the work place. The participants had advice for new African-American females entering the profession. The advice that these administrators had for new African-American females entering the profession of student affairs was to understand the work-place environment, remain close to support systems, and know youself. Henry (2010) suggested that African-American women in student affairs should be greater advocates for themselves by speaking out regarding negative messages and promoting their strengths. Henry (2010) indicated that more research would need to be conducted on African-American women in student affairs, as research studies are deficient.

Similar to Henry (2010), Stanley (2009) revealed a lack of research and theory on African American women's leadership and the intersectionality of race, gender, and social class at PWIs. Stanley (2009) shared that human resource development theory, if applied, can help better understand gender and race issues as it applies everyday work settings. According to Stanley (2009), research on African-American women has mainly focused on topics such as job related challenges and growth such as job performance, job satisfaction, evaluation and career development. Consequently, Stanley (2009) found that little research has concentrated on the phenomenon of leadership from the experience of the African American woman.

Student Affairs Career Path and the College Presidency

Despite obstacles faced by student affairs professionals, the college presidency is attainable. Noyes (1994) conducted research on a detailed profile of college presidents from 4-year institutions who had chief student affairs' officer experience. The data were collected from curriculum vitae and surveys. The results revealed their profile was similar to previously profiled presidents, particularly in terms of their characteristics. Over half of the presidents took presidencies at smaller sized and less prestigious institutions (Noyes, 1994). The presidents were not strictly student affairs professionals, but had experience in the area.

Additionally, Rishacher's (2001) study examined the characteristics of college presidents from 4-year institutions who had experience in student affairs to determine if they share the leadership characteristics of effective presidents from an earlier research study. A three-part survey was used in this quantitative study. Risascher (2001) concluded that 4-year institution presidents who served as senior student affairs officers had the characteristics of effective presidents such as management, social reference, image, and confidence. Quantitatively, there was no significant difference between those areas of the Effective Leadership Inventory. The study revealed that the presidents who had student affairs experience had a stronger index in human relations than did other effective presidents.

Bullard (2008) used the American College President's Survey as a demographic profile of SSAOS who served as college presidents to gain perspectives on these presidents' preparation, search, and acceptance experiences. Seven search firm representatives were interviewed to understand their perceptions and attitudes toward potential candidates from student affairs. The results showed the disparate opinions, perspectives, and attitudes of the search committee members in terms of their understanding of SSAO responsibilities and abilities as related to the

presidency. Bullard (2008) concluded that Senior Student Affairs Officers (SSAOs) who desired to become college presidents should look to two-year institutions as a possible career. Search firm representatives should re-evaluate their reasons for not considering SSAOs and firms should encourage committees to look internally, as some SSAOs were found to have moved from a SSAO position to president at their own institutions.

Likewise, Covert (2004) explored student affairs and SSAO experiences as an alternative and non-traditional pathway to the presidency. Institutional fit was second analysis for this study as the majority of the presidents' work at various institutional types. The unique skills and attributes developed in student affairs and their application to the presidency were discussed. The research found that presidents with experience in senior student affairs positions worked primarily at private baccalaureate (BA) or masters I (MI) institutions with 5,500 students or less. The participants suggested these institutions were less constrained by traditional search processes. Participants credited their student affairs background as appropriate and beneficial training for the presidency. Moreover, the participants stated that a college presidency is about forming successful relationships. The author contended that forming relationships is a skill at which student affairs professionals often prove adept.

Section II: Viewpoints on African-American Women in Higher Education
in the 1980s

Although colleges and universities have become more diverse, there is still a lack of research on African-American women in these settings (Collins, 2000; Holmes, 2003; Henry, 2010). Mosley (1980) revealed that Black women have been pioneers in education for Black and White people, even though historical references reflect little about their role. African-American women in higher education are still considered "*unders*" because issues are not being brought to

light (Hinton & Patitu, 2003). The definition of "*unders"* is underrepresented and underpaid.

Collier-Thomas (1982) revealed little research concerning the impact of Black women on

education. There were "few scholarly articles and essays concerning African-American women"

(Collier-Thomas, 1982, p. 173) and no books documenting the important role that African-

American women played in American education. Collier-Thomas (1982) further asserted it has

been only since the 60s that theses and dissertations have been conducted on leading educators,

such as Mary McLeod Bethune. Collier-Thomas (1982) found that Black women have had a

tremendous impact on education from slavery to reconstruction, but some of the historical

context of their contributions has not been researched nor acknowledged.

Howard-Vital (1989) questioned why African-American women were still the minority

where research was concerned. She revealed African-American women were still struggling

with formulating their identity within higher education. From her review of the literature,

several authors indicated African-American women's contributions to higher education were not

recognized by society. African-American women found themselves feeling isolated and

overburdened. With formulating an identity, she stated, "Black-eyed Susan" revealed the

identity concerns of African-American women:

> people other than the black woman herself try to define whom she is, what she is
> supposed to look like, act like and sound like and most of these creations bear very
> little resemblance to real, live black women. (Howard-Vital, 1989, p. 190)

Similarly, Guy-Sheftall (1982) asserted that despite educational contributions of African-

American women, they were still ignored and viewed as tokens rather than voices at the table

contributing to the issues within the institution. Black female college presidents, even at Black

women's colleges, were rare (Guy-Sheftall, 1982). Guy-Sheftall highlighted the importance that

HBCUs have had on African-American women's development, inclusive of hiring of African-

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American women as presidents. Her article explored how African-American women were encouraged to explore leadership on campus. Guy-Sheftall (1982) noted that Spelman College (an HBCU for Black women) did not hire its first female dean until the mid 1970s. She stated that HBCUs needed to "practice what they are preaching in terms of putting African-American women in leadership positions" (Guy-Sheftall, 1982, p. 281). At the end of her article, Guy-Sheftall (1982) stated that Spelman College could make amends by conducting research on Black women because of the lack of research on them in leadership roles. As Guy-Sheftall (1982) revealed, it is critical to engage and support African-American women in leadership.

Mosley (1980) investigated the barriers that African-American women face in the academy. An underlining barrier for African-American women in leadership has been the social and political issues of being in the position. Mosley (1980) administered a questionnaire/survey to 120 African-American women administrators regarding their status and barriers at PWIs. The findings indicated that Black female administrators in the academe considered themselves as "overworked, underpaid, alienated, isolated, uncertain, and powerless" (Mosley, 1980, p. 296). Most discouraging of all, they felt non-supported, deserted, and isolated from Black males. One Black female administrator from the study said: "until the organized white male hegemony of higher learning and higher education is broken, there will continue to be little room for minorities" (Mosley, 1980, p. 298). In the study, more than 85% of Black women were active in professional scholarship, edited books and monographs, published scholarly papers, and were involved in professional activities (Mosley, 1980). Mosley (1980) exposed the dilemmas faced by Black faculty and administrators on white campuses as, "additional responsibilities usually as 'nigger expert' are added on without additional resources or release time to perform them" (Mosley, 1980, p. 299). Black females had extra duties to fulfill in two categories, "need for a

Black and a need for a female" (Mosley, 1980, p. 299). An illusion for Black females was that they had to compete with White women as a minority (Mosley, 1980). The employment opportunities for Black women in higher education as "the lowest paid, lowest status, least wanted jobs, thus categorizing black women as the bastards of higher education (Mosley, 1980, p. 302)."

The Intersection of Gender and Race

Using unpublished raw data from a previous study, Patitu and Hinton (2003) explored the experiences of African-American women faculty and administrators. Their basic question was what has changed with respect to race and gender for African-American faculty and administrators in higher education? The respondents indicated racism and sexism existed among African-American administrators that were interviewed. Some participants believed that "racism and sexism were equally problematic" (Patitu & Hinton, 2003, p.81). Another barrier discovered by Patitu and Hinton (2003) involved the issue of homophobia. Some of the participants in the study revealed that they did not know if the reason that they were being oppressed was due to their sexual orientation as well. Patitu and Hinton (2003) also discussed issues with faculty obtaining tenure as institutional climate concerns. Similarly, Mosley (1980) discovered a lot issues in the 1980s concerning African-American women, issues such as racism, salary concerns, tenure, and performing their responsibilities.

Jean-Marie, Williams, and Sherman (2009) examined the intersectionality of race and gender from the experiences of Black educational leaders. Semi-structured interviews were used to collect the life stories of participants. Data was taken from a previous study by the author. Twelve narratives were used from presidents, academic deans, vice-chancellors, executive directors, and a university attorney. The findings showed that the African-American women's

personal and professional experiences were associated with their struggle for social justice as many grew up in the civil rights movement. The participants experienced racial and gender discrimination when pursuing their educational and professional goals at both White and Black institutions. The participants developed leadership styles that were collaborative, inclusive, and built consensus among their colleagues and students. Jean-Marie et al. (2009) indicated racism and sexism continue to exist in understated ways within higher education and that human resource development can assist with organizational processes in the area of both race and gender.

Using interviews, Byrd (2009) investigated race, gender and social class by examining the experiences of 10 African-American women in predominately-White organizations in the state of Texas. The African-American women held senior level positions. The findings of these participants indicated the intersection of race and gender were characterized by instances of disempowering encounters, being excluded from "good old boy" social networks, being the only one, needing validation, and disrupting stereotypical myths. According to Byrd (2009), another finding was the need for socio-cultural theories such as Black feminist theory and critical race theory to give voice to the everyday experience of African-American women leaders. The participants indicated people were more willing to accept and support them as leaders once they got to know them; however, they still had to get past the fact the leader was African-American and female (Byrd, 2009). Byrd (2009) indicated that the goal of this study was to stimulate support for more socio-cultural frameworks surrounding leadership, particularly for African-American women.

Lloyd-Jones (2009) examined the lived experiences of an African-American senior level administrator in a predominantly White research university in a single case study. Lloyd-Jones

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(2009) revealed that the lived experiences of the participant challenged the ideology of education and hard work when combined should equal success. The findings indicated that despite obtaining high levels of degrees and holding high-ranking positions within the academic settings, many African-American women in higher administrative positions come across social inequity migrating from the intersection of race and gender.

Mentoring African-American Women

Mentoring can be described as a "hierarchical relation: a person of superior rank or status instructs, counsels, guides, and facilitates the personal, intellectual, and career development of a less experienced person" (Holmes, Land, & Hinton-Hudson, 2007, p. 108). It is important to consider barriers to access and success for African-American women in higher education in academic positions as well as in other positions of leadership within colleges and universities. As with any group, it is important to provide support systems for persons of color. Simpson (2001) revealed mentoring was important to the success of African-American women and minorities in leadership positions in the academy. Simpson (2001) found that despite the many obstacles that African-American women faced, they were still satisfied in their positions. Participants were interviewed concerning their role with family, communication and management styles, and support systems. The participants expressed that they worked hard to maintain emotional stability and support by having God and family as the center of their lives. The participants stated no one would be coming to the rescue to fight their battles, and therefore they embraced their roles of leadership to keep their positions. Intrinsically, they had to understand the differences between gender, political fears, bias, and the majority race to be successful.

Likewise, Fong (2000) reported data from the Chronicle of Higher Education 2000 Almanac issue that revealed American higher education, was still a predominantly white cultural organization; however, African-Americans were the largest minority group. Fong's (2000) article offered several suggestions on how to support and mentor minority groups. The first suggestion was to create a haven of safety and assign new faculty with mentors who teach outside the department. It was important to protect the time of the new faculty. Minority faculty was expected to represent diversity on campuses, committees, and taskforces; they cannot do it all. Third, Fong (2000) illustrated that employers must be concerned about the minority fit and that they get credit for what they do. Finally, employers should be sensitive to cultural isolation as minorities embark on the path of creating their own stories.

Green and King (2001) demonstrated the effectiveness of mentoring relationships among Black women in the academy. In a study conducted at the University of Central Florida, Green and King (2001) designed a program to assist African-American women develop career plans and strategies for both personal and professional growth. Fifteen women discussed topics of needs, opportunities, and career advancement. Afro-centric concepts such as those used in the Kwanzaa celebrations were implemented to empower participants to obtain administrative positions in higher education. Responses from some of the facilitators and participants were extremely positive from "I look forward to getting together each month" to "every time we meet, I feel stronger and empowered" (Green & King, 2001, p. 163). The goal of the program was for Black women to empower other Black women. Although no formal evaluations of the program were conducted, it is apparent a developmental approach to mentoring is needed to support Black women to remain in higher education and to pave the way for smooth transitions into leadership,

both within academic roles and within the highest levels of institutions of higher learning (Green & King, 2001).

Similar to other researchers, Crawford and Smith (2005) examined for African-American women in higher education. The study focused on determining the availability of mentors for African-American female administrators who held senior level administrative positions in higher education in New York State. Crawford and Smith (2005) wanted to examine whether women were given mentors, how they maintained their positions without mentoring, and how mentoring could facilitate their career development. The study investigated how long the women stayed in their positions without mentoring and how mentoring could have facilitated their growth (Crawford & Smith, 2005). The findings indicated that mentoring did not affect the career choices and development of the participants. None of the participants expressed a process where they were guided or counseled in their career development. The participants had no mentors, thus, mentoring had not empowered them. According to Crawford & Smith (2005), the participants felt that if they had been mentored, then they might have had greater job satisfaction. In conclusion, the authors recommended more mentoring needs to be available for African-American women for their career development and greater productivity as leaders in associations.

Holmes, Land & Hinton-Hudson (2007) explored how Black women experienced mentoring or the mentor-mentee relationship. For Black women in academic positions at PWIs, mentoring relationships were not as prevalent. In this study, all participants attended a PWI for their graduate program or were employed at PWIs. Their ages ranged from the mid-20s to early 50s. Six participants indicated mentoring relationships were established at graduate school. All of them appreciated the career advice received; however, two believed having a mentor of the

same ethnicity, race, and gender taught them how to navigate a White environment (Holmes et al., 2007, p. 111). For women, it was suggested that the ideal mentoring relationships were with those from the same gender and race. Some of the recommendations were that new faculty should not be afraid to ask for assistance and women should develop a network both inside and outside of the academic community. The findings suggested mentors whether they were male or female should be committed to the professional development of the mentee, inclusive of the investment of their time and energy.

Minority Faculty and Administration Hiring

There is a belief that many community colleges have made efforts to hire minority faculty and administrators (Jackson & Phelps, 2004). However, many persons of color believe more research and effort should occur to support continued minority recruitment so that faculty and administrators mirror the student population on college campuses. The literature review indicated there are numerous obstacles that impede the success and hiring of minorities within community colleges. According to Holmes et al. (2007), although Black women have made strides in higher education, there are still issues of racism and sexism in the academe. In a study conducted by Schuetz (2002), a large percentage of administrators and faculty agreed economic constraints made it the most difficult when attempting to hire persons of color. Frequently, the funds for advertising and recruiting of minorities were not available. In addition, 22% of administrators believed that affirmative action requirements, usually a method of requirement, raised cost tremendously for community colleges (Schuetz, 2002). Another barrier was that colleges and universities were competing for the same disproportionately small pool of minority applicants (Manzo, 2000). As a result, the very students who the community colleges were trying to recruit sometimes shattered these efforts (Manzo, 2000). Students from underrepresented groups were

less attracted to education and teaching as a profession due to the lack of desirable role models in those particular fields (Kelly, 2002).

Lewis and Middleton (2003) reviewed the literature on African-Americans in community colleges in the *Community College Journal of Research and Practice.* Their review revealed concerns regarding the hiring process of African-Americans in the community college. Lewis and Middleton (2003) shared three structural barriers impeded the hiring of African-American faculty: (a) economic issues, such as lack of state funding availability to recruit; (b) lack of African-American faculty who are qualified in math, sciences, and technical areas; and (c) perceptions that African-American professionals seek employment in business and industry rather than in education due to salary ranges. The authors concluded the issue of race still permeates institutions of higher education particularly regarding committee chairs and participants (Lewis & Middleton, 2003).

In addition, Thomas and Hollenshead (2001) conducted a study on the coping strategies of Black and other women of color faculty members at a large state university in the Great Lakes area using quantitative and qualitative surveys and interviews. Thomas and Hollenshead (2001) discovered women have managed to cope professionally and personally due to marginalized positions, in which they have learned resistance to racism, sexism, and classism. Black women and women of color believed that they were more likely than their colleagues to believe organizational barriers hindered their career progress. Other reported barriers were institutional climate, lack of respect from colleagues of research institutions, no mentoring, and the unwritten rules that govern university life. The participants indicated that mentoring was also less likely to happen in their own academic units. Thomas and Hollenshead (2001) concluded by revealing the

participants' resistance of the barriers were critical factors that influence career satisfaction and retention.

African-American women face the barrier of gaining access through tenure and hiring opportunities. Gregory (2001) discussed issues regarding appointment, promotion, tenure, and institutional culture within the academy. Gregory's (2001) article described the historical status of women while sharing earlier research regarding internal and external barriers to achieving tenured positions in the academy. Much of the research in the article includes some findings from her research in 1999. Gregory (2001) divulged, "they are still most likely to be concentrated among the lowest ranks of the professorate, non-tenured positions, if promoted, it is generally at a slower rate, receive the lowest salaries, and teach only part-time" (Gregory, 2001, p. 125). Gregory (2001) described the struggle for African-American women to manage career and family as well. Historically, Black faculty and women have juggled family, work, and community responsibilities disproportionately, while being advisors, instructors, and community advocates (Gregory, 2001). Gregory (2001) revealed that minority women faculty indicated that the attainment of tenure was "ambiguous, inappropriate, or unfairly weighted" (Gregory, 2001, p.128). Gregory (2001) also indicated that "minorities and women are on a revolving door syndrome, which means that they are appointed on a tenure track, kept for four to six years, evaluated unfavorably and required to leave" (Gregory, 2001, p. 129). Women and minority faculty regard the academy and the tenure process as a place that fosters the needs of White males (Gregory, 2001). For Black women, the major barrier to tenure is the lack of collaboration and cooperation with respect to the time demands, such as advising, committees, research, mentoring, teaching and other duties as assigned. This is due to their small numbers (Gregory, 2001). Gregory (2001) made several recommendations to ensure Black faculty continued to

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move forward in the academy. The recommendations were (a) rethinking tenure and promotion, which should be a renewed commitment to service; (b) restructuring career development; and (c) developing strategic skills both professionally and personally, skills such as saying no to other responsibilities or requests in order to get research completed on the road to tenure.

Perna, Gerald, Baum, and Milem (2007) examined the status of equity for Black faculty and administrators in public higher education in the South. The researchers used descriptive analysis of data from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data Systems (IPEDS). The term *status* was defined as the representation in employment relative to representation of bachelor's degree recipients. In essence, status was that the number of Black faculty should mirror the representation of Black students. The results showed that some progress had been made in some states regarding equity, but race inequalities for Blacks who are full-time faculty and administrators are still present (Perna et al., 2007). The study indicated that the gaps in equity are greater for Black faculty than for administrators.

Leon and Jackson (2009) focused on academic leadership using data from the National Study of Postsecondary Faculty (NSOPF: 99). The sample was limited to cases with complete individual and institutional level data. Dependent and independent variables included academic leadership attainment and upper-level administrative position attainment and human and social capital frameworks, which consisted of race, gender, age, highest degree, and overall job satisfaction. The research questions guiding their study included (a) to what extent, if at all, are women and people of color underrepresented in academic leadership positions; and (b) to what extent, are women and people of color who attain these leadership positions underrepresented in upper-level positions? The results indicated that individual and institutional-level characteristics have important effects on faculty going into academic leadership positions (Leon & Jackson,

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2009, p. 51). Women and Asians in academic leadership have appeared to make some gains in leadership positions; however, investment in women and faculty of color still needs to be encouraged in terms of human capital the human capital (knowledge, attitudes, and skills developed primarily for economic potential; Leon & Jackson, 2009).

Perry and Gundersen (2011) discussed American women and the gender pay gap. The research, conducted through literature review, indicated that women have made strides in education and career advancement since the passage of the Equal Pay Act in1963; however, the pay rates have not been indicative of those strides. Perry and Gundersen (2011) revealed that the pay gap for women continues to exist, which has consequences for women who are dependent on their earnings. The researchers share several assumptions on why the pay gap continues. Some of the assumptions were women are missing from the workforce, educational levels, performance, and the family factor. Perry and Gundersen (2011) dispute all of the assumptions with the research data, revealing that even though women work the same hours as men, they earn only 69.6 per male earned dollar. Perry and Gundersen (2011) indicated that employers needed to admit the difficulties of work and family balance affect work performance.

Townsend (2009) explored the impact of a positive organizational climate for women and minorities within the community college. The author revealed that equal pay for equal work for faculty salaries and equal opportunities for advancement in presidential leadership. Townsend (2009) implied that others have researched community colleges' climates and deemed better than 4-year colleges for women and minorities; however, she stated that women and minorities still encounter barriers of discrimination, glass ceiling, and academic funneling. Community colleges are a positive organization climate for women (Townsend, 2009). Townsend (2009) asserted that the community college organizational climate for women and minorities could change if

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institutional leaders review discriminatory practices concerning hiring and salaries more critically.

White (2005) asserted that the "pipeline" theory, as originally envisioned, has failed. Although, it has produced large pools of women candidates, it has not translated into women reaching high positions in administration at colleges and universities in terms of student makeup at these institutions. White (2005) further stated that this failure is due to leaks in the "pipeline." These leaks are cause by an unanticipated large amount of attrition; family formations, that is, the disproportionately weight of desire for women to have children and childrearing responsibilities; and the ever presence of gender discrimination, a failure of institutional responsibilities with respect to the working conditions of its employees.

White (2005) indicated in the article that new pathways are developing as research models are evolving. This change is largely due to 30 years of data and thousands of stories about women's experience in the academy. Evolving research is assisting to give greater understanding of gender patterns in academia. Previously, patterns concerning women were difficult to chart. With these evolving research models, new pathways are forging in leadership for women in the academy, while at the same time possibly minimizing "bias avoidance," that is, viewing faculty positions as a male career. Consequently, this will create the opportunity of new pathways.

Alfred (2001) used a bicultural framework to examine professional development and to determine how African-American women at PWIs develop competencies to meet career expectations. Data was collected by using life histories of five tenured African-American female faculties at a major White research university in the southwest.

Findings indicated that participants found success in the academy by creating positive images of self-definition and rejecting stereo typical images of themselves, finding a safe place to reaffirm themselves as Black women, becoming visible with disciplinary culture, and having both a Black and White life (Alfred, 2001, p.122). This study revealed that culture and identity do pay an important role in career development of minority professionals.

Section III: Community College Presidents

The community college presidency has proved to be elusive for women and persons of color in the past decades (Vaughan, 1986; Vaughan, 1998, Weisman & Vaughan, 1998; Gillet-Karam, 2001; Giannini, 2001; Weisman & Vaughan, 2002). However, with moving into the 21st century, the highest positions have become more attainable (Blevins, 2001). In this section, community college presidency demographics are shared with an emphasis on minority and women community college presidents. Finally, community college presidential pathways are discussed.

Demographics of Community College Presidents and Leaders

In 1986, 6% of public community college presidents were women (American Council on Education, (ACE), 2102). By 2006, the numbers had increased to 29%. In 2011, women comprised 33% of associate college presidents, the highest of any institutional type; yet, the proportions of minority presidents in the associate college sector declined, dropping from 14% to 13% between 2006 and 2011. In 2011, only 10% of associate colleges were lead by minority presidents, excluding minority-serving institutions. Associate college presidents are younger than their peers in other sectors are, but these presidents are slightly older than they were in 2006. The average age of associate college presidents in 2011 was 60 years of age (ACE, 2012).

Community college presidents are more likely to have led at least another institution prior to their current appointment (American Council on Education (ACE), 2012). Unlike the other institutions described in the research conducted by (American Council on Education (ACE), 2012), where about half of presidents came from senior positions in academic affairs, community college presidents have a somewhat more diverse route to the presidency. The majority of presidents still came from academic affairs, but some came from other executive positions (primarily in finance or administration or student affairs). Others came from outside academia; ACE (2012) showed in their 2012 survey that 20% of presidents came from outside higher education.

According to Weisman and Vaughan (2002), women community college presidents increased from 11% to 28 % between the years 1991 to 2001. Regarding this increase, Weisman and Vaughan (2002) also reported that 50% of those presidents were noted to have mentors. Furthermore, 86% of these women were White, while the remaining 14% were African-American and Hispanic. The average age of these presidents was 56 years, and 60% of the presidents had more than five years of experience as presidents. Female presidents were slightly younger than males (Weisman & Vaughan, 2002, p. 63). Among the presidents, 88.4% had Ed. Ds. or Ph. Ds. and they had been in their position for an average of seven years. The most traveled pathway for these presidents was through academic positions (Weisman & Vaughan, 2007, p. 5). However, 8% of the community college presidents came from student services and 6% came from business or industry (Weisman & Vaughan, 2007). The most common non-academic community college positions held prior to the first presidency were chief executive officer, student affairs officers, and business officers (Weisman & Vaughan, 2002).

The study included interim acting presidents in the data analysis if they met the following conditions: (a) identified themselves as interim, (b) had been in current position for more than a year, and (c) the current interim presidency was not their first presidency.

Vaughan (2004) raised concerns regarding the analysis of the leadership crisis in community colleges because 45% of presidents planned to retire by 2007. Vaughan (2004) exposed two issues: (a) community colleges have failed to fill presidential positions with members of minority groups, and (b) there is too much "inbreeding" (Vaughan, 2004, p. 14). Movement towards filling presidential vacancies with minorities has been "slow" (Vaughan, 2004). According to Vaughan (2004), for minority candidates to move under current practice, they must enter through the existing presidential pipeline. Vaughan (2004) implied that to become a community college president, you must enter the pipeline by one of the three methods: (a) be employed at a community college (90% are); (b) move into a low-line administrative position and get the Ph.D.; or (c) move through the administrative ranks on the academic side rather than through student affairs.

King and Gomez (2008) implied women are most likely to lead associate institutions because they have the highest percentages of presidents when reviewing types of institutions (29% of presidents at this type of institution are women). The highest proportion of women in senior administrative roles of any institution type is in community colleges (King & Gomez, 2008). Women hold more than half of these administrative leadership positions. Women in the community colleges also held central senior academic positions and are more likely to serve as CAO or dean of an academic college than at any other type of institution (p.12)

Because there is a stronger representation of women at community colleges institutions, one might expect a corresponding level of representation among racial and ethnic minorities.

Hispanics were the only ethnic group that was slightly better represented in academic affairs positions at community colleges than at other types of institutions (King & Gomez, 2008). Women have made more progress into the presidency of community colleges than have people of color (King & Gomez, 2008)

Pierce and Pedersen (1997) surveyed the literature and indicated there were three prerequisites for being a successful community college president. These prerequisites were personal adaptability, ability to move comfortably among the various constituents, role flexibility, the ability to mediate between various constituents and stakeholders to ensure collaboration. The final one was to have sound judgment, the ability to listen to a wide range of interests, weigh college options in responding to these interests, and consider any resulting strategy both in time of its resources. It is through this process community college presidents can leverage limited university resources with community organizations to support the college.

Potential Career Paths to the Community College Presidency

Although the traditional path to the presidency is usually through the academic route, there are additional studies on potential career paths to the community college presidency. Miller and Pope (2003) examined the extent to which faculty senate leadership provides skills to ascend to the presidency within community colleges. Data were collected through a survey derived from the work of National Community College Chair Academy. The survey instrument had two sections: skills required for a community college president and the roles community college presidents must assume. Participants were asked to identity both skills and roles relevant to the community college presidency and the extent to which a faculty senate role provides the skills to be a community college president. More than 80% of the faculty senate leaders perceived four skills are as important to community college presidency: educational values, oral

communication skills, personal motivation and problem analysis skills. Presidents viewed eight skills to be important, stressing tolerance, problem analysis, personal motivation, organizational ability, written communication, educational values, oral communication skills, and judgment. However, when evaluating these four skills, the participants stated their order of importance was as follows: problem analysis, educational values, oral communication, and personal motivation. The study's findings support the concept that if tools and experience are present on campus, institutions can begin to develop their own leadership pipeline. The presidents saw faculty senate (leadership) positions as more of a preparation for roles of advocacy, negotiation, and evaluation, which are central to the senior leadership positions.

Amey and Van Der Linden (2002) examined the career paths and backgrounds of senior administrators in positions in the community colleges using a survey instrument. The survey consisted of 34 open-ended responses, closed ended responses, and Likert scale questions. There was a 54% response rate out of 1,700 community college administrators surveyed. The research revealed prior to becoming a community college president, the top three previous most held positions were provost, president of another community college, and a senior academic officer position. However, being promoted within was ranked closely behind holding an academic position. Chief academic officers were more likely to be promoted from within their institutions. Women were represented most notably in offices of the president in the administrative positions (27%), while occupational or vocational directors made up 29%, and chief financial officers made up 30%.

Kubala and Bailey (2001) conducted a follow-up study using essentially the same instrument as a previous study published in 1997. Kubala and Bailey's study focused on newly appointed community college presidents. Specifically, they explored a number of dimensions:

(a) pathways to the presidency, (b) motivation to serve, (c) the search process, (d) first impressions, (e) governance, and (f) learner-centered transformation. For 83% of the participants, the search process began within one year. The participants were split 50-50, favorable and unfavorable, regarding their college's search/selection process. However, the study indicated initial disappointments after acceptance were: (a) difficult people, (b) a negative climate, (c) hostility toward the administration, and (d) lack of cooperation. This was a significant contrast from the previous study, four years prior, where the disappointments were: (a) out dated technology, (b) lack of financial information, and (c) increased debt volume.

Concerning the dimension of governance, most participants were familiar with the governance model of leadership and supported it. The study revealed that less than 19% of board of trustees functioned using a governance model. Regarding the researchers findings, the majority of the college presidents had traveled the academic route to the presidency. The participants' main motivation to serve was their desire to make a difference.

Birnbaum and Umbach (2001) sought to understand the career path of potential candidates ready to move to the college presidency. Their research study had three questions: (a) is there an alternative career path for college presidents. (b) is there a relation between career path and institutional type? (c) is there a relationship between career path and personal characteristics? This study used college president data collected by ACE from 1986 to 1990. They used the following terms to distinguish the presidents' previous college experiences at work: (a) Scholar: with fulltime position; (b) Steward: never taught; (c) Spanner: commitment to higher education and other types of institutions; and (d) Strangers: never taught previously and positions were in something other than education Birnbaum & Umbach, 2001).

Most presidents followed the traditional path of scholar (66.3% or 2,297 out 3,021), including women and minorities. The greatest number of women followed a traditional path to the community college presidency. In this study, 3.5% (2,297 out 3,021) of non-HBCUs presidents were Black. The study raised two concerns regarding race and gender. There is a lack of minority and women presidents within the community college. The authors revealed that developing and encouraging candidates inside of the academy (Birnbaum & Umbach, 2001, p. 215) could address concerns.

Women College Presidents and Community College Leaders

With the appointment of Harvard's first female college president, Bornstein (2007) shared why women make good presidents. She stated women demonstrate leadership that is more interactive. Bornstein (2007) also stated, "women promote inclusiveness and women tend not to apply for administrative positions until they feel that they were prepared because of the fear of failure" (Bornstein, 2007, p. 22). Finally, she stated, "women tend to be flexible and have a situational approach to leadership" (Bornstein, 2007, p. 22).

Tedrow and Rhoads (1999) examined the process used by women leaders in community colleges in Arizona. Gender was placed at the center of the research. Using qualitative methods, 30 senior level women holding positions ranging from directors to president/chancellors were studied. The average age of these women was 42.3 years. There were 24 White women and 6 Black women with an average of 8.2 years in senior level administration. The findings indicated respondents adapted and realigned their leadership identity and behavior to that of a male-oriented style (Tedrow & Rhoads, 1999, p. 4). Senior women community college administrators constructed their own leadership identity and women tended to display a preference for one of three general strategies: adaptation, reconciliation, or resistance. Adaptation was identified as

what type of style they displayed. Reconciliation in this context meant constructing their leadership identity to reconcile to traditional leadership role of men. Resistance was identified as women who wanted to be themselves. In conclusion, the study indicated that the culture of the community college must change starting with key administrative members.

There is some indication that the community college has been supportive of women leaders. Wolf-Wendel, Ward, and Twombly (2007) surveyed 30 female faculty members at 2-year colleges on balancing the demands of their faculty jobs and being parents. All of the participants had children between the ages of 0 and 5 years. The results indicated that community colleges allowed women to balance being a faculty member and parent. The participants revealed the challenges of balancing being a faculty member and having a family were: not having enough time, feeling guilty about not giving hundred percent to their dual roles, seeking tenure, and inequity at home. In conclusion, Wolf-Wendel et al. (2007) disclosed community colleges appeared to be supportive of the participants and their efforts to balance fulfilling their teaching interest, while being a parent.

Drawing from the theory of transformational leadership, Stout-Stewart (2005) investigated whether there was a relationship between leadership patterns and behaviors of female executive officers and other factors, such as race, ethnicity, educational level, the experience of the CEO, and community college enrollment. The participants were female community college presidents whose colleges were members of the American Association Community Colleges and 126 of 175 CEOs responded to this survey instrument regarding their leadership behaviors. There were no significant differences between rural, suburban, urban, and inner city presidents and their leadership patterns. However, leadership patterns and behaviors differed across race/ethnicity. African-American presidents were found to share a vision and

encouraged the community more than White presidents. Regarding education, presidents with doctoral degrees averaged a higher score on all the leadership patterns of action identified by the Leadership Practice Inventory.

Ebbers, Conover, and Samuels (2010) described the need for new leaders as community college leaders' age, creating available openings. Ebbers et al. (2010) revealed community colleges must work on training, growing, and identifying future leaders in the community college pipeline. The authors indicated leadership programs were designed to help those mid-level leaders in the community colleges. The authors showed that networking and succession planning is important for mid-level leaders to navigate. The authors revealed for middle managers to move up into these new roles of leadership they must take ownership of their development as well. The authors indicated that mid-level managers should engage, plan, and get credentials. The final consideration by the authors to fill the community college presidency was to determine the succession planning of the institutions to find potential emergent leaders for the positions.

Finally, June (2008) indicated women have made some progress in administrative leadership positions and have moved up the ranks of senior level administration positions. June (2008) reported that 4% of senior administrators were White women. The author revealed women in senior campus administrator positions would more likely lead to a college presidency. Women made up 38% of chief academic officers; yet, of the 38%, only 10% were African-American, American Indian, Asian, or Hispanic. The candidate pool for racial minorities was small.

African-American and Minority Women

The literature regarding African-American women community college presidents is limited. Prior studies on African-American females have focused on African-American women

in the academy (Gregory, 2001; Guy-Sheftall, 1982; Manzo, 2000; Mosley, 1980, 1982; Hughes & Howard-Hamilton, 2003; Patitu & Hinton, 2003; Simpson, 2001). However, most of the literature related to community college presidencies encompasses minority groups, which include African-American men and Caucasian, African-American, Asian, Hispanic, and Native American women collectively. Although women have made tremendous progress towards the community college presidency, women of color are still behind (ACE, 2102).

Turner (2007) stated 3% of college and university presidents were women of color. Turner (2007) identified the first Mexican American, Native American, and Asian Pacific/Asian American women college presidents. The objectives of the study were to learn about their pathways, understand how universities can support the leadership development of women of color, and to foster leadership in other women who aspire to be college presidents. Additionally, the article provided guiding principles that were intended to aid the success of future presidential aspirants. Turner (2007) concluded with central themes: the importance of early successes, interpersonal connections, and support along the pathway to the presidency. Personal diversity was used to bring communities together and respond to initial challenges. It was important to develop a unique, holistic, long-term vision for their work because interim opportunities were often at play. Participants also indicated the acceptance of failure because it often leads to visibility for another equally promising opportunity. A major finding was that the pathways of three women college presidents were through the academic ranks.

Similarly, Lum (2008) explored Asian-American college presidents. Asian-Americans have not kept pace with other historically underrepresented ethnic minorities in terms of college presidencies despite the fact that they outnumber other minority collegiate instructors. Two reasons why Asian-Americans are not considered for leadership positions in education are due to

the stereotype that they are "hard workers and good managers," but historically not viewed as leaders (Lum, 2008). Asian-American values "emphasize modesty over self-promotion and silent acceptance of status quo over aggressive calls for change" (Lum 2008, p. 13). Lum (2008) stated mentoring assisted the women despite not being seen as a leader. Lum (2008) concluded that Asian-American presidents are barely replacing themselves as they retire.

In an article by Trusteeship (2002), five presidential search experts were asked why there are not more females and minorities in presidential positions in American colleges and universities. The major themes revealed were a lack of institutional commitment, lack of willingness of committee members to take risk, and lack of candidates with comprehensive experience. Presidential search committees knew there were many qualified women and minorities out there. They often used 'tokenism' as an opportunity to interview candidates, but did not give them serious consideration when it came to hiring (Trusteeship, 2002). In addition, women and minorities were considered as serious contenders when they fit the definition of "best." Best meant being able to do more than one normally should or what was being expected of men in the same position. Minorities were often required not just to be the best, but also to be "stars" (Trusteeship, p.18). There were four reasons given for the overall slow pace to hire women and minorities for presidential positions: (a) old-fashioned prejudice, (b) limited pool of qualified and experienced applicants, (c) reluctance among board members to promote females, and (d) minority prospects (Trusteeship, 2002).

Section IV: African-American Women College Presidents

While some researchers have studied minorities, others have chosen to study African-American women in the college presidency by separating them into their own group, rather than placing them with the all inclusive term minority.

Bradley, Carey, and Whitaker (1989) conducted a study concerning women college presidents to answer the question: Is there a leadership style unique to Black women? The researchers recognized that there were certain qualities of leadership that transverse all sectors, such as, decision-making abilities, motivational skills, and communication skills. They also realized that there were some intangible attributes, such as, leadership as relational and mutual cooperative enterprises between leaders and followers as discussed in the literature with respect to female leadership. However, with respect to the researchers' guiding questions their end goal was to determine whether there are attributes of leadership that Black women bring to their positions by virtue of their being Black and female.

The method of the study included an interview by phone with 15 Black female college presidents. There were 25 questions developed for the participants based on Sergiovanni's 10-P Model of Leadership (Prerequisites, Perspective, Principles, Platform, Politics, Purposing, Planning, Persisting, Peopling and Patriotism). Each of the authors analyzed the responses. The participants' demographics and institutional representations varied widely. Concerning the findings, the presidents' responses confirm that the 10-P Model was appropriate for evaluating effective leadership and that to be a competent leader one has to have an understanding of human dynamics and behavior. The participants considered this basic but more importantly that a leader must listen, assess, analyze and decide. These leaders stated that their race and gender reinforced principles such as integrity, honesty, fairness, and respect. The leaders revealed because their race and gender it was difficult to get to the college presidency and stay there.

Regarding their socialization, presidents considered this an advantage because their teaching of cooperation rather than competition. This type of teaching heightens the sense of the

individual and stresses the importance of social justice for all, while preparing them to be highly adaptable.

In conclusion, these Black female college presidents refused to waste time on being Black and female or to defend or excuse their status. However, they preferred to concentrate on being effective and excellent, often creating their own leadership model in academia by bringing a high of level of motivation, determination, and survival behaviors.

Likewise, Waring (2003) interviewed 12 African-American female presidents to understand how they view the origins of their success. These presidents had been in their positions between 2 to 7 years. Waring (2003) identified the intersection and interaction of gender and race and how the terms may influence African-American female college presidents and their concepts of leadership. The findings indicated that social class, educational background, and process of becoming leaders emerged as part of the intersection. Race did play a factor in understanding the concepts of leadership and race. Waring (2003) confirmed the importance of race to these women's identities and their perception as a motivating factor for them assuming leadership positions.

Holmes (2004) researched how African-American college presidents experienced their roles in the context of race. Holmes (2004) used a mixed-method research design to combine narratives of six African-American presidents with descriptive statistics from national level data on the status of African-American college and university presidents. Race was secondary in the overall administrative role; however, it may have been the reason that these presidents were also hired into their positions. Therefore, despite whether one is an African-American woman or minority in education, the pathway to college presidency has its challenges. Holmes (2004)

indicated the major finding revealed African-American are similar to their White counterparts on factors that distinguish individuals as viable candidates for presidential positions (p. 24).

In addition, Wilson (1998) conducted a study of African-American female college presidents. From the study, Wilson (1998) indicated the economic status of these women during early childhood did not deter these presidents from achieving their goals. Regarding the campus setting, many of the presidents had been in the Southern region of the United States, which was surprising because they were African-American**.** These presidents also described what leaders did: "create, plan, motivate and improve" (Wilson, 1998, p. 22). This study revealed that these presidents saw their role as work conflict resolution, governance, and public relations. The presidents' self-reported leadership styles were participatory, similar to those in the Trusteeship article (2002).

In a self-reflection article, Green (2008) explained what it is like to be a woman working in the community college. She shared how she has faced double challenges based upon race and gender—"some questioned my ability to cut it, because I am a woman, my ability to cut it, because I am an African-American …" (p. 813). Green (2008) shared her pathway, which was traditional. Some of the challenges for presidents from her perspective were changing student demographics, increased enrollment, and increased under-prepared students.

The higher the level of the leadership position one has the greater the demand on one's time (Green, 2008, p. 816). According to Green (2008), potential leaders must be able to balance work and personal life. The number of presidents leaving the presidency creates an opportunity to enhance gender equity in the community college presidency. In the author's opinion, community colleges must plan for the future to develop strategies for incorporating a more

diverse group of individuals into the pipeline leading to leadership positions (Green, 2008, p. 820). Green (2008) reflected that presidents must understand the following to be more effective:

- to look at the student body and its transformation

- to be aware of the public demand for accountability

- to understand how local businesses has changed

Finally, a few dissertations examined the barriers, challenges, and leadership styles of African-American women in college presidencies. Using a multi-case method, Roberts (2006) examined the stories of retired female African-American presidents. The study produced findings suggesting that all of the presidents were transformational in their leadership styles. The participants indicated that race and gender were two factors that hindered their progress while they were in positions of leadership. Roberts (2006) found that these African- American retired female presidents were transformational leaders who emphasized empowerment, inclusiveness, good use of power, and care and consideration of students and staff.

 Roberts (2006) concluded from the study that none of the women was ready for full retirement and gender, race, and the concept of patriarchy were issues during their presidency. The participants were the first African-Americans or woman in their leadership roles. According to Roberts (2006), the participants viewed power as a positive feature to aid others. The presidents revealed that new contract negotiation and moving into new leadership roles was timed around achieving their goals with the organization (Roberts, 2006).

Sanders' (2004) conducted a qualitative study to examine the leadership traits and personality characteristics needed by African-American women to become presidents at public colleges and universities and historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs). The triangulation of data collected included interviews, curricula vitae, and institutional

demographics for five female participants.   Sanders (2004) concluded that African-American female college presidents were underrepresented at the doctoral/research universities. Success for the female presidents in these positions was attributed to their leadership style, educational background, role models, and mentors.

Williams' (2007) studied the history, educational preparation, career paths, and experiences of African-American women college and university presidents with an additional expectation of identifying perceptions of barriers, strategies, leadership, and leadership characteristics. Williams (2007) concluded that their success was attributed to strong family backgrounds; growing up in Black communities; the Black church; and attending Black schools, which fostered their Black identity, strong sense of self, self-esteem, resiliency, motivation, and determination to succeed. In conclusion, their leadership styles were transformational.

Like Williams (2007), Woodward (2008) examined four dimensions of African-American women college and university presidents: role, experiences, challenges, and barriers. The findings with respect to role were that these African-American women often had to assume multiple roles, such as: (a) nurturer and protector of students, (b) fiscal manager, (c) values and skills practitioner, (d) spiritual practitioner and servant, and (e) communication expert. Pertaining to experience, the findings indicated the collectivity of their experiences formed the foundation for their leadership roles as president (Woodward, 2008). The dimensions of challenges and barriers revealed five specific themes: (a) addressing and resolving fiscal insolvency; (b) work-life balance; (c) managing health and wellness; d) gender, race, and age disparity issues; and (e) professional status quo issues (Woodard, 2008).

Gooch (2009) used a qualitative case study to investigate the impact mentoring relationships had on the career paths of selected African-American, female, community college

presidents. Five participants addressed formal and informal mentoring relationships, doctoral

mentors, barriers they encountered, and professional development. The common themes that

emerged from the data were motivating forces, major influences, barriers, diversity matters,

work/life balance, mentor/protégé relationships, and professional development. Participants

discussed benefits and opportunities from formal and informal mentoring, as well as challenges,

and offered suggestions for professional development for African-American women desiring the

position of a college president.

Summary

In summary, this literature review provided an overall assessment of several key topics

relevant to student affairs as a viable pathway to the community college presidency for African-

American women. This review is not exhaustive, but gives the reader a perspective from broad

to narrow on African-American women, student affairs, and the community college presidency.

In Section I, I shared aspects of student affairs. This section showed the many faces of

student affairs to the reader inclusive of the function and role of student affairs. It also

demonstrated that women, particularly women of color, also experienced some form of

discrimination as well as salary inequalities. However, the reader will also see that student

affairs have been a field relevant to women, particularly women of color and African-American

women. One study revealed that despite pay issues, women still preferred student affairs to other

appointments in institutions of higher education. Finally, the number of professionals working at

institutions in student affairs should mirror the population of students.

In Section II, I explored African-American women in higher education. There is a lack

of research on African-American women in higher education. The section sought to share the

struggles and challenges African-American women faced in higher education and how they

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persevered through the challenges. Some light was shed on the importance of mentoring

relationships to the success of African-American women in higher education. A key component

of this section revealed difficulties faced by African-Americans as they tried to obtain tenure and

promotion. African-American women particularly struggled through career progressions in the

academy due to a lack of respect from colleagues, salary inequalities, and unwritten rules of the

organization or college itself. This section identified the struggles of African-American women

in their career at institutions of higher education.

In Section III, I shared research and information regarding minority presidents. Although

the data indicated the number of minority presidents has increased since the 1980s, they are still

relatively few compared to their White counterparts. From the literature in this section, people

of color materialized as disproportionately underrepresented persons in the community colleges

presidency. Women have made many strides to senior leadership positions, "the proportion of

women who are senior executives and faculty are still underrepresented" (ACE, 2007, p. 18).

Section III highlighted the strides African-American women have made to become community

college presidents. This section showed how race, although a factor, did not hinder them from

doing their job in the presidency. It also reveals the "double whammy" African-American

women have to deal with being both African-American and female. It revealed that these two

barriers have been challenging. However, African-American women did not allow these barriers

to distract them from their leadership roles or diminish their effectiveness as leaders. Once again,

mentorship was mentioned as a way for African-Americans to receive support in their careers.

In this literature review, the author sought to bring out the relevant components of African-

American women in their pursuit of the community college presidency, while simultaneously

identifying another possible pathway to the community college presidency.

Section IV addressed African-American women in the community college presidency. Several of the authors indicated that there are not many African-American women in the presidency. Some revealed that their was intersection between race and gender and African American women's ability to navigate to administrative leadership positions due to those two challenges. Majority of current research on African-American women presidents were dissertations that reveal once again a lack of research in the area of African-American women. Gilkes (2001) characterized the literature review by saying, **"Black women have either been** invisible to researchers …or these women's visibility have been overlooked as unimportant to the larger questions governing the research" (p. 8). As a result, focusing on African-American women's transition from the student affairs area to college presidency is important to the body of knowledge.

CHAPTER 3—METHODOLOGY

Research studies on African-American women community college presidents have yet to address student affairs as one pathway to becoming a community college president. The purpose of this study was to understand the lived experiences of African-American women and their journey from student affairs positions to the community college presidency. This chapter includes a description of the research design and rationale, participants and site, data collection, data analysis, and trustworthiness.

Research Design and Rationale

This study reflects the use of a qualitative paradigm. First, the data collected from participants were through interviews. This approach allowed me to be more intentional and meticulous in collecting the data so that I could hear "the experiences or stories of individuals" (Creswell, 2007, p. 40). Second, a qualitative approach was appropriate because participant's expressions of meanings are the foundation for the study. The focus of this research was on the personal stories of African-American women from their lived experiences and perspectives. Third, qualitative research "tells a story from the viewpoint of the participants" (Roberts, 2004, p.113). By using the interpretative approach, I gained first-hand knowledge of the emotions and interactions of the participants through hearing each woman's story.

Within the qualitative paradigm, I used an interpretative phenomenological approach (Willig, 2001). Phenomenology is rooted in philosophy and psychology (Merriam & Associates, 2002, p.93). Phenomenological research addresses the essence and lived experiences of the participants (Merriam & Associates, 2002; Moustakas, 1994; Patton, 1990, 2002; Willig, 2001).

There were several reasons to use the interpretative phenomenological approach. First, it was important to understand the shared (or common) experiences of individuals related to the

community college presidency. Second, interpretative phenomenology is interested in "what" the participants experienced and "how" they experienced the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). By understanding these shared experiences, I was able to develop a deeper understanding of the experiences African-American women community college presidents who migrated from a student affairs pathway to the presidency.

Third, interpretative phenomenology is an interpretative process (Creswell 2007; Moustakas, 1994; Patton, 1990; Willig, 2001). The experiences these presidents encountered form their own realities. In forming the essence of realities, I used the participants' own words to formulate my interpretation of their perspectives.

Finally, an interpretative phenomenological approach was appropriate because it welcomed self-reflection. Since my own background as an African-American woman and student affairs professional is my reality, my background shaped my interpretation of the experience. Self-reflection allowed me to bracket my biases and put my thoughts and perceptions aside so that I could gain an understanding of the participants' lived experiences (Moustakas, 1994).

African-American women community college presidents have stories to tell, particularly concerning their leadership journey from the field of student affairs to the community college presidency. The interpretative phenomenological approach was the best approach for this study as it evoked the process of pursuing the meanings of African- American women and their experiences as leaders within community colleges.

Participants and Site

I selected 10 African-American women community college presidents from various locations across the United States to be the participants for this study. These presidents had

attained a community college presidency after following a career path that began in student affairs work. Purposeful sampling was used to recruit participants who met certain criteria (Patton, 1990, 2002). The logic and power of purposeful sampling is in the ability to collect a lot of meaningful information when performing an in-depth study (Patton, 1990, 2002). According to Patton (1990), qualitative inquiry focuses on small samples. According to Polkinghorne (1989), a phenomenology sample should have 5 to 25 participants. Yet Creswell (2007) indicated long interviews with up to 10 people are just as appropriate (Creswell, 2007, p.161).

To identify and recruit participants, purposive and criterion sampling with the help of professional colleagues, directories, and higher education list serves were used. Additionally, the participants met the following criteria:

1. Community college presidents in a post-secondary two-year institution in the United States of America.

2. African-American women.

3. Administrators who had held positions in student affairs

4. Able to participate in initial and follow-up interviews

A recruitment email was sent to two organizations: National Association for Student Administrators of Personnel (NASAP), and the American Association of Women in Community Colleges (AAWCC) National Chapter. With each email, I attached a letter explaining my study (see Appendix A and B). In addition, a request that potential participants contact me directly. To ensure participants met the criteria I reviewed their biographies on-line and in the Directory of the President's Roundtable, the National Council on Black American Affairs, of the American Association of Community Colleges.

I also utilized professional contacts to recruit participants. I contacted another colleague who had served as an Assistant Vice-President of Student Affairs at a four-year institution and was currently a president of a community college. The colleague remembered me from several NASPA events and provided me with the 2009 President's Roundtable Directory. I sent my letter regarding my study to see if there were any potential participants. At least five of the participants, from the directory, said they would participate as long as it was not labor intensive. One of the participants was not sure if her area in student affairs qualified. I called my methodologist to ask about her background and information. From my discussion with my methodologist, it was determined that she could participate in the study and met the criteria. I had 10 participants who responded and met the criteria. One of the ten served as president over a commission of colleges inclusive of four-year ones; however, it was determined that she met the criteria as the majority of her experiences spanned more than 25 years in the community college area. When a participant agreed to participate in the study, I sent her an *Informed Consent* form prior to the interview process that included "information that protects their rights, risk assessment and confidentiality" (Patton, 1990, 2002). The *Informed Consent Form* was sent both via email and by mail to each participant (see Appendix C). The signed copy of the consent form was completed prior to the interviews taking place.

Data Collection

Using an interpretative phenomenological approach, the most common method to collect data is in-depth, semi-structured interviews (Creswell, 1998; Merriam & Associates 2002; Patton, 1990, 2002; Willig, 2001). For this study, the process of collecting data involved semi-structured interviews and open-end questions, which led to receiving in-depth information. Information was not just "yes" or "no" answers to questions. The participants elaborated on

questions and there were multiple times that participants discussed more upon a question as needed. According to Patton (2002), the rationale for conducting an in-depth interview was to obtain a rich variation of the human experience. Interviews allowed the participants to speak out regarding their views within the scope of the interview questions. Pre-formulated interview questions guided our conversation (see Appendix D).

Prior to the data collection process, I conducted a pilot interview to determine if the questions were appropriate and effective in eliciting the richness of data I desired. The pilot interview was conducted with an African-American female Assistant Vice-President in the Denver metro area who had a student services background. The purpose of the pilot interview was to determine which questions, if any, needed restructuring. I met with the Assistant Vice-President in her natural setting and informed her that this was a pilot interview for my research study, and I wanted to ensure that the questions were appropriate. She understood the purpose and proceeded to answer my questions. During the pilot interview, two questions needed to be revised for clarity. The following semi-structured questions were used only as a guide to the research interviews. As the interviews began, more questions were asked and as the participants answered questions and elaborated on the particular question being asked.

1. Describe your journey in Student Affairs?
2. What were some of your roles, responsibilities, barriers and challenges along the way to the community college presidency?
3. How has your presidency been enriched by Student Affairs?
4. What are some the circumstances/instance that triggered you to desire to become a community college presidency?
5. Describe your experiences as an African-American woman within Student Services. What were some of the barriers?
6. With Student Affairs, not being the most notable pathway to the community college presidency, how are you making others aware that there are other pathways available?
7. At what point in your career, did you decide to become a community college president and can you describe that decision-making process?

8. As an African-American woman, what were some of the turning points and or terminating points, if any, along the journey to the community college presidency?

9. What advice would you give future African American women who are interested in being college presidents?

10. What is the biggest challenge for African-American women who want to become a college president in this century?

11. How do you plan to assist others (African-American women or men) to the community college presidency?

12. What would you change, if anything, if you had to do it over again?

Data were collected through interviews and field notes. Field notes are written accounts of all that I saw, heard, and experienced during the data collection process (Patton, 2002). Field notes were written as the participant was speaking. Notes were taken on their excitement regarding describing their offices to me verbally and the intimate detail that they gave to particular colors, paintings, and figurines that had in on their desk and on their walls. Initially, I thought I would be interviewing participants face to face. With the support of the participant's administrative assistants, I was able to get on the calendar of each of the participants; yet due to their hectic schedules, I determined that telephone interviews were the best way to get the interview with the participants. Conducting telephone interviews allowed them to have flexibility to move dates and times around that they needed to participate in the study. This worked out really well as it offered as many of them the opportunity to continue their work, fulfill their commitment to the study as a participant, without the added expectation that they had to host and take care of the researcher. However, I managed to meet with one of the participants face to face despite schedule constraints. All participants except one had the telephone interview to take place in her office. Because the majority of the interviews were not taking place face to face, I kept a picture of each participant near me during the interview. Before beginning the interview, I

told them that I had a picture of them and described the picture. In addition, at the end of the interview, I asked many of them to describe their offices to help me visualize their setting.

After each interview, I reflected on the conversation with each participant. I wrote down salient points regarding each participant and their experiences in student affairs and the similarity and differences to my own experiences. Writing the experiences helped to alleviate bias as I continued to put my feelings thoughts in my journal. Interviews supported the goal of the study, which was to obtain a deeper understanding through rigorous inquiry the lived experiences of African-American women community college presidents.

Pseudonyms were established after each interview for each participant and her institution in order to protect confidentiality. All interviews were audio-taped. Two recorders were used to ensure that the interview was taped efficiently and to have a back up, one was digital and the other manual. Each interview ranged from 60 to 90 minutes in length. One participant was able to interview for only 45minutes; however, she returned the interview guide with her additional answers on it.

After the first set of interviews were completed and coded, I decided not to do a second 30 minute interview as the majority of the participants that I had met with for the full 90 minutes and all information per the study and additional information beyond the scope of the study had been collected.

Once each interview was completed, I sent it to be transcribed. A copy of each transcription was sent to each participant for her review and input as well as to my methodologist. Participants were welcomed to add new or clarifying information to their particular transcript via electronic transmittal. Three of the participants made minor adjustments to their transcripts, such as spelling of an institute, words regarding background, including

additional statements. One participant requested that I delete a couple of sentences from the transcript, which she highlighted in yellow for me. The majority of participants indicated the transcripts did not need any changes

Data Analysis

In qualitative research, data analysis consists of preparing and organizing text data for analysis and reducing the data into themes through a process of coding (Creswell, 2007). To analyze my data, I first conducted an overview of all of the information gathered including field and reflexive notes and then finally the transcripts. Field notes consisted of my notes on each interview. My reflexive notes were kept in a notebook to reflect a culmination of my thoughts and biases after each interview and any previous conversations and correspondence with each participant. According to Creswell (2007), "hunches, insights, and intuition" are part of interpreting the data, which required several readings (p.145).

For the analysis, I read and re-read the transcriptions for meaning, understanding, and interpretation. I made notes of each transcript and field notes. Once this was done, I moved into the analysis using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), which is concerned with making meaning of the participants' experiences (Willig, 2001). Since I coded by hand, it took me a while to complete, so I gave the participants updates as I went through the coding process. I requested the transcriptionist to leave space in the margins of each transcript so that I could write my comments on the margins once the transcripts were completed. I reviewed my own reflections and prejudgments through journaling so that the focus was on the African-American women in the study and not my own experiences.

After analyzing the data line by line several times, I began to develop codes by reducing data into manageable components. Next, I listed each statement that appeared relevant to the

research questions. I put my immediate thoughts concerning the participants on the left margin of the lines and on the right margin; I put the category of what the participant was saying from the transcript. My methodologist checked the categories of the first three participants to ensure that I was coding the categories accurately using the coding methods of Willig (2001). As I recorded the statements, I consolidated the statements into non-repetitive lists. I took the significant statements of these African-American women and grouped them into larger units of information. Grouping the meanings of the larger units developed structural elements. Structural elements are the structures that make up the phenomenon of the collected experiences of the African-American presidents who came from a student affairs pathway. In some research studies, structural elements are considered themes. Once emerging elements were established, I looked for connections or patterns between them. Particularly, I grouped and listed expressions relevant to both student affairs and the journey to the community college presidency. I coded my interpretation of the meanings of each of their experiences or claims (Willig, 2001). Non-overlapping statements became the meaning units or clusters of the experience and assisted with establishing structures of the experiences of the participants (Willig, 2001). I then synthesized the structural elements into a description of the text of the experience including verbatim examples. Once this process was completed, I stepped away and reflected on the themes and the examples for these women. After that, I constructed a universal description of the meanings and essences of the experiences representing the group of African-American college presidents as a whole.

These significant statements were labeled by their pseudonyms and placed into tables. Each significant statement had line numbers associated with it so that my methodologist and I could easily move forward through each participant's transcript.   Once clusters were

established, I had to determine which clusters were overlapping and to collapse those that were similar with each other (Willig, 2001). I met with my methodologist to review this process. I used large post it notes for each participant and had the major clusters for each one. These were posted all over a wall so that my methodologist and I could go through each participant's cluster to narrow them down to the true essence. In this process of coding, each participant was distinguished from each other by a color marker. The colors allowed my methodologist and I to determine which clusters were similar and could be collapsed, and which were insignificant to the overall collective experiences. These clusters created structural elements that are typically called themes. For the purposes of this study, structural elements are used as each element collectively makes up the phenomenon of the experiences to get to the essence.

Finally, for the interpretative phenomenological approach, I wrote my interpretation of the essence of the study and the knowledge that I gained for my professional and professional life. My methodologist reviewed the coding and my structural element process to ensure it was consistent with the IPA method and the cross checking of codes. According to Creswell (2007), crosschecking is a way to ensure validity. I used an external auditor to review and ensure the coding and theme creation was consistent and reliable. Because cross-checking of codes is an efficient way to establish credibility, I asked my methodologist to assist with the cross-checking efforts.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness represents the strength of qualitative research (Creswell, 2007; Patton, 1990, 2002). A trustworthy study involves multiple strategies involving the researcher and the participants that ensure the authenticity of the study. For this phenomenological study, I utilized member checking; peer review; rich, thick description; and clarifying researcher bias.

For member checking, I asked participants to review and comment on the transcripts including accuracy and credibility of their account of the questions and responses (Creswell, 2009). Member checking involved the review of the draft of the transcription to ensure accuracy. Additionally, I noted insights on participants' interpretation of transcripts and included any changes in my field notes for further interpretative analysis.

A second strategy that I used was peer review. I asked my methodologist to be my peer reviewer after the proposal meeting. My methodologist examined my transcripts for discrepancies and other issues (Creswell, 2007, 2009). To support me in the review, my methodologist reviewed copies of how I analyzed the data. To ensure that I was following the appropriate analysis process for (Willig, 2001), I met with him to review my coding and we discussed what I was doing in the coding process. As the methodologist for the study, he was very familiar with interpretative phenomenological studies; however, I also sent him a copy of the entire coding process that I was using and we discussed how this method was different from other interpretative approaches. My methodologist looked at the Willig (2001) method for the coding process and checked to see if I had followed all of the steps for the review.

The third strategy was rich and thick descriptions. Rich and thick descriptions are methods for establishing qualitative validity (Creswell, 2007; Patton, 2002). Rich and thick descriptions were gleaned from the interviews and included in the narrative. These descriptions of the participants' experiences allow the reader to gain an understanding of the individual and common realities of the participants.

The final strategy used in this study was clarification of the bias. My own biases and assumptions were stated to show how they might influence the research. To eliminate my bias, I implemented self-reflexive journaling as I conducted this study to make sure biases did not

migrate into the study. In my researcher perspective section, I stated my experiences in student affairs, my biases and assumptions that might influence the research. While this study was on African-American women with a student affairs background, my experiences are interwoven. To ensure external validity, the research provided rich, thick descriptions of the phenomenon of the experiences of African-American women community college presidents from a student affairs background. This was done by having a diversity of participants in terms of sample size (Merriam & Associates, 2002). For qualitative reliability purposes, the transcripts were checked for mistakes, which involved checking codes for similar meanings (Moustakas, 1994). My methodologist assisted with the crosschecking efforts. As with any study, transferability was important. The goal was to add to the body of knowledge and for future researchers who may want to continue to add to the research on African-American community college women and presidents and student affairs.

Summary

This chapter explained the interpretive phenomenological analysis used to describe the phenomenon of the experiences of African-American women who came from a student affairs background to the community college presidency. There were 10 participants in this study from various locations across the United States. The data were collected by in-depth and structured interviews using pre-formulated questions as a guide. Participants were able to cross check the transcripts used for the study for accuracy and changes. Using IPA (Willig, 2001), the researcher was able to analyze and distill the transcripts into general, meaningful statements and ultimately into structural elements to make up the phenomenon. To ensure reliability and validity, cross checking, peer review, and external auditing process were implemented. The researcher's methodologist conducted all externally auditing.

CHAPTER 4 – FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to understand the lived experiences of African-American women and their journey from student affairs positions to the community college presidency. Chapter 4 has four sections. In Section I, each individual president is introduced and described so that the reader may become familiar with the participants' lived experiences of moving from student affairs to the community college presidency. In Section II, the structural elements that make up the phenomenon of these presidents' experiences are shared. Section III presents the findings as they relate to the research questions. Finally, Section IV summarizes the chapter.

Section I: The Presidents

This interpretative phenomenological study involved 10 participants who were interviewed. The participants were purposefully selected, per the participant criteria, and they agreed to be a participant in the study.

This section highlights the participants' demographics, provides a "snapshot" into their lives, and catalogs their ascension to the presidency from positions within student affairs. Each participant was assigned a pseudonym from a combination of words that are found on a Southern farmland to reinforce confidentiality. Since confidentiality is important to this research, overall demographics were given, along with structured individual introductions regarding each president.

First, collective demographic data of the presidents are shared. Then, I give a glimpse of each individual participant by sharing aspects of their demographics. Secondly, I share little nuggets about how the participants see themselves and their family life. Thirdly, I share their upbringing, and then I tell of their education and professional development opportunities. Most of the participants attended some type of professional development institute within higher

education. Next, I disclosed their career track or path and where they are today. Finally, I reveal their narratives on their career starts within student affairs and aspects of their student affairs background. I conclude, this section, with remarks and a summary of a demographics of the presidents overall.

Collective Demographics of Participants

Information regarding each president's profile was gathered as a part of the interview process. From the data collection, participants shared their demographic information. The findings regarding their collective demographic information included titles, snapshot of age range, degree attainment, and other relevant information.

First, their titles are communicated. Some participants did not have the title of president but were leading the institutions as provost or they were the chief executive officer at another campus or site, which satisfies the definitions criteria for this study. Of the 10 participants, two were provosts and the remainder held the title of president.

Part of the research indicates that community college presidents are aging and soon will be retiring (Weisman & Vaughan, 2007). From this study, only one of the participants was retiring at the end of the academic year. The age ranges for the participants were from 50 to retirement, age 65. The other category regarding the demographics of these women participants were the geographic regions that they were currently serving as senior officers. The participants were from various parts of the United States. Five of the participants were serving in Southeast, while four were serving in the Western region. Only one was from the East coast.

Typically, most studies deal with the degree attainment of participants. All of the participants in this study had a doctorate degree. While educational attainment was a factor to these women's access to the presidency, more importantly it appeared that the majority of the

professionals attended some type of professional institute or professional development opportunity. The majority of these women had attended an institute prior to becoming presidents. This is important as it supports assisting others on how to prepare for the presidency. Majority attended the Lakin Institute for Black community college leaders under the Association of Community Colleges (ACC).

One of the most interesting pieces of information obtained in this study is the area in student affairs from which these participants migrated. Prior to becoming president, most of these women were holding the chief administrator position within in student services or another area within the executive cabinet. However for this study, the data revealed it was the early starts in student affairs for these participants that assisted them to obtain the community college presidency.

Finally, as a part of the demographic data, the majority of these women were married. Those participants that were married had very good support systems with their spouses. Spouses of participants who had commuter marriages were encouraging despite distance and time constraints due to their distant relationships. Two participants were widowers, while two others were divorced at the time of the study.

Dr. Rolls

Dr. Rolls described herself as coalition builder who has a tender "care for people because people and their experiences matter." She has a tremendous amount of energy and passion for working in higher education.

Dr. Rolls was the only participant born outside the United States. She was the youngest of four children and grew up in a military family. Currently, she is married and lives in a

different state from her husband and family. Despite having to commute to another state, she is very family centered and spoke of relationship with her mom who 87 years.

Dr. Rolls attended Catholic parochial schools from kindergarten through her undergraduate degree. She holds a bachelor's degree in Psychology; a master's degree in Student Personnel in Higher Education; and an Ed. D. in Educational Leadership and Organizational Development. Throughout her career, Dr. Rolls has been involved in numerous civic organizations, including serving as a board member for the President's Advisory Board within a school district. Like many of the other study participants, she attended the Lakin Institute, which supports African-American leaders in the community colleges under the umbrella of the American Association of Community Colleges.

Dr. Rolls is currently president of a community college that serves more than 71,000 students. This is her first presidency.

Her career path took her from her first professional position as an Admissions Counselor in student affairs; to Dean of Health and Human Services; to Vice-President for Instruction and Student Services; to Vice-President of Instruction; and, finally, to the community college presidency. She described her start in student affairs as follows,

> I worked in advising and counseling and I realized that I really had a passion for career work because it was sort of the other end of the admissions piece. I think most people chose a college that is going to help you live your potential and help to nurture the essence of who you are so that you can have a lived experience;. Yet, on the other end are you looking for work that is going to animate those values and help you balance out your life so that you can achieve that moving forward. Therefore, I found career development to be really exhilarating so I spent a year looking for a master's program.

Dr. Hillman

One staff member described Dr. Hillman as supportive, intuitive, and wise. She does not need the limelight or accolades; thus, she is always working to support others. Dr. Hillman is passionate about life. She had a lot of experience about the equity and diversity of education within higher education. She continues to work toward equity and support for others in higher education.

Dr. Hillman, an only child, was born on the East Coast in a rural agricultural community. Her mother was a schoolteacher and pushed her to extend herself outside of the community in which she was reared. Subsequently, she attended a predominantly White college. Married early in her career, she was divorced after 17 years of marriage. During this study, she remarried. Dr. Hillman's faith has played a major role in her life and her presidency.

Dr. Hillman grew up in an all Black educational community. She holds a bachelor's degree in Psychology, a master's degree in Counseling, and an Ed. D in Counselor Education. Dr. Hillman has attended many of the major institutes for leadership throughout her career, including the Harvard University, MLE Institute of Higher Education and the Lakin Institute, and President's Roundtable. Dr. Hillman attended some institutes even before she became a president.

Dr. Hillman is currently in her first presidency. She is provost at a community college campus that services more than 10,000 students. Her path to her current position began in Student Special Services as a counselor in the Trio Program. The Trio Programs are named as such because there are three levels or parts: talent search, upward bound, and student special services. Dr. Hillman has subsequently served as an Associate Dean for Afro-American Affairs, Director of Student Services, Dean of Student Services, Acting Dean of Instruction and Student

Services, Interim Vice-President for Academic and Student Services, and now Provost. She said of her start in student affairs:

> I wanted to work with students of color and… there was a new program starting called Student Special Services. It was a federal grant program, which later was called Trio programs. There were three levels or parts to this grant program: talent search, upward bound, and student special services.

Dr. Mills

Dr. Mills was born in the South. Her administrative assistant described her as caring and supportive. Dr. Mills is a person who enjoys learning and stated that she will continue to be a life-long learner after her presidency. Dr. Mills is always willing to help others as they move along the journey.

She is the fourth child of six siblings. She grew up in a segregated community and has a supportive family. She said of her parents, "they had a lot of mother wit; even if they did not have a lot of education." She holds the highest degree of all of her siblings. Dr. Mills has a great support system with her family and has a wonderful relationship with others. She is a member of a historically Black sorority and still stays connected with this network of women. From her perspective, her sorority and the mentors who facilitated their development really created an environment for her to grow and learn. She is single.

Dr. Mills holds a Ph.D. and three master's degrees. She has a master's degree in Specific Learning Disabilities; master's degree in Curriculum and Instruction; and a master's degree as Education Specialist in curriculum and instruction. She has a PhD in Curriculum and Instruction and a bachelor's degree in social and behavioral sciences. She is also a graduate of the Enlighten Leadership Institute, Chancellor's Leadership Seminar, and Graduate of Future Leaders of

Institute as well as the Chair's Academy. She did not attend Lakin Institute before becoming a provost.

She is a provost/campus president for more than 14,000 students. She did not attend Lakin before becoming a provost. She plans to retire in four to five years. She served in numerous positions at several institutions before she became a president, including District Dean of Education and Continuing Education, Research Associate, Psychometricist, Test Administrator, and Higher Education Administrator. She started her career in student affairs in testing. Dr. Mills said of her start in student affairs:

> upon my entry into higher education, I was what you called a psychometrics'…but primarily testing. I guided the testing programs for about 10 years at a community college. In addition, during that development over those 10 years, I was one of the pioneers helping to set the stage for college placement testing. I came back to help set up a literacy program for community college and then went straight to administration with testing well.

Dr. Jiles

Dr. Jiles has a great passion for serving others. She strongly believes in educational development and being prepared. She received an award for her commitment to educational excellence within the first year of her second presidency.

Dr. Jiles, the youngest of five children, was born in the Southwest. She described her family environment growing up as one of strong family values and a commitment to and emphasis on higher education. She grew up during the 60s in a Black neighborhood, where everyone in the neighborhood supported each other's children. The community that she lived in was that of professionals, nonprofessionals, blue-collar, and white-collar workers. There were a number of positive influences in the community and most households included a father and

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mother. The community had very few incidents of divorce. Her parents were her best role model, and they were married for about 59 years. She is also a very talented musician.

Dr. Jiles attended the Executive Leadership Institute (ELI) for the League of Innovation. She has degrees in bachelor's degree in Music Education Piano and Voice; master's degree in Applied Behavioral Studies in Education, Counseling, and a PhD in Education Administration and Community College Leadership. Apart from ELI, Dr. Jiles also attended the League for Innovation in the Community College, the Leadership Institute, and the Asilomar Leadership Institute.

Dr. Jiles has worked in higher education her entire career except for a period of 18 months when she worked in private industry. This is Dr. Jiles' third presidency; her current college has an enrollment of more than 23,000 students. At one her former institutions, she was the first woman president in their 92-year history. She is active in many civic organizations including the President's Roundtable. She began her career in housing and worked her way up from Resident Assistant to Head Resident. She was the youngest student assistant in the residence life. She also did diversity work early on in her career. She described her start in student housing:

> While I was at SU, [I] worked in student housing, which is where I lived, and when I saw a position open up as a student assistant. A student assistant is the person who lives on the floor, monitors the comings and goings of other students, and maintains quiet hours…various house rules of the dorms. I was that person. …I was a student assistant for the rest of the time I was at the college, even through my graduate studies. Then, I became a head resident, an assistant head resident.

Dr. Camp

Dr. Camp was born in the South. She described her lineage as coming from a long line of teachers and preachers as her parents and grandparents were teachers and preachers. She is the

second of three siblings, having an older sister and a younger brother. She is described by others as a caring person.

Dr. Camp attended several educational institutions and has earned a bachelor's degree in Biology, one master's degree in Teaching Education, and second master's degree in Business Administration. She received her Ph. D in Counseling and Guidance. She revealed getting her MBA was more difficult than getting her Ph.D. Her original goal was to be a researcher and scholar.

Dr. Camp is enjoying her time as president and a grandmother; she hopes to retire in the next couple of years. She is president at a private, non-profit, residential institution with a religious affiliation and an enrollment of 200 students. She is constantly seeking to improve services on her campus. She moved from her previous institution to her current position for health purposes. She began her career in the counseling area. She has held similar positions at major research institutions. She was a Psychological Counselor, Associate Professor, Professor, Associate Dean of the Graduate College, Associate Vice-Chancellor of Academics, Vice President for Academic Affairs and ultimately, President. Regarding her career moves, she stated that she did not make a move without inner peace from God. She described her starts in student affairs as:

> Guess you would say the four years that I was in the counseling center when I was working on my doctorate in counseling, and I was, hired by the, the vice president student affairs and moved along the path to academics.

Dr. Wills

Dr. Wills considers herself an ambassador for education and wants to provide equity and access to others. She believes that the adversities in her life have made her strong and continue

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to sustain her throughout her professional journey. Dr. Wills is a strong advocate for education and access.

Dr. Wills was born on the West Coast and raised in the foster care system. Aside from her role as an education advocate, Dr. Wills has also worked in outreach, recruitment, admissions and tutoring services, coordinating the inter-cultural center, summer bridge programs, academic advisement, human resources, and faculty development.

Dr. Wills is a graduate of the American Council on Education (ACE) Institute for women leaders and the Lakin Institute. She completed her Ph.D. in Education with an emphasis in Higher Education Administration/Policy. She also completed all coursework in the Organizational Behavior and Industrial Relations Ph.D. program of a School of Business. She received a master's degree in Educational Administration and a bachelor's degree in Liberal Studies with emphasis in Psychology and Education.

In addition to her duties as a community college president of a student body of 14,000 students, Dr. Wills serves in several other leadership capacities. She is a member of the American Association of Community Colleges' (AACC) Commission on Global Education and the Community College League Advisory Committee on Legislation. She is also member of the National Council on Black American Affairs and the American Indian Child Resource Center.

Dr. Wills is serving in her first presidency. Previously, she served as Manager of Human Resources, Administrative Officer for Chancellors, Vice Faculty Dean of Instruction for Humanities, Language Arts, and Social Sciences, and Vice-President of Instruction.

Dr. Wills described her journey in student services as:

In student affairs, I was initially as an outreach officer…getting information out to the greater state high schools, community colleges, community-based organizations, etc…about… the opportunities within the university system… …where I worked. I moved very quickly into…recruitment. I probably visited any give year to about sixty

different combinations of high schools and community colleges, recruiting students for the university, and then responsible for admissions, and then moved into coordination of summer bridge and other support programs… …in student services, and then to coordination of another set of programs, college wide mentoring programs, intercultural center, etc...

Dr. Waring

Dr. Waring has a faith life that reveals a strong journey of progression and development. She described her career journey as one that she would not change as it was inspired by God.

Dr. Waring described her family as a strong support system. Dr. Waring is the older of two siblings. Segregation was part of her childhood but she attended integrated schools for junior high and high school. She has been married for more than 31 years; she and her husband once commuted between states due to job responsibilities. Dr. Waring plans to retire in four to five years.

Dr. Waring attended a historically Black college (HBCU) for her first degree. She has a bachelor's degree in History Education, master's degree in Guidance and Counseling, and a PhD in Higher Adult and Lifelong Education. She attended institutes such as the Lakin Institute and the Executive Leadership Institute (ELI) before becoming a president. At the Executive Leadership Institute, she attended a Leadership Program for Executive Level Administrators in Higher Education.

Dr. Waring serves as president for an institution that serves more than 4,500 students within a district in the South. Dr. Waring went from Dean of Students to her current position. She deliberately selected a smaller institution so that she could have more of an impact on students. Her start in student affairs was in the area of counseling. Throughout her career, she has held several different titles: Teacher, Administrator of Counseling Services, Coordinator of

Women's Program, Director of Counseling and Faculty, and Dean of Student Support Services, and Dean of Students.   She described her journey to student affairs as:

> I taught junior high school and high school in an alternative education center then became a counselor…, and I got a job at Junior College as a counselor, it was an administrative counselor position.

Dr. Olive

Dr. Olive described herself as being a very spiritual person. Her faith was instrumental in her journey to the community college presidency. She truly enjoys life every second, and she has a wonderful sense of humor. Dr. Olive has a very joyful spirit and is willing to help anyone succeed in life.

Dr. Olive is married with two children; her husband is a physician. She grew up in a traditional two-parent family structure in the South. Her parents were her role models and she received many words of advice and wisdom regarding life from her father. Dr. Olive has the highest education of her six siblings. Her grandmother was not educated but sent all of her children to further their education. Her parents were also active in the Civil Rights Movement and she was taught to have racial pride from the time she was very young.

Dr. Olive has bachelors' degrees in Education English and Social Science, a master's degree in Education/Counseling, and an Ed.D in Educational Leadership. She attended the Lakin Institute as well as the President's Round table.

Dr. Olive served as president at two institutions prior to retiring (which took place during this study). Her last presidency was at an institution in the West that served more than 21,000 students; she was the first woman to serve at this institution. On her path to the presidency, she held the following positions: Program Director, Associate Dean of Student Services, Vice

President of Student Services, and ultimately Campus President. Dr. Olive said of her journey to student affairs: "I went from teaching to counseling, and that's how I got into student affairs"

Dr. Wheat

Dr. Wheat believed that her faith played a major role in her journey to the presidency. During several interviews with other participants, Dr. Wheat's name came up as a role model and source of support for other current presidents. She said of her journey that God has a way of maturing one along the process.

Dr. Wheat was born in the Mid-Atlantic area. She was an only child. Her mother was a teacher and instilled the importance of education. Her mother passed away when she was 24-years old. She was a divorcee with one son at the time of the interview.

Dr. Wheat has a bachelor's degree in Psychology and Sociology and a master's degree in Developmental and Educational Psychology. She obtained her Ph.D. in Philosophy and Educational Administration with an emphasis in Community College Leadership from Harvard University's Institute of Lifelong Learning.

Dr. Wheat is considered a pioneer in the field as a community college president. She has laid the foundation for many women of color and inspired some of the participants to attend the President's Roundtable and the Lakin Institute. Dr. Wheat has served at several campuses. She has served in numerous roles ranging from Associate Professor to Secretary of Education for her state. Her journey included positions as Associate Professor, Acting Director of Counseling, Director of Developmental Education, Director of Academic Support Services, Dean of Students, Provost, and President. At the time of the interview, it was not her plan to retire any time soon. Dr. Wheat described her roles in student services as:

> They added duties to it and changed my title. Therefore, at one point I was the acting
> director of counseling because their director of counseling had resigned and the

counselors had been working with me in the developmental program anyway. So they said, well, since they're reporting to you as faculty, you may as well just go on and take the job until we find a director. Of course, there's no more money with that, which was, you know, typical, but it gave me a broader perspective. They also added the TRIO programs, you know, and the learning lab and changed my title at that point to Director of Academic Support Services. Again, with no new money, just an expanded title

Dr. Delta

Dr. Delta had a great appreciation for presidents rising through the ranks of student affairs; she believes strongly that student affairs' is a viable pathway to the community college presidency.

Dr. Delta is from the East Coast. She is a recent widow with one child.   She was brought up in a two-parent household, the second oldest of nine siblings. The motto that her family lived by growing up was that we are in this all together whether rising or sinking.

Dr. Delta has a bachelor's degree in English, master's degree in Administrative and Policy Studies, and an Ed.D. in Administrative and Policy Studies. She attended the President's Roundtable and the Lakin Institute. She was very active in civic organizations such as her sorority and supports different service functions and higher education initiatives such as college leadership advisory boards.

Dr. Delta was a student affairs practitioner who worked her way up from Admissions and Financial Aid to the Community College president.   At the time of the interview, she was a president at a college on the East Coast that serves more than 40,000 students. She served as acting president at her current institution before she became president. Her journey from student affairs started in Admissions and moved to Financial Aid Officer, Assistant Director of Admissions, Director of Admission and Financial Aid, Director of Minority Affairs, Dean of Students, Vice-President for Student Services, and finally to President. Her goal was to retire in approximately five years. Dr. Delta described her roles in the following manner:

I have always grown up on what I call at least from a career perspective on the enrollment management/student services side of the house. I started out as an admissions and financial aid officer; I then moved to and served as the assistant director or admissions, the director of admissions and financial aid, the director of minority affairs and dean of students.

Closing Thoughts Regarding the Presidents

The 10 presidents were exciting to interview. They were very transparent concerning their professional journeys to the community college presidency. Their interviews offered rich insight into understanding their lived experiences and to establishing the structural elements for this research. The 10 presidential interviews were the basis from which the data elements emerged.

Although it was not a primary objective of this research, perhaps one of the most intriguing similarities that emerged among these presidents was that the majority had earned degrees in psychology and counseling. Additionally, the majority had experience in the area of counseling. This similarity is important as it may suggest that counseling may be position that will allow others in student affairs with similar positions to move into the community college presidency.

In addition to the demographic information gathered from the interviews of the participants, structural elements emerged regarding their lived experiences as well.

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Section II: The Structural Elements

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Section II communicates the structural elements that described the phenomenon of these participants' journey from student affairs to the community college presidency. The term structural elements were defined in Chapter 3 as the structures that make –up the phenomenon. The structural elements that emerged from this study were: personal pillars influencing ascendancy to the community college presidency, professional factors influencing ascendancy to

the community college presidency, advice for African-American women, challenges on the journey to the community college presidency, and the student affairs' pathway, the road less traveled.

Personal Pillars Influencing the Pathway to the Community College Presidency

In this study, the participants revealed that they did not make it on their own to the presidency without several personal pillars of influence. The personal pillars that influenced these women along the pathway to the community college presidency were family, faith, and educational experiences.

Family

The first personal pillar that emerged centered on the family. Nine of the ten presidents referred to family as a personal factor assisting them on their pathway to the community college presidency. The participant's family consisted of her parents, siblings, husband and children. The concept of family was broken down into three areas: the extended family– the village, African-American communities of the 60s and 70s; parents; and supportive spouses.

The village – extended family. The extended family played an important role on their pathway to the community college presidency for two of the participants. One participant had members of her community who helped her develop and grow particularly in the early stages of her life. These community members were collectively termed the village. The village is a metaphor that represented the image of extended family support that participants received from those who were neighbors in historically Black neighborhoods of the 60s and 70s. The idea of the village is that neighbors helped each other and each neighbor provided support in raising the other's children whether it was teaching them how to play musical instruments or teaching them how to read or write. The village became an extension of the nuclear family for those living in

these types of communities. Persons in their community were interested in the growth and development of the each other's children and encouraged them to achieve. Of the ten participants, Dr. Jiles and Dr. Mills were the two who gave illustrative examples of the village.

Dr. Jiles described how her neighborhood nurtured and supported her as she grew up in this community of extended family of both professionals and blue-collar workers.

> …My early years were spent in an African-American neighborhood where everybody lived together in the community. Professionals, and non-professionals, blue collar, white collar, everybody lived in the same neighborhoods. So, you could live next door to a dentist or a doctor or a lawyer, teacher, college professor, the preacher, the janitor, the taxi cab driver, the yard man. …I had a lot of influences that were very positive. I grew up in a neighborhood where every single family with few exceptions had two parents in the household….

Persons within Dr. Jiles' community acted as agents of influence. They provided positive role modeling and encouragement to her. Dr. Jiles indicated by living in this environment she received affirmations that she could achieve and lessons for personal growth.

Similarly, Dr. Mills revealed that she grew up in segregation and the community provided a layer of support for her.

> "…you know growing up in a segregated community also provided some insulation for all of us, for whatever we chose, to do… [do] it to the best."

Dr. Mills illustrated that growing up in a segregated neighborhood provided some degree of nurturing for her and encouraged her to strive for the best. She later shared that this type of community provided educational resources for her parents so that she had books to read to increase her knowledge.

Dr. Jiles explained the environment in which she was raised in which persons with unique skills created an avenue of opportunity for the community.

....The local neighborhood music instructor would travel from one elementary school to the other to ensure that all of the kids had access to music and so we had access to a lot and had a lot of encouragement and a lot of support.

Dr. Jiles showed another example of community support when she discussed the relationship she had with a neighbor.

My next-door neighbor was a teacher… Mrs. Gracey would do little tests with me and she would come back and tell my mother how smart I was and how I had achieved. She was always very encouraging… I grew up in this group of folks who were always encouraging to me and always telling me that I could achieve so I did not know anything else. I'm a strong believer in the self-fulfilling prophecy, I really do believe and think that when you support and promote and encourage and all of those things that make people feel good about themselves, those people are more likely to achieve than the ones that receive, direction that tells them just the opposite. So, when people hear all the time that they're no good, that they won't matter, that they won't amount to anything, sometimes that serves as a source of motivation, but most times, not.

Dr. Jiles had many educational experiences within her village or community. She received several educational opportunities of care through her early years and throughout her journey. She illustrated that she was told she could achieve and that thought developed as a seed for her to believe that she was capable of achieving the impossible. She demonstrated positive reinforcements motivate people, not the negative ones. It is the concept if you believe in yourself; you can achieve it. She illustrated the strong structural ties that members of the community had with each other such as spending time with each other's children without the fear of ill-treatment. In this village, Dr. Jiles showed that children's successes were everyone's responsibility and not just the responsibility of their parents.

Both, Drs. Jiles and Mills received support and care from her neighborhood communities, which provided an atmosphere of an extended family. For these participants, the family extended was a community of neighbors with a shared vision for their children. The participants received both training and support from those outside of their immediate family that influenced them to know that they could be successful in reaching her goals and aspirations.

Nuclear family: Parents and supportive spouses. The nuclear or immediate family was an important pillar of influence in the lives of the participants on their pathway to the community college presidency. Eight of the ten participants were raised in a two-parent household. One participant revealed that her parents divorced when she was 12 years old, while another participant shared that she grew up in foster care.

Parental support and encouragement provided these women with a strong foundation in achieving their career aspirations. Some participants spoke about the importance of parents who supported them through difficult situations such as divorce and rearing their children. Being a single parent can be very challenging, particularly on the pathway to the community college presidency. Dr. Hillman and Dr. Mills illustrated the importance of parental support for single parents who were in professional leadership positions.

Dr. Hillman shared how her parents supported her through the personal difficulty of divorce and becoming a single parent.

> They helped me a great deal by supporting my children and me. After moving back to Winchester, I went through a divorce. I was raising my children, single-handedly after about 17 years of marriage and they [parents] were a support to me.

Due to a lifestyle change, after getting a divorce, Dr. Hillman decided to move back closer to her parents. By receiving the support from her parents, Dr. Hillman was able to continue to work and gain experience so that she could eventually apply for a community college presidency position outside of her hometown. This opportunity provided her the best of both worlds to be near her parents as they aged; and for her children to grow up near their grandparents, receive similar nurturing, and care that she received growing up; particularly as children of divorced parents. Dr. Hillman illustrated how important that her parents were to her in the earlier stages in her career. Later she revealed, without their support she would not have been able to continue on

the pathway to the community college presidency. By moving near her parents, Dr. Hillman became place-bound for a while, which limited the opportunities to pursue other career promotions; yet, she made this sacrifice to be near her parents particularly as they were getting older, and she wanted to support them as they had supported her through her challenges of her divorce and with raising her children.

Similarly, Dr. Mills illustrated that her parents and extended family were such a support to her that she did not have to wrestle with the same difficulties as other single parents. She illustrated her parental support by disclosing an observation by one of her close friends.

> I will tell you like my best friend said to me one day; I have never seen you as a single parent. Most parents, who are on the professional track, have their children either in after school care programs or they are latch key children because on the way to these positions you do long hours…my family has always been there.
> I tell people my children don't know what after school care programs are because they're always with their grannies after school…and either I pick them up or granny picks them up, Uncle Russell picks them up… …but my family has been the support piece that has helped me to arrive where I am today…

Dr. Mills, a single parent, did not have to place her children in childcare agency programs, while she worked. Her parents and family were able to provide services that are typically used by single parents, such as, after school care, nanny services, and self-care-children (children left at home by themselves due to parents having to work). In the 1980s, children who came from school without parental supervision were called latch-key children. Her family was a childcare resource, which helped her to balance long work hours, while raising her children.

Several participants revealed the importance of having a network with parents and family as support. The participants' demonstrated during moments of need and challenges in their personal lives that parents provided a safety net not just for them but their children, as well. The level of care and support provided the participants the opportunity to continue their professional responsibilities and to pursue their pathway to a community college presidency.

While the majority of presidents spoke of parents in terms of support, one president received motivation that included another member of her immediate family, her son. Dr. Wheat revealed that although she lost her mother in early adult life, the factor that motivated her to continue to go on was her child.

> My mother passed when I was 24 and I am an only child. She and my dad divorced when I was 12; therefore, I had no additional family, beyond my mother in my adult years to be there for me. My son is my motivating factor. He keeps me moving.

Dr. Wheat later revealed that as her son became older he was always willing to move and take on the next role with her and support her as she traveled her pathway to the community college presidency. Often her son would question and ask, "Does this mean more opportunity or money for you? If I said yes, then he would say, let's go, we are moving." She revealed that her son was not only a support, but he was a source to encourage her to continue to seek positions that provided more financial stability and an opportunity for a better life. Her son was never reluctant to change schools or to make new friends.

One participant did not have steady parental support growing up. Dr. Wills described the difficulty that she had growing up within the foster care system. She demonstrated that her foster family wanted her only because she was a means to an end through the financial benefits that were received for boarding her.

Dr. Wills disclosed,

> I was reared in six different foster homes. The last foster home I was in, I was in a different location, my foster mother had just died, and I was moved around, so I was in another foster home. They needed me because they needed money and they did not really know me, and they could care less who I was, but they were trying to be nice to me, but they did not have time to get to know who I was.

Dr. Wills illustrated she was human capital for her foster parents. Despite her upbringing without supportive parents, she demonstrated one could still achieve despite adversities that they

may experienced in life. Dr. Wills demonstrated how challenges that she encountered without

parents made her hard, strong and determined to achieve her dreams of success.

While some of the presidents shared that their parents were there for them and helped

them with their children, three of the presidents spoke of caring for their elderly parents and

giving back to them the way that their parents had given to them, when they were younger.

Supporting and giving back to their parents was one factor that influenced the participants to

continue on their path to the community college presidency.

Dr. Jiles showed her caring relationship with her parents and the influence that they had

over propelling her forward to achieve successes along the pathway.

> I had to move to Tillman. My mother had been very ill and that was another part of my
> motivation. I wanted to be closer to home and I wanted to be someplace where I could
> pursue my advanced degree but at the same time be close enough to drive to Opelika to
> visit with my parents, spend some time with my mother, and give my father some relief.
> I would drive home almost every weekend. … Later, she was so ill where she could
> hardly do anything for herself. I walked into her hospital room with my cap and gown
> and it was the degree that made the whole room light up for her. [Getting the PhD],
> ultimately gave my parents, both of them, great joy.

Dr. Jiles revealed that because it gave her parents happiness that she was excelling in her career

progression and received her PhD. This motivated her to continue on to pursue the next level

and ultimately the community college presidency.

Dr. Hillman stated her desire to be supportive of her parents as they aged. In her own

words, she stated:

> I had deliberately gone back to Westminster because my parents were elderly and I was
> an only child. I had made the commitment to be near them, in support of them, because,
> well they were by the time I was 50, they were in their 80s, and I wanted to be a support
> to them, and so I built a home near them….

Although this was a transition for her, Dr. Hillman decided not to seek a presidency or further

professional opportunities due to being place-bound to be near her parents as they aged. This

transition did not discourage her. She became more determined to continue her journey as

positions became open to seek opportunities and ultimately a presidency, when one near her

parents' home became open and to which she could commute.

Dr. Rolls revealed the difficulty of being physically separated from her mom and family

as she served as a community college president in a different state:

> I miss my mom. She is 87, and I miss her. My dad passed away a few years ago and I was
> there [the other state]. He understood, but it was hard…I was trying to pass a bond.
> …You can't get back those days that you could have spent with your dad. So, those are
> the kind of things that you really have to think about. I mean I was up there a lot, but my
> job was down here. You got to think about that because you know when you're in your
> 50s your parents are getting older. Your children are getting older [too] and then they're
> starting to have kids.

Dr. Rolls shared her regrets and the challenges of being separated from her Mom and

grandchildren. Despite the challenges of being separated, Dr. Rolls illustrated that her family

realized that she was serving a greater purpose as she continued to accept more responsibility in

her new role as a community college president.

Although, some of the participants spoke of moving closer to their parents and the role

that they now play with parents, they demonstrated that they wanted to reciprocate the support

that was given to them not as an obligation but by living their lives as giving and caring people.

Parents were personal pillars of influence for the presidents in reaching their goals by supporting

them through their personal transitions and by supporting their daughters' career aspirations. By

these presidents giving back, it showed the core values that were engrained in them by their

parents and the law of reciprocity – you give you get. However, it also demonstrated the

expectations that these parents had for their daughters. It illustrated the difficult choices and

sacrifices that they made to ensure they supported their daughters.

While some presidents described the importance of parents as an influencing pillar on their journey to the presidency, two participants showed how supportive spouses were important as well. Five of the participants were married and five were single due to death of a spouse or a divorce. During this study, one participant indicated that she had got married after being single for a number of years. Two participants described supportive spouses and commuter marriages, while on their pathway to the community college presidency.

Dr. Rolls asserted that her husband was supportive of her goals and her continuance to pursue the presidency.

> … My husband and my family still lived up in X, so I was commuting back and forth almost every weekend for four years. I have a wonderful husband, he said, "honey, I'll support you" and he made it work somehow. He came down, mostly I went up, and we made it work. ..I knew in advance when I'd have to be there for the weekend and so I could go back up. At that time, our kids were having kids so I needed to go up and you know, you know our life was up there and I was down there for work and I really had a kind of a bifurcated life. Of my goals in higher education, my husband [asked], well you know, what is next for you?

Dr. Rolls described the difficulty of separation from her family and living in two places. During this study, she still was commuting and her husband was still her biggest cheerleader and constant encourager in her role as president. Since her husband was a support and took care of responsibilities at home, it allowed Dr. Rolls the freedom to continue to strive to the community college presidency.

Dr. Waring described the importance of teamwork with her spouse concerning her pathway to the presidency.

> My husband commuted for ten years because we agreed for me not to go for a presidency until [our] son got out of high school. So, after [our] son finished high school. I was wide open, and ...we were willing to go anywhere. I think that's important.

Dr. Waring demonstrated the planning process, communication and mutual goal setting that involved she and her husband, so that, she could be in the best possible position to become president, which was a goal that they both had for her progression in the community college system.

The two participants revealed the support that they received from their husbands including commuter marriages for them to pursue their professional goals. Commuter marriages were a way of life for these two participants, and their commitment to both their career and spouses. In addition, the support of these husbands indicated that they acknowledged, supported the abilities and talents that their wives demonstrated. The spouses for these participants provided home stabilization for these women to pursue their career goals. The second personal factor that supported these participants as they ascended to the presidency was faith.

Faith

The majority of these presidents indicated that faith was important to making decisions regarding their careers as they ascended to the community college presidency. This personal pillar of influence characterized their strong belief and faith in a higher power and an inner calling. The participants spoke on the importance of God and having God as a guide to support them through both their personal and professional journeys in life and to the presidency.

Using faith on the job. Dr. Hillman talked about having God as the source for her professional life as she had to file a grievance against her supervisor.

> …my faith truly sustained me through the challenge of being told by my supervisor that you have great evaluations, but I need to let you go from your position because I want all of my staff to have doctoral degrees, no experience but a PhD, which I was working on. I learned in this situation to trust God, almost, to trust God completely with my life and my career and my plan. Because I truly do believe that sometimes, God laughs when we make plans. There are no accidents, there are no coincidences, everything is by design and that I am just blessed with an assurance that God is always in control… and so

whatever comes out it, and if that's the outcome then that's what was ordained and that's what I have got to accept. Moreover, I can accept that fully but it is for my good. I do not care how it looks; it might look terrible. It might look like a total rejection, or it might look like, you know, what a horrible event, or what a tragedy, somewhere in there it is for my good, because that's what God works for me, is good. I can't see it, I mean my perceptions, you know everything's colored with my subjectivity, but I know that it's for my good. And that when I can get to that place and be there there's nothing that can shake me, I've got to stay there, and that's a daily activity…a daily reaffirmation every morning so that I can function…

Dr. Hillman indicated that she had to learn to trust God with each part of her journey with job challenges. She revealed particularly during this incident that she learned to let God take the reins of her life completely. She revealed despite excellent evaluations, student protest, and ultimately her reappointment that her relationship with God helped her through the chaos of that particular incident in her career and ultimately her life.

Similarly, Dr. Waring revealed that her walk with God was a way to support her decision making regarding job selection and for direction for every aspect of her life.

I just prayed to God, God send me to the place that you want me to work, and the people that you want me to work with. It became very clear that he sent me to Care Village. I just let God lead me… I always worked to get to a place of inner peace with God that is my goal. ..long enough for me to be clear that this is where He wants me to be for this time. I've never moved in my career before I knew that He wanted me to move.

Dr. Waring demonstrated the importance of being at peace and letting God order her steps regarding what positions to take. She indicated that she no longer decided to take a position on her own without consulting God. She revealed once she gets a confirmation from God then she moves in that direction. She revealed that God has guided her journey to the community college presidency.

Faith for direction. Personal direction for their career and personal lives were guided by their relationship with God. Drs. Hillman and Waring illustrated that their life and goals was influenced by hearing or discerning what they perceived was God's direction for them rather

than them trying to create or establish the pathway on their own. Bothe participants revealed that

learned to hear from God before making any decisions.

Drs. Rolls, Waring, and Olive shared their need to have meditation and an opportunity to

have a prayer life as a time to contemplate and reflect on future directions. Drs. Rolls, Waring,

and Olive talked about the importance of meditation every day and as a way of leading them and

in making decisions. Dr. Rolls stated for her it was continual practice, "I do meditation every

morning, and I'm a contemplative person."

Like Dr. Rolls, Dr. Waring revealed more in depth about her time with God.

You know, I get up every morning, try to have prayer and then exercise, and say God, what is it you want me to do, what is my purpose for life and am I living my purpose? I do that daily, so I certainly don't make a move without being clear with Him I'm working daily on being living truth of what he needs me to do and being clear about this, and so you know, people will ask me when you make a big decision, when things go wrong, are you stressed, no I'm not. If I am stressed, and I certainly have been, it's because my prayer life is not what it needs to be. I always have inner peace, even in the very, very tough situations.

Dr. Waring demonstrated the importance of prayer as a daily procedure. She indicated that if

she has not found peace for the day it was due to a lack of quality time with God.

Similarly, Dr. Olive revealed that prayer was her source and said,

I'm a very spiritual person. So, that was my source, great source. I'm an early riser so I tried to call that quiet time. I did that even when my children were babies, to have that quiet time, even if it was ten minutes and, to do my reading…..

These three participants described before starting their daily routines that they had the

opportunity to reflect and spend time with God as way to be clear about what direction that they

would take on a daily basis. The participants revealed that it important for them to make sure

that they take a moment to reflect, read, or pray before starting their daily routine of work or

their daily activities. At least two of the participants indicated prayer was a daily practice and they had to do it to function.

Faith: Name it, claim it. Drs. Jiles and Wheat spoke of their faith or spirituality by using terms such as "claiming and blessed." Both of these terms are used in the African-American faith-based traditions. In African-American faith-based traditions, the words "claimed and blessed" are used to express the faith that resonates from believing that God will give you the desires of your heart if you have faith to believe. It is the believing in God without doubting that he will give us what we are seeking or believing him for at that moment in time. By using these terms, the two participants indicated their experience in terms of coming from a strong faith community.

Dr. Jiles said regarding a career move and that by faith that she "claimed" the position that she applied for and hoped that she would get it.

> ..and I was determined when I walked through the door I claimed that job, I said this is my job, I knew about this school I did my homework, I did my background, and when I came in, I walked away from that job knowing they were going to call me for a second level interview.

Dr. Jiles revealed the process of activating her faith by saying that she claimed the presidential position that she was applying. She also revealed that preparation was a key aspect of seeking a professional opportunity.

Dr. Wheat shared her experience in terms of being blessed.

> …You know I've been blessed. Because every job for which I've applied, I've been interviewed and every job for which I've been interviewed I've been hired, with the exception of one, and the one that I just got out of the search. I don't know if it's because I only apply for sure things or what it is, but all of those have been ah ha moments.

Dr. Wheat demonstrated that she was blessed rather than lucky in moving into the opportunities that she had professionally. She could have used any other term but she used blessed, which indicated that she came from a faith centered mindset.

Faith was an important personal pillar for all of the participants. Many of them deemed it as the most valuable factor as they made decisions from one position to the next. While negative factors such as family illnesses or death and career issues may have played in many aspects of their lives, their relationship with God, a higher being or calling made their paths more transparent to them as they traveled along the way to the community college presidency.

Educational Experiences to Achieve: Experiences as a Minority

Education acted as a personal pillar in these women's journey to the community college presidency and a source for overall development and growth. Education was a personal pillar influencing their journey to the community college presidency. All participants have a doctorate in areas ranging from higher education to business administration. Only one participant attended a historically Black institution after graduation from high school and gained valuable support through that experience. The rest went to Predominantly White Institutions (PWI) due to parental influence and the hope that desegregation would provide more equal opportunity for their daughters. Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs) are universities or colleges, where the majority of students, faculty, and staff are non-Black, and these institutions have only a few students of color. Three presidents went to Catholic schools growing up. Two participants tell of their challenges in education earlier in life. One president described her educational experience through the lens of growing up in segregation and making the connection to her experience and higher education, while the other president shared what detractors had to say about her capabilities to achieve academically.

Dr. Hillman revealed that segregation was part of her educational experience even after laws were supposedly passed and served as a personal pillar to propel her to move out of comfort zone. She mentioned:

> My entire secondary, elementary and secondary education was in an all Black environment. Most people are pretty surprised to hear that Brown vs. the Board was in 1954 and [my town] was just desegregating in the mid-60s 64, 65. We were still in separate high schools, two separate systems were operating. I always laugh at the phrase "with all deliberate speed" they were supposed to be enacting Brown versus the Board, but it was very, very slow and by '68 they had completed it and it was the year after I had graduated. I deliberately wanted to stay at my high school and not be one of the trailblazers going to the previously all White high school. So, when it was time to go to college, my mother insisted that I go into an environment that would be what an integrated environment. That was the word of the day, because I had not gone to school with white students and had White instructors or anything, and she thought that was an important experience for me. It was very wise of her, I needed to do that, and a historically black college (HBCU), went off the table.

Dr. Hillman indicated going to a PWI was concern for her and it was a good decision for her even though she could not see it at the time. She revealed that it stretched her developmentally to experience the unfamiliar, which was somewhat scary for her.

Dr. Hillman also showed how her own personal experience was an educational factor, when deciding to accept the calling of wanting to help someone outside of herself through her own human experience:

> …Being a student in a minority environment, it really made me aware of what higher education was going to be like in the future for African American students as they were moving into these environments. Somewhere in that process, I decided I wanted to do that kind of work. I wanted to work with students in higher education. I wanted to, particularly to work with students of color and I was interested initially in working with students of color in traditionally white institutions, because I felt that my experience had taught me a great deal and I wanted to share that experience. I thought that I could identify with those students and that I could work with in an administrative capacity to make that transition somewhat easy and smoother for them.

Dr. Hillman experienced educational opportunities, which helped her to realize that she could give back to others by sharing her experiences as a person of color and by working with others of

color. Her experience at a PWI and being a minority propelled her desire to help those coming behind her to help them succeed at a PWI, particularly, as she grew in a predominantly Black school and transitioned to a PWI. She understood both cultures and the transitions that students would go through as a person of color.

Like Dr. Hillman, Dr. Wills revealed her challenges within her high school educational system that influenced her decision to continue to pursue her goal despite naysayers.

> This one person, who clearly did not perceive me as someone worthy of being in college prep courses, gave me a big flippant, funny response expecting me to leave there and be happy with it. Clearly, the person was a detractor and had no need for me or no use for me. I stayed there and waited for him to get me in the classes. …My wiring is not to assume that just because someone says something that is harmful, that is otherwise negating or undermining, means that even that person will help me get to my destination, and that has been throughout my career.

Dr. Wills revealed that despite the person's unbelief that she could do the college prep work this made her even more determined. She revealed that she had several detractors, such as, this teacher along her journey, but these experiences made her even more determined to succeed in what others said she could not do or achieve.

Dr. Mills indicated that she had achieved the highest level of education in her immediate family and during the time of segregation, she was encouraged to strive to do better.

> I would say, neither of my parents graduated from what they would consider grade school then. But both of them had a lot of mother wit they've always had books in our home, there was always that encouragement of reading or you know that exposure, and…

Dr. Mills showed that her parents did not have a lot of education; yet, they provided an environment for learning for their children.

Education whether inside the classrooms or through their day to day interactions was an influencing personal pillar for these presidents in their personal lives. Without a good education,

they would not be where they are today. Education for these participants was also by those inside of their neighborhood communities.

Summary of Personal Pillars of Influence

The personal pillars of influence that supported these presidents as they ascended to the community college presidency were family, faith and educational experiences. Family played an important factor of influence for participants. It was constant and recurring support. Their families had an understanding of the rich heritage, and they understood the progress that African Americans had made and the challenges before them. Some the presidents did not have strong family support systems; yet, some of them learned to persevere without it and continue to strive toward excellence despite adversity. It, actually, made them more determined to succeed. Family systems, such as, parents, husbands and children continued to motivate these women to work toward their goals regarding leadership. The village of support and extended family provided an environment for participants to learn and grow. Family was important to the women's success as it provided an avenue of support for assisting with children, encouragement and motivation to pursue their goals. The next structural element that played a role in the personal influence of these presidents was their faith.

Religion and faith played an important role in the lives of the participants not just on their daily journeys but also in career development. They reveal that having a faith life supported them with inner peace, discernment and overall guidance. Faith was a factor in the lives of these presidents as they ascended to the presidency. Faith or spiritual discernment guided these presidents along the pathway whether it was a new position or just their daily routines of being a president in the world of work.

The opportunities and support from parents and the community regarding getting an education was a continuous theme among the participants. Education gave these participants an opportunity to extend themselves and learn more about what they should do with their lives. The participants had educational challenges that stretched them to become more and challenged them to continue to want to succeed and develop on their journey to the community college presidency. It was the educational experiences that sealed their desire to get more knowledge and to support others on their educational journey as well. The personal pillars of influence made the difference to these women's successful progressions to the pathway to the presidency were family, faith and education.

Professional Factors Influencing the Pathway to the Community College Presidency

The second structural element that emerged from the data was the professional factors influencing their pathway. The factors that influenced these participants were the lessons learned, mentors, and legacies.

Ah Ha Moments: The Lessons Learned

Most participants revealed that they had some turning points *(ah ha moments)*. Of which, they learned some lessons on their pathway to the community college presidency. At least four presidents described the lessons that they learned before becoming a community college president. One of the lessons learned for these women was to take risk. Four presidents described their lessons and the risk that they took to proceed on the pathway to the community college presidency.

Step into the brook: Be a risk-taker. The first lesson learned was to be a risk-taker.

Dr. Hillman spoke of how taking a risk to apply for a new position was a lesson learned for her

on the pathway to the community college presidency.

> I often compare Holyoke to stepping out into the brook. I had been standing on the
> sidelines and quite honestly limiting myself in terms of what I could and couldn't do to
> move and apply for a new position. I was place bound, I had made a decision about
> where I wanted to live and reside and that involved some personal things that were
> important to me. But at the same time I had limited myself professionally by saying that
> there were things I didn't think I could do. I could probably stay there, would never be
> you know seeking something else, but there's always an event or an occurrence or
> something in that position that will suddenly make me realize that there are options
> outside of here and you ought to be looking somewhere else.

She indicated that she had been watching her career go by because she believed that she could

not be a president because she never received encouragement to move forward from her

supervisor, and she felt she was limited to her personal situation of being place-bound.

However, Dr. Hillman received encouragement of another African-American woman that she

could become president. With this encouragement, she was able to step out of the limitations of

her own mind and comfort zone and became president of a community college. After meeting

with this president and understanding her own potential, she was no longer content with just

being in her current position. She also realized that where there was a will there was a way to

balance family and being place-bound with new career opportunities.

 Similarly to Dr. Hillmans, Dr. Delta mentioned her lesson was to take calculated risk,

when she turned in her resignation prior to receiving a position.

> The board said they were going to do a national search for the Vice-President of Student
> Services. I talked with the current president and he said to me, why not apply? He said,
> you have been preparing for this all of your career and if it doesn't work here it will work
> somewhere. I had already decided to apply and I even had a letter of resignation because
> I will go in and meet with the new president and tell him or her that I am prepared to be
> the best vice president of student services that you could ever want. However, just in

case, you want someone else, here's my letter of resignation. Because I watched another colleague that she had applied for a job at the same institution where she worked, she didn't get the job. She tried to stay there and work and it was no matter what she said or did, that president took it as trying to show him up. I thought I am not going to put a new president or myself in that position. I'm going to give him or her, my letter of resignation and in a year if it is not working. He or she can tear up the resignation or either tell me to move on. If he or says no it hasn't been a great experience, that's okay because I have already resigned, so you can't get rid of me, I resigned.

Dr. Delta indicated that taking a calculated risk was necessary to prove that she was capable to move up in her career, while it gave her on the job training for her next position. She revealed that she would be ready either way because a new president may decide to hire a whole new presidential cabinet for his or her staff. Dr. Delta decided to create her own destiny by taking the risk to resign even if the end result was losing her job.

Dr. Wheat revealed she decided to take a job that she knew would only last for 4 years.

A Democrat got elected governor and he called and said I've been following your career since you were in Lineville, and I see how well you work with the senior institutions, K-12 and the business community, why don't you take a $45,000 pay cut and drive 100 miles one way every day and come be my Secretary of Education. … Salem has the only one term governor in the country, so I knew it was only a four year job, you know when I took it, and so in year three, everybody starts to look for their next opportunity and I was no different and applied for several positions.

Dr. Wheat explained that she went into a position with her eyes wide-open and knew that her position was not going to be long term; yet, she was willing to take the risk despite the inconvenience and uncertainty because in the long run she knew it would be valuable experience in the end.

Lessons learned. Unlike other presidents who took risk, Dr. Waring revealed the lesson learned was to find her purpose along the pathway.

When I was a director of counseling and my supervisor asked me what I was going to do next. I said, be a counselor. She said, how many more years do you want to work? I said about 20; she said do you know the burnout rate for directors of counseling is eight

years? You need to think about what you're gonna do next. I think that was the major turning point, and then once I went from being dean to a VP, after that I knew I wanted to be a president.

Dr. Waring revealed that learning to see the big picture regarding her career was a lesson that she learned before becoming a president. Dr. Waring said her lesson learned that influenced her professionally was to begin to think carefully about her long-term career goals.

Three of the participants learned to take risk, while for one it was to determine her purpose along the journey. The lessons learned for these four presidents were to be risk-takers. They took big gambles that paid off for them. Many took risks in their professional lives. The lessons learned on the journey empowered them and made them desire to continue to push for their dreams and move forward on the pathway to the community college presidency.

Mentors

An important professional factor of influence along the pathway to the community college presidency for these women was the mentors in these women's lives. The participants indicated that they had both female and male mentors. However, most of the participants had more female mentors that supported them throughout their pathway. At least two participants discussed some of their mentors as being persons in their community or immediate family, while others expressed the idea of having mentors in their professional lives. All participants spoke of mentoring relationships or giving back to others. Mentors were from various areas within their communities, families and professional networks.

Personal and professional mentors. Dr. Rolls described one of her mentors as more than a support, but a Godsend.

> I have one of each, I have a female mentor of color, who's a chancellor down at RU and I love her ...I'm going to get emotional...she is just ... a blessing ...

For Dr. Rolls, her mentors were more than a means to and end in her career, but she illustrated the importance of the type of relationship that she had with her female mentor, a gift from God.

Dr. Jiles described her mentors not only as professionals within the field of higher education, but she also revealed her mentors were those in her neighborhood and church community.

> my little teacher, who would do those little tests with me, she to this day is still somebody that I see in my mind's eye as a role model… …she was a strong believer in promoting young people to believe in, you know making them believe in themselves, so that was a role model. I also had… a counselor at college who was a role model. There were two, one an African American man and one an African American woman. They were just always there to listen to help guide me and others at the college who would seek their advice…There was also a woman in my church, I haven't even mentioned the church, but church was really important. I just found a card from her the other day, I always kept her cards over the years and whenever I pick one up. I just have them all over the house, they're just randomly in drawers and every now and then I'll just open a drawer and there's her card and I'll pull it up, you know, pull it out and read it…and her cards have always been inspirational. She'll say things like, I saw you at church when you were home the last time and I didn't get a chance to see you because so many people were around you but just seeing you across the room was good enough to let me know that you're doing well… you were always a star, or something like that. Those are the kinds of things that she would send me, and still does… also this woman; I think this is one of the reasons why I have such a decent command of the English language.

Dr. Jiles revealed her mentors were from different aspects of her life. She revealed mentors came from her community and within her church. Her mentors have continued to encourage her throughout her career and gave her the foundation that she has today as a community college president. While some of the presidents spoke of female mentors, a couple described how male mentors influenced their professional growth and development along the pathway to the community college presidency.

Mentors and the gender factor. Dr. Camp shared that she had men mentors who really supported her and she shared that it was unusual during that time.

> I'm 67 now and have had many my mentors. Many of my mentors have been men. When I was at the University of H, the one person man who was the dean of and vice chancellor for research. He did promoting of me. I was able to talk with him personally about some of the things that I really wanted to do. He was White and Catholic. One of my other mentors who is deceased was really an outstanding scholar and Harvard graduate... He was very supportive. I think in some instances men are not always supportive of women, but I can just mention those two who were supportive during that time.

Dr. Camp disclosed that she had male mentors that supported and guided her along her journey. She disclosed that this was unusual during that time.

Dr. Waring described her mentors as being of both genders and the lessons she learned regarding decision-making.

> I would say an equal, I have some good men, Anglo men and Black men, and I will say that probably I work better with men than women, because sometimes women haven't learned to take the emotion out of decision making. You know, I was taught early, this is not an emotional matter, and we've got a decision to make. Hang with the problem, hang with the problem, and hang with the problem.

Dr. Waring revealed that the majority of her mentors were men and that they taught her how to take the emotion out of decisions; rather not to think like a woman but think like them-men. Dr. Waring indicated that she learned from her male mentors to take on male traits, regarding making decisions.

Giving back as mentors. Some participants indicated not only were they mentored, but they mentor others now. They spoke of giving back and supporting other students and professionals of color. Two participants illustrated how they mentor others as a way of giving back.

Dr. Rolls described how she gave back by mentoring other women of color; particularly those who are trying to move up within the community college system.

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I am involved with the President's Round Table, which is the African American presidents' two-year college organization. I have been involved in the institutes to help people who want [to] move into a dean position or dean to a vice president, president, vice president up to a president, chancellor. . On campus, I…am a mentor to the students there.

Dr. Rolls shared how she was not only mentored but how she contributed to the development of African-Americans who want to move into a dean or presidency positions. She indicated that mentoring was a part of her role on the campus that she served.

Dr. Wheat stated that mentoring and mentoring relationships has been a way of life for her professionally. She gave an example of mentoring relationships and giving back to others coming behind her. Dr. Wheat mentored others and described her philosophy regarding mentoring overall. She stated:

I try to be a mentor to anybody who asks, if they think I have something to offer, then I haven't learned to say no yet. It's important to me that number one, students see role models. I can be a role model for all African-Americans, male and female, I can be a role model for all females, you know, Black, White, and Brown, I can be a role model for anybody who's looking for an effective leader. My mentees are in all those categories, Black, White, Brown, male and female, okay, 'cause it's good leadership, they're trying to emulate, and it's, my responsibility, to make sure that there are people who can follow in my footsteps and that they are well prepared for going into administrative jobs, whether it's department chair, dean, vice president, or president. Books can't teach you everything. Sometimes just good old fashioned experience is what is needed. I learned most of what I learned on the job. I want to be able to share those kinds of experiences with others so they can be aware of them, so they will not be caught off guard. And to have someone to call to say, I ran into an issue that you didn't tell me about before, so now I need you to help me to work through how to deal with this. I have a mentee right now who's being pursued for a presidency, he's already got one presidency and he's being pursued for the other, some of the pressure he's getting you know, are from congressional folks, ah, how do you deal with that pressure? Do you succumb to that kind of pressure if you say no, what's the impact of doing that? Those are the kind of things that they don't necessarily teach you about in graduate school, but you've gotta learn it somewhere. You know you'd like to be able to call upon people who have been there, done that, bought the CD, or you know at least have more experiences on which to call in order to make the decision effectively.

Dr. Wheat showed the importance for new professionals to have the opportunity to gain advice

and a shoulder to lean on concerning leadership decision-making and dealing with issues;

particularly those who have had been in the trenches or navigated the waters in the community

college presidency. She described her desire to be a mentor for others as a rainbow in a cloud.

A rainbow in a cloud is the hope in moments of need.

Dr. Wheat also stated that mentoring was not just by position and that staff that were

considered to be in a lower hierarchical level have mentored her. She said:

> …My administrative assistants have been mentors of mine, because they help me learn the organizations into which I have gone. I've had faculty members who have felt comfortable enough to pull my coattails and say you know, you…I'm hearing that you're thinking about doing this, if you do that, you know let me tell you what I think is going to happen.

Dr. Wheat also revealed how mentors can be from various positions within organizations and

how important it is to have persons that want to support you.

> Only Dr. Olive spoke of not having many mentors to guide her career.

> I didn't have that many mentors, but… …I would say as you think of mentors around management, …probably more males at various times, but sustained mentor who looked out for you or called you and you know put you in a position and said, you know I'm going to watch your career, I didn't have that kind of thing. I think you can find more mentors who sort of watch you and say, you know, you ought to go and do this job, and do this, and move on. Some of my mentors were people who'd say, you know, you can do this job real well. I need you to do it because I can't do it.

Unlike other participants, Dr. Olive described that she did not have anyone to direct her career

path; however, a lack of direction and guidance did not hinder her in reaching the community

college presidency.

Unlike Dr. Olive, Dr. Mills said her mentors gave her support and showed her

unconditional love:

> There is one particular woman other than my mother who really helped me to establish the confidence in myself in my twenties, because she extended to me; she extended to me what I call unconditional love. She would say…it doesn't matter what's happening or

what has happened, I'm always here for you…This woman, not only embraced me as a young woman, but other young women I [felt] drawn to her. She taught you how to love people, not based on who they are but because they're human beings, that really helped to open a door for me, so now, I know what unconditional love feels like. I can just remember her having those conversations with me and telling me, you gotta go farther, you got to go farther…

Dr. Mills indicated that her mentors helped her to understand and discover the true human experience of care and support for another person without expectations or conditions. It did not involve "quid pro quo."

These women had mentors and they in turn learned how to mentor. Some participants had male mentors, while others just had women mentors. The majority had mentors that were a great support to them as they continued to learn, grow and develop in administrative positions in higher education.

The lessons learned for these presidents ranged from being risk-takers and to take control of their own destiny. Many of them took risk in their professional lives. The lessons learned influenced and empowered them to continue to push for their dreams and goals on the pathway to the community college presidency.

Legacies: Practicing What We Preach

It has been stated in the literature that many community college presidents will retire within the next five to ten years (Weisman & Vaughan, 2007). One participant retired, during the study. Other participants indicated that they would be retiring in five to seven years. Several participants were in their last years of their careers. Their legacies were an important question for them to discern regarding their presidencies. Most indicated that they wanted their legacies to be about making meaningful changes that affected and supported students, while some felt they were just beginning to write the next chapter in their career as community college presidents and a legacy was a way to put it into practice.

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Meaningful professional and personal contributions. For many, it was the concept of making meaningful professional contributions to their institutions, community, staff and students. Some examples of legacies were found in the data elements of Drs. Mills, Camp, Olive and Waring.

Dr. Mills illustrated that she wanted people to remember her for being fair, supportive and doing what was right for people.

> …I want people to remember me for being fair but compassionate…and when I say fair, sometimes fairness is not always what people desire…because it does not match their wants…but for them to say at the end of my life, she was a fair person, and she tried, and she did what was right, not tried, she did what was right for the right reasons…

Like Dr. Mills, Dr. Jiles reflected on what she would want for her legacy. She said of her hopes:

> I guess one of the things I want is to know that some of this has made a difference in terms of the legacy is what I want to leave behind, … I want to have influenced the landscape of higher education…in ways that enable …any organization that I'm part of to not just be better than what it was when I came, but to be significantly better than it was when I came…and what I also want is for people to not just remember me for the leadership that I provided an organization, but I want to be remembered for the person that I was… inside…because in the end when this is all stripped away you know being a president of this college it will be etched on the wall somewhere…but what most people will likely remember is how I treated them…and that's a simple thing, but I guess that would be more important to me**…**

Dr. Jiles revealed that she wanted her legacy to be that she made an impact within the institution itself and that she treated people fairly.

Legacy of support for students. Two participants spoke of legacies in terms of students. Dr. Olive, who was in the process of retiring, stated that she hoped that her legacy would be that she was a support for students.

> That I made a difference…and that I accomplished something that would allow students to be more successful and that the we worked together as a college and around the

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strategies that we use, and we changed some things…and that we acquired some property and improved the physical plant of the college…

Dr. Olive described her legacy in terms of making institutional changes, giving back to students and overall improving the general health of the college.

Similarly, Dr. Waring shared her goal for accomplishing the legacy of giving to students:

I would say that my legacy was I did a renovation of a student services facility that had served… students well. I would say that it's more the retention [of] things that I left behind for them, like learning communities, and a way of thinking about students…here I don't think I've developed my legacy yet, it's certainly the science facility that we created is wonderful, but I don't want my legacy to be about, buildings. I want it to be about people. I really want to be known for having a powerful vision that changed things for the good of students. You know there's a book called Jesus is CEO and it talks about when Jesus left… He said, I leave with you Peter, Paul, John. He could have said anything, he could have said I went to the cross and I died and I rose again, but his parting words were, you know go into the world, and I lead with you, so that's what I really want my legacy to be, and that's sort of hard to define. I had this powerful vision about any student being able to come here and us having the financial resources that could give scholarships, they were exposed to the best minds in the country and it didn't matter that they were poor.

Dr. Waring demonstrated that she wanted her legacy to be about her vision and moving the organization forward and that she influenced and created a change within the institution.

Legacy for Drs. Olive and Waring was to have supported and touch the human beings lives. Both participants mentioned how that they wanted to have some impact not just on students but the institutions that they served. These presidents were concerned about making a difference in the institution, the administration, and faculty but more important they were concerned about leaving a legacy that would support, direct and guide students long after they have left the institution.

Summary of Professional Factors

The professional influences of the participants weaved a process of learning lessons, mentors and mentoring relationships, and the legacies that they hope to leave. Their lives were full of lessons and what these women learned was to take risk (step into the brook) and not to sit

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on the sidelines watching their careers being played out as puppets. They were strategic and followed their goals. Mentors provided an avenue of support for them to continue on the journey; yet, they also provided an opportunity for many of them to continue to give back to others. The legacies the participants wanted to leave were to make a difference to the organization and serve others, namely, students.

Advice to African-American Women Seeking the Community College Presidency

The third structural element that was derived from the data was the advice given by the participants to African American women seeking the community college presidency. However, from the researcher's perspective, the advice given by these presidents is applicable to all women seeking the college community college presidency and men as well. These participants had several types of advice concerning how to navigate moving up in leadership roles and responsibilities and how to achieve a community college presidency. Preparation was the first advice given.

How to Prepare for a Community College Presidency

Preparation was the key to the women's success and many of them believed it would be instrumental to those who want to be community college presidents. These women presented preparation as a process that varied across their experiences. Preparation involved the following components: having goals, mastering skill sets, and staying on a job; get items in order; get your credentials; network and learn from your biggest detractors. For these women preparation included several elements, such as, know where you are going, credentials, know yourself, and know your purpose.

The preparation process. Several of the participants spoke of preparation as one of their most important aspects of moving into a presidency position. Although preparation varied for

some of them, the key to success for a majority of the participants included a range of

competencies. Dr. Waring gave the best illustrative examples of how to prepare for the

community college presidency through goal setting and mastering skill sets.

Set goals. Dr. Waring's philosophies on the preparedness were a good example. Of all of

the participants, she is the only participant that stated she actually prepared to be president

because it was actually one of her goals. According to Dr. Waring,

> ….you got to be prepared, you know, especially by tenth grade. I think it's important for
> you to know where you're going, take the tough courses. I think it's important for you to
> get your education and move up and then to have a goals, to surround yourself with
> people who are good and then just chart your course.

Dr. Waring advised that you have to be taking difficult courses and prepare as early as high

school and you need to set your goals.

Stay on the job. Dr. Waring revealed the importance of staying on the job for a while

and learning the job well before moving forward helps to prepare for the presidency.

> I think it is important for you to be prepared. You know, people do not like to hear me
> say this, but if you look at my background, every job that I was in I did it for about ten
> years. Sometimes I see deans, they come in here, they have been a dean for three years,
> they barely have learned how to do a dean and they want to be a VP. Now I do not think
> it takes ten at every level, but I mean it takes you five years to master a job, most jobs,
> unless you are just the exception.

Master skills. Dr. Waring explained in the preparation process, there are certain skills

that you need to master as you continue to move forward.

> I do think that you have to be prepared. You have to have some things behind you.
> Because if you look at my days, you know I might in the morning have to go to a
> welcome, but, I cannot be sitting there writing every welcome, I have to get up and speak.
> I have to go to meetings. I have to know how to dress for those meetings and be prepared,
> and to talk to people about a variety of subjects to work with my budget manager and put
> in place accountability systems, and to work on a board. You know, at the point you're
> president, somebody said, you're not learning to be a president, you know what you are
> as a leader and your surrounding yourself with people who are good where you, where

you're weak…. I think it is the preparation. I think it is about being prepared. You got to know how to do your resume. You have to know how to interview and you have to know what a good packet looks like. You have to know how to network. You have to have people that will say this person can do the job. Therefore, that is all about the preparation to me…

For Dr. Warring explained that preparation for the community college presidency included knowing how to communicate effectively, knowing how to dress and to be knowledgeable on a variety of subjects and how to work with others. She illustrated if you do not have the expertise in a certain area that you need to hire someone who has the skills to perform and do the job.

The preparation process involved from having knowledge and mastering skill sets. The examples of preparation provided by the presidents ranged from preparing a good resume, interviewing skills, and staying on the job to networking.

Develop an inner circle of networking. The majority of participants attended an institute such as the Harvard Institute, Lakin Institute for the President's Roundtable for community colleges and educational leadership institutes and programs where they honed their networking skills and learned to enhance these skills to assist with pursuing job opportunities. All of the presidents had attended and participated in some type of leadership program before becoming a community college president.

Dr. Rolls described how she navigated and used her inner circles of networking and how networking will possibly be a benefit to others. She said:

> I would tell them to go to them …to the Lakin Institute as well as Executive Leadership Institute. There is an inner circle of people who will help you be successful. It is worth the investment of money; it helped me because I did not know answers to all these questions; [particularly on passing a bond]. Also at ELI, Executive Leadership Institute through the League for Renovation, they have a network of, what you call it, headhunters, and they're going to call you up because they know you and they know what you're interests are and what could fit, you see. I have to tell you, life is all about relationships anyway, but I made sure that I connected with the people who were also doing searches for positions.

Dr. Rolls advised networking as opportunity to invest in your development to assist you with moving to the next level and to be exposed to persons that can help navigate you to the presidency. She revealed that speaking with persons who had experiences that she did not have helped her to understand processes such as how to pass a bond so that when the time came she was able to speak competently and with confidence to what needed to be done within her institution.

Dr. Olive revealed leadership development trainings were important as it was a good way to meet people.

> …you can go to any of the workshops or conferences and get with people I would say if you get to go to any of the training check them out to see some of the good ones, then you get a network of people [that] you can call who are also interested in the same thing, and they're in the community college…

Dr. Olive indicated conferences and workshops were another avenue to use the inner circle of network of persons.

Networking played an important role in these women's journey to the community college presidency. Networking allowed them to gain knowledge, skills and expertise in areas that they did not have previously.

Know yourself and your purpose. Another element of advice was that you really have to know yourself. Three of the participants talked about being true to yourself and knowing what you are capable of being, as well as, having purpose.

Dr. Hillman believed it is important to be who you are and be transparent.

> I think people want people to be real, you know, 3-dimensional, and what I'm seeing now in college presidents, is that you see that. They're not a role; they're a person and a role… I think that is my job to help people feel comfortable in the place they work, and prideful, so…I think it is a new change in how people perceive leadership now… I am proud to be a college president at this time in history of higher education.

Dr. Hillman revealed some keys to a successful role as a community college president, namely, intentionality and honesty. She indicated that leaders have to be transparent and know their role within the institution.

Similarly, Dr. Waring asserted to be a leader you have a clear direction toward your purpose.

> I think you got to be connected to your soul, and your heart and what you like doing and your purpose for life…that's got to be real connected to who you are. …they need to know their purpose for life and what their gifts, what are their talents are, those are two different things. As God called them to do, so to me, it's different for different people, based on who you are and what is yours to do, what's your purpose for life…you need to connect I believe your work to your purpose, those things need to be connected. I think you work through that at different parts and every stage of your life.

Dr. Waring revealed that you have to know that you were called to be a community college presidency. It is not by happenstance, but you have to know that it is purposed by what God has called you to do.

Like Waring, Dr. Wills showed that you must not only know your purpose, but you must have a vision for reaching that goal or that outcome.

> I'd say to these…African American women, who are becoming, taking a leadership role, be clear about the vision, for example, if they have something that my vision, transforming that community. …..I would say to these women, be clear about your passion, make sure it is education if you're pursuing leadership in education, because if it's not, if it's just to have a job, that's, those folks burn out very quickly. The other thing I would say, just because someone…demonstrates high level of disagreement with them, at the very least, sexist, racist, otherwise, demeaning undermining behavior, does not mean that person cannot actually facilitate their success. I don't know why, and maybe because I like challenges, most folks who told me "no" I used their "no" to propel me forward. And not only have I used their no; I have engaged them in being a principal in ensuring my success.

Dr. Wills indicated that to be a leader you must have direction and must not get caught up with those who challenge you. She demonstrated that despite the issues of racism and sexism that she

faced she used those experiences to her advantage by using the words and actions of others to help move forward in her career objectives.

> Dr. Delta divulged that you must be open to change and strategic.

> In terms of advice, what I would say is be open to whatever opportunities arise. I remember when I moved from Director of Admissions to Director of Minority Affairs and Affirmative Action and that was probably in, late 80s early 90s. I remember some comments I got from people who said why would you want to do that, minority affairs people of color and you can't go anywhere from there. However, I did not believe that because what it did was, it put me close to the president. As the Director of Admissions and Financial Aid, I wasn't close to the president.

Dr. Delta revealed that you sometimes need to go with the flow and ultimately you will end up where you want and desire to be. She revealed that she listened to her own advice rather than others.

An important component of advice that these presidents had for those coming after them was to make sure you know your capabilities and strengths. People will always tell you that you may not be capable of doing this or that but it is important that individuals know what they are truly capable of doing.

Attain your credentials. The majority of the presidents spoke of having or getting credentials to move into the community college presidency. For the majority, credentials meant the degree and other facets of credentials. Three of the participants talked about getting credentials. Credentials meant obtaining a doctoral degree. Concerning attaining credentials, three of the participants illustrated its importance.

Dr. Wheat illustrated that a first step to move into the community college presidency was to get a doctorate degree.

> First of all, they need to prepare themselves academically, you know, you got to have that union card, that doctorate.

Dr. Wheat illustrated that academic preparation was important to success of women who want to become community college presidents. Dr. Camp affirmed Dr. Wheat when she stated: …. Credentials…[best affordable per] the opportunity, I don't think you should take short cuts… I think you have to have solid credentials.

Like Drs. Wheat and Camp, Dr. Olive avowed: "Get your credentials…

Majority of participants advised, in order to move toward the community college presidency, they would suggest getting a doctorate degree and to work on learning the institution. The degree and maintaining your own personal knowledge was important factor on advice from the presidents.

Obtain administrative and committee experiences. The other advice recommended by these participants for future women presidents were to realize the breadth of experiences particularly in administration across the institution. This is especially true if coming from student affairs alone.

Dr. Wheat illustrated to become a president that women will need a variety of administrative experiences within the institution.

> They need to have a variety of administrative experiences… to be able to have served on committees that are more focused on finances and student services depending on where they are in the institution.

She advised that women who come from the student affairs path will need to serve on a variety of committees that broaden their skill sets.

Dr. Camp acknowledged people skills as an essential component to become a community college president.

And then I think you need a lot of people skills. You must have some administrative skill… and if you don't have it, then get mentoring and having some assistance that will help you get to that level.

Dr. Camp indicated that being mentored was an important aspect to moving along the community college pathway.

Similar, to attending institutes and networking, many of the participants were encouraged to get involved in committees and other groups outside of Student Affairs since they came from that pathway. Particularly, the advice from these presidents was to get on faculty committees and get involved with faculty, as well as, other administrative offices. Preparation was described as having several elements, such as; be prepared, know where you are going, network and attend leadership institutes, attain your credentials, and secure administrative committee experience.

Summary of Advice for African-American Women

Each of the participants varied in their advice to achieving a presidency. However, the most prevalent advice was attaining your credentials. The importance of obtaining a doctoral degree and knowing yourself were important advice that the participants had for women of color to move into the community college presidency. For these presidents preparation also involved the importance of taking risk and developing a plan and sense of direction. A key component of their advice was the idea of knowing yourself. Other advice given by the participants included getting on committees, networking, and attending leadership institutes. All of the participants agreed that teaching or having a relationship with faculty would only enhance the navigation to the community college presidency. It was clear that these women had learned that you must develop intentional relationships and develop opportunities with the academic side of the house to be successful in obtaining a community college presidency.

Challenges Along the Pathway to the Community College Presidency

The fourth structural element that developed from the data analysis was the challenges that these women encountered on the journey to the community college presidency. The challenges that were most prevalent as expressed by the presidents were: inequity of promotion and pay, difficulty working with other leaders, race–other's beast of burden, being an African-American woman and counting the cost to the community college presidency.

The Inequity Factor—Lack of Promotion and Pay

Two of the presidents mentioned a lack of promotion to higher leadership as a challenge on their path to the community college presidency. First, Dr. Hillman revealed her experiences of dealing with her supervisor who would not promote her or assist her with leadership development to move toward a community college presidency.

> I would talk to him about advancing in the position, but there was always a reason why that could not happen. I think the president quite honestly did not think I would take it, in fact he said to me, you're pretty much place bound. He meant he knew, because we were very close why I was there and wanted to be near my parents and all of that. But there was something about that that angered me, because it made me realize that he knew that, and that was why he had never responded to my need for elevating the position, changing title, you know, all of that, he figured I was going to be there no matter what.

Dr. Hillman disclosed that her supervisor deliberately did not promote her because he knew her personal family life and her desire to be near her family. My interpretation of Dr. Hillman's challenge of promotion in this situation was that her supervisor believed that she was place bound without asking her the question; he did not see any need to promote her to a new level inside the community college. He was getting the best performance from her so why should he train someone else in her position. He appeared not to be interested in her professional development.

Dr. Camp revealed on her pathway to the community college she was not readily given a promotion despite her credentials, unlike other colleagues in the same field.

> …Before I was promoted to associate dean, there were others who were just promoted in the college….My dean had gone to the council of graduate schools and asked about my work there and the committees that I had been on. [It] was as if I was required to have more justification than some others who had just been promoted on up…I [had] better credentials than some of the other women there; yet no promotion.

Dr. Camp shared the process that she had to endure before being promoted even to an associate dean on her pathway to the community college presidency. She revealed that her supervisor seemed to believe that she had to have all of the checkmarks to be promoted to her position; unlike other persons in their positions who were promoted.

Dr. Olive indicated on her pathway she was not promoted, but she was simply passed over. "I've also been passed over positions because there was a male friend there; and the dean needed that support from that male friend rather than from me." Dr. Olive showed that for some positions she was simply ignored because the person doing the promoted actually wanted their friend or colleague who was a male in the position rather her.

Dr. Camp revealed another inequity, namely, being underpaid.

> I was underpaid and when I would consult the person who I reported to, he didn't think so. Yet, the Department of Labor came in and looked at 29 women in the area and 12 of us, including me, were giving a raise.

Dr. Camp indicated that she along with other women experienced inequity in pay. She revealed that it took an outside government agency to determine for her and others to receive equal pay for equal work.

On their pathway to the community college presidency, Drs. Camp and Olive revealed that they experienced inequities regarding both pay and promotions. Promotions were not given easily to the two participants and one of them did not receive a promotion at all. The lack of

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appropriate pay for equal work was a challenge for Dr. Camp. She revealed that she had to seek

a promotion and pay equity despite letting her supervisor know that the inequities existed. For

these two presidents, obtaining equal pay for equal work was a challenge for them along their

journey to the community college presidency.

Difficulty with Working with Other Leaders—Untraditional Traits

Some participants expressed that they had difficulty working with other leaders in

leadership roles. Two participants revealed that they had difficulty working with leaders who

were Caucasian and African-American. The perception from the two participants was that

working with these groups was difficult or a challenge for them because they had taken on

untraditional traits. Dr. Rolls described her experience working with other women leaders whom

she believed had taken on male leadership traits.

> I have to be honest, across my experience I've had a lot of difficulty with [intra-gender generational traits]…. it's very sad because I've never had any difficulty with African American or Asian American women [within generations]. But I have never worked well with… European American women…[within certain generations] and… it's very disturbing. I think it's not so much in my generation, but it's the generation ahead of me that have taken on a lot of male attributes… so, there's a lot of …cattiness.

Dr. Rolls disclosed her difficulty working with White women on her journey. She indicated that

the women that she worked with and far had taken on male traits, which made it very challenging

for her to work with. She shared that other men and women of color had not been an issue for

her.

Unlike Rolls, Dr. Mills revealed that she had difficulty with working with persons of

color; particularly, African-Americans:

> ….sometimes when you meet African Americans who have moved to administration, they're a bit standoffish from you. I don't know the reason, but it is almost difficult to connect with them, particularly if they're in the same organization as you are. I've had that experience…… … some of them, and for whatever reason, I don't know if they've had to protect themselves or perceive that they're protecting themselves, but they're not

as open with you. I'm not looking for a buddy-buddy club but the ability to go to them and say "look, I'm having this difficulty, what do you think?" and to keep that balance between you know professional and being a confidant…

Dr. Mills indicated that some African-Americans who had "arrived" to higher leadership in administration had been difficult for her due to the fact they appeared to try to shelter themselves from any outside attachments, inclusive of those of color. She indicated this was a concern because she did not want to be their friends but she just wanted some advice on how to navigate some processes.

Working with other leaders also proved to be a challenge for two of the participants. In this section, those who experienced those challenges indicated it did not matter if the leaders were African-American or not because they did not embrace them in a supportive manner.

Colleges and universities have made several efforts to increase diversity among faculty, staff and students. However, despite diversity initiatives, women continue to have challenges within the workplace. Several of the participants described their experiences in terms of being African and being a woman.

Race and Gender

Although community colleges boast of equity and access to education, challenges regarding race still exists. The most obvious challenge that these women faced was being women of color. Of the 10 participants, three of the participants described their experiences as an African-American in leadership in higher education and some of the challenges that they faced due to their race.

Race—other's beast of burden. Race was an issue for some of the participants on their journey to the community college presidency. Race affected employment opportunities and was

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a challenge. Three participants described those who had an issue with the color of their skin and how it transpired in their lived experiences on the journey to the community college presidency.

Dr. Hillman described her work experience regarding issues of race at one of the colleges in which she was employed, particularly, concerning students of color.

> …UX was like a step back in time. ….I mean you expected to see Thomas Jefferson when you turned the corner up there, because his presence was so revered and his work was often cited. I worked there and began to understand the politics of higher education and what it meant to challenge higher education…institutional racism and the issues that Black students were confronted with at that institution, both in the classroom and outside the classroom. [Eventually] we butted heads so much that a grievance was filed.

Dr. Hillman described her experience at an institution, where she was able to see and experience institutional racism as it related to her and students of color. This experience helped her to understand and advocate for students of color.

While there were some who dealt with racism within institutions regarding a lack of change, two of the participants described their experiences as presidents, when they walked in a room or meeting. This was indicative of several of the participants and Drs. Waring and Olive described the common experiences that were indicative of their collective experiences.

Dr. Waring stated that she still gets the surprised looks, when she was introduced and how she constantly tries to look and speak opposite of what people expect because she is Black.

> Now, certainly I have been in settings where people are surprised, you know they'll say, we have today with us the president of X College, well nobody expects it to be a Black woman…

> When I stand up, I can read the audience and I can see people being stunned at oh, she's Black. Sometimes after things people will come up, she's so intelligent, you know, but coming out of segregation was good for me because you're taught to go early, to stay late. Always remember that you represent a race of the people, and if you do something wrong at a conference, they're not going to say Dr. Waring did that, they're going to say, did you see what those Black people did? So I've worked to speak the language correctly, I'm always working to look the part, you know, I tell my students that when you sit down you should look as good, think as well, be as articulate as a Harvard or Morehouse student.

Dr. Waring revealed that she does not allow race to get in her way. She indicated that she has worked hard for race not to be an issue for her and that people cannot use the excuse that she is Black to negate her appearance or performance. She revealed that she has had to overcompensate to make race not an issue by working harder and smarter. She indicated that she achieved this by going early and being the last one to leave. It is the concept that you do not leave before your supervisor. She alluded to as an employee you must stay until your boss leaves and even beat him or her in the office in the next day.

She demonstrated that how as an African-American you have to work twice as hard as others to be in a position of leadership. Dr. Olive had a similar experience as Dr. Waring and confirmed her experience through this story.

> My administrative assistant informed me one day that a person was there to see me, when the person came up to see me, she got up and let the person usher her into the room and I of course was sitting right there at my conference table waiting for them so that we could sit there. I'd never seen this person before and I was new to Orange. She immediately came in and finally she said, oh, I want to speak to Dr. Olive. I sat there and looked at her and said I am Dr. Olive. She immediately rushed out of the office you know to sit down and went back to the administrative assistant. She said once again to my administrative assistant, I wanted to speak with Dr. Olive. My administrative assistant said to the person, I just took you into see Dr. Olive... The person then said you mean that woman was Dr. Olive. I wasn't hurt, I wasn't angry, I was so tickled. I just started to laugh and my administrative assistant wanted to know how can you laugh, this is so stupid, but I met with the person and they knew that I knew. It's those kind of circumstances that you have to get past if you're going to do the work and not be bitter and move on. I think people, they mask their surprise and I think I have to go through a few more tests than other folks do, they like first of all, you know, you're articulate you can use the language well, even though you're you know, you have a doctorate, that ought to tell people something, but it's just those little things.

Dr. Olive demonstrated the coping mechanism that she developed regarding when people do not expect her to be African-American. She illustrated how see has dealt with the issue of race and how she has not allowed it to deter her from being a community college president. She indicated

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she is not immune but she had learned to move pass the challenge of race that others have but she decided to move on and do her job.

Dr. Olive stated that overall race still matters even within the community college system.

> The racial issue, of course, you know, it's always there because race matters in our country, and I don't know when it will not matter.

Dr. Olive indicated that race was a challenge for her and she revealed that it will always matter due to not just the institutions but because it is an issue in this country. Dr. Olive revealed that race is something that will not change as it has always been an issue in our country and higher education is no exception to the rule.

While Drs. Waring and Olive shared their experiences about race in the presidency, several of the participants asserted that race was not their issue but others. While, they knew that they were Black, and they knew that race was not their concern but doing the job was their goal. While some difficulty dealing with race and race issues within the institutions and with students, some of the women simply stated that if people had a problem with them because they were Black that was on them. These participants revealed that they dealt with race by not letting it become an issue but rather by being the best in their leadership roles at their institutions.

Three participants gave good illustrations of how they do not make race an issue. At least three of the women give examples of this type of attitude and fortitude.

Dr. Jiles showed that she was not going to make race an issue for herself either within the hiring process and started a self-examination of her credentials.

> I started looking beyond the excuse of because I'm a person of color for why they didn't hire me. I started looking at what was missing in my skill set and what did I need to fill in. Now admittedly, I think I could have moved faster earlier in my career and that I didn't move because I don't think they saw me as an African American person being ready to do some of those jobs. I do believe that…but after I reached a certain point,

where I didn't worry as much about that, I started to do better in my interviews. What I'm saying is that when I stopped worrying about what's the committee going to think of me as an African American person for the job when I just started going in there saying "I'm the person for this job," let me show you what I've got.

Dr. Jiles indicated that she managed to get through the issue of race by not making it as an excuse for her not to be ready for the job. She did admit that she believed that she did not receive positions quickly because those hiring did not see an African-American as being capable of doing the job. She demonstrated how she gained the skill sets and credentials making it impossible to not hire her because she had the credentials to do the job and she had the confidence, as well. Similarly, Dr. Mills revealed racism is other's issue to deal with and she described being the only.

> Still, I find myself the only person of color in the room…and…you're still on so you have to fix your head not to accept the resistance and discrimination that people will extend to you because it is really not your burden. It is their beast of burden and for you to be in a room of your colleagues or your counterparts and know that folks still sometimes are surprised that you're there. When you open your mouth and tell them what you do…or better yet I may deal with my staff at some point or another and someone steps in to see the provost. They will gravitate towards my staff…so you know, you just say to yourself, it's okay, that's their beast of burden. You learn to sit and wait, you develop patience…but strategic patience… … so it doesn't go away, you just have to decide what part of it you're going to allow to enter your circle of influence, into your spirit, and that part that you will not.

Dr. Mills disclosed that she is often the only person of color at the table. She revealed that she dealt with being the only person "being the only can be lonely…" The issue of race as it is the person's burden to carry and not hers. She indicated that you get used to misidentification or a lack of recognition as the leader because you are a person of color and people do not expect you to be in a leadership position. Dr. Mills indicated that she coped by developing patience as a self-defense mechanism, when she was not immediately acknowledged.

These women know that race may be an issue with moving forward in their careers. Knowing this, they begin to embrace it and used it as a strength that they would not let it be an excuse for them not achieving because after all it something that they could not change.

Being a woman. While these women had an excellent outlook on viewing race, others had challenges regarding being both Black and a woman. Several of the participants spoke of the challenges of being an African-American woman. Drs. Camp and Waring described their experiences of being a woman in leadership. Dr. Camp described the biases that she endured as leader by her own experience as shared with her by a maintenance employee.

> I think that there are still those biases that people would rather interact with men, than with women. I think that's unfortunate. One of the men who is over buildings and grounds he sometimes says, he says well you know sometimes you have problems with the board, it's not because you don't know what you're doing, but, it's because, they are more accustomed to getting along with men. And that's true even from White and Black men, it's not different. Some Caucasian and African American men are very supportive, but on the other hand, you have some who just don't believe that women should be in, in what they perceive as high places.

Dr. Camp shared that it did not matter whether they were Black or White men, that some men in general have issues with women breaking the glass ceiling. Dr. Camp asserted some men whether Black or White would rather not deal with a woman as their leader.

> Dr. Waring acknowledged the differences between men and women leaders.
>
> I just think there's all the things that people would say things to a woman they won't say to men…people will expect things of women they don't expect from men. If a woman is passionate about something, somebody might say, either she's weak or she's crying. Or if she's mean, a man can do the same thing and he's just being a man. So I think it's all the things you read about in the literature and that stuff…people have certain expectations.

Dr. Waring illustrated how women are perceived in the work place and how the standards are different for men versus women. She indicated that there are certain expectations that people

have of men leaders versus women leaders, which indicated why some women take on male traits. Dr. Wills described a transparent and direct statement regarding race and gender for women in leadership.

> Because there is an assumption that we are workhorses, that we can do everything we do not need support. Don't expect support, yet seek that support from even the strongest detractors.

Dr. Wills indicated that women of color are expected to work until the work is done. She used the lack of support as a mechanism to propel herself forward to achieve the community college presidency.

Similarly, Dr. Delta shared her experience of moving forward as an African-American female.

> …and race is always there. I mean, for me I was probably the first African American female financial aid officer at my first job, I think on that campus there were only four African Americans working in any kind of professional position. Two faculty members, one, associate vice president, one dean of students, and me. And you know, large campuses are trying to figure out… how do we make this work, how do we deal with people who have never worked with persons of color before, how do we deal with students who have never lived with persons of color before. Now you as [leader] are giving direction to the "how tos" by providing, managing, and leading. …You ensure people understand that you know what you're doing and that your skills, talents, and expertise can't be questioned.

Dr. Delta asserted that while race is an issue; it is important for those African-Americans who are the only ones in leadership to lead and direct the institution in dealing with race. She revealed that persons not of color do not know necessarily how to work or lead diversity initiatives and work with students who have never experienced community life with persons of color. She revealed that African-Americans are directing and leading initiatives in these areas to transcend the institution.

Dr. Hillman indicated that had challenges working with some men because they do not know how to respond to someone who is not playing the traditional female leadership stereotype.

I don't think men could handle me (laughter). Let me be clear about how I'm saying that, men have a difficult time with smart intelligent women. They do okay when the woman is the quote/unquote "bitch" because then they can define her place and deal with her, you know? They can attribute everything to her, you know, as the "B" that's how she is and that's how they are. When you are an intelligent woman, smart are comfortable in your skin, and you are good at what you do, they have serious problems with you because they don't quite know how to compete with you, because men are competitive.

Dr. Hillman illustrated that that men were intimidated by her because she displayed that she was smart and did not show the stereotypical perceptions of being an aggressive difficult woman or a "bitch."

As women in leadership, some of the participants had challenges because they were not only African-American, but because they were also women. While these challenges could have been major set-backs for some, these presidents did not allow it to be. Their attitude was to always lead by trying to be and do the best in their leadership roles.

Counting the Cost—Balancing Family Life and Career

Many of the participants spoke of the cost of leading institutions while making the effort to be married and a mother. Although most spoke of it as if it could be done, however, it does not happen without a cost and making sacrifices. Most of the participants had children, a husband or parents, which created some planning and concerns regarding balance of personal versus professional life. At least two of the participants said that they did not have a hard time balancing as the solicited outside help, while others indicated that balancing the presidency and family was still a juggling act.

Perspectives on balancing family life. Dr. Rolls, a commuter president (commutes from one state to another one), revealed her concerns about her family and some challenges in relationship to her work as president.

I'm very close to my family…I wish I was closer to them, I wish I could change colleges and move it to here. My mother is 87; my grandkids are moving into pre-teen and

teenage. You know, they say, grandma can't you find an exit that can lead you back to home…you know…that's the hardest part that's probably the only thing I would change. It's just a package you just really got to keep assessing all the time.

Dr. Rolls shared it has been a personal sacrifice for her to be a community college president and that she has given up much to lead. She revealed that family life is important and while she is balancing it and being a community college president she continues to examine the cost of what she is paying to be president.

Like Dr. Rolls, Dr. Olive affirmed that balance was hard for her and she felt often that she had not balanced.

I don't think I was ever truly balanced, you know. You're always have a ball just rolling around on your shoulders, and you have pressure cooker at work so you had to organize so you could get that done, and then of course. I have two sons and they were very, important. My husband and I had ideas about you know how they should be raised and what kind of men we wanted them to be… We are a close-knit family. We didn't have any relatives here. We worked to help each other out and you know. My husband was my helper when he could be but also, friendships with other women in a way that allow you to help each other out, is a good thing to do and that's what I found myself doing. And then you have to give up some things, you just can't do them at certain stages in your life and that's, that's a kind of hard thing to deal with and to realize, but you have to give this up at this time, or almost give it up, not entirely, but…

Dr. Olive described the stress that she had felt, when trying to balance her family and professional life. She revealed that balance was difficult for her, but she and her husband worked it out so that she could pursue the community college presidency.

Dr. Camp shared her thoughts on being in a presidential role for women versus men.

I do think it's easier for men, because men don't have all of the other things to think about. I was shopping, cooking, cleaning, and working, and it not so easy. It was you know stressful, but what I thought women were supposed to do and fill their multiple roles of being the, the worker, the mother, the scholar, , many multiple roles…so yes I still think it's more difficult, especially if women are trying to you know have families too. I think people choose to have families or not to, today, and, but I don't regret having a son.

Dr. Camp revealed that despite the difficulty that she has experienced as a woman she did become presidency. It was a cost of balancing, but she was able to do it. She revealed that despite the challenges that she did not regret having her son, and she was glad that she did not sacrifice being a parent for a leadership position.

How to balance. Unlike others, Dr. Waring disclosed that she had gathered information before becoming a president so that she could get an understanding of the impact on her family.

> As I started to advance, I interviewed 15 women who were CEOs of companies that I valued, and they told me a series of things that they would suggest I do to keep that balance. They were things like, you know, when your son is a baby, have somebody come to your home and keep him. So, I did that. The lady would take care of my son at 10:30 in the morning; feed the baby so that I can go do my job. I always had separated my job from home. I stayed at work until I finished what I need to finish. When I come home, even on weekends, 90 percent of the time I don't work. Saturday and Sunday I'm not doing work. At 3 o'clock on Sundays, I line back up.

Dr. Waring indicated that she did have to learn to balance but what helped her was preparing for the position, which included getting additional outside support for her children. She revealed that she typically has a schedule and must prioritize what needs to happen.

Dr. Delta indicated you must create your own sense of balance by adjusting your schedule.

> Balance could mean, this is the week before registration and I really have to work this week, but that's okay because in two weeks I'm going to come home every day at 4:30 or 5:00 and you know it's what you do…. I think there is no time greater than the present for women to be thinking where is it that I want to go and how can what I'm doing today lead me to where I want to be tomorrow.

Dr. Delta described how with appropriate balance, women can have it all. She revealed that you do have to make some adjustments in your schedule, and it is a cost that she had to pay to balance.

Despite efforts to balance work and personal life, both Drs. Rolls and Delta agreed that your time was not always your own.

Dr. Rolls revealed that your time was not your own, as a community college president.

> By the way, if you think that you're in control as the president, you are in trouble. I mean people are raising my hair, you've got lipstick on your cheek, you know, they're adjusting my clothes…there's two things I learned, get a hold of your calendar. I had time at the beginning of the day, the middle of the day, and the end of the day. Always, always have some time, just have an hour from 8 to 9, from noon, let me see, from 11:30 to 12:30 and 4 to 5 everyday, I don't have appointments for things to happen. I have time so people can come and see me…I think the other thing that's difficult is meeting everyone's expectations, internally and externally.

Dr. Rolls shared the importance of moving toward balance by getting your calendar under control. She revealed if she did not control her calendar, she would be at the mercy of others' schedules.

Dr. Delta disclosed that you must give up something as move into senior leadership positions.

> But what I discovered was that as the senior administrator it was very difficult to control my time so that I knew that I could always be in the classroom. So at some point, I decided to give up adjunct teaching because I felt it was a disservice to the students.

Dr. Delta revealed that she had to give up teaching to balance her personal life and the presidency. She realized that she was not servicing students well by trying to balance the classroom experience.

Although these women hold very high positions within educational institutions, they also have a life outside of their work. These women indicated that to achieve the level of education and the presidency there are costs, the cost of balancing marriages, children and a career. While some revealed that the cost is high, others revealed that it could be done with strong support networks, such as, husbands and outside persons within the community.

Summary of Challenges

The presidents spoke of numerous challenges: race, gender, student affairs and balancing their personal lives. Sometime race and gender coincided with them being the only ones of color and female in the room. The presidents also spoke of some people who were shocked to see that they were Black. These presidents indicated that they had risen above race and that race was another's beast of burden.

The final challenge unveiled by the participants was the cost of leadership and the balance of professional and personal lives. These participants indicated that balance can be achieved with the support of family, friends and outside help. Despite the challenges that they faced as presidents; they were still able to overcome those challenges to become presidents.

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The Student Affairs Pathway—The Road Less Traveled By

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Student affairs' is one of the less prevalent pathways, when looking at the ascension to the presidency. This section provides advice provided by the presidents for those coming from a student affairs background, which include work with faculty and have committee involvement, the challenges of coming from the student affairs pathway, and the viability of the pathway.

The most interesting aspect of this study is that all of the participants are practitioners of some aspect of student affairs. While many of them began their career at the entry level, they did not get to the presidency by the traditional pathways. The majority came from Student Affairs to the presidency.

Advice for those Coming from a Student Affairs Pathway

All of the presidents indicated to be a president you have to gain the respect of the faculty; particularly, if you come through a non-academic pathway. From these presidents, having credibility with faculty was critical and necessary element to be a successful president,

particular, for those coming from a student affairs background. More importantly, the majority of them expressed the importance of teaching to gain credibility with faculty. Six of the participants provided advice regarding working with faculty for those coming from student affairs.

Gain faculty experience and connect with faculty. Dr. Waring spoke on the importance of working together as an institution whether you came from student services or faculty and bridging gaps.

> …Let me say philosophically, I believe student services and instruction should work together as one. I spent a lot of time with faculty, I think that's key, even when I was a faculty counselor and bridging those two things…, so, that gave one a deep understanding of student services and the impact student services can have on students. So I think that's very important. It also gave me the ability to know how to develop relationships with faculty and then it gave me all of the other practical experiences a leader has to have on how to resolve conflict, but it also… because of my counseling experience, helped me to know how to listen, and know how to go for win-win, to know how to develop relationships, all those things that are real important that are used daily…

Dr. Waring disclosed that both faculty and student affairs persons can gain experience from each other.

Similarly, Dr. Jiles revealed the importance of working with the faculty side of administration particularly on search committees.

> For people who are interested in moving into the presidency if they are in student services, they need to do things that introduce them more strongly into the academic side of the house. Because if you are trying to interview for the presidency the academic folks on the search committees are not going to be comfortable if you only have student services experience, you have to show the knowledge across the organization.

Dr. Jiles advised student affairs professional to develop a relationship with faculty if they are seeking the presidency because it will give the faculty a chance to become more comfortable with your abilities as a presidential candidate.

Dr. Olive revealed very pointedly that working with higher education academic affairs know nothing about student services, but student affairs know about them.

> Most people in instruction don't realize is that almost everybody in student services knows more about instruction than instructional people know about student services.

Dr. Olive indicated that student services folks know a lot about the academic side so it important to let faculty know what you understand from the student affairs' lens.

Establish credibility with faculty. One of the suggestions regarding getting to the community college presidency from student affairs was to serve on different committees and be involved with faculty to establish not just connection but credibility.

Dr. Jiles illustrated the importance of connecting with different constituents across the university to establish a reputation of working with faculty.

> We have to do those things that connect with faculty, so that means serve on curriculum committees, chair curriculum committees or co-chair where you can, be part of college-wide governance structures. Participate in ways in accreditation team processes and chair committees where faculty are present and they see that you're able to lead the group towards the completion of a task. When you have an opportunity to do presentations to the college as a whole, do that. When you have opportunities to do presentations at statewide and national conferences, do that…build your network. Become a really good collaborator, not only within your own organization, but with other institutions, get to know people, learn about openings, and the other thing I would say is we have to be willing to take a look at those places that normally wouldn't get our attention in terms of where we're willing to work

Dr. Jiles advised the importance of getting on various committees and partner with faculty to build the network across the institution if one wants to be president.

Dr. Wheat advised student affairs professionals to get adjunct faculty experience to make faculty feel more comfortable with candidacy, when applying for the position of president.

> I tell student services folks; you need to at least get some adjunct faculty experience because faculty who interview candidates for a presidency want to know that they have been in the trenches. In the trenches for them means, you have been in the classroom,

simple as that. They want to know that the president coming in has been in their shoes, understands what it's like to be in a classroom, they don't care what else they've done, but as long as they can see some classroom experience…and [credibility]…

Similarly, to others, Dr. Olive told of the importance of keeping credibility with faculty.

> I went from teaching to counseling, and that's how I got into student affairs, and I still kept my foot [with academics]… try to get assignments and projects that get you out into instruction and the other parts of the college, so that other people get to know you. Go over there and talk to the faculty and you get them to understand you and your value as well as the value of student services. So that they can see, and that you have to make sure you understand the something about instruction and what it's like to be in the classroom and what that curriculum means to them, and I think you should have an understanding that really student development and student services has a curriculum of sorts as well. Student services have an educational value. Students are being taught there, if it's individually or whatever… [know] …that you have [value], you are teaching students and they are learning and, much of what you do has been to perform and to do well and to retain and to graduate from the college, and I think it's teaching and having people understand that…

Dr. Olive indicated that teaching helps to build a relationship with faculty. She revealed by teaching and working with faculty one is still educating the whole student and student services persons should embrace this aspect of instruction.

Challenges of Coming from the Student Affairs Pathway

One challenge that these women talked about was coming from a different area in higher education–student affairs. The participants revealed that coming out of the student affairs area meant that they received little respect from their peers from academic side and that they had to try harder.

Being a student affairs administrator rather than academician. Some of the participants revealed the difficulty of not being from an academic discipline. Although student affairs is considered an administrative role, the concerns from the participants indicated that

people had set limits on their skill sets because they did not come from an academic discipline.

Dr. Olive described her experience as being in student services and a woman.

> …coming out of student services has been challenging. I think, the world has opened up to accept the skills that now how to come from student services, but I do believe that there is …a bias… …when you come from that unit of the college… you know my inability to move up …I think, well for whatever reason people have a notion about student services that it's not an educational program. Most folks think that student services is actually a big 'old registration department, maybe admissions, in the community college; it is not. Even though, women are represented to a larger percentage in education than men, it is usually in a teaching role or in some other role, and that's in all sectors to include higher education…the lead roles are normally held by men.

> Dr. Camp revealed the challenge that others have said concerning her leadership style of

putting students first, which is a student affairs perspective.

> I think a student is as important or more important because they very well maybe at a stage where they really need attention, and so some people say I'm too student oriented…..I think, too, that I'm never too busy for students or colleagues.

Dr. Camp indicated the criticisms that she received by putting students first. She indicated that

she has an open door to students and she makes time for them.

> **Bias faced as practitioners.** Some of the participants shared the bias and barriers that

they faced regarding coming from student affairs. From student affairs to the presidency, Dr.

Delta revealed,

> …I think that for anyone to say that there was never a challenge or barrier might be someone who's living in a fantasy. I think that there are always challenges that you face with your work and that could be from a number of perspectives, for me, certainly moving from student services into the presidency [was one]. I think it's becoming much more common these days. College presidents do not necessarily imamate from the academic side of the house. I do believe because our mission and focus evolves so much around education and the acquiring of credentials that it makes sense to understand what happened from the academic side of the house, and that was sort of drilled into me at an early time in my career, which was why I accepted an adjunct faculty position. You know pretty much anyone who knows me will tell you that I will say to people all the time that an education institution is not about the bricks and mortar; it is about the people.

Dr. Delta shared that coming from student services was barrier to her but she combated that by becoming an adjunct faculty. Some of the participants indicate that went the road less traveled by coming from student affairs to the presidency. They reveal that student affairs' has its challenges with being recognized within the higher education hierarchical system.

One of the challenges regarding coming from student affairs is that the academic pathway is the most understood, reverend, accepted and traveled. Therefore, when persons from outside of academics try to attain a presidency, they are not as accepted as the traditional pathway. Dr. Olive illustrated this issue, when she stated:

> Coming out of student services was challenging. I think, the world has opened up to accept the skills from student services [professionals], but I do believe that there is …a bias… …when you come from that unit of the college. I say those were the major challenges…my inability to move up.

She further illustrated why she feels this bias is against student affairs, when she stated:

> Some people have a [perception] about student services ….Most folks think that student services is actually [just] enrollment and admissions, in the community college setting. Your ability to understand what is considered to be the core of our mission, which is instruction, is somewhat limited unless you are able to really show that you have broad and comprehensive knowledge about the college sufficient enough to a lead and manage. You really don't have to know every detail. There are many presidents, who have never taught, but they have…an understanding of the core mission and they surround themselves with competent folks. They are good leaders and managers…but that's not a commonly held belief…well I think that is waning, though…really waning, and that's good to see because there's more and more of my colleagues that have become presidents and I think people are really seeing the value of those other skills that you come with [from] student services …

Dr. Olive revealed that student affairs were an important pathway and good leaders come from the area.

Dr. Camp also confirmed that coming from Student Services creates barriers, as she always puts students first. She says regarding this experience:

"Some people say I'm too student [centered], but I said, that's really what education's all about - students."

Dr. Camp asserted that because she valued students; people felt that she was too student-centered, which is a trait of a student affairs practitioner.

Being in student affairs also proved to have struggles, particularly not only from other administrators but within their own institution that they serve in, as well. The barriers also helped the presidents stay focus on what is the most important aspect of being in higher education–the student and working for them.

Viability and Perspectives on the Pathway of Student Affairs

Many of the participants shared their thoughts on not just the student affairs pathway but other perspectives on a viable pathway to the presidency. Dr. Wheat indicated that a prominent researcher in higher education informed her that student affairs was not a viable pathway.

> …well, back in the day when I was coming through, a researcher would write books all the time about the pathway to the presidency was academic affairs and he was a president in X when I got there. He and I had heated arguments all the time about student services and finally, one of the latter books that he wrote admitted that there are other pathways to the presidency and I think that's true nowadays.

Dr. Wheat revealed that coming from student services was a challenge because it was not viewed as a pathway to the presidency.

Like Dr. Wheat, Dr. Rolls stated the student affairs pathway is becoming more prevalent.

> …well you know, I just was talking with some folks and they just hired a campus president who came out of student services…I think now, because of the intersection of student success, between you know, it crosses over, that there's going to be more. I do think that… having some opportunity to teach is really important, so whether you teach a course within student success, which I by the way do teach every year. I teach a student success course, I get in the classroom every year, …this is just my perspective, I don't think you can really be successful with faculty unless they believe you've walked in their shoes…

Dr. Rolls indicated that although more student affairs professionals are getting to the presidency by this pathway, faculty who are on search committees want a president that have walked in their moccasins and have labored in the work process.

Dr. Camp shared that her pathway was atypical and things are changing regarding journey to the presidency.

> I don't think my journey was typical…in research universities more people go through the ranks, so going from assistant professor to associate professor and on and dean and then to a presidency. I think probably in two year colleges a number of people do have doctorates of education and go from sometimes from a student affairs area. I know some of the other, a few of the college presidents who I know who are in historically black colleges have gone from a business or law area. I don't know that I know what a typical path is, I'm not sure that mine was typical…

Dr. Camp disclosed that she believes that there are no silo pathways to the community college presidency. She also revealed that for research institutions more than likely you will need to go through the ranks and also a traditional pathway.

Dr. Wheat said that student affairs was not considered relevant earlier in her career, but it is now due to the many facets of student affairs**.**

> I think maybe service learning is one of the pieces that have brought those two sides of the house together. Because, pardon me, faculty are now incorporating activities that the student services side sets up…for their students to be able to apply the things they've learned in the classroom, and so you've got more and more conversation and interaction. I was one of the first learning centered environments. I think in our region because of the quality enhancement plan that we've required institutions to do. It caused that chasm to close because the support services have got to be intertwined with how we are going to get students to learn. So, it's a much easier way now for student services people to demonstrate that they've got an overall knowledge of the entire institution, or at least of the academic side as well as the support side because of that cross-fertilization of activities, much easier now than ever before. The faculty run institutions and faculty are on the instructional side and they want somebody…who they can identify with.

Dr. Wheat indicated that student affairs and classroom experiences should go hand in hand and complement each other. She revealed that student affairs is getting support from the academic

side as service learning opportunities has allowed faculty to have the interactions with students

outside of the classroom, which has created a cross training of experiences for students.

Dr. Delta shared her perspective on the pathway of student affairs and why student

affairs' was viable:

> Oh, definitely…definitely today, to be honest, in today's world, I think that almost any at the senior level, can be a viable pathway. And I think the other thing is you have to have the credentials, because you don't want anyone to question…not having the doctorate. It's your credibility that the terminal degree and I think that that's important…so I guess student services if I had to say is one of the top two administrative positions. I think that there are things that student services people bring. They bring their understanding of students, our understanding of people and relationships and how all of that for coming together in order to support success. I think it's our willingness to put their hands in and to get dirty. You know I tell people all the time that there's no job that I wouldn't do or couldn't do, it's just really not the job they pay me for, so if I walk around campus and I see paper on the ground, I pick it up, and I throw it in the trash, I don't walk past it.

Dr. Delta revealed that student affairs pathway was viable to the community college presidency

because people are supporting student success.

Dr. Hillman believed that student affairs pathway was a viable one to the community

college presidency because they go to the heart of the institution, its students.

> Well, the answer to your last question is yes, without a doubt, they can be presidents, and they can be very good presidents. One of the things that I think about student affairs is that you go to the very heart of the institution. I know that people think the faculty rule, but students are the reason for being here, and if you understand the responsibility you have to students, I think that's a guiding principle and philosophy for you as a leader. I'm not about the data, the statistics on enrollment, I'm about empowering people and educating people, and changing the quality of their lives, and I think that comes out of student services, my background in student services that I don't think about these people, these as an aggregate of none…of people with no names and faces… I see it as a very serious and critical responsibility to lead this institution such that they're getting the very best in the way of an education, instruction, service, and support that we can possibly provide to them. I think student services also gives you, I know how to work with people.

Dr. Hillman revealed that student affairs pathway is credible because ultimately you know how

to work with people. She disclosed that students are the business of the community college;

although data and enrollment statuses are important, she indicated that the work is about

educating and leading the students that you are supposed to be serving. She illustrated if you

educate people you are changing their quality of life.

Dr. Wills disclosed that coming from student affairs was the best of both worlds.

> …doing what I enjoy doing… have a passion for being an educational ambassador, and it just happened that I got to do the fun work initially as a student affairs officer, working with thousands of individuals, directly, in groups, individually…the parents, etc…and then morphed into doing more substantive work around training, and then teaching, and then into academic affairs leadership. So, I've got the best of both worlds, in a sense.

Dr. Wills indicated that coming from student affairs allowed her to have several pieces of

leadership as she has moved into the presidency. The skills she gained was working with

students, parents, academics and teaching. All of these experiences have allowed her to be able

to navigate both sides of the institution.

Dr. Rolls stated the benefits of having someone who knows instruction and student

services are important to the presidency. She showed her experience with having both sides of

the houses, student affairs and the academic side.

> ..My experience was to have a vice-presidency in academics and student services. I think for you to have a vice presidency, if you can this is the most beautiful part in both instruction and student services… I think. Student Affairs –whole person-so it really got me to understand the intersection [that is] know where students go to help them grow morally, ecologically, developmentally and in real ways.

Dr. Rolls explained that the pathway is an ideal one, as it combines both the academic and

student affairs pieces. Education is about educating the whole person, so this is why it is a viable

pathway from her perspective.

Similar to other pathways to the presidency, student affairs does have its challenges.

However, the presidents who come from that track or arena have proven that it can be reached

through the student affairs pathway when combined with perseverance, talent and desire to reach that goal.

Summary of the Road Less Traveled

Student Affairs can be a viable pathway to the presidency. It is evident from these participants that it is a pathway and one that came with some challenges. It provides opportunities to show a different side to administration. However, the key according to the presidents in the study is to attain some teaching experience as an adjunct or experience working with faculty. Coming from student affairs was a challenge for some of the presidents, as well. Two of them indicated that student affairs did not get the respect because of perceptions regarding student affairs as only registration. The participants revealed that student affairs can be a pathway with training, understanding on how to work with faculty, serve on committees, and teach. The presidents disclosed that teaching provided an avenue of credibility with faculty, which established a common element of having walked in their paths as faculty.

Summary of Structural Elements

In this study, there were 5 structural elements that made up the phenomenon of the lived experiences of the presidents that came from a student affairs pathway to the community college presidency. The elements were: personal pillars, professional factors of influence, advice for African-American women, challenges along the pathway, and the student affairs pathway. Each of the structural elements was a snapshot of the individual and common experiences of these presidents. The personal pillars that emerged were faith and family. For professional factors, the major structures were mentors and the legacies that these women hoped to live as they thought about retiring. Advice revealed the importance of getting credentials and credibility with faculty to move into the community college presidency. The challenges indicated that race and gender

were still a factor in the community college, even though diversity was one its strength. The student affairs pathway was indicated that it is viable but there are challenges for anyone coming through that pathway particularly with faculty and with the perception that it is services only. Student affairs was revealed as a viable pathway as it provided opportunity for leadership and skill development, collaboration and developing a sense of holistic community with staff, faculty, students and the outer community. Next, the research questions are addressed in relationship to the structural elements.

Section III: Research Questions as Related to the Findings

The purpose of this section is to share the research questions that assisted with describing the phenomenon of these participants' journey from student affairs to the community college presidency. Using an interpretative phenomenological approach (Willig, 2001), this section offers an opportunity to better understand the lived experiences of the ten African-American female community college presidents who came from student affairs pathway. The questions below were discussed as they relate to the structural elements and collectively helped in understanding the phenomenon. There were seven research questions within the study. Some of the research questions were answered through some of the structural elements and are not discussed in detail in this section as they have already been shared. For the research questions not addressed completely in Section II of this chapter, they will be discussed directly as they relate to the structural elements.

The first research question addressed the participant's pathways and positions held within student affairs. *The question was what was their career path? What were the roles and responsibilities within student services that lead the women to pursue the community college presidency?*

The participants in this study came from various areas in student affairs. Some of their starts ranged from hall directors, student support services, directors, admissions counselors and instructors. From the entry levels of their careers in student affairs, they were able to migrate to directors and assistant deanships. However, the most prevalent area of career experience for the women was from the area counseling. The majority had a psychology degree and a counseling background. The most prevalent positions held before moving into the presidency was vice-president/dean of student and vice-president for both academic and student affairs. The early starts in student affairs for these participants began at the grassroots in the profession. The participants' roles as student affairs practitioners cover a broad range of positions.

The second research question examined the experiences that females from student affairs must or should have according to the study participants. *The question was what do they believe are the most critical experiences (must haves) for females who have worked in student services and desire to be a community college president?*

The must have that the women emphasized to move into the presidency was to get your credentials. Credentials were the key aspect for each of them. All of the participants held a doctorate degree; however, for these participants it did not matter whether it was an Ed. D or PhD but either helped them to ascend to the community college presidency.

Additionally, some of the must haves from these women's perspectives were to network, get on committees, and to gain a breadth of knowledge. The major advice for these women was that you must relate to the faculty. To relate to the faculty, they suggested get experience as an adjunct faculty member. Another piece of advice was to serve on committees, or somehow gain a connection with the faculty. The participants indicated that it was important to gain the respect of the faculty because the majority faculty was on the search committees. Advice for those

seeking the presidency from a student affairs background is discussed more thoroughly under the structural element of *The Student Affairs Pathway – the Road less Traveled.*

The third research question examined the challenges that the participants faced as they journeyed on the pathway to the community college presidency. The question was w*hat were some of the challenges or obstacles these college presidents faced to get to the presidency?*

Similarly, to other women of color in administration, these women suffered discrimination in areas of promotion and pay which they attributed to gender, race and biases. They revealed that another challenge was coming from student affairs, as it was not a traditional path. Participants revealed that coming from student affairs meant that they had to have greater credibility and credentials were important. These challenges are mentioned in the *Challenges along the Pathway to the Community College Presidency and the Student Affairs Pathway –Road less Traveled,* in section II of Chapter 4.

The fourth research question dealt with how the participants handled and discerned the challenges along their pathway. The question was *how did these African-American women discern and respond to obstacles in their career path to the community college presidency?*

As one of the participants stated, they have dealt with and responded to obstacles by standing right in the midst of it all. The participants in this study dealt with numerous obstacles such as being a woman, being Black, and coming from student affairs. Although the obstacles were challenging, they dealt with them all and still pursued the presidency. Most of the participants mentioned that they discerned obstacles by also praying and seeking guidance of a higher power. The participant who depended and listened to their spiritually calling was able to gain inner strength, direction and vision for their professional lives. The other way that these women discerned obstacles was by just recognizing that the obstacles were there and taking them

head on and by not allowing the obvious–being a woman, being Black to hinder their growth and process. One of the participants described this experience as "stepping into the brook." She described the experience of refuting obstacles by recognizing that she was standing on the sidelines and that she needed to cross over. This experience was not only life changing for her but it allowed these women to pave their own paths to the journey to the community college presidency. Many of the participants developed several coping mechanisms by not letting race be a concern for them. They decided to stay above it by developing additional skills and credentials, so that there would be no obstacles in their way. These women used their obstacles as an opportunity to propel themselves to not just continue the journey, but to move forward to their purpose.

The fifth research question attended to mentors and the roles mentors played in the participant's journey. The research question was *what role did mentors play in the establishment of the professional goals of these women in their journey?*

Mentors served in various roles for these women. The majority had at least one mentor that supported and nurtured them on the journey. Mentors gave advice, support and unconditional love (as Dr. Mills stated). Mentors for these women were both women and men and really helped guide and direct their career. The participants also emphasized the importance of mentoring relationships. A couple of participants said they used their detractors as mentors as well. Detractors helped made them stronger and more determined. The role of mentors is described more in Chapter 4, under *Professional Factors of Influence the Journey to the Community College Presidency.*

The sixth research question concentrated on the opportunities that came to the participants on their journey. The research question was *what were the significant opportunities presented to them and how did they take advantage of them?*

These women had amazing experiences that provided several opportunities for them. Some of them had education lessons with the best in higher education, such as, Drs. Gilligan and Terry O'Banion. They used the knowledge gained from these experiences to determine how they could make things better for students. One participant had the opportunity to work with the governor and enhanced her position nationwide as educator in higher education. Today, she is the president over several college associations. The participants also indicated that they were allowed to create new programs in mentoring with professional organizations.

The seventh and final research question focused on the choices that participant's decision-making and the criterion that they used to navigate the presidency or life. The question was tri-fold: w*hat important choices did they face; why did they make them a certain way; what decision criterion did they use?* There were several opportunities of risk-taking moments, and one of the participants described the challenge and the opportunity of risk-taking.

Dr. Wheat asserted, when the governor called and said he wanted me to be the Secretary of Education. She revealed that she took certain risk with this because she had a good job and she realized that the governor's position would last at the least 4 years; however, the decision criteria was that her family was okay with her taking that opportunity.

Several of the participants spoke of the cost of balancing family and career. They made decisions to move closer to the support systems that guided them in order to continue to pay it forward for those who gave so much to them. Some of the women chose due to circumstances to

be separated from their spouses as they continued their career journey. Their spouses knew of their potential to reach the presidency and were supportive.

Prayer and spirituality was an important guider and resource for the participants. Of all the elements in this study, the connection to a higher calling and higher power than themselves always kept these women grounded and directed them to make difficult decisions along the journey. One of the key personal factors used by all of these participants was their faith life. They used faith particularly concerning making a decision. Faith is often what directed and guided the decision-making processes. For example, Dr. Waring spoke on the higher calling, "I just let God lead me…but you know I always worked to, to get to a place of inner peace with God, that's my goal. Still long enough for me to be clear that this is where He wants me to be for this time. And I've never moved in my career before I knew that He wanted me to move."

In conclusion, many of the research questions were answered through the structural elements for this study. The research questions provided an additional method to analyze and review the structural elements through the coding process for this study to ensure that I was on the right track with my clusters and ultimately answering the *what* and *how* questions for an interpretative phenomenology study.

The findings related to African-American women and student affairs pathway indicated that there are some challenges, yet like these women presidents, those coming behind them will learn, grow and develop avenues to navigate the challenges. The findings revealed that African-American women continue to struggle with issues of race and gender higher education. Nevertheless, they did indicate that they overcame difficulties whether professionally or personally with diligence, hard work and faith. It appeared that when they faced the greatest obstacles they leaned on their personal pillars of support: faith and family. The findings that

were most prevalent for this study were the constant risk-taking that these presidents took,

legacies that they plan to leave behind regarding the inference of succession planning, and

utilizing naysayers as mentors to propel them forward on the journey, and as mentioned

previously by not allowing racism and sexism to be a beast of burden.

CHAPTER 5—DISCUSSION

This study examined the lived experiences of African-American women who came from the pathway of student affairs to the community college presidency. The purpose of this study was to understand the lived experiences of African-American women and their journey from student affairs positions to the community college presidency. From this research, five themes emerged from the structures of the president's narratives regarding their experiences. The themes were personal pillars of influence, professional factors of influence, advice for African-American women seeking the presidency, challenges along the pathway to the community college presidency, and the student affairs pathway. Based upon the findings of this phenomenological research study, participant responses revealed support systems whether personal or professional were must haves to ascend to the presidency, networking was key to the success along the pathway, challenges of race and gender still exist, and student affairs can be a valuable pathway to the community college, but it too, has it challenges.

Chapter 5 discusses the findings as related to existing literature, limitations and recommendations for further research. The study closes with a self-reflection.

Findings as Related to the Literature

Interpretative phenomenology is a method of reviewing how participants lived experience help us understands the phenomenon (Willig, 2001). The structural elements that emerged from these 10 presidents and their lived experiences are discussed in relationship to relevant literature.

Personal Pillars of Influence

Personal pillars of influence supporting the ascendancy to the presidency revealed support networks these women had early in their careers and life that helped them to navigate to the community college presidency. One pillar was family. Research conducted by (Williams,

2007) indicated that African-American female college presidents were most successful when they had support from their families and their communities. In this study, family was the participant's community, parents and spouses. For two of the participants, growing up in an all African-American community was very empowering for them as they had numerous role models. Their lineage or "roots" gave them structure, support, and encouraged them to strive toward achievement beyond the limitations that parents and ancestors had due to segregation and slavery. Research conducted by Crawford and Smith (2005) indicated that women connected to family and friends which had an effect on the women's career and life courses (p.59). Support systems for African-American women have included their family members both extended and nuclear. Research studies similarly revealed that African-American community college presidents have had personal support such as family and their community, in order to reach the presidency (Williams 2007; Gooch, 2009).

Most of the participants also came from two-parent households and received significant support from their parents. Parents provided a foundational pillar of support for the participants. Similarly, Crawford and Smith (2005) cited that parents strongly influenced African-American women leaders and were role models for them. As the women started their own families, their parents often assisted them with raising their children and childcare as some were single parents or divorced. As their parents grew older, the participants recognized that it was important to "pay it forward" and give back to them as well. The concept of "giving back" to parents, other than achieving to make them proud, was not found as much in the literature overall. The participants indicated that after all their parents had done for them it was now their turn to take care of them.

Another personal pillar was the women's husbands. Four of the participants spoke of the importance of supportive spouses; two had experienced commuter marriages, while in the presidency, and two others had experienced it along the journey. The spouses of these participants helped them to continue their journey to the presidency. Husbands supported the participants by commuting, providing household care, taking care of family including elderly parents, and childcare.

Wolf-Wendel and et al (2007) suggested that home-life for women faculty in the community college was like a second job. They indicated that these women had to be housekeepers, children keepers and budget keepers within their household (Wolf-Wendel & et al (2007), p. 266). In this study, this was not the case. Participants revealed that their husbands took care of the home while they continued in their leadership roles. Without the support and care of these participants' spouses, two participants revealed that they would not be able to be a president. Research by Holmes & et al (2007) revealed support from spouses was important to leaders.

Spirituality and connectivity to a higher calling or power were also pillars that influenced these women's ascension to the community college presidency. Most of the participants had a strong religious or spiritual foundation and relationship to spirituality or God. Participants shared experiences of prayer, calling upon faith, or meditation. For many of the participants their spirituality, more than anything, provided them the strength to continue on their journey. In a narrative study, Williams (2007) found that African-American female college presidents attributed their success to the Black church. Research by Clayborne and Hamrick (2007) discovered that spiritual connections provided an avenue of support for African-American women in mid-level leadership in student affairs. The spiritual connections used included

praying, reading the Bible, and attending religious services (Clayborne & Hamrick, 2007). Unlike Clayborne and Hamrick (2007), the participants for this study suggested that they did not just have spiritual connections; but prayer, mediation, being active in church was a daily practice and process for them.

The participants also had good teachers who instilled in them the importance of achieving educationally. Dr. Mills stated, a mentor from her community told her that she "could go far…farther than those that came before her." African-American women have had a strong foundation in education through history (Collins, 2000; Woodward, 2007). In a narrative, Carter-Black (2008) revealed the challenges that she experienced as an African-American women in a predominantly White institution. She revealed that she carried the hope of her family when she attended college in 1968 and went on to achieve a doctoral degree and professorship (Carter-Black, 2008). Like, Carter-Black's research (2008), education was also a factor related to the women's achievement. Education involved experiences both inside and outside of the classroom.

All of the presidents had doctoral degrees. ACE (2012) and King and Gomez (2008) revealed that the majority of college presidents had a terminal degree. The majority of the doctorate degrees were in education. Similarly, ACE (2012) revealed that most presidents had a degree from the field of education. Many of the participants grew up in segregation and were encouraged to pursue more education as their parents were not educated. For some of them, education was just not in the book learning but included the experiences that they had within their community, neighborhood churches, and within educational environments, where they were the only one of color. One participant called having education but non-book knowledge,

"mother wit." She indicated that her parents had a lot it of mother wit and were advocates for education.

Professional Factors of Influence

The professional factors of influence consisted of the lessons learned or "AH HA" moments, mentors and mentoring relationships, and legacies that the participants want to leave at the end of the journey.

More than half of the participants spoke of the lessons learned on the journey. These lessons included making life decisions regarding risks in their careers, "stepping into the brook" or moving forward, and not setting limits on oneself. A couple of leadership studies discussed the concept of career mobility and moving forward in leadership (Ebbers & et al, 2010; Leon & Jackson, 2009; Holmes et al, 2007). Bower and Wolverton (2008) published a book on African-American women and their calling to the college presidency. The presidents shared their stories on leadership and getting to the presidency (Bower & Wolverton, 2008). Risk-taking was a key element to these women's success as they ascended to the presidency. While it was evident that most leaders do take risks at the institutional levels, the individual calculated risks that these women took was not so prevalent and openly shared in the literature (Wolverton, Bower, & et al, 2009, p. 29; Ebbers, 2010). It was interesting and an empowering find to discover what risks they took why they took them, and how they prepared for consequence of taking risks. The risks these women took were strategic, although at times, they were scary. One participant took a job knowing it was going to last only 4 years, while another one submitted her resignation to a new president in case he did not like her work after one year. Participants indicated one must step out of the comfort zone to move up in leadership. I did not find support in the literature for the

constant risk-taking behaviors that these women took, particularly the vivid examples that they gave of the risks that they took.

Mentors and mentoring relationships were an important aspect of the participants' journeys. Mentors proved to be a supportive resource for many of the participants as they helped to guide, grow and mature the participants' as leaders. Mentors for these women were both male and female and crossed color lines. Holmes et al (2007) indicated that mentoring Black women in the academe was a benefit to those receiving the mentoring whether the mentors were male, female, Black, or White. Smith and Crawford (2007) indicated mentors were an appropriate way to facilitate career advancement. Similarly, Gooch (2009) revealed that mentoring and mentoring relationships proved to be influential in supporting African-American community college presidents. Mentors proved to be valuable in their journey to leadership. These women were mentored and knew the importance of giving back by mentoring others. They mentored both students and other professionals. Smith and Crawford (2007) revealed that mentoring is an institutional tool that could help retain, recruit and advance women. The majority of the participants had good mentoring relationships. Using detractors as mentoring opportunity was a surprise finding within this study; even though, other authors indicated that detractors were an issue for women in higher education (Gooch, 2009; Holmes, 2003). One participant revealed their detractors made them stronger, wiser, and more successful on the journey to the presidency. These women set out to prove their detractors wrong.

Creating a legacy of excellence was also important to these women. Many of the participants were facing retirement in the next 5 to 10 years and had begun to reflect on their legacies. Several research studies revealed the graying of the community college presidents (Weisman & Vaughn, 2007; Ebbers & et al, 2010; ACE, 2012). Several researchers indicated

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that institutions are not prepared for presidents retiring or succession planning (Benjamin et al, 2010; ACE, 2007; Weisman & Vaughn, 2007; King & Gomez, 2008). The participants wanted their legacies to be about more than bricks and mortar; they wanted their legacies to reflect that they made a difference in the lives of students. The majority of the participants wanted to leave a legacy of care and equity. They wanted their legacy to reflect that they made a difference not only to the institutions that they served but also to the students, faculty, staff, and overall community.

Blevins (2001) discovered through stories that leaders need to leave a record regarding their experiences in the community college as presidents, inclusive of the legacies that they hope to leave behind. Similarly, these participants were actually thinking in terms of what they would leave behind after they retired. According to Ebbers et al (2010), existing leaders need to work on training and growing others in leadership to meet the replacement needs due to the exiting of the community college presidents They indicated that there are a limited number of leaders in the pipeline to the presidency (Ebbers & et al, 2010, p.59). Weisman and Vaughan (2007) revealed that 84% of presidents would retire in the next five to 10years. Many presidents will retire, as they do, will they think of their legacy and the development of their successors. One conclusion from these women's stories is that they were thinking of succession planning and its impact on their institutions. Although many leaders speak of the idea of succession planning, very little research indicated leaders were creating a culture of self-sustainability on the concern and their legacies (Blevins, 2001).

Advice for African-American Women

The participants were eager to provide advice to African-American women and others of color who were interested in becoming a community college president. Their advice was very

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practical and applicable. One of their suggestions was to know who you are as a person. They advised that those who aspire to become community college presidents should know who they are and to know their limitations and talents. The second suggestion was to acquire credentials. The degree was termed as "the union card" by one of the participants. Ebbers and et al (2010) suggested degree credentials prevented a screen out process and enhanced job attainment. All of the participants had multiple degrees, inclusive of the doctoral degree. They emphasized the importance of getting the terminal degree, as it established credibility with colleagues. The participants indicated that it was important to have the appropriate credentials. Preparing was a constant message concerning the experiences of these women. Preparation was obviously the key to their success.

Another suggestion was to network. Research conducted by Ebbers and et al (2010) revealed networking would help future leaders in their community college particularly if in a mentor-protégé relationship (p.62). Unlike other research studies, networking was imperative for many of these women and it was actively implemented and practiced (Ebbers and et al, 2010). They shared some of their networking experiences, particularly at institutes and advised future African-American women to practice it as well. Finally, for those professionals who might be starting in student affairs, the participants urged them to connect with faculty and to participate on committees. The participants provided a roadmap on how to network.

Challenges along the Journey to the Presidency

The fourth element to the phenomenon was the challenges that these presidents faced along the pathway. Some of them indicated being Black and being a woman was a test. They also indicated the cost of the presidency was successfully balancing family life with their career. The first element addressed being Black. The presidents shared their experiences as African-

American women working at predominantly White institutions (PWIs). They gave examples of people saying, "Oh she is Black or is that the president." Two of the participants shared their challenges of underpay and being passed over as women in leadership. The final element of challenges for these participants was the cost of being a president. One or two indicated that their life was not their own as they had people constantly telling them what, where and when they needed to be somewhere. The cost also indicated there was some level of concern with being away from family as one of the participants was in a commuter marriage.

The literature indicated that discrimination in higher education toward women is not new, inclusive of community colleges (Townsend, 2009). In community colleges, the numbers of women presidents or chief executive officers are still lower when compared to male presidents (AACC, 2010; ACE, 2012). Some of the female participants referenced wage discrimination. Women experience challenges regarding equity in pay and in terms of promotion (Perry & Gunderson, 2011). According to Townsend (2009), women still earn less than men in higher education do. White (2005) revealed that the pipeline to higher-level leadership positions for women had leaks. These leaks were due not just to attrition and family formation, but to the continuing presence of gender discrimination. Research studies on African-American women in higher education indicated that there are still challenges regarding diversity in institutions of higher learning (Gregory, 2001; Zamani (b), 2003; Howard- Hamilton, 2003; Patitu & Hinton, (2003); ASHE Report, (2009).

Race is still a challenge in higher education. In a self-reflection, Green (2008) explained what it was like to be a black woman working in the community college. Green (2008) stated, "Some questioned my ability to cut it, because I am a woman and an African-American …" (p. 813). Race and gender still matters in administrative positions at community colleges as

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indicated by the reach studies by Holmes (2001; 2004) and Holmes & et al (2007) regarding African-American women in the academy. Holmes (2003) indicated that African-American women often experienced the "*double whammy* – being Black and woman regarding race issues in the higher education."

Black women have not made the same strides as their white counterparts. According to AACC (2010), although women made up 28% of the community college presidents, only 4% of those presidents are African-American women. In addition, Nealy (2009) revealed that women of color experience challenges finding role models/mentors and dealing with pay equity and discrimination as they enter the academy (p.7). Ebert (2005) revealed regarding differences "the perception that America is colorblind requires that we ignore current inequalities that fall along racial lines," (p. 174). Barnett-Johnson (2010) challenged why are there so few African-Americans females in presidencies indicating that although African-American women are qualified, they are still not securing positions at the same rate as their counterparts.

Yet, the majority of the participants in this research did not allow race to be a hindrance for them. Similarly to studies by Holmes and et al, (2007); Turner (2007); Holmes (2001); Jean-Marie & Sherman (2009); Byrd (2009), these women have learned to cope and rise above the challenges that they faced regarding the issue of race. One of the participants made it plain by saying that race was not her "beast of burden." Although the participants alluded to the challenges that they experienced on racism, sexism, and social class, they simply indicated that as a leader you do not make it your issue... Dr. Wheat, stated regarding being African-American and female,

> I think one of the things that have allowed me to be successful is that I am African-American and I am female, but I do not wear either one of those on my sleeve. I am the president who has all the skill-sets necessary to do that, the fact that I'm female and,

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African-American, I'm sure impact decisions that I make, or at least give me a perspective to interpret the information that I get, but I don't wear that on my sleeve.

As mentioned earlier, these women overcame it by not letting race be their issue; even though, it may have been an issue for others. They rose to the occasion to achieve despite being African-American and female. It appeared like previous studies that these participants had learned not to ignore the challenges that they faced, but they learned to continually strive and let their work speak for them.

The Student Affairs Pathway

The final element of significance was the pathway through student affairs. At least half of the participants indicated that being from student affairs was a challenge. They indicated that they were viewed differently and that they had to prove themselves to the faculty. Coming from student affairs, meant that the participants had to establish greater credibility; particularly concerning their ability to relate to faculty whether within the classroom or on committees.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the most common pathway to the community college presidency is an academic one (Weisman & Vaughan, 2007). Researchers indicated that most community college presidents have come from an academic pathway. Vaughan (1989) and Kubala (1999) both discovered the most common position held prior to the presidency was that of an academic officer. Similarly, research conducted by the American Council on Education (2007, 2012) suggested the most traveled pathway to the presidency was an academic position (ACE, 2007; Weisman &Vaughan, 2007). According to ACE (2007), more than half of all presidents in 2006 were either presidents or provosts in their immediate past positions before becoming a college president (ACE, 2007). Thus, advancement to the community college presidency was typically attained through a series of promotions for persons who were previously community college presidents or who had served as chief academic officers (ACE,

2007). Birnbaum and Umbach (2001) indicated there has been a breakdown in the pipeline process regarding getting more candidates to the college presidency via the academic route. Minorities have had little success with obtaining faculty appointments through the academic route (Birnbaum & Umbach, 2001 and White, 2005, Vaughan, 2008).

In a report by the President's Roundtable of African-American women, Benjamin & et al (2010) revealed the position most frequently held prior to becoming a president was that of the academic vice-president. White (2005) suggested that additional research on new pathways on women in leadership is evolving. There are pathways other than the traditional track from academic affairs. In this study, the participants revealed student affairs is a viable track to the community college presidency and that other pathways are available as well, particularly from the area of business and finance (ACE, 2012).

The other area was to encourage women that it is possible to come from an atypical pathway. They gave perspectives traditional pathway to the community college presidency and indicated that there are other pathways to the presidency. The other aspects of coming from student affairs were to gain credibility with faculty. Several of the participants indicated that credibility was important no matter what pathway you came from. Finally, the other relevant area shared from these participants was the challenge of coming from student affairs. At least three of the participants mentioned that coming from student affairs was a challenge because of the perception in the minds of others concerning that student affairs only can deal with registration. However, these participants shared that coming from student affairs really gets to the heart of the institution, which is its students.

Very little research has been conducted regarding the promotional gains African-Americans have made at the executive levels in administrative positions (Jackson, 2003; Henry,

2010). In an effort to assist others who come from student affairs, the participants offered

several elements of advice. First, they suggested those interested in a community college

presidency should do the following: serve on faculty forums, committees, teach and most

importantly get to know faculty as they were typically on the hiring boards. African-Americans

were less likely to be in an academic positions and more likely to hold other upper level

administrative positions in other areas, such as provost (Jackson, 2003; ASHE Report, 2009).

Hispanic and African American were much more likely than Caucasians to have been the chief

student affairs officer as far as career path before becoming a college president (ACE, 2007, p.

23). According to the literature, the next most common position held before becoming a

community college president was not the chief student affairs officer (Vaughan, 1998; Weisman

& Vaughan, 2007; ACE, 2012). In 2006, only 8% of community college presidents came from a

student affairs background suggesting student affairs was not a traditional path to the community

college presidency (Weisman & Vaughan, 2007).

Limitations of the Study

As with most research, there are some limitations to this research study. The limitations

of this study were that it was narrow in scope and only provided a snapshot of the experiences of

African-American women community college presidents who came from student affairs

background. The study interviewed African-American women community college presidents

who had a student affairs background. The 10 participants for this study were not limited to

location but selectively limited by race and gender.

There was an assumption that the participant's lived experiences were shared through the

interview process in the participant's responses. Since I did not get to interview the majority of

them face-to-face, I could only hear their expressions through their comments, laughter and other

gestures. However, the lack of face-to-face contact did not reduce the rich thick description that these women shared with me. Each participant seemed to be comfortable with me and shared their stories.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study provided some insight into the lived experiences of African-American women from a student affairs pathway to the community college presidency. The findings have implications for future research. Since this research dealt specifically with ten African-American women community college presidents who had a student affairs background, further research might consider investigating African-American male community college presidents who come from a student affairs background. To specify the gender and race of a future study would provide additional research, to assist with the gap in the literature regarding Africa-Americans and men in higher education (Jackson, 2003; 2004; Leon & Jackson, 2009; ASHE Report, 2009).

In addition, race and gender should be further explored for a deeper understanding of those issues in institutions of higher education. Perhaps, other gains from such research could provide strategies for future leaders to overcome the challenge related to issues of race and gender.

As stated earlier, little research has been conducted on college presidents who come from the pathway of student affairs (Bullard, 2008). Previous researchers only have explored African-American presidents in the presidency and their leadership styles, mentoring and roles, but no specific pathway (Kubala, 1999; Vaughan, 1998). A study of this nature would provide additional research to the pathway of student affairs and to African-Americans who want to be community college presidents. Moreover, further research studies the on examination of the pathway of student affairs and other paths to the community college presidency would be

beneficial to research as the review of the literature suggested that the academic pathway is still the most referenced and traveled to the community college presidency (Weisman & Vaughan, 2007; ACE, 2012).

Summary

The findings of this study broaden the understanding of the lived experiences of African-American female community college presidents who began a journey to the presidency by working in student affairs. The willingness of African-American women to share their journey will better prepare future leaders who are interested in the community college presidency, particularly, women of color. As an interpretative phenomenological study, it intended to assist universities and colleges to understand the experiences of these women as well. By examining this phenomenon, the lived experiences of these women produced common structures that characterized the process by which they became presidents.

The study revealed that women, particularly African-American women coming from student affairs could reach the community college presidency. However, this study also revealed many challenges that are still barriers to achievement. Race, gender, and coming from student affairs were some of the key challenges experienced by these presidents. The most important aspect was that these women had developed a coping mechanism and immune system to the challenges and it continues to be the elephant in the room. African-American women have come a long way historically and navigating community college leadership is no different (Zamani, 2003b). Despite the progress of African-American women, still little is known about them in regards to supporting them to reach the epitome of their potential, whether they select the academy or administrative roles in colleges and universities (Henry, 2010).

Closing Reflection

Well, this has been an interesting and amazing journey to hear these women's experiences of how they reached the community college presidency. As I began this study, I reflected on the questions that I wanted to answer to contribute to the research. The questions that I constantly pondered were: 1) what were some of the challenges faced at the community college presidential level for African-American women, and how did they overcome their challenges? 2) what can be done to assist others to the pathway to the presidency and how can this research support that endeavor?

Going into the study, I knew and had an assumption that the academic route was the most frequent path to the community college presidency. However, what I wanted to find out was other ways to get to the community college presidency. I hope that by sharing additional pathways, perceptions on getting to the community college presidency would generate more presidents from non-traditional pathways, particularly if community colleges will soon have a shrinking pool of candidates to take vacant presidential positions. Throughout the research, there have been suggestions of a leadership crisis in community colleges due to the retirements of current community college presidents. While this may be true, the pathway to the community college presidency has it challenges from whichever pathway you come from. From this research, I have learned the bottom-line; it is difficult to get to presidency from any path. Furthermore, I have learned that those of us in student affairs will have to work at being among the pool of candidates and being respected by their colleagues as such leaders.

Ten African-American women who had persevered and reached their goals have inspired me. These women were caring, courageous and successful on their journey to the community college presidency despite the challenges that they encountered. As many of them stated, it is the

"challenges along the way that make you stronger, wiser and more determined." I was truly honored to hear their experiences as leaders in higher education. It was a privilege to hear how they did not allow the challenges of being a woman and being African-American hinder them and used it as an opportunity to push themselves to be better. As I heard these women's stories, it reminded me of the plaque that I have in my office stating, "*Who the student is*." Their stories also resonated with my story as a practitioner in student affairs. As they answered questions, it was remarkable to hear how so many of areas of their personal and professional lives was like a page in my own life story. So, the question is, do I believe it is possible to be a community college president coming from student affairs, being Black, and being a woman? The answer is absolutely. As an African-American woman, I find myself these days reading a poem that was read and given to me by Dr. Wheat on the day that I interviewed her. Before reading this poem, she said to me this has been the experience of African-American women in higher education…let me read this to you from the 25th anniversary of *Essence* magazine. She stated to that this poem speaks on who the African-American woman in higher education and our resiliency whether we are the president, counselor or student affairs practitioner. This is not all of the poem but pieces of the last two stanzas.

> *….Just so there's no mistaking my identity, I am free, Black...independent of mind and centered in the spirit. I know who I am. I'm only telling you 'cause I think you should know who you're dealing with…over the last…years I have soared and stumbled, but always forward,...but I've been around and I've been there…for you, my sister, and for you my brother, all along, you know me, I'm {a Black woman substituted for Essence}. Excerpt from poem in Essence Magazine, by* Khephra Burns 1995

In my opinion, it is quite clear to me that student affairs professionals can be presidents and it is a viable pathway to the community college presidency, but they must work harder to gain credibility from others within the academy. Why not student affairs professionals as presidents? As I pondered that question, it became more and more apparent that student affairs

professionals would make good presidents for several reasons. Some student affairs professionals have published, they are experts in crisis management, and they know how to handle a budget with limited resources. Creating, intentional, effective program on a shoestring budget is something that student affairs professionals do daily. In addition, they typically have people skills, which indicate that they should have no problem raising funds. Moreover, they know how to support, care, and assist students from the entrance to graduation. They know how to care for the whole person as they grow and develop.

Throughout this study, I often heard from these women it was all about the students. Student access, student equity, and care for the whole student. It was not about the bricks and mortar. Moreover, students matter to the work and mission of the community colleges and institutions of higher learning. I guess this is what called me more than 17 years ago to the area totally out of my field of study. There is something innate and special about seeing a person transform right in your eyes. Seeing the transformations, changed my career path … I know that not everyone can beat to the drum of the student beat. The drum of late night and morning calls regarding crisis, the expectation to always be an advocate, to care about making a difference to someone and getting them to the finish line- graduation. Yet, I am happy to say even though I am overworked and underpaid, I know that my purpose is to take the late night call and respond to the needs of others outside of the classroom setting.

I hope this research, particularly the advice the ten participants gave, will support those in student affairs that have the passion, the hope, and the desire to influence the lives of students at the highest level within the educational institution. Years from now or even tomorrow, I hope that there is an African-American *sistah* in who wakes up one day and says, "I want to be a community college president and make a difference in the lives of others." More importantly, I

hope this research contributes to the road map to her success. In conclusion, just like the plaque,

(from an unknown author), on the wall in my office, I am optimistic that future leaders moving

into the community college presidency will remember this:

> *"The student is the most important person on this campus. Without them, there would be*
> *no need for this institution. We are dependent on them. They are not to be hurried away*
> *so we can do our own thing...they are our thing. They are not an interruption to our*
> *work, but the purpose of it."*

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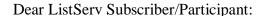Patton, M. Q. (2002) Qualitative evaluation and research methods (3rd ed.). Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

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APPENDIX A

Dear ListServ Subscriber/Participant:

 I am a doctoral candidate at Colorado State University. The title of my dissertation is "Experiences of African-American Female Community College Presidents Using a Student Affairs Pathway: A Phenomenological Study." This research involves using a qualitative interpretative approach, interviews will be conducted spring/summer of 2010 with previous administrators of student affairs that have become or that are former community college presidents and that are African-American females.

I am inviting you to participate in this study if you meet the criteria for this research. The information received from the interviews will be extremely useful in many aspects, such as, the identifying of this pathway to the presidency as a viable one and as a guideline to other African-American women aspirants. If you are interested in participating in this study or you if know persons that may be interested, please email me or have them to email me directly at Marie.Humphrey@ColoState.Edu.   I will then follow-up with you or them directly. All contact with participants, once they contact me will be confidential. Thank you in advance for your time and assistance.

Sincerely,

Marie Humphrey

Marie Humphrey,	Linda Kuk, Ph.D., School of Education
Ph.D. Candidate	Doctoral Advisor
303-964-5086	970-491-7243
Marie.Humphrey@Colostate.edu	Linda.Kuk@Colostate.edu

APPENDIX B

Colorado State University

Dear President:

My name is Marie Humphrey and I am a doctoral candidate at Colorado State University. Dr. Linda Kuk, Associate Professor in the School of Education, is my advisor who is guiding me in this research study. My dissertation, entitled, "Experiences of African-American Female Community College Presidents Using a Student Affairs Pathway: A Phenomenological Study" will use in-depth interviews to explore and to understand the lived experiences of African-American female college presidents who held positions as administrators in Student Affairs before becoming a college president.

I am inviting you to participate in the study because you have the knowledge and experience of working in a community college setting and meet the qualifications that we are seeking for this research project. The information received from the interviews will be extremely useful not only to the body of knowledge of education, but also to African-American women who aspire to become college presidents.

For your review, I have attached a copy of the preliminary interview questions and the consent form. The interview questions will offer a window to the topics that I will be seeking to explore. The consent form has all of the pertinent information regarding this research study. Please be aware that all of the information you provide is confidential. Also, your identity or that of your college will not be disclosed in any written work as a result of this research study. There are no known risks or discomforts associated with this research study.

I will follow-up with a telephone call in one week of this letter to answer your questions and accept your participation to participate in this study. The interviews will be audio-taped and will be approximately 60 minutes for the first interview and any follow-up interviews will be 30 minutes. If you are willing to participate, the first interview will either be face to face or via telephone and any subsequent interviews can conducted via telephone at a mutually agreeable time. Also, if you are willing to participate, I will request a copy of your vitae at our first interview.

If you have any questions or concerns, please let me know. I can be reached by calling (303)862-7765 (home) or (303)964-5086 (work). I know your schedule is very hectic and I really appreciate your time and consideration regarding my research study. If you have any questions about your rights as a volunteer in this research, please contact Janell Barker, Human Research Administrator, at 970-491-1655. Thank you in advance for your time.

Sincerely,

Marie Humphrey   Dr. Linda Kuk

Doctoral Candidate   Associate Professor, School of Education
School of Education   Colorado State University
Marie.Humphrey@ColoState.Edu

Consent to Participate in a Research Study

Colorado State University

TITLE OF STUDY: Experiences of African-American Female Community College Presidents Using a Student Affairs Pathway: A Phenomenological Study

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR (PI): Linda Kuk, Ph.D., Associate Professor, School of Education, Colorado State University. Linda.Kuk@colostate.edu

CO-PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR (CO-PI): Marie Humphrey, Graduate Student, School of Education, Colorado State University. 303-862-7765 (home); 303-964-5086 (work). Marie.Humphrey@colostate.edu

WHY AM I BEING INVITED TO TAKE PART IN THIS RESEARCH? You are being invited to participate in this study because you have the knowledge and experience of working in community colleges as a president, African-American female and student affairs' professional. Your background and qualifications meets all criteria aspects for this study.

WHO IS DOING THE STUDY? The Principal Investigator for this study is Linda Kuk, Ph.D. and the Co-Principal Investigator is Marie Humphrey, graduate student. The study is in partial fulfillment of the requirements for Marie Humphrey's Ph.D. program.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY? The researchers hope to obtain a better understanding of the experiences of African-American women community college presidents who have a Student Affairs background. It will focus on the experiences of community college presidents, and aims to assist future women of color whose goal is to become a college president.

WHERE IS THE STUDY GOING TO TAKE PLACE AND HOW LONG WILL IT LAST? Interviews will take place in the offices of the participants or a mutually agreed upon location and the study will take place in the spring/summer semester 2010.

WHAT WILL I BE ASKED TO DO? If you agree to participate in this study, the Co-PI will interview you for approximately 60 minutes, with a possible 30-minute follow-up interview. You will be asked a series of questions related to your experiences both in Student Affairs and as a college President. The Co-PI will take notes during the interview and will also audiotape the interview with your permission. The co-investigator will have the tapes transcribed, and these transcriptions will be sent to you for review. Audiotapes will be destroyed at the end of the research project. All materials will be indexed by case number and only pseudonyms will be used.

ARE THERE REASONS WHY I SHOULD NOT TAKE PART IN THIS STUDY?

There are no known reasons not to participate in this study.

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS?

There are no known risks associated with this project.

It is not possible to identify all potential risks in research procedures, but the researcher(s) have taken reasonable safeguards to minimize any known and potential, but unknown, risks.

ARE THERE ANY BENEFITS FROM TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY? There are no known benefits to you for participating in the study; however, the researchers hope that sharing your experiences will be helpful both to the body of knowledge of education but also to African-American females of the future.

DO I HAVE TO TAKE PART IN THE STUDY? No. Your participation in this research is voluntary. If you decide to participate in the study, you may withdraw your consent and stop participating at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Page 1 of 2   Participant's initials _____ Date ____

WHO WILL SEE THE INFORMATION THAT I GIVE?

Individual, institutional, region and state identity associated with your interview will not be used to in any reports generated by the study.

Quotes will be used in the study to support themes; however, any quotes from the study will not be used in connection with any identified persons, state or institutions. We will keep all research records that identify you confidential, to the extent allowed by law. Your information will be combined with information from other people taking part in the study. When we write about the study to share it with other researchers, we will write about the combined information. You will not be identified in these written materials. We may publish the results of this study; however, we will keep your name and other identifying information confidential.   All interview data will be stored in a safe location. For example, your name will be kept separate from your research records and these two things will be stored in different places under lock and key.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I AM INJURED BECAUSE OF THE RESEARCH? The Colorado Governmental Immunity Act determines and may limit Colorado State University's legal responsibility if an injury happens because of this study. Claims against the University must be filed within 180 days of the injury.

WHAT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS?

Before you decide whether to accept this invitation to take part in the study, please ask any questions that might come to mind now. Later, if you have questions about the study, you can contact the co-investigator, Marie Humphrey at 303-862-7765. If you have any questions about your rights as a volunteer in this research, contact Janell Barker, Human Research Administrator at 970-491-1655. We will give you a copy of this consent form to take with you.

This consent form was approved by the CSU Institutional Review Board for the protection of human subjects in research on (Approval Date).

WHAT ELSE DO I NEED TO KNOW? In order to accurately document your comments during your interview, the researchers would like to audio tape the interview. Please indicate below if you give the researcher permission to record your interview(s). You will have the opportunity to review the transcribed interview. We are also asking for your permission to contact you for a second interview if necessary.

Yes___   No___ I give my permission for the investigators to audio tape my interview

Yes___ No____ The researchers can contact me for a follow-up interview

Your signature acknowledges that you have read the information stated and willingly sign this consent form. Your signature also acknowledges that you have received, on the date signed, a copy of this document containing ___ pages.

_____   _____

Signature of person agreeing to take part in the study   Date

_____

Printed name of person agreeing to take part in the study

_____   _____

Name of person providing information to participant   Date

_____

Signature of Research Staff

Page _2_ of _2_ Participant's initials _____ Date _____

Interview Guide

Thank you for taking the time to interview with me. I hope this study will contribute to the community college presidency and to African-American women.

Housekeeping – two recorders - transcripts, I will send them back to you for your review – to see if you need to add anything – let me know if you do want to review.

Topic: *Experiences of African-American Female Community College Presidents Using a Student Affairs Pathway: A Phenomenological Study*

Name of Participant (pseudonym):_____ Date of Interview:_____

Participant #_____

Present position and title for participant:_____

Research questions:
- What were some of the roles and responsibilities in Student Services that lead these African-American women to pursue a college presidency?
- What is the lived experience of African-American female presidents who worked in student services?
- What were some of the challenges or obstacles African-American female college presidents faced?
- What is their plan to assist others coming after them?

Sub-questions to be addressed inquire of specific experiences the participants have had in their professions:

SECTION I:

Demographic information (please circle one of the following for each category):

1. Age: 1) 31-35   2) 36-39   3) 40-45   4) 46-50   5) 51-55   6) 56 -60   7) 60 or above

2. Birth location: 1) South   2) East coast 3) West Coast 4) Mid-Atlantic 5) Outside of U.S.

3. Highest Degree level attained: 1) Bachelor's degree   2) Master's degree

   3)Professional/Terminal degree 4) Doctorate

4. Did you attend an Institute (Harvard or Lakin) before becoming a president?

   1) Yes   2) No

5. Were you an ACE fellow before becoming a president?

1)Yes   2) No

SECTION II:

The questions below will help guide the interview process:

1) Tell me a little about yourself…education, family background?

2) Describe your career in Student Affairs?

3) What were some of your barriers and challenges along the way to the community college presidency?

4) How has your presidency been enriched by Student Affairs?

5) What are some the circumstances/instance that triggered you to desire to become a community college presidency?

6) Describe your experiences as an African-American woman within Student Affairs and what were some of the barriers?

7) Why do you think that the academic pathway is still the most prevalent?

8) If given the opportunity would you change your pathway?

9) How did coming from a Student Affairs pathway influence your current position?

10) With Student Affairs, not being the most usual pathway to the community college presidency, how are you making others aware that there are other pathways available?

11) At what point in your career, did you decide to become a community college president and can you describe that decision-making process?

12) As an African-American woman, what were some of the turning points and or if any, along the journey to the community college presidency?

13) What advice would you give future African -American women who are interested in being college presidents?

14) What is the biggest challenge for African-American women who want to become a college president?

15) How do you plan to assist others to the community college presidency?

16) What would you change, if anything, if you had to do your career journey over again?

17) What is your definition of "best practices?"

18) What are some of the best practices that you would recommend for future leaders or what would be on a best practice list?