

Abilene Christian University

Digital Commons @ ACU

Electronic Theses and Dissertations

Electronic Theses and Dissertations

11-2022

Exploring the Lived Experiences of African American Female College Presidents: The Path to Presidency in Higher Education

Breonna Collins
bxc08a@acu.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.acu.edu/etd>

Recommended Citation

Collins, Breonna, "Exploring the Lived Experiences of African American Female College Presidents: The Path to Presidency in Higher Education" (2022). Digital Commons @ ACU, *Electronic Theses and Dissertations*. Paper 534.

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Electronic Theses and Dissertations at Digital Commons @ ACU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Electronic Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ ACU.

This dissertation, directed and approved by the candidate's committee, has been accepted by the College of Graduate and Professional Studies of Abilene Christian University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership

Nannette W. Glenn, Ph.D.

Dr. Nannette Glenn, Dean of
the College of Graduate and
Professional Studies

Date: 11/1/2022

Dissertation Committee:

Jennifer T. Butcher

Dr. Jennifer Butcher, Chair

Jaime Goff

Dr. Jaime Goff

Linda Wilson-Jones

Dr. Linda Wilson-Jones

Abilene Christian University
School of Educational Leadership

Exploring the Lived Experiences of African American Female College Presidents: The Path to
Presidency in Higher Education

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership

by

Breonna Collins

November 2022

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my precious angel, my mother. Though you are no longer with us earth-side, your support and encouragement lives on. I promised you I would do this. During the days, months, and years that I wanted to give up, I remembered my promise to you. Thank you for teaching me about strength, perseverance, and resilience. To my father, thank you for instilling the importance of education in me at an early age. You taught me that it was cool to read, be curious, and ask questions. I did it, Dada! To my husband, thank you for your patience. Thank you for your encouragement. Thank you for believing in me more than I believed in myself.

© Copyright by Breonna Collins (2022)

All Rights Reserved

Abstract

According to the American College President Survey of 2017, 30% of college presidents across the country are female, and only 5% of that population is represented by women of color (Gagliardi et al., 2017). Diversity in leadership positions, more specifically in the higher education sector, is a critical need as higher education institutions continue to develop sustainability strategies in response to impending demographic changes (Virick & Greer, 2012). The purpose of this phenomenological qualitative research study was to describe the lived experiences, pathways, and successful strategies used during career trajectory by former or current African American female college presidents in the United States. Framed by intersectionality and Black feminist thought, a phenomenological qualitative research study utilized data from six African American women who were serving, or had served, as college presidents in the United States. The findings revealed that while African American female college president had an overall positive experience during their pathway to presidency, remnants of racial discrimination, gender discrimination, and the Queen Bee Syndrome had an impact on their career trajectory. Despite these roadblocks, it was determined that internal confidence, mentorships and professional development opportunities, specialized skill sets, and a community of support led to them to achieving college presidency. The findings of this study can be utilized by aspiring African American female college presidents, current university governing bodies or boards, and university human resource professionals within the United States higher education system to identify and implement strategies that better support aspirant college presidents.

Keywords: African American female college presidents, higher education, mentorship, intersectionality, Black Feminist Thought

Table of Contents

Abstract	iii
List of Tables	vi
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Background	2
Statement of the Problem	4
Purpose of Study	5
Research Questions	6
Definition of Key Terms	6
Chapter Summary	7
Chapter 2: Literature Review	9
African American Women in Higher Education	9
History of African American Women in Higher Education	10
History of African American Female College Presidents in Higher Education	11
America’s College and University Presidents Today and Tomorrow	14
Intersectionality	17
Black Feminist Thought.....	20
Queen Bee Syndrome	22
Mentorship	27
History of Mentorship.....	27
University Presidents and Mentorship	28
Race and Mentorship	29
Gender and Mentorship.....	32
Considering Race and Gender in Mentorship	34
Chapter Summary	35
Chapter 3: Research Method.....	36
Research Design	36
Research Questions.....	36
Population and Sample	37
Instruments and Procedures	38
Data Collection	39
Data Analysis	39
Establishing Trustworthiness	40
Assumptions.....	42
Limitations	42
Delimitations.....	43
Chapter Summary	43
Chapter 4: Results	44

Research Questions	45
Participants.....	45
Review of Research Process	47
Key Findings.....	48
Overall Positive Experience.....	49
Roadblocks.....	51
Mentors/Professional Development Make an Impact.....	56
Strategies and Support Systems	63
Summary	69
 Chapter 5: Summary, Discussion, Recommendations, and Conclusions	 71
Summary of the Study	71
Background of the Study	71
Purpose of the Study and Research Questions.....	72
Review of the Research Design and Methodology	73
Summary of Major Findings	73
Discussion and Conclusion of Findings.....	75
Research Question 1	75
Research Question 2	77
Research Question 3	78
Research Question 4	81
Implications for Practice.....	82
Contemporary Unconscious Bias Training	83
Institutional Employee Resource Groups	84
Institutional Mentorship Programs	85
Professional Development Opportunities for Women	86
Recommendations for Future Research	87
Reflection and Final Remarks.....	88
 References.....	 90
 Appendix A: IRB Approval	 110
Appendix B: Solicitation Email	111
Appendix C: Interview Protocol	112
Appendix D: Coding Matrices	114
Appendix E: Participant Follow-Up and Confirmation	117
Appendix F: Consent Form.....	118

List of Tables

Table 1. Participant Demographics	46
Table 2. Overarching Themes and Subthemes	48

Chapter 1: Introduction

According to the American College President Survey of 2017, 30% of college presidents across the country are female, and only 5% of that population is represented by women of color (Gagliardi et al., 2017). Diversity in leadership positions, more specifically in the higher education sector, is a critical need as higher education institutions continue to develop sustainability strategies in response to impending demographic changes (Virick & Greer, 2012). The American Council on Education (n.d.) noted “college and university presidents occupy a leadership role unlike any other. They play a critical role in ensuring their institution’s success, especially as internal and external pressures have grown at a time of resource instability and demographic change” (para. 1). The National Center for Education Statistics (2018) projected that by 2026 the enrollment of Black students will increase by 20% and the enrollment of female students will increase by 15%. As the student population of United States higher education institutions continues to diversify, it is imperative that the presidential leadership roles within those institutions mirror these demographic changes. Diversity in leadership provides an expansion in experiences and perspectives that lead to innovation, an increased awareness of the global landscape, and a sense of trust and psychological safety for organizational stakeholders (Forbes Coaches Council, 2016).

Chapter 1 is organized to aid the reader in understanding the underrepresentation of African American female college presidents in the United States. It provides a brief highlight of the traditional United States college presidential profile and the slow diversification seen over the last century. This information is followed by the specified problem of practice and purpose statement which is intended to define the specific approach and research method used to identify strategies, support services, and roadblocks experienced by current or former African American

female college presidents. It includes the significance of the study, the appropriateness of using a qualitative phenomenological research design, the theoretical framework that supports the research, and discussion of the research questions. The chapter concludes with definitions of key terms and a summary of significant components.

Background

Higher education institutions have been present in the United States since the 17th century (Rudolph, 2021). In 1636, Harvard College, now known as Harvard University, was the first college chartered in the United States (Thelin et al., n.d.). Thelin et al. noted that originally, Harvard served as an institution of postsecondary education for clergymen and those who sought formal education in civil leadership. In August of 1640, Henry Dunster was appointed as the college's first president ("History of the Presidency," n.d.). According to History of the Presidency, much like his colleagues and pupils, President Dunster was a White Baptist clergyman.

It was not until the end of the 19th century, with the second Morrill Land Grant Act, that the federal government made a concerted effort to support the educational opportunities of African Americans in the United States (Stein, 2020). Like its predecessor policy from 1862, The Morrill Land Grant of 1890 provided annual funding for states to establish colleges that would teach agriculture and mechanical arts (National Research Council, 1995). However, according to Lee and Keys (2013), the 1890 policy "prohibited the distribution of money to states that made distinctions of race in admissions unless at least one land-grant college for African Americans, was established, and thus brought about the establishment of 19 public black colleges" (p. 3).

Over time, higher education institutions vastly expanded their reach by increasing academic offerings, access, and equity (Stein, 2020). The progression of the United States

education system has been influenced by state and local needs, demographics, religion, and changing social situations (Thelin et al., n.d.). As a result of these changes, Thelin et al. (n.d.) noted, “postsecondary institutions in the United States mirror the multifaceted complexities of the broader society in which they are embedded and the diversity of the people they serve” (para. 26).

As the diversification of United States higher education institutions expanded, it was assumed that their presidential profiles diversified as well; however, over two centuries passed after the charter of Harvard College before the first African American female college president, Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune, was appointed in 1903 (Jackson & Harris, 2007). Dr. Bethune was the only African American female college president in the United States until the 1950s (Jackson & Harris, 2007). By 1990, there were a total of 18 African American female college presidents in the United States (0.5% of the total college president population), while African American women represented approximately 6% of the United States population (Jackson & Harris, 2007).

As of 2019, 13.4% of the United States population identify as African American, and of that 13.4%, 50.8% identify as female (Census.gov, 2019). Conversely, of the 4,000 college presidents in the United States, only 5% identify as women of color (American Council on Education, 2017). While these statistics represent growth, when compared to their White female counterparts, who represent 30% of college presidencies in the United States, the disparity in presidential leadership roles is clear (Seltzer, 2017).

The scientific study of leadership and its theoretical framework has been conducted for several decades. Traditionally, the prototypical leader in western society is both White and male (Livingston, 2013). While the study of leadership has evolved by including underrepresented identities (e.g., people of color and women), contemporary researchers continue to dissect their

studies by race or gender, rarely considering the intersection of both. Livingston (2013) reported “prior research on gender and leadership has almost exclusively looked at White women, whereas prior research on race and leadership has almost exclusively looked at Black men” (p. 4). Consistent and thorough research of African American women is vague. African American women tend to be defined as non-prototypical, minimal members of their racial and gender groups rendering them invisible in research, advancement, and leadership (Livingston, 2013).

Many researchers argue that there are several barriers that prevent African American women from achieving executive or presidential roles in higher education (Beckwith et al., 2016; Jackson & Harris, 2007; Whitehead, 2017). These barriers include, but are not limited to, lack of mentorship and remnants of racial and gender discrimination (Beckwith et al., 2016; Jackson & Harris, 2007; Whitehead, 2017). Additional researchers argue that the Queen Bee Syndrome, or the practice of high-powered women who overlook other women for promotion due to low gender identification and a threatened social identity, lend to this problem as well (Derks et al., 2011).

Statement of the Problem

While research suggests that aspiring African American female college presidents have the same credentials as their White female counterparts, African American women fail to be promoted to college presidency at the same rate (Holmes, 2004). There is limited research available that provides a clear understanding of African American women’s professional development strategies, success stories, and perceived roadblocks (Griffin, 2020; Jackson & Harris, 2007).

Contemporary researchers argue that further investigation should be conducted to gain more specific data concerning the challenges and strategies used by African American women to

secure college presidency (Britton, 2013). Additionally, researchers encourage others to bring attention to the mentorship experiences of African American female college presidents and the perceived correlation to their career advancement (Smith-Ligon, 2011). Finally, researchers suggest that further studies be done to explore the degree to which organizations support career and family, mentoring, and understanding of the Queen Bee syndrome as it relates to successful female leaders (Baumgartner & Schneider, 2010).

If limited mentorship opportunities, discrimination, and the Queen Bee Syndrome continue to prevent African American women from obtaining presidential roles within higher education, the diversification of higher education leadership will remain stagnant (Ellemers et al., 2004; Ensher & Murphy, 1997; Fisk & Overton, 2019). In turn, higher education institutions will be at risk of failure to attract top talent, make better decisions, and produce stronger financial returns (Forbes Coaches Council, 2016). Additionally, they will stifle the value of diversity amongst their students and will further perpetuate White privilege within the higher education sector (McDermott, 2013).

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this phenomenological qualitative research study was to describe the lived experiences, pathways, and successful strategies used during career trajectory by former or current African American female college presidents in the United States. Collecting this information and publishing it provides methods and strategies for African American women who aspire to become a college president, thereby increasing their likelihood of achieving such a role and increasing their preparedness for this role. The theoretical framework of this study was guided by intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989) and Black feminist thought (Collins, 2015). The sample consisted of six former, or current, African American female college presidents. The data

were collected through semistructured virtual interviews, observation, and field notes. Data exploration included coding, inductive analysis, and convergence.

Research Questions

A detailed understanding of an individual's experience is essential to others as they navigate similar a phenomenon (Neubauer et al., 2019). The study answered the following research questions:

RQ1: How do current or former African American female college presidents describe their experiences during their pathway to college presidency?

RQ2: Based on their lived experiences, how do current or former African American female college presidents perceive the impact of the Queen Bee phenomenon on their journey to college presidency?

RQ3: Based on their lived experiences, how did mentorship impact their pathway to a college presidency?

RQ4: Based on their lived experiences, what type of strategies, support services, and/or roadblocks do current or former African American female college presidents believe had an impact on their pathway to college presidency?

Definition of Key Terms

Terms relevant to this study are defined to provide clarity and comprehension.

Career preparedness. Career preparedness is the accurate understanding of the occupation landscape and the training credentials that particular jobs requires for attainment (Mintz, 2019).

Career trajectory. Career trajectory is the path or process of career development that can move forwards, backwards, or remain stagnant dependent upon the effort, preparedness, and planning of an individual (Oriol et al., 2015).

Gender identification. Gender identification is the personal concept of oneself as male or female and is typically made clear by the outward manifestation of personality as a result of inherent and environmental factors (Ghosh, 2020).

Mentorship. Mentorship is a purposeful alliance in which individuals collaborate to support the personal and professional growth, development, and success of the relational partners through psychosocial and career support (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2019).

Queen Bee. Queen Bees are defined as women in positions of power who are more critical of female subordinates as a way to cope with gender discrimination they've faced in their own careers (Elsesser, 2020).

Threatened social identity. Threatened social identity is the feeling of threat and devaluation that one experiences due to their social identity which can undermine intellectual performance and sense of belonging (Hall et al., 2019).

Chapter Summary

The introduction for this study provided a preliminary understanding regarding the disproportionate representation of African American female college presidents in the United States. Despite their preparedness, evidence suggests that African American women are unlikely to secure presidential roles in higher education institutions due to discrimination, Queen Bees, and lack of mentorship. Although this phenomenon has been present for decades, there is limited research available surrounding the lived experiences of African American female college

presidents and the strategies and support services utilized to overcome these roadblocks. The purpose of this study was to describe the lived experiences, pathways, and successful strategies used during career trajectory by former or current African American female college presidents. Chapter 1 also solidified the appropriateness of a phenomenological qualitative approach, which allows for the use of personal interviews and in-depth probing. A phenomenological research study is used to understand the human experience and the perceptions of its participants (Wilson, 2015). A detailed understanding of an individual's experience is essential to others as they navigate similar a phenomenon (Neubauer et al., 2019).

Chapter 2 introduces the theoretical framework and delivers a complete review of African American women in higher education, intersectionality, Queen Bee Syndrome, and mentorship. The chapter provides valuable awareness for understanding African American female college presidents and the potential barriers they have experience during their pathway to presidency.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The purpose of this phenomenological qualitative research study was to describe the lived experiences, pathways, and successful strategies used during career trajectory by former or current African American female college presidents in the United States. The literature review for this study was divided into five major sections: African American women in higher education, intersectionality, Black feminist thought, Queen Bee Syndrome, and Mentorship. While this study focuses on African American women who have attained college presidency, it is imperative to provide thorough insight into the history of African American women in higher education, a detailed explanation of the theoretical frameworks of intersectionality and Black feminist thought, as well as a comprehensive examination of the Queen Bee Syndrome and the effects of mentorship in career ascension.

The literature for this study was obtained through Abilene Christian University's online library and search engines such as Google Scholar. The key terms used to conduct the research are as follows: *African American female college presidents, African American females in higher educations, Intersectionality, Black Feminist Thought, Queen Bee Syndrome, same-race mentorship, and same-gender mentorship.*

African American Women in Higher Education

While African American women have made extreme progress within the higher education system in the United States, there is still much work to be done to ensure proportionate representation. African American women are becoming more educated; however, their leadership has not been seen in executive roles within colleges and universities (Paige, 2018). The National Center for Education Statistics (2020) reported that Black women led in degree conferrals earned by all Black students, averaging 68%, during the 2018–2019 academic school

year. Yet, representation of African American women in campus leadership roles such as student body president or campus president averaged approximately 6% (Paige, 2018). According to Collins (2000), there are roadblocks such as racism, sexism, political climate, and the lack of a supportive culture that lead to the disproportionate representation.

History of African American Women in Higher Education

In the 1830s, it was illegal to teach African Americans to read or write in many United States territories (Coleman, 2021). Coleman noted these laws were established as a result of fear felt by Whites who believed that literate people of color would threaten the strength of the slave system. For example, in 1833, the state of Alabama declared:

Any person or persons who shall attempt to teach any free person of color, or slave, to spell, read, or write, shall upon conviction thereof of indictment be fined in a sum not less than two hundred and fifty dollars. (Akin, 1833, p. 397)

It was not until the Emancipation Proclamation of 1862, which freed remaining slaves in the south near the end of the Civil War, that schools were developed specifically to educate the African American community (Coleman, 2021). According to the National Assessment of Adult Literacy (n.d.), literacy rates amongst African Americans increased by almost 80% during the century immediately following the Civil War. African American women, more specifically, showed exemplary progress and persistence during this time period in the United States education system.

Despite the ongoing turmoil in the south, Oberlin College was the first institution to open its door to both African Americans and women in 1833. Later, in 1862, Mary Jane Patterson was the first African American woman to earn a bachelor's degree from Oberlin (Cross & Slater, 2007). Patterson went on to become a notable teacher and was later appointed the first

African American principal of the first public high school specifically for African American students (Garner, 2010).

In 1881, Spelman College was founded as the first education institution in the United States specifically for African American women in Atlanta, Georgia. The first generation of Spelman students initially enrolled in high school equivalency courses because Atlanta did not have a high school that was open to Black students until 1924 (Steptoe, 2010). According to Steptoe, high school diplomas began to be issued in 1887, and two women received the school's first bachelor's degrees in 1901.

Spelman saw great growth and financial support over the next century. Beginning with just 11 students and \$100 of operating budget, Spelman has grown to national recognition as one of the Top 20 Best Women's Colleges, purporting an elite enrollment of over 2,000 students each year, and over \$340 million in endowed funds (Spelman College, n.d.). Notable alumnae include Rosalind Brewer, former CEO of Sam's Club, Dr. Audrey F. Manley, former United States Surgeon General, and Alice Walker, author of *The Color Purple* (Berry, 2012; Shaw, 2016).

Cross and Slater (1997) reported that by the 20th century, African American women made up nearly 63% of all African Americans enrolled in higher education. In the 2000s, the American Association of University Women stated that "among Black students in higher education, women are more likely than men to earn degrees: Black women get 64.1% of bachelor's degrees, 71.5% of master's degrees and 65.9% of doctoral, medical, and dental degrees" (para. 3).

History of African American Female College Presidents in Higher Education

From the introduction of the United States higher education system in the 1600s, and well into the 21st century, African American women have been absent from the executive leadership

position of college presidency (Jackson & Harris, 2007). It was not until 1904 that Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune was appointed as the first African American female college president at Bethune Institute, now known as Bethune-Cookman College (Alexander, 2010).

Bethune, the youngest of 15 children born to slaves, transformed a nation by believing in the Black woman's ability to advance her race (Alexander, 2010). In a persuasively bold speech, entitled "*Closed Doors*" (1936), Bethune described the issue of racism in America and the ways in which it penetrated all aspects of life, specifically education (Alexander, 2010). Bethune called the country to action by encouraging the academy to open the doors that blocked African Americans from opportunities. Bethune (1936) declared, "whether it be my religion, my aesthetic taste, my economic opportunity, my educational desire, whatever the craving is, I find limitations because I suffer from the greatest known handicap, a Negro – a Negro woman." Bethune noted that the door to access and equity for Black youth was closed; however, greater opportunities would eventually open for this demographic if the pupils proceeded with tact, skill, and persistence (Bethune, 1936).

Five decades passed before the next African American female, Dr. Willa Beatrice Player, was appointed as president of Bennett College for Women in 1955. While menial progress was apparent, it was not until 1987 that there were multiple appointments of African American female college presidents (Jackson & Harris, 2007). Jackson and Harris (2007) reported "in 1987, for the first time in history, there were three or more African American presidents of four-year colleges and universities serving simultaneously" (p. 11). By 1990 there were a total of 18 African American female college presidents (Jackson & Harris, 2007). By 2000 there were a total of 38 African American female college presidents (Jackson & Harris, 2007).

Appointed to president of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in 1999, Dr. Shirley Ann Jackson has become a trailblazer in the history of African American female college presidents. Dr. Jackson has held the title of “first” many times throughout her career. According to Gant (2015), Dr. Jackson was the first African-American woman to receive a doctorate of any discipline from MIT, the first African-American woman to serve as president at a top-ranked research university, and the first African-American woman to top the list of one of the highest paid college presidents. Albany Business Review (2020) reported that Dr. Jackson total compensation for 2018 was \$5.8 million dollars, far ahead of any other college president in her region.

Another notable trailblazer in the history of African American female college presidents is Dr. Ruth Simmons. Dr. Simmons was the first African American female to serve as president of an Ivy League institution. She was appointed as president of Brown University in 2001 and served in that capacity until 2012. Historically, Ivy League students were primarily White, wealthy, and male (Carlton, 2021). By the start of World War II, fewer than 125 Black students had earned degrees from Ivy League institutions, and it was not until the 1960s that women were admitted to these exclusive universities (Carlton, 2021). Dr. Simmons is an accomplished higher education administrator who earned a Ph.D. in Romance Languages from Harvard University, introduced the first engineering program at the largest women’s college in the United States, and improved the academic standing at one of the world’s finest research universities (About the President, n.d.). Beginning in 2017, Dr. Simmons began serving as the first African American female president at Prairie View A&M University, a historically Black college in Texas.

Data collected by The American Council of Education’s American College President study (2017), noted that 5% of the women serving as college presidents identify as women of

color. It is important to note that the survey defines women of color as “presidents who identified their race as other than white or who identified their ethnicity as Hispanic or Latino(a). . .”

(American College Presidents Study, 2017).

According to an article published by HBCUBuzz.com (2014), African American women were considered to be the most educated population by race and gender in 2014; however, professional representation of African American female presidents in higher education institutions is diminished. Moses (1989) argued, “when more Black women are in positions of authority and influence on campus, the environment for students will improve” (p. 13). This assertion has been, and continues to be, ignored by the United States higher education system. According to the most recent American College President Survey conducted by the American Council on Education (2017), women of color continue to be the most underrepresented in presidency roles.

America’s College and University Presidents Today and Tomorrow

According to the American Council on Education’s American College Presidents Study (2017), America’s college and university presidents are predominately White, male, over 60 years old, married, and Protestant. Most college and university presidents’ immediate prior positions were that of Provost, and 80% hold a terminal degree (American Council on Education, 2017). The average presidential tenure decreased from 7 years to 6.5 years when compared to the 2011 study (Whitford, 2020). Whitford reported that more than half of the American Council Survey respondents planned to retire or leave their job within 5 years.

In anticipation of the mass retirements of college presidents across the United States in the near future, organizations are beginning to revisit the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed for future college president. Seltzer noted (2017), as universities continue to enroll an

increasingly diverse student body with a new set of needs, current presidents will face a myriad of new challenges. The typical pathway that past presidents followed to attain presidency is changing (Seltzer, 2017).

In the 1800s, most college presidents were clergy men or acting professors. In the next century, college presidents took on the role of campus administrator. As colleges became more complex, boards began looking for managers to run the campus (Deloitte's Center for Higher Education Excellence and Georgia Tech's Center for 21st Century Universities, 2017). The Pathways to the university Presidency report (2017) describe 1945–2008 as the time in which presidents took on the role of builders and accountants in response to the influx of student enrollment, the need for more physical structures, government funding, and federal student loans.

College presidents must be protean. In 2017, Deloitte's Center for Higher Education Excellence worked in partnership with Georgia Institute of Technology's Center for 21st Century Universities to conduct a robust study surrounding college presidents. The purpose of the study was to examine what is necessary to excel in the role of a contemporary president, and how the dynamics of higher education were driving a new set of skills and capabilities for the presidents of tomorrow (Clark, 2017). The data were collected from 165 current college presidents through surveys, in-depth interviews, and the analysis of curriculum vitae (Clark, 2017). The study (2017) revealed 5 key findings: 1) the university provost position is not necessarily the direct path to presidency, 2) instead, provosts often have skill sets that complement, rather than duplicate, the president's skills, 3) the ability to fundraise is essential to presidential success, 4) continual support in leadership development is needed, and 5) presidents feel pressure to show fast results early in their tenure.

In light of these key findings, the survey (2017) went on to suggest five strategies that are aimed to help improve the diminishing pipeline of aspiring college presidents in order to ensure an effective and successful tenure. The first strategy suggests the introduction of intentional training and leadership development aimed at prospective college presidents (Deloitte's Center for Higher Education Excellence and Georgia Tech's Center for 21st Century Universities, 2017). For example, established in 2021, Clark Atlanta University established the HBCU Executive Leadership Institute. According to HBCU Executive Leadership Institute's website (n.d.), the purpose of the program is to establish a model for increasing the quality and volume of qualified HBCU presidential candidates. The curriculum includes, but is not limited to, relationship building, strategic planning, finance, branding, and communication for influence (HBCU Executive Leadership Institute, n.d.).

The second strategy encouraged by the survey (2017) was for governing board to set clear long-range goals to avoid short-lived publicity spikes. The third strategy suggests that the hiring committee be comprised of sitting or former presidents who can not only assess the necessary skills and abilities, but can also mentor the new president months into his or her transition into the new role. The fourth strategy encourages search committees to look beyond the traditional academic background. The survey (2017) indicates that with "provosts increasingly saying they don't want to be presidents, search committees may have little choice but to consider candidates from nontraditional backgrounds," and a more diverse skill set is required to manage more complex institutional needs (p. 24). The final strategy encourages new presidents to focus on building relationships both on and off campus. With faculty and student activism gaining more influence on campus, presidents should spend more time weaving

themselves into the fabric on the institutions they represent (Deloitte's Center for Higher Education Excellence and Georgia Tech's Center for 21st Century Universities, 2017).

Tomorrow's college president will not follow the traditional prototype. Tomorrow's college president must be multifaceted, proactive, politically adept, and entrepreneurial (Seltzer, 2017). Seltzer noted failure to meet these requirements runs the risk of institutional failure.

Intersectionality

Intersectionality and Black feminist thought are the theoretical frameworks for this study. The term intersectionality refers to the way in which social identity structures such as race, class, and gender intersect in a manner that creates life experiences that are often seen as oppressive (Gopaldas, 2013). Kimberlé Crenshaw, an African American attorney and activist, introduced the term intersectionality in 1989 "to describe how Black women's experiences of the unique combination of racism and sexism were obscured by treating race and sex discrimination as separate matters" (Moradi & Grzanka, 2017, p. 502). Until this introduction, the distinctive experiences of African American women, discriminated against for not only race, but also for gender, were often overlooked. Stitt and Happel-Parkins (2019) further articulated this point by stating "when intersectionality is ignored, researchers discount the experiences of individuals who may be affected by more than one of these categories, thereby silencing their voice by not understanding the nuanced ways that different identity categories include lived experiences" (p. 63).

In a previous study by Stitt and Happel-Parkins (2019) using intersectionality as the theoretical framework, nine African American female engineers were interviewed to describe their experiences with discrimination based on the intersection of race and gender. According to Stitt and Happel-Parkins (2019), "all participants shared at least one experience where they dealt

with stereotypical, sexist, or racist views, and a number of the participants had more than one experience that they shared” (p. 67). Though discouraged, the participants also expressed feeling a need to preserve and persist through the discrimination to break ground for future African American women (Stitt & Happel-Parkins, 2019).

According to Stitt and Happel-Parkins (2019), one participant, Caylee, described an experience she had when she asked for the help of a White male peer during class:

I was in class and the professor was telling us that we needed to use the calculator to complete the math problems for the test. So, I asked the guy next to me if he could show me how to use the calculator. He looked me dead in my face and said, “you got in here, you figure it out.” He helped other people, but he just didn’t want to help me. (p. 68)

Caylee believed that both her race and gender played in a factor in the White male’s response. His response perpetuates stereotypical thinking towards people’s differences. It also creates a barrier in which people who are different must prove that they are worthy to belong before being accepted.

Stitt and Happel-Parkins (2019) also described Cliffie’s experience (i.e., another participant) with an older Black woman while discussing her choice in academic major. Cliffie said, “when I told her I was studying mechanical engineering, she looked like, ‘Honey what? That sounds hard. I mean do you think you can do that? That just sounds like something a White man would be doing’” (p. 69). The women’s lack of support, especially as a Black woman herself, left Cliffie feeling unsettled and confused.

The experiences described in this study are an unfortunate reality of Black women in the United States. Unlike their counterparts, Black women are often oppressed by not only their race, but also their gender. However, Stitt and Happel-Parkins’ (2019) study findings resulted in two

themes: 1) Black women are challenging stereotypes by doing something out of the ordinary and 2) Black women are persisting for future generations despite adversity.

Jean-Marie et al. (2009) argued “unlike the glass-ceiling white women have to break through, black women have to shatter the concrete ceiling to move up the echelon of corporate America” (p. 567). In their 2009 study, Jean-Marie et al. reviewed the interviews of 12 Black women leaders in higher education. The participants reported encounters of racist and sexist demarcations on the part of both White men and women and Black men (Jean-Marie et al., 2009). One participant, who subsequently took her leadership to a historically Black institution due to racial discrimination experienced at a historically White institution, was shocked to experience a different type of judgement in her new role. She noted “it was the Ivy league experience all over again. But this time, it was a black environment because I was a woman” (p. 572).

More recently, in a 2020 *TIME* magazine article by Steinmetz, Crenshaw provided a more contemporary definition of intersectionality:

These days, I start with what it's not, because there has been distortion. It's not identity politics on steroids. It is not a mechanism to turn white men into the new pariahs. It's basically a lens, a prism, for seeing the way in which various forms of inequality often operate together and exacerbate each other. We tend to talk about race inequality as separate from inequality based on gender, class, sexuality or immigrant status. What's often missing is how some people are subject to all of these, and the experience is not just the sum of its parts. (para. 3)

Black Feminist Thought

Devised in the late-1800s, the term “feminism” was used to express the belief in and advocacy of equal rights for women (McAfee, 2018). While benevolent in nature, the original theories of feminism implied that all women shared the same lived experiences. However, as intersectionality confirms, additional social structures such as race change a woman’s individual experience. As a result of this evidence, Black feminist thought emerged.

Black feminist thought is a theoretical framework that was designed to give an understanding to the multifaceted experiences of African American women in relation to how their lives are shaped by the intersection of their race, gender, class, and sexuality (Collins, 2000; Davis & Brown, 2017). Davis and Brown argued that because of this “double bind” Black women have to fight socially and politically against multiple statuses that lead to discrimination unlike a White woman or a Black man.

Coined by Patricia Hill Collins in 1990, the introduction of Black feminist thought was meant to encourage self-actualization and empowerment. Collins (2000) believed that sharing and understanding the intersections of oppressions would propel African American women into a position of self-reliance, self-definition, and independence. Critical to the empowerment of African American women, Black feminist thought gives a multitude of Black women a collective voice that was once silenced (Yates-Richard, 2020). Twenty-five years later, contemporary social justice activists, such as Black Lives Matter’s cofounder Alicia Garza (2015), continue to echo Collins’s sentiments by purporting “we can’t afford to follow just one voice. We have so many experiences that are rich and complex. We need to bring all those experiences to the table” (para. 32).

In a complex article written by Ana Stankovic (2021), the author provides a thought-provoking analysis of Maya Angelou's autobiography, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, to further explain the tenets of Black feminist thought. Stankovic (2021) noted, "Angelou's writing and activism have often been connected with the concerns raised by the proponents of black feminism, although her first autobiography precedes some of the most important writings by black feminist critics" (p. 975). Angelou's work is a coming of age story that travels from racism, violence, and the lack of opportunities and resources as a Black female, to the idea of self-definition, empowerment, and survival (Stankovic, 2021).

One of the most important concerns of Black feminist thought is the power of self-definition (Collins, 2000; Stankovic, 2021). Self-definition is a major step to challenging the negative stereotypes that have been forced upon Black women for centuries (Collins, 2000). As a way to control, contain, and oppress the Black woman, labels and images of the "mammy," angry Black woman, and jezebel have been emblazoned across Black female history (Collins, 2000; Stankovic, 2021).

According to Pilgrim (2000), the mammy caricature "was created by white southerners to redeem the relationship between black women and white men within slave society in response to the antislavery attack from the North during the ante-bellum period" (para. 4). During this time period, though taboo, many male slave owners were physically attracted to, and often raped, their female slaves. In juxtaposition to this reality, the mammy was created. Pilgrim (2000) noted, this caricature was portrayed as dark-skinned, obese, and old in an attempt to desexualize and imply that Black women were ugly. According to Pilgrim (2000), "no reasonable white man would choose a fat, elderly black woman instead of the idealized white woman" (para. 6). To her White creators, the mammy caricature was loyal, sexless, politically and culturally safe (Pilgrim, 2000).

The mammy was an imaginative figure that her creators hoped would become a reality. This is an example of the controlling image that Collins (2000) encourages Black feminist to rebel against.

An additional cornerstone of Black feminist thought is the desire to be heard. Often times Black women are overlooked or talked over. Historically, even as little girls, Black women's voices were considered to be irrelevant, and any kind of back talk was discouraged and punished (Stankovic, 2021). However, Collins (2000) asserted the voices of African-American women are voices of survivors and should be recognized as essential to their survival.

The collective voice encouraged by Black feminist thought is intended to educate, familiarize, and reject the oppressive experiences of African American women. The collective voice takes individual experiences that happened to many women and shapes the collective standpoint of an entire oppressed group (Stankovic, 2021). For example, when writing *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, Angelou stated that she intended to write a story that resonated with the collective voice. Angelou said "...I wasn't thinking so much about my own life or identity. I was thinking about a particular time in which I lived and the influences of that time on a number of people" (Gilbert, 1999, as cited in Stankovic, 2021, p. 979). Angelou's rhetoric is a clear example of Collins's (2000) ideology that collective experiences lead to collective wisdom. Collins declared (2000), "U.S. Black women's collective historical experiences with oppression may stimulate a self-defined Black women's standpoint that in turn can foster Black women's activism" (p. 30).

Queen Bee Syndrome

According to Allen and Flood (2018), "women in higher education, although increasing in numbers, experience difficulties in building and maintaining positive female relationships with

female colleagues” (p. 14). While this phenomenon can be attributed to many factors, literature reveals that the Queen Bee Syndrome is a dominant motive. The Queen Bee Syndrome, introduced by researchers Staines, Tavis, and Jayaratne in 1970, is defined as the tendency of token women in senior positions, within a male-dominated environment, who sabotage or block other women’s ascension in organizations in a demoralizing, undermining, or bullying manner (Allen & Flood, 2018; Ellemers et al., 2004; Harvey, 2018; Ramnund-Mansingh & Seedat-Khan, 2020).

Though it is often overlooked, women who do not support other women in the workplace creates a significant impediment towards professional advancement (Harvey, 2018). Former United States Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, was famously captured as saying, “There is a special place in hell for women that don’t help each other.” This provocative statement was made as a call to action for women voters in support of democratic nominee, Hillary Clinton, during her 2016 presidential campaign. Albright broke barriers in the workforce while unknowingly providing a pathway for other aspiring women. She successfully obtained a Ph.D. while raising children, was a Georgetown University professor, and was appointed the first women United States Secretary of State in 1997.

Queen Bee behavior is often linked to relational aggression and can be seen in female power struggles that encompass a range of emotionally hurtful behaviors (Allen & Flood, 2018). Allen and Flood (2018) defined relational aggression as “any behavior intended to harm someone by damaging or manipulating relationships with others” (p. 13). Research conducted at the Workplace Bullying Institute reported that women bullies target other women 68% of the time, and 56% of culprits who exhibit relational aggressive behaviors are bosses (Allen & Flood, 2018).

Allen and Flood (2018) conducted a study to characterize how women in college/university settings responded to episodes of relational aggression when encountered. The study consisted of a cross-sectional survey and semistructured interviews given to female higher education professionals who were professors and mid-level administrators. Approximately 67% of the responders expressed having experienced relational aggression towards them (Allen & Flood, 2018). Their relational aggression experiences included behaviors such as a challenge of their authority, being talked down to, personal attacks on character, and being excluded from projects or meetings.

The results of the study revealed that 30% of those faced with relational aggression chose to respond to the behavior by avoiding the aggressor and isolating themselves (Allen & Flood, 2018). Disconnection and isolation negatively skew career trajectory. With an overwhelming number of women reporting these egregious experiences, Allen and Flood (2018) reported, “enduring the aggressive behaviors of female colleagues can be characterized as one of the hurdles to be crossed if the goal was to work and experience success in a predominately male environment.

Individual mobility can also be considered a cause of the Queen Bee Syndrome (Ellemers et al., 2004). More specifically, women who have risen to a managerial level in a male-dominated world view themselves as different from, and sometimes better than, other women (Ellemers et al., 2004; Faniko et al., 2017). These women disassociate from their gender pool by focusing on intra-group differences rather than similarities, which enables individual group members to contrast the self with the rest of the group, demonstrate their distinctness, and avoid gender stereotypes and bias (Ellemers, et al., 2004; Gromkowska-Melosik, 2014). It is believed

that women can attain higher positions and levels of power if they can convince their audience that they possess traditional masculine traits (Huddy & Terkildsen, 1993).

Ellemers et al. (2004) conducted a study to examine possible explanations for the underrepresentation of women among university faculty. The researchers aimed to address whether female and male faculty members *actually* differ in their levels of commitment at work, or they were merely *perceived* by others as having different commitment levels (Ellemers et al., 2004). The results of the research indicated that while there was no statistical difference in male and female commitment levels, female faculty perceived their female counterparts as less career-oriented than men. According to Ellemers et al. (2004), this element was “consistent with our argument that making a successful career under these circumstances involves setting the self apart from one’s gender group, there is indeed evidence that these faculty members regard themselves as non-prototypical women” (p. 331). Additionally, the data confirmed that when women achieve success in an academic career that is dominated by men, those who are successful perceive themselves as exceptional members of the group (Ellemers et al., 2004).

An additional cause of Queen Bee behavior can be linked to female hostility. Henshaw et al. (2018) defined female hostility as “a destructive comparison mentality women sometimes exhibit when they feel inferior to another woman in some way” (p. 67). This mindset perpetuates the idea that only one woman can be smart, funny, or attractive. In comparison, this illogical frame of mind means the other woman cannot be such things, inadvertently creating competitions that destroy relationships (Henshaw et al., 2018).

In a research study on inter-female hostility, Henshaw et al. (2018) examined why women are underrepresented in Congress. The researchers divided 139 female participants into three groups. Each group listened to a fictional female’s political speech, but each group saw

something different on their screens. One group could only see a blank screen, the control group saw a female candidate with unkept hair and no make-up, and the final group saw a picture of the same woman with well-kept hair and professional makeup (Henshaw et al., 2018). According to Henshaw et al. (2018), the research confirmed that “attractiveness is negatively related to likeability among female voters at a 95% confidence rate” (p. 67). Thus, a woman is more likely to judge another female if she perceives the other woman as more attractive and successful.

While affirmative action policies, such as gender quotas, have been implemented to support more gender equality in the workplace, many senior management women resist these policies (Faniko et al., 2017). Research indicates that this resistance can be attributed to prior career experiences and the sacrifices current senior management women have experienced (Faniko et al., 2017). Faniko et al. (2017) conducted a study to determine why women might not support measures that support other women. The results indicated that women managers believe that have made more personal sacrifices to be in a position of power than their female subordinates therefore less worthy of success (Faniko et al., 2017). A female senior manager from the study reported:

I’m against gender quotas. I can’t understand why we need to roll out the red carpet for young women and to make sure their life easy while I made a lot of sacrifices for my career success and I didn’t have such a privilege. (p. 638)

Women to women gender biased often goes unnoticed and therefore is not appropriately combated. The strategies that Queen Bees utilize to achieve success, despite their gender, are likely to cause them to discriminate against other women (Ellemers et al., 2004). Queen Bee behavior reinforces gender inequality, further advances misogyny, and prolongs the thought of male superiority. Ellemers et al. (2004) suggested “when it no longer seems necessary to distance

oneself from other gender group members in order to prove one can be successful at work, this may prevent gender stereotypes from affecting career opportunities of women at the university” (p. 334). Combating the Queen Bees may be a new key to shattering the proverbial glass ceiling.

Mentorship

The results of qualitative studies imply frustration felt by African American women because of the lack of role models similar in gender and race available to provide mentorship within their career fields (Ensher & Murphy, 1997). In its most basic form, mentorship is a deliberate relationship between a more experienced individual (mentor), and a lesser experienced individual (protégé), with the agreed upon goal of creating an atmosphere in which the protégé will grow and develop from the guidance and examples set forth by the mentor (Boldra et al., 2008). Research studies confirm that mentoring is positively related to career success for the protégé (Ensher & Murphy, 1997).

History of Mentorship

The word mentor comes from Homer’s Greek poem *The Odyssey* (Syakir, 2019). *The Odyssey* tells the story of the King of Ithaca and his quest on a 10-year battle of the Trojan War. While away for war, the king calls on his entrusted teacher, Mentor, to guide and protect his son Telemachus. Though Mentor failed at his mission of oversight, Athena, the Goddess of War, assumed the likeness of Mentor and provided the necessary support and encouragement needed for Telemachus to succeed (Syakir, 2019). Through this poem, the word Mentor has since been used to designate a skilled person who imparts their knowledge and wisdom to a lesser skilled person (Syakir, 2019).

Historically, research surrounding the correlation between mentorship and career success has been primarily focused on White men (Boldra et al., 2008). Over the last two decades, more

research has shown that the focus on White men is primarily due to the lack of diverse demographics available for analysis (Boldra et al., 2008). While the diversification of our workforce was catapulted by the Civil Rights Act of 1964, over the years the research and recommendations towards a more inclusive and equitable environment remains limited (Barnard & Rapp, 2005).

A study conducted by Cox and Nkomo (1990), concluded that the research regarding organizational behavior and human resource management (OBHRM) lacked an understanding of the implications of race. Cox and Nkomo (1990) reported that only 201 OBHRM articles related to both race and gender were published during a 25-year time period, while over 2,000 OBHRM articles were published related to issues such as international management, age, and gender only during a similar time period. Cox and Nkomo (1990) concluded, “the major outlets for OBHRM research do not contain a significant research base for understanding race in organizations” (p. 422).

Though the research is limited, it has been confirmed that race influences access to mentorship and to whom you have access to (Blake-Beard et al., 2006). If race is not thoroughly considered in the exploration of mentorship and its impact on participants, a large demographic will be overlooked. Blake-Beard et al. (2006) maintained “people of color may find it difficult to access mentors of any type and when they do, they must overcome critical barriers within the relationship such as differences in race, gender, job level, function/profession, or organizational culture” (p. 12).

University Presidents and Mentorship

In a 2019 study conducted by Briscoe and Freeman, 11 university presidents were interviewed to explore the role mentorship played in their pathway and success as president.

Briscoe and Freeman (2019) revealed “mentoring, including experiences such as internships, shadowing, and frequent conversations with current and past university presidents, has shaped aspiring university presidents’ experiences and continues to be influential for their career trajectories” (p. 433). Furthermore, prioritizing mentoring, and serving as a mentor once a presidential role was obtained, is a critical component to giving back and creating additional mentorship opportunities for future protégés (Briscoe & Freeman, 2019).

In another study conducted by Hill and Wheat (2017), 16 female key-line administrators or current presidents reported the most valuable benefits of mentoring during their career trajectory was receiving encouragement and support, receiving specific career advice, and receiving specific advice on skills and/or training. These benefits had a significant impact on their increased self-confidence in their ability to lead and the tools required to build their credentials in an effort to become a qualified presidential candidate (Hill & Wheat, 2017).

Race and Mentorship

In a 3-year case study conducted by Harvard Business School professor David Thomas (2002), 20 minority executives were interviewed to discuss their successes. Thomas (2002) found that the minority executive who advanced the farthest in their careers attributed their success to a strong network of mentors. While this success and attribution should be applauded, it is important to note that minority protégés should be mentored very differently than their White counterparts in order to see holistic success (Thomas, 2002). Thomas (2002) noted “the mentor of a professional of color must also be aware of the challenges race can present to his protégé’s career development and advancement” (p. 2). Mentors who cannot relate to or respect the experiences of minorities can cause more harm than good.

There are several elements to consider when mentoring minorities. Mentor-mentee relationships that involve minorities are more effective when both parties are open to discussing race (Alegria et al., 2019). Mentors must be prepared and willing to combat negative racial stereotypes. When navigating a largely White system, acknowledging the reality of unconscious bias with a mentor creates a safe space for minority protégés to externalize negative experiences and create strategies to overcome them (Alegria et al., 2019). Thomas (2002) reported “a potential mentor who holds negative stereotypes about an individual, perhaps based on race, might withhold that support until the prospective protégé has proven herself worthy of investment” (p. 8).

The mentors must also be able to closely identify the with protégés. Mentoring relationships are more successful when both parties see parts of themselves in each other (Thomas, 2002). Making a connection by sharing personal stories of exclusion, disempowerment, feeling undervalued, and burnout can be helpful topics of discussion with minority protégés (Alegria et al., 2019). Difficulties with identification, sometimes due to race, may create an obstacle that makes it difficult for the mentor to see beyond the protégé’s weakness (Thomas, 2002). Thomas (2002) warned that cross-race mentoring has limitations when it comes to potential behavior adoption. As noted by Thomas (2002), “in my study, an African-American participant recounted how his white mentor encouraged him to adopt a mentor’s more aggressive style. But when the protégé did so, others labeled him an ‘angry black man’” (p. 8).

Lack of connection could greatly impair the psychosocial benefits of mentoring. Psychosocial mentoring goes beyond career assistance. It includes functions such as counseling, friendship, role modeling, confirmation, and affirmation (Hezlett, 2005). According to Arora and

Rangnekar (2015), psychosocial mentoring creates a deeper emotional bond and a more pleasurable interpersonal connection between the mentor and the protégé. The emotional bond provides additional support that can counter elevated stress, discouragement, and lack of confidence that some protégés may face (Dawson et al., 2015).

Due to the limited number of minorities at executive level positions within the workforce, cross-race mentoring is often required. Cross-race mentoring has its disadvantages. One of those challenges is protective hesitation (Thomas, 2002). Protective hesitation occurs when both races are hesitant to discuss sensitive issues (Thomas, 2002). Thomas (2002) provides an example:

Richard Davis, a white mentor in my study, thought that his African-American protégé style was abrasive, but he kept the feeling to himself in order to avoid any suggestion that he was prejudice – specifically that he harbored the stereotype all black men are brash and unpolished. (p. 8)

Thomas (2002) noted that others found the protégé's approach to be problematic as well. However, the behavior could have been corrected far before it became an issue if Richard felt comfortable addressing it (Thomas, 2002). Race is a taboo topic for many, but protective hesitation severely hinders a mentoring relationship. In a study conducted by Chen et al. (2015), the researchers discovered that minority protégés who receive culturally specific advice from their mentors report greater satisfaction with their mentor experience. Cross-race mentoring often lack culturally specific engagement due to inadequate knowledge about culture specific challenges for minority protégés (Chan et al., 2015).

Trust is another challenge of cross-race mentoring. Trust is a vital component of successful mentoring relationships (Chan et al., 2015). However, as a result of historical and present-day racism in the United States, there is a large gap in cross-racial trust between White

people and minorities (Brown & Grothaus, 2019). Brown and Grothaus's (2019) study revealed several reasons that Blacks in particular felt distrust towards Whites including but not limited to: 1) childhood messages from their families that White people were untrustworthy, 2) they cannot be themselves around White people and must often resort to code-switching, 3) personal experiences with overt racism with their White counterparts, and 4) suspicions of tokenism or a disingenuous desire to connect.

Studies suggest that higher levels of trust can be seen in relationships with similar racial backgrounds (Light & Bonacich, 1990). Additional research suggests that stronger bonds were formed in same-race mentoring (Gaddis, 2012). Finally, racial similarities lead to more positive outcomes as it relates to workplace mentoring as well (Gaddis, 2012).

Gender and Mentorship

Researchers argue that mentorship can reduce the barriers that prevent women from career advancement and pay inequality (Cullen & Luna, 1993). However, there is limited research available that focuses primarily on mentorship and its impact on female career trajectory. According to Cullen and Luna (1993), "the scarcity of women administrators and absence of the mentoring relationship is potentially one reason women experience difficulty with career progression beyond the mid-management level" (p. 2).

In a study conducted by Cullen and Luna (1993), 24 women in executive or administrative positions within higher education were interviewed to determine if women empower other women for successful career progression in higher education through mentoring. The results indicated that women do in fact empower other women when the opportunities are available; however, two key barriers were revealed: 1) there are not enough women

administrators available to mentor other women, 2) some senior administrators exhibited jealousy of others and had no interest in mentoring other women (Cullen & Luna, 1993).

A study conducted by Olivet Nazarene University (2018), surveyed 3,000 full-time employees in America to explore the latest trends in mentor-mentee relationships. A gender discrepancy revealed itself when it was reported that 82% of men have had male mentors, while only 69% of women have had female mentors (Olivet Nazarene University, 2018). There is a need for more female mentors who can educate, cultivate, and encourage other women entering the work force.

Neal et al. (2013) suggested that women are not being asked to mentor. According to their study of 318 businesswomen from 19 different countries and 30 different industries, “the majority of women (54 percent) reported that they have only been asked to be a mentor a few times in their career or less, while 20 percent reported they have never been asked to be a mentor” (p. 5). There is likely a plethora of women with significant knowledge and advice to give to potential protégé if only there we asked to serve in such a role.

Unlike their male counterparts, often times women are hesitant to serve as mentors due to time constraints. As reported by Rafnsdottir and Heijstra (2013), “women and men often spend their time differently due to the widespread gender division in work and family life” (p. 283). Even when there is flexibility in the workday, and traditional hours are not required, women are more likely than men to utilize the flexibility to be on call for their family (Rafnsdottir & Heijstra, 2013). Alternatively, men typically report that they have more power over their own time and are able to allocate time more easily than women (Rafnsdottir & Heijstra, 2013). Since women typically carry a heavier work and family responsibility load than men, there is limited time available to give beyond their already busy schedules.

Lastly, the skewed narrative that male mentors provide better outcomes continues to be perpetuated. Macauley (2019) quoted David Smith, co-author of *Athena Rising: How and Why Men Should Mentor Women*, as saying:

there are benefits on both sides when men mentor women. Women get more raises, they advance faster, and they stay in the organization longer. That's not because men are better mentors, but because they have positions of influence and power. It's a numbers game. Men get increased access to information, they build a more diverse and expansive network, and they tend to increase their interpersonal skills. (para. 3)

Considering Race and Gender in Mentorship

Patton (2015) noted “African American female mentors had a deeper understanding of the issues present in the Academy and could understand the experiences the [African American] participants faced” (p. 523). There is a dearth of information that investigates how mentorship effects the career success of African American women. Blake-Beard et al. (2006) suggested “our most highly regarded models, theories and empirical studies either exclude race as a factor or include samples that lack diversity such that race is often relegated to unexplained variance” (p. 8).

Though others believe that cross-cultural mentor relationships create pathways to inclusion, contemporary researchers argue that similarity in race and gender are important to consider when pairing a mentor with its protégé (Crutcher, 2014; Ensher & Murphy, 1997). The more similar mentors and mentees are as it relates to attitudes, race, and gender, the more productive the relationship will be (Ensher & Murphy, 1997). African American women who are currently interested in pursuing a college presidency position, and are looking for the most productive mentor relationship possible, will only have 4% of the college presidential population

to choose from. Thus, it can be argued that the lack of mentorship opportunities for African American women has contributed to the disparity of their representation in presidential roles within higher education.

Chapter Summary

African American female college presidents remain underresearched despite the impending diversification of the higher education leadership climate in the United States. After examining the current research presented on African American women in higher education, the profile of current college presidents, and predictions for the future of higher education and presidential need, a problem arises. When considering intersectionality and Black feminist thought, barriers and challenges are exposed that hinder career trajectory for aspiring African American female college presidents (Davis & Brown, 2017; Stitt & Happel-Parkins, 2019). Although research provides examples of African American women who have overcome these barriers, a more thorough examination of this phenomenon will allow former and current African American female college presidents to share their lived experiences with key factors such as the intersectionality of race and gender, the Queen Bee Syndrome, and mentoring during their career progression.

Chapter 3 will provide the methodology used to examine the lived experiences, pathways, and successful strategies used during career trajectory by former or current African American female college presidents in the United States. Chapter 3 presents the overarching research questions as well as research design, method, population, sample, trustworthiness, and reliability.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this phenomenological qualitative research study was to describe the lived experiences, pathways, and successful strategies used during career trajectory by former or current African American female college presidents in the United States. The use of this research approach allowed for a deeper understanding of the experiences lived by each participant. The primary components of Chapter 3 will include the study's research questions, research design, participant selection, instruments and procedures, data collection, establishing trustworthiness and rigor, and finally data analysis.

Research Design

According to Creswell and Poth (2018), a qualitative research design leads to in-depth understanding and allows for the description of experiences, themes, and stories of marginalized groups by investigating a significant phenomenon. The purpose of a phenomenological research study is to understand the human experience and the perceptions of its participants (Wilson, 2015). A detailed understanding of an individual's experience is essential to others as they navigate similar a phenomenon (Neubauer et al., 2019). As such, this research approach provided ideal outcomes as I further investigated the lived experiences, pathways, and successful strategies used during career trajectory by former or current African American female college presidents in the United States.

Research Questions

The objective of the research was to describe the experiences, pathways, and success strategies utilized by current or former African American female college presidents in the United States to address the disparity of representation when compared to their counterparts. Through a phenomenological lens, following research questions were explored:

RQ1: How do current or former African American female college presidents describe their experiences during their pathway to college presidency?

RQ2: Based on their lived experiences, how do current or former African American female college presidents perceive the impact of the Queen Bee phenomenon on their pathway to college presidency?

RQ3: Based on their lived experiences, how did mentorship impact their pathway to college presidency?

RQ4: Based on their lived experiences, what type of strategies, support services, and/or roadblocks do current or former African American female college presidents believe had an impact on their pathway to college presidency?

Population and Sample

A preliminary list of current and former African American female college president's email addresses was obtained by utilizing purposive and snowball sampling. More specifically, the use of university directories, LinkedIn, Google search, and referrals were applied. Etikan et al. (2016) stated that "purposive sampling is the deliberate choice of a participant due to the qualities the participant possesses" (p. 3). Snowball sampling finds a main source of a hard to reach population who has the desired characteristics and uses that source's social network to recruit like participants (Sadler et al., 2010). Participants of this study were required to meet the following criteria:

1. Female
2. African-American
3. Current or former United States college president
4. Served as president at a community college or 4-year institution

After receiving IRB approval (see Appendix A) and securing a list of least 30-45 email addresses of current/former African American female college presidents, I sent a solicitation email (see Appendix B) requesting their participation. Those who agreed to participate, served as my final participants.

Instruments and Procedures

Data were collected through semistructured in-depth interviews held via Zoom. Findings by Archibald et al. (2019) suggested that Zoom is a preferred method of collecting qualitative data because of its relative ease of use, cost-effectiveness, data management capabilities, and security options. Additionally, in response to the on-going COVID-19 global pandemic, Lobe et al. (2020) noted that “online interviewing via videoconferencing provides a valuable opportunity to rise to the challenge of social distancing while maintaining our data collection efforts” (p. 6).

This interviewing method was intended to collect rich in-depth information about the participant’s experiences as it relates to the research topic (Ivankova, 2015). And, by following the Interview Protocol (Appendix B), it can be confirmed that the interview questions were relevant and align with the overarching research questions (Yeong et al., 2018). As needed, probing follow-up questions were asked to ensure depth, clarity, and thorough responses. Handwritten notes were also taken to supplement the Zoom recordings. Each interview was conducted on a one-on-one basis. With the participants’ permission, the interviews were recorded and later transcribed for further analysis.

Careful observation of key items such as behaviors, tone in response, and body language were also considered. Paying attention to important cues such as laughter, lowered eyes, or an increase in volume lends to a deeper understanding of the feelings of the participant such as

support, hostility, openness, or disapproval (Patton, 2015). Observation and detailed notes allow for a comprehensive account of the firsthand experiences of participants (Ivankova, 2015).

Data Collection

To conduct a qualitative research study, data were collected via semistructured Zoom interviews. Zoom is a video conferencing cloud-based software that allows for easy and reliable video, audio, and chat communication. An interview protocol was developed to provide the roadmap for the interviews (see Appendix C). This protocol ensured alignment of the overarching research questions with the more detailed interview questions. A reliable interview protocol is crucial to obtaining respectable qualitative data by implementing a consistent and comprehensive system (Yeong et al., 2018). Furthermore, an interview protocol that is based on the information gathered during the literature review ensures that the researcher received the desired feedback (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012).

Data Analysis

After carefully collecting the data, a thorough analysis was done. The purpose of qualitative data analysis is to generate a larger consolidated depiction of the phenomenon that is being studied by segmenting the data into relevant categories (Ivankova, 2015). There are several ways to conduct this type of analysis such as coding, theme identification, and classification.

The transcribed interviews were coded to identify common themes and make note of any apparent outliers. Three coding types were used: In Vivo, open, and axial. In Vivo coding is a code that is derived directly from the data. A specific word is selected verbatim and then used to represent the theme that is of significance (Ivankova, 2015). This type of coding is predominantly helpful for terms that are indigenous to a particular subgroup or environment (Witt, 2013). Open coding creates tentative labels for the large amount of data that emerges

(Gallicano, 2013). The open coding methodology was used to dissect the responses to the interview protocol questions. Finally, the axial coding method was used during the final review of the transcripts. Axial coding identifies relationships between initial codes (Gallicano, 2013). This coding method was used to connect, and further digest, the information provided in the transcripts.

After the coding was complete, inductive analysis was used to generate new concepts, results, and theories from the specific data in the qualitative study (Patton, 2015). The results of the coding passes informed this induction. Inventory of the key phrases, terms, and practices that appear from the coding of the transcripts were taken (Patton, 2015). The data were then reviewed for convergence to determine interrelatedness. These patterns were sorted into categories (see Appendix D). Divergent patterns and deviant instances that did not fit within the dominant categories were also noted (Patton, 2015). This cycle was repeated until all data points were reviewed, compared, and categorized appropriately. Finally, the data were reported in a narrative manner that provided a clear explanation of the phenomenological study (Ivankova, 2015).

Establishing Trustworthiness

While collecting solid data is an important focus in a research study, establishing trustworthiness and rigor is equally important. Establishing trustworthiness and rigor is done by assessing the quality of the interpretations and inferences made by the researcher (Ivankova, 2015). This assessment can be conducted by considering the credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of the data (Ivankova, 2015).

Credibility, or creating confidence in the “truth” of the findings, can be established by prolonged engagement (Amankwaa, 2016; Korstjens & Moser, 2018). As suggested by Korstjens and Moser, participants in this study participated in prolonged engagement by being asked

several distinct questions and were also encouraged to support their statements with examples that were prompted by follow up questions. This type of activity is one of the most crucial techniques for establishing credibility (Amankwaa, 2016).

Transferability refers to the capacity to show applicability in other context and settings (Amankwaa, 2016). It is the responsibility of the researcher to develop predominant theories that are delimited using thorough descriptions which potentially have meaning outside of the immediate context of the study (Finfgeld-Connett, 2010). According to Finfgeld-Connett, “in the end, decisions about transferability depend on the explication of theoretical metaphors that apply across settings and the identification of cause-and-effect allegories that exist between two contexts” (p. 248).

Dependability requires the researcher’s ability to show consistent findings that could be repeated in subsequent studies (Amankwaa, 2016). Korstjens and Moser (2018) defined dependability as “the stability of findings over time. Dependability involves participants’ evaluation of the findings, interpretation and recommendations of the study such that all are supported by the data as received from participants of the study” (p. 121). Dependability can be established through an audit trail that consists of notes, reflective thoughts, sampling decisions, and information about data management (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Dependability was established by providing a thorough description of the research methodology. A systematic account of each procedure used during data collection, analysis, and interpretation proves that the methods are consistent and can be duplicated (Ivankova, 2015).

Confirmability relates to neutrality and unbiased research methods (Amankwaa, 2016). As noted by Amankwaa, confirmability can be established through activities such as triangulation and audit trails. With confirmability, the findings are clearly derived from study

data as opposed to the researcher's own thoughts and opinions (Tuval-Mashiach, 2021). Confirmability was established by maintaining unbiased analysis when reporting findings (Ivankova, 2015). Constant reflection on the emergent themes and checks against personal opinions and perceptions were done to ensure that biases did not have an impact on the way the data were interpreted (Ivankova, 2015).

Assumptions

Assumptions are the thoughts researchers hold as truths from which conclusions will be drawn as they navigate their study (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). It was assumed that a phenomenological qualitative research approach was the best method for this study as the goal was to understand the lived experiences, and what those experiences mean, to current and former African American female college presidents during their career trajectory (Grossoehme, 2014). It was assumed that the participants in this study would adequately and honestly provide recollection of their lived experiences. Previous research focuses on the roadblocks that African American female college presidents experience; however, it was also assumed that there were implicit strategies and factors that support this populations as many have overcome these barriers in order to attain presidency.

Limitations

Study limitations, as noted by Ross and Bibler Zaidi (2019), "represent weaknesses within a research design that may influence outcomes and conclusions of the research" (para. 1). Given the limited number of current or former African American female college presidents, and an unpublished list of this population, participation and sample size was low. As such, it was difficult to provide robust insight as it relates to the lived experiences of African American

female college presidents in the United States during their trajectory to college presidency.

Second, because the sample size was small, the study findings may be limited in transferability.

Delimitations

Delimitations are the purposeful boundaries or limitations set by the researcher so that the study's aims and objectives are not unnecessarily skewed (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2018).

These limits can be related to items such as age, gender, or group membership (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). Theofanidis and Fountouki (2018) noted that "delimitations are mainly concerned with the study's theoretical background, objectives, research questions, variables under study and study sample" (p. 157). Delimitations for this study included race, gender, location, and current or previous job title. Participants in this study identified as African American women.

Additionally, they currently serve, or have previously served as a college president. Their service as college president took place at a community college or four-year institution with the United States.

Chapter Summary

Chapter 3 described the research design that was used to help readers better understand the chosen research method. A qualitative phenomenological research approach was best for this research as it explored the lived experiences, pathways, and success strategies utilized by current or former African American female college presidents in the United States (Grossoehme, 2014). This chapter also discussed the data collection, participant selection, instruments and procedures, trustworthiness and rigor, and finally data analysis. Chapter 4 will reveal the results of the research study.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this phenomenological qualitative research study was to describe the lived experiences, pathways, and successful strategies used during career trajectory by former or current African American female college presidents in the United States. Purposive and snowball sampling was used to select six to 10 African American women who were serving, or had served, as a college president at a community college, or 4-year institution, in the United States. The study utilized semistructured interviews and open-ended questions. The semistructured disposition of the interviews allowed for a rich understanding of the perspectives of current or former African American female college presidents related to their overall experience, roadblocks, mentorship and professional development impacts, and strategies and support systems utilized along their journey. The experiences of the participants will assist potential and aspiring African American female college presidents navigate the pathway to presidency.

Six African American female college presidents, or former presidents, agreed to participate in this study by completing in-depth interviews. The in-depth interviews were conducted via the online video and conference platform, Zoom. The interviews followed a semistructured interview protocol that consisted of 21 open ended questions that were intended to explore the lived experiences during their pathway to presidency. In Vivo, open, and axial coding were used to analyze the interviews and highlight the voices of the participants while give meaning to the data (Manning, 2017).

The purpose of Chapter 4 is to present the results of the study, with overarching themes and subthemes, that are supported by direct quotes and statements of significant value gathered by the semistructured interviews. The participants provided perspective and shared their lived experiences through their personal narratives. The participants' narratives were formed from

their own words through their personal reflection and storytelling. The presentation of this data will result in the answers to the research questions through an overview of the study's findings in Chapter 5.

Research Questions

The primary question for this study was the following: How do current or former African American female college presidents describe their lived experiences, pathways, and successful strategies used during career trajectory to college presidency? As such, four research questions were utilized to investigate the phenomenon.

RQ1: How do current or former African American female college presidents describe their experiences during their pathway to college presidency?

RQ2: Based on their lived experiences, how do current or former African American female college presidents perceive the impact of the Queen Bee phenomenon on their journey to college presidency?

RQ3: Based on their lived experiences, how did mentorship impact their pathway to a college presidency?

RQ4: Based on their lived experiences, what type of strategies, support services, and/or roadblocks do current or former African American female college presidents believe had an impact on their pathway to college presidency?

Participants

Purposive and snowball sampling was used to obtain a sample of six study participants. The sample population included six African American women who currently, or previously, held the title of President at a 4-year institution or community college within the United States. An email invitation was sent to potential participants whose contact information was published their

institution's website (see Appendix B). Potential participants whose contact information was not published on their institution's website were sent an identical message invitation via their professional LinkedIn profile. Additionally, those who received invitations were encouraged to share the email invitation with potential participants in their personal and professional network who met the study's preestablished criteria. In total, six current or former African American women agreed to participate in the study. The six participants were then sent a follow up email requesting their upcoming availability (see Appendix E) to schedule the Zoom interview and completion of the informed consent form (see Appendix F).

The study's six participants varied in credential type, years served, institution type, and United State region (see Table 1). All participants had a terminal degree. All but one participant served at an HBCU, and all but one participant served at a 4-year institution in a southern region of the United States. Length of time served in a presidential role ranged from less than 6 months to more than 10 years, and some participants served as president at more than once at different institutions. All but one participant was the first African American female to serve as president at their institution.

Table 1

Participant Demographics

Participant's assigned pseudonym	Highest academic credential	Years in presidential role	Type(s) of institution(s)	1st African American female president	U.S. region
Allison	Ph.D.	5-10 years	Private, HBCU	Yes	Midwest Southeast
Brenda	Ed.D.	5-10 years	Private, HBCU	Yes	Southwest
Carol	Ph.D.	1-5 years	Private	Yes	Northeast
Dorothy	Ed.D.	10+	Private, HBCU	Yes	South Southwest
Evelyn	D.S.W.	5-10	Public, HBCU	Yes	Southeast
Frances	Ph.D.	Less than 1 year	Private, HBCU	No	South

Review of Research Process

Once the participants responded to the invitation email confirming their willingness to participate, a follow-up email (see Appendix E) was sent providing suggested Zoom interview dates and times as well as a request to complete Consent Form (see Appendix F). Each interview lasted approximately 45–60 minutes and followed the interview protocol (see Appendix C) with semistructured interview questions. Participants were encouraged to elaborate often, and follow-up questions were used to solicit a more thorough and in-depth understanding of each participant's unique experiences. Each interview was conducted via Zoom and was audio and visually recorded. The recordings were then transcribed via the Zoom transcription service. Zoom maintains strict confidentiality of all data recordings and fulfills all ethical and IRB requirements. The audio/visual recordings and transcripts were saved as password protected files on my personal computer.

The video recordings, transcripts, and field notes were reviewed multiple times to identify common themes. First, In Vivo coding was used to highlight the actual spoken words of the participants through direct quotes. According to Saldana (2014), the words or phrases you select in the data “are those that seem to stand out as significant or summative of what is being said” (p. 17). Next, open coding was used to develop significant codes to classify the phenomenon. Open coding is intended to create concepts and broad thematic categorizations (Williams & Moser, 2019). Finally, axial coding was used to relate the data together to further uncover themes and subthemes (see Appendix F). Axial coding focuses on the alignment and categorization of apparent themes (Williams & Moser, 2019). All participants were assigned a pseudonym to maintain confidentiality.

Key Findings

Through a framework of intersectionality and Black feminist thought, the goal was to identify roadblocks and success strategies during the pathway to presidency to promote perseverance and self-empowerment for aspiring African American female college presidents. To aid in the understanding of the participant's experiences, the following section will present the findings of this study by first revealing overarching themes and subthemes that emerged during data analysis.

Data analysis of the lived experiences of former or current African American female college presidents revealed four overarching themes and two to three subthemes for each (see Table 2). At least three participants (50%) made statements that formed the basis for all four themes and subthemes. These themes and subthemes offered an in-depth understanding of the lived experiences of these women during their pathway to presidency.

Table 2

Overarching Themes and Subthemes

Overall positive experience	Roadblocks	Mentors/Professional development make an impact	Strategies and support systems
Internal Confidence, Commitment to Achievement, and Leadership	Queen Bees are Detrimental	Mentors are a critical need to success	Be an Intentional Game Changer
Saving Grace	Double Whammy: Race & Gender Discrimination	Mentoring comes from the heart	It Takes a Village
		National Leadership Development Workshops	Intentional partnerships

Overall Positive Experience

When thinking about their total pathway to college presidency, each participant reported having had an overall positive experience. While discussing factors that influenced their pathway, whether positive or negative, each woman discussed the following factors: (a) an internal confidence and commitment to achievement and leadership, and (b) their ability to utilize their caring and nurturing disposition to preserve a troubled institution.

Internal Confidence, Commitment to Achievement and Leadership. All six participants (100%) emphasized that their internal confidence, commitment to achievement, and natural-born leadership qualities positively impacted their pathway to presidency. The participants alluded to internal motivations that propelled their careers. They each made a personal commitment to themselves to excel academically and professionally to achieve the presidential role. Allison stated, “I was driven. I was very focused on what I wanted, and I knew that there were certain things that I had to learn that would set me apart from others.” Brenda echoed this feeling by stating, “I had grit and resilience to continue to pound towards the mark. We have to be brilliant and tenacious. We have to be better than good to get the presidential role.” Many of the participants believed that they had natural born leadership qualities and believed that if they further developed those qualities they would reach a presidential position. Like Allison and Brenda, Dorothy was committed achieving her goals and had built enough confidence within herself to take the steps towards college presidency. Dorothy stated, “It was as if I was meant to be a leader. I had a lot of organizational administrative talent. I did workshops. I was a great educator. I knew I had the skills to become a president.”

Evelyn relied heavily on her inner confidence when outside influences attempted to distract her from her goals by expressing doubt in her capabilities. Evelyn stated:

I am a very self-confident person. And I always say to women, if nobody else is going to toot your horn, you better be prepared to toot it yourself! Because if not, we begin to say “I can't do.” But from my perspective, there's nothing I can't do. And, I am a natural leader. I always had enough confidence to know I could do this.

Saving Grace. Over 67% of the participants reported that their caring and nurturing disposition as a woman, and/or their level of expertise in a particular area, allowed them serve as an institution's saving grace. These characteristics and abilities positively influenced their pathway to college presidency. More specifically, most of the women felt as though they were hired as president to nurture a college back to a healthy place after many years of failure. For example, as Brenda shared:

I was the first female. There was a lot of hype around that. And I was specifically saying to people, “I want to be a good president - who happens to be a woman”. I will share that, because I am a woman, the needs of my campus were met. It was an assignment for me because of my feminine characteristics to be a nurturer, and a caregiver, and a healer. That is what my campus needed at that time.

Most of the institutions that Allison joined in a presidential role were in a state of failure prior to her presence. Allison was hired to be the institutions' saving grace. The institutions were desperate to redeem themselves and knew that Allison would be the right fit based on her skill set. Allison shared her experiences saving a failing institution with accreditation issues. She stated:

When I went into the roles, they had accreditation problems. All three of them were on the verge of either losing their accreditation or being required by the regional accreditation association to make some quick changes or they were going to be put on

probation. So, all of the institutions were in trouble with accreditation. I became an accreditation expert and, they called me the game changer. People knew that when I went in, it was a most difficult work, but they knew that I would not fail in making the corrected changes that were needed to save the accreditation of the institutions thus saving the institutions.

Much like Brenda and Allison, Dorothy believed she was her institution's saving grace. Dorothy leaned on her soft disposition and innate female traits such as nurturance, empathy, and devotion to save a school that was floundering. Dorothy believe that while many male presidents are successful, it is not their innate ability to make an emotional connection to an institution. She believes this emotional connection is needed for ultimate success. Dorothy noted:

I think women see the institutions like a mother and a child. Nurturing, caring. A lot of us were not in this because we wanted the title of president. We were concerned about those students and the legacy. We seem to have a deeper, I'm not saying this is true for all men presidents, but we as women seem to have a deep desire to nurture those campuses. Like we would our children. And we would give up a lot to do that. And you could see the outcomes of our work. Women will come in and straighten things out. No nonsense.

We're not going to let our baby die. We're not going to let someone hurt this institution.

And we will do anything to save it.

Roadblocks

Though participants reported an overall positive experience on their pathway to presidency, they also reported roadblocks along their journey. Participants noted barriers such as the difficulty balancing familial and professional responsibility, or the lack of a terminal credential; however, two main subthemes amongst these roadblocks emerged: (a) Queen Bees

were detrimental to their success, and (b) they faced the double whammy of discrimination due to their race and gender.

Queen Bees are Detrimental. The Queen Bee Syndrome, introduced by researchers Staines, Tavis, and Jayaratne in 1970, is defined as the tendency of token women in senior positions, within a male-dominated environment, who sabotage or block other women's ascension in organizations in a demoralizing, undermining, or bullying manner (Allen & Flood, 2018; Ellemers et al., 2004; Harvey, 2018; Ramnund-Mansingh & Seedat-Khan, 2020).

Over 83% of the participants reported negative experiences with Queen Bees that they believe had an impact on their pathway to college presidency. Allison reported how a Queen Bee led to a demotion during her pathway to presidency. The sabotage, jealousy, and spitefulness she experienced cause a major setback during her career trajectory. A single Queen Bee was able to prolong Allison's ability to reach a presidential role. Allison stated:

A Queen Bee got me taken down as acting Vice President of Advancement and put back in the classroom. But, my contract had to be honored because I had tenure. So, I was put back in the classroom as a full professor. I call it encountering jealousy, cattiness, rather than women being supportive of women. They throw up the roadblocks.

Like Allison, Carol also reported the callousness set forth by Queen Bees during her pathway to presidency. Carol's experience with Queen Bees was emotionally draining and sometimes distracted her from her professional goals. The lack of a trusting environment and malicious intent Carol experienced caused her to self-isolate to protect her energy. Carol shared:

I had a Queen Bee who just could not stand me. She had always been the Queen Bee, but I came in with a level of excellence, and I was able to produce, and I was given power. Eventually she became one of my direct reports. She just could not stand it. I mean this

person is the wicked witch, and that took energy away from me. Like I said, I'm just one of those people, I don't even go into that space of meanness, you know? It took a lot of energy to deal with her. She was just sneaky. She would maneuver things and do things behind my back.

As a consequence of encountering Queen Bees, Dorothy felt as though she had to be overly cautious and meticulous in her work during her pathway to presidency. She stated, "I had to do double duty. I had to watch my back. I had to do the work myself." Dorothy believed that she could not depend on the other women in senior leadership positions to support her for fear of sabotage. Dorothy shared how one Queen Bee attempted to sabotage her on several occasions. She stated:

I had brought a woman from the Midwest with me that I felt like was really supportive. And she sabotaged me in several ways. Once she said, "Don't worry about the meeting with the Executive Committee. I'll have everything covered." When I went, it was just disgraceful. And of course, I am blamed for the incident. This same female took a call of a minister, a very prominent minister, who wanted me to speak at his church. I didn't know anything about it. She didn't tell me about it. Didn't put it on my calendar, but she put it on her calendar. She was planning to go and speak for me and me not to show up. This pastor called me on Friday just to check in. I said, "I'm sorry, what's happening Sunday?" He said, "Well, I spoke to your colleague and set this up." I said, "No one told me." He said, "You know, The Holy Spirit told me to call you and make sure everything was good." She had everything ready to be there except for me. So, my students would've noticed that I didn't show up. Those are examples of being sabotaged and I can give you story after story, after story like that.

The Double Whammy: Race and Gender Discrimination. All participants shared experiencing racist and sexist behaviors from others during their pathway to presidency. Unlike White women, or African American men, these African American female participants shared stories in which the intersectionality of their race and gender impacted their journey. The term intersectionality refers to the way in which social identity structures such as race, class, and gender intersect in a manner that creates life experiences that are often seen as oppressive (Gopaldas, 2013). Allison shared:

I always called it the double whammy. You would be questioned because of your race. And I always used to say, “What does the color of my skin have to do with my ability to perform?” Well it was there. You could go to a presidential search and you knew what the elephant in the room was. Your race. And if it was a black experience at an HBCU, your gender would be the elephant, because people wanted that male. At majority institutions, they wanted the white male and at the black institutions, they wanted the black male.

Brenda shared similar sentiments. She experienced both race and gender discrimination early in her career and well through her presidential profession. Brenda stated,

for me to sit here and say that my race has never been a hindrance to me would be unrealistic. It can be a barrier. And if you're not resilient, if you're not that person, then you won't make it.

Even as a college president, Brenda's experiences with racial discrimination did not subside. She shared:

I am unapologetically black. I say that in all circles, unapologetically. I like being a black woman. I'm very good at it. There have been instances where I have been treated poorly,

even as a President, there have been microaggressions against me because I am black. People say I am the President of the 'Black College.' It's also institutional as well. You can get in the door, or get the interview, but then you have to have something, as Beyoncé says, you have to have something to "Back it up." You can't just show up and say, "Hey, I'm a female, I'm a black woman." There's extra pressure on you to have these magic wands. That's where that term Black Girl Magic comes in. You have to get in there with your magic wands and perform all these things with high expectations.

Dorothy's experience with discrimination became overtly apparent as she sought a tenured track position during her pathway to presidency. She stated:

Historically, black females don't do traditional research in academia, but even when they do they're overlooked. So many black women, or just women, were bypassed for publications. Men had a buddy system where they bring somebody in to do a chapter so they could get tenure promotion.

Even after Dorothy achieved a presidential role, her accomplishments could not withstand discriminatory practices. Though Dorothy believed that she was her institution's saving grace, nurturing and caring for a campus in crisis, she was quickly replaced by a male once the campus made a turnaround. Dorothy stated, "They will come and get a woman now when they're in trouble. But as soon as the woman straightens the school out, they want to get rid of her and bring a man in."

Evelyn experienced race and gender discrimination as she began to seriously pursue the presidential pathway. When seeking nominations for a presidential role, she encountered many roadblocks. Evelyn stated:

I know the state system that I'm a part of, and I know the sexism that is real. Probably the sexism and racism. But the biggest impact is that the majority of men, particularly white males, nominate people who look like them and are the white males.

Frances discussed how her race and gender impacted her access to a mentor and his network. Frances made the decision to depart from societal norms for Black women in the workplace and participate in The Big Chop. According to Miche (2015), The Big Chop is the act of Black women cutting off their chemically straightened hair to reveal their true natural hair texture. Frances stated:

You know, when I think about racist stuff things happen all the time. I had one person who said that he was going to sponsor me, and mentor me, and introduce me to his whole network. And then I cut my hair and went natural. I did the big chop, and I thought it would look better if I colored it. So, it was kind like this lovely reddish-brown color. And I thought it was popping. When I saw him again after I cut my hair he literally said “Somethings is different. Oh my God! You changed your hair.” I never heard him again after that.

Frances believes that because she made the decision to step outside of societal and gender norms, by not hiding her natural hair texture with chemical treatments and hair extensions, she was no longer considered a worthy candidate to her potential mentor. Frances noted that a man's decision to cut his hair, or a White woman's decision to allow her natural texture of hair to show, would likely never lead to a professional roadblock.

Mentors/Professional Development Make an Impact

According to 100% of the participants, mentorship and professional development made a substantial impact during their pathway to presidency. All participants had relationships with

multiple mentors, and over 80% of the women participated in professional development opportunities. When analyzing the data, three subthemes emerged: (a) mentors are a critical need to success, (b) mentoring comes from the heart, and (c) Harvard's Institute for Management and Leadership Education provided the critical skills to prepare for presidency.

Mentors are a Critical Need to Success. All of the participants shared how mentorship propelled their career towards college presidency. All of the women believe that without such guidance, experiences, and opportunities, the open doors may not have existed. Allison asserted:

I think I would've been like a fish out of water. Sometimes just having someone who's been through what you've been through, who understands and who you know is not going to use it against you. If you share something in confidence with them, you know that they're giving you genuine advice because they want to see you succeed.

Brenda shared that her mentors helped her overcome self-doubt. At times, Brenda suffered from Imposter Syndrome. Imposter Syndrome is described as individual's self-doubt and fear of failure leading to the concern that others have overestimated their abilities and talents (McGee et al., 2021). Her mentors believed in her abilities and constantly reminded her that she was capable to serve in a presidential role. Brenda stated:

I have mentors in my life who inspire me, and who believe in me more than I believe in myself. I think that's very important because women can tend not to believe in yourself. Like the imposter syndrome. I surround myself with people who believe in me more than I believe in me. And that's been very helpful for me. They have provided me with constructive criticism while still encouraging me to be a president.

Carol shared similar sentiments. She noted that mentoring played a critical role in her journey to college presidency from the very beginning. Carol stated:

A mentor is everything for me! Mentoring started early with me. When I was an undergrad, my Dean was a mentor. Likewise, I had a faculty mentor when I did my MBA. And then throughout my career, I had an extraordinary cast of diverse mentors who have opened doors for me. So, they not only mentored, but they sponsored and coached. They've given me that next promotion. They've nominated me for training programs. They've talked to head hunters. I really have had a great experience with mentoring.

Evelyn also dissected how she views mentorship and its benefits. She divided the experience into three categories with three very different expected outcomes much like Carol. Evelyn shared:

I use three different definitions. Mentor, sponsor, and coach. So, a good coach knows the game and they are literally instructing you on what to do. Then I have sponsors who literally opened the door for me. Then I had mentors and people who literally walk alongside of me and allowed me to bounce off ideas and things with them.

Mentoring Comes From the Heart. Despite Thomas' (2002) warning against cross-race mentoring, and Kao's et al. (2014) belief that same-gender mentoring relationships had stronger and more positive effects, none of the participants considered race or gender when describing their ideal mentor. Instead, 67% of the participants shared that their most successful mentorship experiences were with mentors who had a genuine concern with their success and lead from the heart.

Allison stated, "Mentors can come in different colors. They can be male, female, whatever, because that mentoring comes from the heart. It's not a head attribute. It's a heart attribute." Dorothy, who attributes her successes to several mentors throughout her lifetime,

echoed Allison's sentiments. Her mentors varied in race and gender, but all presented a humble and genuine demeanor. Dorothy did not believe that the race or gender of her mentors had any impact on the strength of their relationship or her successes. Dorothy shared:

They had a mission in life, and it was very clear that their mission was giving back and helping. Not I'm this, and I'm that, putting themselves on a pedestal. They were just genuine people who cared about other people. People who made a commitment to make the world better. They were humble people powerful in their own rights, but they care deeply about helping the next generation. They were people that genuinely cared and nurtured and wanted the best for me. It didn't matter what the gender or race was. They were just good people that saw something in me that maybe I didn't see.

Frances' mentor's, coaches, and sponsor came from a variety of demographic classes as well. However, the common denominator was their heart. When soliciting for mentorship, Evelyn never considered race or gender before approaching a potential mentor. Evelyn stated:

I've had African American mentors, both male and female. I've had white females and black females to be mentors and coaches and sponsors. Are they good leaders? Do they support me? You know what I mean? Are they good people? You can learn from anybody with a good heart and a desire to see you succeed.

Carol shared her experiences with several types of mentors from several different racial identities. She believes that multiple mentors are needed to meet different needs within each mentor/mentee relationship. When focusing solely on race and/or gender, you are limiting the opportunity to find a match to your particular needs. Carol noted, "I have a constellation of mentors and they all look different: white, Asian, black, female, male. I've been open to that. No one person can be the perfect mentor. I have very different mentors for different needs." While

all of Carol's mentor relationships were beneficial, she did note that the relationship with her Black female mentor was different. She believed that the connection with her Black female mentor was slightly more authentic. Unlike in her other mentor/mentee relationships, Carol did not have to code shift. According to Boulton (2016), code shifting /switching is the speaker's perceived need to modify their vocabulary to better accommodate the expectations of their listeners. Code switching is often used by people from urban, bilingual, or underrepresented populations (Boulton, 2016). Carol shared, "I can bring my best self. I don't have to code-shift. Right? She understands my journey and where I'm coming from."

National Leadership Development Workshops. Over 80% of the participants noted that national professional development workshops had a positive impact on their pathway to college presidency. Professional development workshops geared specifically for aspiring college presidents that addressed topics such as fundraising, student affairs, and legal issues were noted as key opportunities. More specifically, over 60% of the women noted how critical their participation in Harvard's Institute for Management and Leadership in Education was during their pathway to presidency. Brenda noted:

I did go to Harvard and that has worked for me very well. That was a great experience for me. I went there as a Vice President to participate in their management development program. They have several of them now, with different tracks, but all leading to senior leadership positions in higher ed. I did take advantage of that. That was definitely a plus for me in my pathway to the president. Definitely. Harvard prides itself on bringing great minds together. So, it's a cohort model, and you spend the summer there and you stay in the residence halls. You have these real-life case studies that address things from the student affairs aspect, academic affairs, faculty relations, security, infusing technology,

how to be innovative, critical thinking, etcetera. You're working on these things with your cohort. You're learning from each other. Great minds coming together. That is the beauty of the cohort model. So that curriculum was around building your muscle and your skills on how you would deal with leadership challenges – how to navigate being a senior leader.

Like Brenda, Carol listed the workshops and curriculum she believed was critical to her success. Carol stated:

My first formal conference was the Big 10 Leadership Consortium for people who are on the pathway. So, I did the Big 10, and that was where I really started to think about the college presidency. I did the Georgetown/Arizona State Innovation program as well. And then I did the Harvard Institute for Management and Leadership in Education post-grad program. Another thing that really opened up is I had the opportunity to sit on a presidential search committee. So, I got to see what it takes. Remember, I'm a business school professor by training with the MBA. So, in the grand scheme of things, if you look at the world that I grew up in, I already had the skill set to know what it takes to be a CEO, right? The higher ed focus was extremely helpful. I understand finances and corporate strategy and marketing, but seeing it from the higher education spin was needed. Understanding what it means to be the Chief Academic Officer, such as meeting Provosts. Or looking at the finances and understanding how you translate corporate Fortune 500 companies' finances to a university's finances. I thought that was relevant. Advancement and fundraising were good ones. Understanding External Affairs was another good one. Learning about Student Affairs and learning about Athletics was helpful too. I was exposed to all of those things in the Big 10 Leadership Program as

well. With regards to the Georgetown/Arizona State program, that one was a little bit different, whereas it consistently focused on innovation. Focused on new college models and how to be innovative. Those things, coupled with traditional functions, really prepared me for my current role.

Frances shared her experience with several national leadership development opportunities as well. Frances noted that her presidential preparation, in conjunction with her teaching development, better positioned her to become a scholar practitioner. Frances shared:

I think that the professional development opportunities should be required. Harvard was really helpful. The Journalism, Leadership and Diversity program that I did was helpful as well. Also, the HBCU Executive Leadership Institute that Clark Atlanta has was helpful during my pathway. I think those three formal educational pieces really helped. I came up through the academic ranks, and I earned it at my institution where I began as Assistant Professor. So, having been an assistant, associate, a full, I completed the academic trajectory, right? I had published books. I had published a few, I'm not really good at publishing research journal articles, but I did books, chapters, a couple of research journal articles. I have created a reputation as someone who is a connector between industry and the academy.

Dorothy did not participate in the Harvard experience, but did attend a national professional development conference with Yale. Dorothy noted:

I didn't do the Harvard Institute. But there was this wonderful experience at Yale for Presidents that dealt with the classic writings. We would read all of the classical writings and then come and discuss and do case studies and critical incidents. And it was just a wonderful learning experience. And it also helped us to bond with colleagues around the

nation from all types of schools. In fact, I think I was the only African American there. But there were people from just about every college and university and you got to know them and it was just a great experience. People were surprised that I didn't go to Harvard, but I chose not to.

Strategies and Support Systems

Though many participants reported their experiences with several types of roadblocks during their pathway to presidency, they also reported key success strategies and support systems they utilized along their journey. Three main subthemes amongst strategies and support systems emerged: (a) be an intentional game changer, (b) it takes a village to successfully navigate the presidential pathway, and (c) make intentional partnerships.

Be an Intentional Game Changer. Over 50% of the participants reported that they identified a specific requirement or skill that the industry needed in a president and worked towards becoming a subject matter expert in that area.

Allison shared her experience as the accreditation expert. She was able to secure three presidential roles because of her expertise in the subject area. Allison stated:

I became an accreditation expert, and they called me the game changer. People knew that when I went in, it was a most difficult work, but they knew that I would not fail in making the corrected changes that were needed to save the accreditation of the institutions thus saving the institutions. For an example, at Institution A, they were put on Show-Cause accreditation, which is the worst accreditation that an institution could ever have. And I brought it back from Show-Cause to full accreditation. And in the case of Institution B, they were on probation. Institution B was on the verge of losing its accreditation, and it had never had full accreditation status until I went there. I brought it

from being on probation back to full accreditation status. The difference between being on probation that was under the Southern Association for Colleges and Schools (SACS) and being on Show-Cause is with the Higher Learning Commission (HLC). I was familiar with both because I was the subject matter expert. When an institution is placed on Show-Cause, it's almost like they have to apply for accreditation all over again. They not only have to prepare that self-study, but they have to prepare the documents just like they would do, or they did, when they were initially accredited. So, we had to prepare at Institution A about 3,000 pages. Then, before the site visit team came in, we had to prepare another 3,000 pages. So, it was about 6,000 pages before we were finished. But I am known as an accreditation expert, so they knew I was capable and up for the challenge.

Frances explained how she was able to match all of her previous experiences, whether direct or indirect, to presidential job descriptions. She focused less on previous job descriptions and instead focused on specific skills and the impact that she could make with those skills.

Frances stated:

Use everything. There's nothing that you experience that you won't be able to use. Working with students in the classroom, you understand the key purpose of most colleges. You understand research, whether you're at a teaching institution versus an R1 going after grants and contracts. You use that. Experiences you have as a faculty member, advising students and student orgs is going to prepare you to work with other faculty, to support them in their journey, to work with students and support them in their journey. You pull that from your experiences as a teacher. You pull your experiences as a fundraiser when you have to apply for a grant, right? Meaning what that institution says

that they want to do and matching it with what you're trying to do and finding that sweet spot. It's the same thing if you're talking to an individual donor. When you're talking with an alum, you want them to come talk to your class. You're learning how to pull them in with their time. And when you're asking for someone to teach a course with you, you're asking for their talent. And when you're like, "Hey, can you help sponsor a kid to go to a conference?" Now you just did fundraising, and you got some of their treasure. So, you literally pull something from every single aspect. And when you look at college presidency job descriptions, you need to take a step back, right? And look at your experiences and literally do a brain dump on all those different things. Like managing a budget. Even if you've only done grant work. You've managed a budget. You need to write about what that was like. You know, you are required to work a board of trustees. Have you worked with advisory boards? Have you ever presented to a board of trustees? But I think one of the things that people do is they take their vita and they throw it down like they're just applying for a teaching job or applying for a regular staff position. They don't have a functional resume that tells a story of how what they have accomplished matches what the presidency calls them to do. And so, if you list down that you've been a department chair, but you haven't explained your department chair into all the criterion that people want you to have in terms of what you're going to do as a president or what the qualifications are, then you've missed an opportunity to tell them why those experiences are transferable experiences into this new scope of work. You can't just present a vita. You have to make a functional resume and a functional cover letter that says, here are all the qualities they said that they want. They say they want somebody innovative. Well your cover letter has to state examples of how you're an expert in

innovation and it resulted in this impact on student success, this impact on fundraising, this impact on retention, this impact on better efficiencies and operations. You have to be intentional in telling your story. Not just I was department chair.

Aligned with Allison and Frances' strategies, Carol positioned herself to be an asset to potential universities. She worked hard, with a specific learning orientation, to become overly familiar with institutional needs. Carol said it was her goal to have "strategic assignments where I made a difference." Dorothy focused on fundraising. During her pathway to presidency, Dorothy realized that most successful presidents were also superb fundraisers. Dorothy shared:

I thought of strategies for fundraising tied into strategic plans. You've got to have a fundraiser as a president. And in the interview I told them all of their challenges and I also told them all the opportunities and how I would transform the school through my ability to fundraise.

It Takes a Village. While all of the participants successfully achieved college presidency in their own right, 50% of the participants noted the importance of care from their village of supporters. Additional support came from sources like spouses, family, neighbors, colleagues, and church members. Carol shared:

My husband has two philosophies. One, he's been supportive of my career. Any career aspiration, he finds a way to make it work. There were times when I wanted to take off and he discouraged me from taking breaks off of in my career. Because if you take breaks off, it's difficult to start back up. Second, my husband's thing is "I'm going support you, but you also have to find a way to outsource the cast." Right. So, you know, "I'm going to support you, but I'm not going to cook dinner. I'm going support you, but you need to find good childcare." I had great childcare. When my youngest was born, I had the same

nanny up until she was 15. I raised my kids in a village of other black women professionals where we had trade-offs. When the job in New York came up, and my daughter decided she did not want to go to New York schools. But she said “Mom, I don't want be a roadblock for you and your career. This New York job is a great opportunity. So instead, may I go to boarding school?” So, I had a New York job opportunity that was there. That was an extraordinary opportunity. And so, we had three paths: does my daughter join us in New York? Does she go to boarding school, or does she stay in our current location? Remember I said they had that village, and several people in the village said “You go take the New York job. Your daughter can live with us.” My husband strongly wanted her to do boarding school and that's where she ended up. The boarding school was three years of a transformational experience for her. But knowing that village supported us and gave us options was extremely touching.

Evelyn shared a similar narrative. She believed her support system of colleagues helped to drive her career in a positive direction. Evelyn stated:

What probably propelled my career is my support system. Some that were visible and active in my life, and some that were behind the scenes that I didn't even know. One day I asked some of my colleagues who worked out of this system, “So how did my name get called for college presidency?” And they said, “Well, Evelyn, your name came up because you hosted the first Diversity Institute for the whole system. Your name came up because you applied for that other position. We knew you were interested and we wanted to support you.” The white male that I said told me to go to the school in Georgia and follow the president around, he became an interim president in the system and he worked in the system office. There was a position that was open at a 2-year school that was

converting to a four year. I did not want the position. I was not interested in going, but he told me to apply. I went and drove through that town and it was one of the most racist towns I had ever seen. It had been a military school. You know, they're wearing confederate attire and all of this. So, I was like, "Oh no, no, no." But he said "Apply, so at least they'll know that you're interested in becoming a president." If it weren't for his support, I might have a part of the presidential candidate pool.

Brenda also shared a similar sentiment. Her support system was vast and she believed all of them helped her in some way during her pathway to college presidency. When asked what type of support Brenda believed impacted her career trajectory, Brenda stated, "The support of my family. Hands down, my husband, my children, my sister, my parents, hands down. People believing in me more than I believe in myself."

Intentional Partnerships. In addition to being an intentional game changer, 50% of the participants noted that many of the roadblocks experienced during their pathway to presidency were overcome by their ability to create intentional partnerships. These intentional partnerships were meant to create a sense of community, belonging, and success.

Allison curated a professional group of current and former African American female college presidents. The purpose of the group is to increase the number of well-prepared African American women who are college presidents, chancellors, or CEOs. Through these intentional partnerships, the group intends to provide training, technical assistance, and mentoring support for potential and new African American female college president, chancellors, and CEOs.

Allison stated:

So, organizing this group of women, I found about almost 75 of us. Bringing them together was a 20-year goal. My goal is to see women esteem women more and encourage them and understand that it is our duty to reach back and help somebody else.

Carol also spoke to the idea of intentional partnerships. Carol's intentional partnerships were made with women, even Queen Bees, that could provide mutually beneficial outcomes.

Carol shared:

I am always partnering with women from all different backgrounds, but especially women of color to make sure they're successful in their career. I really do try to understand where people are coming. The Queen Bees are not sure of themselves. It's not about you. It's about their own problems that they have. But, I've also tried the partner and to be an asset to their career also. I ask what else can I do for you and your career?

This is a win-win situation. I help them, and they back off of me.

Dorothy shaped intentional partnerships by creating community amongst her professional colleagues. She implemented activities that encouraged belonging and inclusion. Dorothy stated:

I had retreats to try to get people to feel like we were a community. We would have prayer any time we started meetings, being a religious institution. I would always recognize birthdays. I would give parties for Christmas. You know, things like that just to build community.

Summary

Chapter 4 was introduced by reviewing the purpose of this study and reiterating the four research questions. Next, the method for data collection and analysis were reviewed. From the four overarching research questions, four themes and 10 subthemes emerged. All themes and subthemes were described in detail. Chapter 5 provides a discussion of the findings, implications,

limitations of the study, and recommendations for future research through the lens of the theories of intersectionality and Black feminist thought.

Chapter 5: Summary, Discussion, Recommendations, and Conclusions

The purpose of this phenomenological qualitative research study was to describe the lived experiences, pathways, and successful strategies used during career trajectory by former or current African American female college presidents in the United States. Leadership diversity is a critical need in higher education (Virick & Greer, 2012). However, only 5% of United States college presidents are represented by women of color (Gagliardi et al., 2017). There is limited research available that explores the experiences of African American women in higher education leadership positions, especially at the presidential level. Leadership research focused on gender and race almost exclusively looks at White women or Black men, but rarely Black women (Livingston, 2013). Through a lens of intersectionality and Black feminist thought, the goal of the study was to identify perceived roadblocks and success strategies utilized during the pathway to presidency of African American women to promote perseverance and self-empowerment for aspiring African American female college presidents (Collins, 2000; Davis & Brown, 2017; Gopaldas, 2013; Moradi & Grzanka, 2017; Stitt & Happel-Parkins, 2019).

Summary of the Study

This study followed a qualitative research design. Purposive and snowball sampling was used to identify six African American women who were serving, or had served, as a college president at a community college, or 4-year institution, in the United States. The study utilized semistructured interviews held via Zoom. The video recordings, transcripts, and field notes were reviewed multiple times to code the data and identify common themes.

Background of the Study

In 2019, approximately 13.4% of the United States population identified as African American. Of the African American population, over 50% identify as female (Census.gov,

2019). On the contrary, only 5% of United States college presidents identify as women of college amongst the 4,000 college presidents in the United States (American Council on Education, 2017). These statistics do represent a growth in diversification amongst United States college presidents; however, when compared to their White female counterparts, who represent 30% of college presidencies in the United States, the disparity of African American women in presidential leadership roles is clear (Seltzer, 2017).

Many researchers contend that there are a multitude of barriers that prevent African American women from achieving presidential roles in higher education (Beckwith et al., 2016; Jackson & Harris, 2007; Whitehead, 2017). These barriers include matters such as remnants of racial and gender discrimination as well as the lack of mentorship opportunities (Beckwith et al., 2016; Jackson & Harris, 2007; Whitehead, 2017). Additional researchers posit that the Queen Bee Syndrome, or the practice of high-powered women who overlook other women for promotion due to low gender identification and a threatened social identity, lend to this problem as well (Derks et al., 2011).

Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

The purpose of this phenomenological qualitative research study was to describe the lived experiences, pathways, and successful strategies used during career trajectory by former or current African American female college presidents in the United States.

Four research questions guided this study:

RQ1. How do current or former African American female college presidents describe their experiences during their pathway to college presidency?

RQ2. Based on their lived experiences, how do current or former African American female college presidents perceive the impact of the Queen Bee phenomenon on their journey to college presidency?

RQ3. Based on their lived experiences, how did mentorship impact their pathway to a college presidency?

RQ4. Based on their lived experiences, what type of strategies, support services, and/or roadblocks do current or former African American female college presidents believe had an impact on their pathway to college presidency?

Review of the Research Design and Methodology

A qualitative study design was used to identify the experiences, pathways, and successful strategies used during career trajectory by former or current African American female college presidents in the United States. Data were collected from six current or former African American female college president participants and then analyzed. The primary method to secure the data within this study was in-depth internet-based Zoom interviews. The transcripts from each interview were reviewed and coded for data analysis. From the coded data, recurring patterns and themes were revealed. The recurring themes established the basis for the description of the findings.

Summary of Major Findings

The results of the study are outlined by each research question.

Research Question 1. Research question 1 examined how current or former African American female college presidents describe their experiences during their pathway to college presidency. The following were the findings:

- Overall positive experience

- Internal confidence, commitment to achievement, and commitment to leadership led to success
- Served as the institution's saving grace

Research Question 2. Research question 2 examined how current or former African American female college presidents perceived the impact of the Queen Bee Syndrome on their pathway to college presidency. The following were the findings:

- Queen Bees are detrimental to professional success

Research Question 3. Research question 3 examined how mentorship had an impact on current or former African American female college presidents' pathway to presidency. The following were the findings:

- Mentors are a critical need to success
- Ideal mentors are not based on gender and/or race. Mentoring comes from the heart
- In addition to mentoring, professional development experiences are imperative

Research Question 4. Research question 4 examined the success strategies, support services, and roadblocks experienced by African American female college presidents. The following were the findings:

- Strategy - Be an intentional game changer
- Strategy - Make intentional partnerships
- Strategy - A large support system is critical
- Roadblock - Race and gender discrimination
- Roadblock - Queen Bees

Discussion and Conclusion of Findings

The qualitative research study identified overall experiences, success strategies, support services, and roadblocks experienced by current or former African American female college presidents during their pathway to college presidency. With an eye to intersectionality and Black feminist thought, as it relates to the research data, the overall conclusion for this study is that African American female college presidents still experience the intersectionality of racial and gender discrimination, with most gender discrimination coming from other women. However, to overcome these roadblocks, the African American female college presidents implemented the following success strategies to achieve college presidency: (a) cultivated intentional skill set, (b) cultivated intentional relationships with other women, (c) created a network of genuine mentors, and (d) participated in national professional development opportunities geared specifically for aspiring college presidents.

Research Question 1

How do current or former African American female college presidents describe their experiences during their pathway to college presidency?

Overall, the participants shared that they had a positive experience during their pathway to college presidency. While racial discrimination, gender discrimination, and Queen Bees did impede their trajectory, the participants noted two major factors that subdued these barriers overall.

First, each participant talked about their internal confidence and commitment to achievement and leadership despite the odds stacked against them. One participant stated, “I always knew I was meant to be a leader. I knew I had the skill set. Nothing could stop me.” The findings suggest that inner confidence can be related to career success. Historically, women have

shown more self-doubt about their job performance and careers than men (Kay & Shipman, 2014). However, according to Kay and Shipman (2014), “Success, it turns out, correlates just as closely with confidence as it does with competence” (p. 7). Internal confidence, or self-esteem, is derived from how a person views her performance and how a person believes she is perceived by others (Orenstein, 2000). People often determine others abilities based on cues such as nonverbal behavior, appearance, or style of speaking (Anderson et al., 2012). According to Anderson et al. (2012), “individuals are perceived as more competent when they express their ideas more, appear more confident in their answers, and exhibit a calmer and more relaxed demeanor” (p. 6). Thus, one can conclude that the confidence exhibited by the participants led to other’s believing in their competence and ability to serve in a leadership capacity. Much like the tenants of Black feminist thought, the participants relied on their internal confidence as a means to resist the institutional challenges they faced (Armstrong, 2007).

Second, many of the participants felt as though they were hired as president to nurture a college back to a healthy place after many years of failure. One participated stated, “Because I am a woman, the needs of my campus were met. They needed someone who was a nurturer, and a caregiver, and a healer.” They believed that these conventional expectations were based on gender and racial stereotypes. These findings suggest that though racial and gender stereotypes typically have a negative connotation, sometimes these stereotypes can be seen as advantageous. Typically, women are stereotyped to be sympathetic, gentle, passive, and nurturing (Crites et al., 2015). As a result, it is assumed that gender also impacts leadership style (Crites et al., 2015). Women are often seen as people-oriented leaders (Crites et al., 2015; Gartzia & Baniandres, 2016). People-oriented leaders frequently engage in actions such as supporting, empowering, and developing (Gartzia & Baniandres, 2016; Northouse, 2007; Yukl, 2012).

According to the Society for Personality and Social Psychology (2020), intersectionality impacts stereotypes of those with various marginalized identities. In addition to the general female stereotypes, the participants were able aware of the intersectionality of their racial identity. Much like the mammy caricature of the 1900s, these participants were also expected to be loyal, safe, and faithful workers who were lasered focused on the wellbeing and care of the students at their respective institutions (Pilgrim, 2000). Though Black feminist thought warns Black women against taking on this type of image, being accepting of these expected characteristics led to favorable career outcomes for the participants.

Research Question 2

Based on their lived experiences, how do current or former African American female college presidents perceive the impact of the Queen Bee Syndrome on their pathway to college presidency?

Overall, the research participants found that the Queen Bee Syndrome was pervasive and occasionally detrimental to their success during their pathway to college presidency. The participants shared that more often than not, when attempting to curate relationships with their female colleagues, they were faced with jealousy and competition. They also discussed the sabotage and discouragement they experienced when dealing with Queen Bees. One participant stated, “A Queen Bee got me taken down as acting Vice President of Advancement and put back in the classroom.” Another participant stated that a Queen Bee was jealous of the participant because of her level of excellence and power. She went on to note that dealing with this type of jealousy and malice was detrimental to her mental and emotional health. Another participant noted that she never experienced this type of devious behavior from men. In fact, most of her professional support came from men during her career trajectory.

The encounters that the participants had with Queen Bees included insecurity of the Queen Bee, competitive behaviors, superfluous malice, and career interference. This aligns with the findings from the research literature that suggests aspirant female leaders experience difficulties building and maintaining positive relationships with other women (Allen & Flood, 2018). Almost 70% of women who participate in bullying in the workplace target other women due to relational aggression and power struggles (Allen & Flood, 2018). The Queen Bee behavior, comprised of bullying, sabotage, and demoralization, is intended create a specific impediment to professional advancement of other women (Allen & Flood, 2018; Ellemers et al., 2004; Harvey, 2018; Ramnund-Mansingh & Seedat-Khan, 2020).

Research Question 3

Based on their lived experiences, how did mentorship impact their pathway to a college presidency?

All of the participants revealed that mentors were a critical component to their professional success and impacted their career trajectory in a positive manner. Many of the participants believed that they may not have been as successful without the guidance and leadership of a mentor. One participant noted that she would have been a fish out of water had she not had a mentor. The participants shared that the relationships with their mentors opened doors and opportunities for them that may have otherwise been closed. The participants' descriptions of the impact of mentorship on their career trajectory echoed Ensher and Murphy's (1997) assertion that mentoring is positively related to career success for the protégé.

Many of the participant's mentors were serving, or had served, as an administrator within higher education. The direct experiences of the mentors allowed each participant specific insight into the explicit characteristics and job skills needed to be a successful university administrator.

The participants' feedback also aligned with Hill and Wheat's (2019) belief that the most valuable benefits of mentoring during career trajectory was receiving encouragement and support, receiving specific career advice, and receiving specific advice on skills and/or training. One participant stated that her mentor incessantly encouraged her to apply for presidential roles, critiqued her shortcoming, and provided her with valuable tools to fill her knowledge gaps. The mentor's goal was to ensure that the participant was fully prepared in all aspect of the role. The participant said, "He has always encouraged me to be a President, but he would also critique me. I used to wear my emotions on my sleeve. He would tell me you cannot be a president without a poker face."

When describing their ideal mentor, the participants shared that the race and/or gender of their mentor did not have an impact on their relationship or career trajectory. Their statements are in contrast of the contemporary literature that argues that similarity in race and gender are important to consider when pairing mentors and mentees (Crutcher, 2014; Ensher & Murphy, 1997). One participant shared, "I have a constellation of mentors and they all look different: white, Asian, black, female, male. I have been open to that."

The participants did not find it difficult to identify mentorship opportunities. In fact, each participant noted that they had several mentors over the course of their career. These findings contradict Blake-Beard et al. (2006) claimed that "people of color may find it difficult to access mentors of any type and when they do, they must overcome critical barriers within the relationship such as differences in race, gender, job level, function/profession or organizational culture" (p. 12). The participants were open to mentorships from all demographics, and instead were focused on access to increased knowledge bases, deeper relationships with different

populations, and expanded networks. This supports the assertion that cross-cultural mentor relationships create pathways to inclusion (Crutcher, 2014).

Participants also described their ideal mentors as a person whom they trusted had a genuine heart to serve in a mentor capacity and held a true desire to see their mentee succeed. And, more often than not, the participants' mentors believed in them more than the participants believed in themselves. This type of affirmation gave the participants the boost in confidence that was needed to pursue the next level in their careers. One participant shared, "I surround myself with people who believe in me more than I believe in me. And that's been very helpful for my career." This depiction supports Johnson and Smith's (2018) statement that perceptual and behavioral affirmation are imperative and influential during the mentoring relationship. Johnson and Smith (2018) stated, "A mentor must earn trust, be accessible, and listen generously. Here is the key: Once a mentee's ideal self becomes clear, the mentor must consistently endorse the mentee's vision" (para. 3).

The relationships between the participants and their mentors were based on a feeling of trust. One participant talked about the ease of her relationship with her mentor because she trusted him to provide her with genuine advice. She stated, "I trusted him to be honest with me because we had established a friendship. I knew that he genuinely cared for my well-being and success and would give me honest feedback." This illustrates Brinkman et al.'s (2018) postulation that positive mentoring relationships should possess four major categories: (a) development of positive relationships, (b) integrity and trustworthiness, (c) perceived support, and (d) role-modeling.

Surprisingly, in addition to critical mentorship opportunities, most participants also attributed their success to the professional development opportunities that their mentors

encouraged them to participate in, specifically the Harvard Institute for Management and Leadership in Education. These findings suggest that while mentorship is critical to career success, engaging in national or local professional development opportunities to supplement this support is also helpful (Antley, 2020). Professional development expands your knowledge base, boosts confidence and credibility, increases hireability, and opens doors to future career opportunities (Antley, 2020). Aligned with the oppressive behavior of intersectionality, unlike privileged and affluent populations, marginalized populations do not frequently have access to development opportunities (Wright & Chan, 2022).

Research Question 4

Based on their lived experiences, what type of strategies, support services, and/or roadblocks do current or former African American female college presidents believe had an impact on their pathway to college presidency?

There is extensive research that describes the roadblocks faced by African American women during career trajectory. The findings confirmed that racial discrimination, gender discrimination, and Queen Bees continue to hinder careers ascension as discussed in previous sections (Gopaldas, 2013; Harvey, 2018; Moradi & Grzanka, 2017).

What is not regularly researched are the success strategies and support services utilized to overcome said roadblocks. The findings in the research suggest three strategies utilized by African American female college presidents during their pathway to presidency: 1) be an intentional game changer by identifying a specific requirement or skill that the industry needs in a president and works towards becoming a subject matter expert in that area; 2) engage in intentional partnerships meant to create a sense of community, belonging, and success; and 3) rely on support from sources like spouses, family, neighbors, colleagues, and church members.

Many of the participants talked how it was imperative for them to learn more about accreditation and fundraising to set them apart from other presidential candidates. According to the American Council on Education (2016), almost 60% of college president reported that most of their time spent as president revolved around fundraising for the institution. However, most first-time presidents do not have a clear understanding or experience with central aspects of fundraising or managing development operations (Jones, 2015). Taking an unprecedented approach, and positioning themselves in an unfamiliar territory that gives them competitive advantage, these women confirm Collins' (2002) idea that self-definition and self-valuation are essential to coping with the simultaneity of oppression they experience. Self-valuation is a constructive prioritization of a growth mindset perspective that seeks to learn and improve (Metz et al., 2022).

Second, emersion in intentional communities found within partnerships, family, neighbors, and church are supported by the Black feminist thought that encourages Black women to create "safe spaces" where they feel free to present their true self (Collins, 2000). According to Collins (2000), "In order for an oppressed group to continue to exist as a viable social group, the members must have spaces where they can express themselves apart from the hegemonic or ruling ideology" (p. 4). These safe spaces can function within informal relationships such as family, church, and professional organizations (Collins, 2000).

Implications for Practice

The findings of this study can be utilized by aspiring African American female college presidents, current university governing bodies or boards, and university human resource professionals within the United States higher education system to identify and implement strategies that better support aspirant college presidents. The implications of this study may

facilitate discussions that further reduce racial and gender discrimination, create resources for aspiring college presidents, encourage additional mentorship participation, and further develop professional development opportunities that better support underrepresented populations. I recommend the following based on the research study findings:

- Require contemporary unconscious bias training for persons responsible for hiring college presidents such as trustees and governing systems.
- Create institutional Employee Resource Groups for female employees that cultivate a community of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging.
- Create institutional mentorship programs for mid-level faculty and staff members that connect them with senior administrators and their networks on a consistent basis.
- Create national professional development opportunities that mirrors Harvard's Institute for Management and Leadership Education with curriculum such a managing organizational change, fundraising, innovative technology, and managing institutional culture specifically for aspirant African American female college presidents.

Contemporary Unconscious Bias Training

As noted by Hirsh and Cha (2017), “the most popular method of reducing bias and enhancing equity in the workplace is by making workplace decision makers and evaluators aware of their conscious and unconscious biases through training and education” (p. 45).

Contemporary unconscious bias training that not only increases the awareness of bias and its impact, but also teaches participants how to manage their biases, modify their behaviors, and track their progress is the most affective type of unconscious bias training (Gino & Coffman, 2021). Unconscious bias refers to the unconscious attitudes and stereotypes that impact our understanding, actions, and decisions in an oblivious way (Suveren, 2022).

These biases can be seen in the workplace through discriminatory behaviors such as racism, sexism, and ageism (Suveren, 2022). For example, a hiring panel may favor a male candidate over a female candidate even though they have identical job skills and experience. This favor can be attributed to the unconscious bias that some may have towards women leading them to believe that women are less capable, less committed to work, and therefore less worthy of the position.

To combat this type of discriminatory behavior, unconscious bias training that includes the tools required to reduce bias is needed. Patricia Devine (2012) and her colleagues at University of Wisconsin conducted a longitudinal study in which participants were given strategies that not only assisted in identifying their unconscious bias, but also included strategies that could be used to break these prejudice habits. These strategies included calling out stereotyped views, gathering more individualized information about people, reflecting on counter stereotypical examples, adopting the perspectives of others, and increasing interactions with a diverse group of people (Gino & Coffman, 2021). According to Devine et al. (2012), participants that were given concrete tactics to reduce prejudice behavior generated through unconscious bias were “more likely to interact with Black strangers, were more likely to report noticing bias and to label it as wrong, and, two years later, were more likely to confront bias in others” (p. 20).

Institutional Employee Resource Groups

Employee Resources Groups (ERGs) are employee-led groups within an organization whose goals is to cultivate a diverse and inclusive workplace in alignment with the organization they serve (Hastwell, 2020). Originally introduced in the 1960s, ERGs have evolved to safe place groups that discuss issues such as racial tension, gender inequality, and contemporary political issues (Hastwell, 2020). ERGs are effective in improving work conditions for alienated

workers, bringing employees together in a safe place, identifying and developing leaders, and lowering the change of suppressed frustrations (Hastwell, 2020).

In a study conducted by Seegmiller Renner et al. (2022), the researchers aimed to demonstrate how an ERG at the Mayo Clinic positively influenced leadership development focusing on growth, resilience, inspiration, and tenacity amongst women. The case study measured the impact the ERGs curriculum and interventions through bi-weekly and annual standardized surveys sent to group members (Seegmiller Renner et al., 2022). The results confirmed that the ERG was successful in promoting, educating, and empowering the Mayo Clinic female members while breaking down the barriers that can prevent women from obtaining leadership positions (Seegmiller Renner et al., 2022).

Institutional Mentorship Programs

Formal mentorship programs at an organizational or institutional level can serve as effective on the job training when value is placed on mentorship impact and organizational benefits (Giacumo et al., 2020). Formal mentorship programs provide a strategic approach to meeting organizational needs, further develop organizational capacity, and improve work performance and motivation (Giacumo et al., 2020). Additionally, formal mentorship programs provide highly contextualized professional development opportunities to individuals that facilitate attainment of new skills, decrease goal ambiguity, and support retention motives (Giacumo et al., 2020).

In a study conducted by Efstathiou et al. (2018), a formal mentorship program was developed for junior faculty members at Massachusetts General Hospital. The formal program matched junior and veteran faculty members, provided three formal training sessions with a formalized action plan, and regular informal meetings to discuss best practices and joint

expectations over the course of nine months (Efstathiou et al., 2018). The results of the study confirmed that participants “derived both short-term and long-term benefits in comparison to faculty who did not. Mentees reported subjective improvements in their productivity and satisfaction in many areas, and demonstrated higher objective achievement than controls” (p. 6). Additionally, after long term follow, it was determined that the mentees were more likely to be in senior faculty positions despite their initial administrative rank when compared to non-participants (Efstathiou et al., 2018).

Professional Development Opportunities for Women

Professional development expands your knowledge base, boosts confidence and credibility, increases hireability, and opens doors to future career opportunities (Antley, 2020). Formal professional development programs like Harvard’s Institute for Management and Leadership Education and Clark Atlanta University’s HBCU Executive Leadership Institute are specifically curated for aspirant university leaders and provides curriculum that includes topics such as strategic planning, finance, emotional intelligence, and managing organizational change. Several of the participants who have completed these programs have gone on to become college presidents.

In conjunction with these skills, African American women would more greatly benefit from professional development that is tailored to specifically to Black women’s needs and include social justice and gender equity concerns (Davis & Maldonado, 2015; Knorr, 2005). According to Davis and Maldonado (2015), “understanding the leadership development experiences of African American women in the academy is necessary for improving leadership development opportunities for them as emerging leaders” (p. 60).

Recommendations for Future Research

Diversity in leadership continues to be a contemporary topic of discussion within the higher education sector (Virick & Greer, 2012). Research suggests, when managed effectively, diversity in leadership improves organizational effectiveness and increases competitive advantage (Martins, 2020). By 2026, the enrollment of Black students will increase by 20%, and the enrollment of female students will increase by 15% (National Center for Education Statistics, 2018). If higher education institutions are interested improving effectiveness and competitive advantage by mirroring the communities they serve, they must commit to further eliminating racial and gender discrimination and creating environments for aspiring African American female college presidents that are supportive, inclusive, and enriching. This study examined the strategies, support services, and roadblocks experienced by current or former African American female college president in the United States. Rich data were obtained by investigating the lived experiences of the study's participants with a lens to intersectionality and Black feminist thought. While this study provided an in-depth understanding, there is still limited research surrounding the experiences of this population. Based on the findings of this study, suggestions for future research are as follows:

- Explore the lived experiences of African American female principals K-12 education.
- Compare and contrast the lived experiences of African American female college presidents at Historically Black Colleges and Universities versus Predominately White Institutions.
- Explore the lived experiences of other female college presidents from other minority groups (e.g., Hispanic, Asian, Native American, etc.).

- Conduct a longitudinal study examining the career outcomes for aspiring college presidents who attend Harvard's Institute for Management and Leadership Education.
- Conduct a longitudinal study examining the career outcomes for aspiring college presidents who participated in cross-race cross-gender mentor relationships versus those who participated in same gender same race mentor relationships.
- Explore the types of diversity recruiting initiatives that higher education institutions employ to attract top talent.
- Explore the lived experiences of leaders from underrepresented populations and their perception of the Glass Cliff phenomenon.
- Explore the similarities and differences between mentorship, sponsorship, and coaching relationships as it relates to same-gender and same-race pairing.

Reflection and Final Remarks

African American women continue to trail behind in leadership positions even amongst other underrepresented populations such as White women or Black men (Seltzer, 2017).

Diversity in leadership positions, more specifically in the higher education sector, is imperative (Virick & Greer, 2012). Aspirant African American female college presidents have the education and professional experience necessary to lead an institution, however they are often overlooked. Having a better understanding of the lived experiences of current or former African American college presidents is the first step in eliminating the disparity.

This study examined the lived experiences of current or former African American female college presidents in the United States. More specifically, the research provided an in-depth understanding of the pathways, roadblocks, and success strategies utilized by six African American women who were serving, or have served, as college president. Over the course of the

study, I was enamored by the commitment to excellence, resilience, and determination displayed by the participants. Despite the racial injustices, gender discrimination, and Queen Bees that attempted to skew the participants' pathways, each woman persevered and had a successful career in higher education administration.

I, as an African American female higher education administrator, feel empowered after conducting this study. I have faced similar roadblocks in my relatively short career, and these roadblocks have often left me feeling excluded and discouraged. The findings in this research give me hope. The participants proved that with inner confidence, strong mentor relationships and support services, and strategic professional development opportunities, the concrete ceiling can be chipped away. It is my hope that through this research, aspiring African American female college presidents remain focused, connected, and committed to achieving their dreams.

References

- About the President. (n.d.). <https://www.pvamu.edu/president/about/>
- Akin, J. G. (1833). *A digest of the laws of the state of Alabama*.
<https://archives.alabama.gov/teacher/slavery/lesson1/doc1-9.html>
- Alegria, M., Fukuda, M., & Markle, S. L. (2019). Mentoring future researchers: Advice and consideration. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 89(3), 329–336.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/ort0000416>
- Alexander, T. (2010). Roots of leadership: Analysis of the narratives from African American women leaders in higher education. *International Journal of Learning*, 17(4), 193–204.
<https://doi.org/10.18848/1447-9494/CGP/v17i04/46973>
- Allen, T. G., & Flood, C. (2018). The experiences of women in higher education: Who knew there wasn't a sisterhood? *Leadership and Research in Education*, 4, 10–27.
<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1174433.pdf>
- Amankwaa, L. (2016). Creating protocols for trustworthiness in qualitative research. *Journal of Cultural Diversity*, 23(3), 121–127. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/29694754/>
- American Association of University Women. (n.d.). *Fast facts: Women of color in higher ed*.
<https://www.aauw.org/resources/article/fast-facts-woc-higher-ed/>
- American College President Study. (2017). <https://www.aceacps.org/>
- Anderson, C., Brion, S., Moore, D., & Kennedy, J. A. (2012). A status-enhancement account of overconfidence. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 103(4), 718–735.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/a0029395>
- Antley, T. (2020, July 16). What is professional development and why is it important? *WebCE*.
<https://www.webce.com/news/2020/07/16/professional-development>

- Archibald, M. M., Ambagtsheer, R. C., Casey, M. G., & Lawless, M. (2019, September 11). Using zoom videoconferencing for qualitative data collection: Perceptions and experiences researchers and participants. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 18. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406919874596>
- Armstrong, K. (2007). The nature of Black women's leadership in community recreation sport: An illustration of Black feminist thought. *Women in Sport & Physical Activity Journal*, 16(1), 3–16. <https://doi.org/10.1123/wspaj.16.1.3>
- Arora, R., & Rangnekar, S. (2015). Relationships between emotional stability, psychosocial mentoring support and career resilience. *Europe's Journal of Psychology*, 11(1), 16–33. <https://doi.org/10.5964/ejop.v11i1.835>
- Barnard, T. H., & Rapp, A. L. (2005). Are we there yet? Forty years after the passage of the Civil Rights Act: Revolution in the workforce and the unfulfilled promises that remain. *Hofstra Labor & Employment Journal*, 22(2), 627–670. <https://scholarlycommons.law.hofstra.edu/hlelj/vol22/iss2/10>
- Baumgartner, M. S., & Schneider, D. E. (2010). Perceptions of women in management: A thematic analysis of razing the glass ceiling. *Journal of Career Development*, 37(2), 559–576. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0894845309352242>
- Beckwith, A. L., Carter, D. R., & Peters, T. (2016). The underrepresentation of African American women in executive leadership: What's getting in the way? *Journal of Business Studies Quarterly*, 7(4), 117–134. <https://www.icos.umich.edu/sites/default/files/lecturereadinglists/Underrepresentation%20of%20Black%20Women%20in%20Executive%20Leadership.pdf>

Berry, J. (2012, September 19). *Lady Jaguars: 10 famous women who attended Spelman College*. Madamenoire. <https://madamenoire.com/216446/lady-jaguars-10-famous-women-who-attended-selman-college/>

The big chop: Everything you need to know about going natural. (2021, January 15). <https://www.michebeauty.com/blogs/the-miche-manual-blog/the-big-chop-everything-you-need-to-know#:~:text=The%20big%20chop%20is%20the%20act%20of%20cutting%20off%20your,months%20before%20cutting%20their%20hair.>

Blake-Beard, S., Murrell, A., & Thomas, D. (2006). *Unfinished business: The impact of race on understanding mentoring relationships* (Working Paper No. 06-060). Harvard Business School. <https://www.hbs.edu/ris/Publication%20Files/06-060.pdf>

Bloomberg, L. D., & Volpe, M. (2019). *Completing your qualitative dissertation: A road map from beginning to end*. Sage.

Boldra, J., Landin, C. W., Repta, K. R., Winistorfer, W., & Westphal, J. (2008, August). The value of leadership development through mentoring. *Catholic Health Association of the United States*. <https://www.chausa.org/publications/health-progress/article/july-august-2008/the-value-of-leadership-development-through-mentoring>

Boulton, C. (2016). Black identities inside advertising: Race inequality, code switching, and stereotype threat. *Howard Journal of Communication*, 27(2), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10646175.2016.1148646>

Briscoe, K. L., & Freeman, S. (2019). The role of mentorship in the preparation and success of university presidents. *Mentoring & Tutoring: Partnership in Learning*, 27(4), 416–438. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13611267.2019.1649920>

- Britton, L. M. (2013). *African American women in higher education: Challenges endured and strategies employed to secure community college presidency* (Doctoral dissertation, National-Louis University). Retrieved from Digital Commons. (Accession edsoai.863642326). <https://digitalcommons.nl.edu/diss/68>
- Brown, E. M., & Grothaus, T. (2019). Experiences of cross-racial trust in mentoring relationships between Black doctoral counseling students and White counselor educators and supervisors. *The Professional Counselor*, 9(3), 211–225. <https://doi.org/10.15241/emb.9.3.211>
- Carlton, G. (2021, September 30). *A history of the Ivy League*. Best Colleges. <https://www.bestcolleges.com/blog/history-of-ivy-league/>
- Chan, A. W., Yeh, C. J., & Krumboltz, J. D. (2015). Mentoring ethnic minority counseling and clinical psychology students: A multicultural, ecological, and relational model. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 62(4), 592–607. <https://doi.org/10.1037/cou0000079>
- Clark, C. (2017, April 18). *Pathways to the university presidency*. Deloitte Insights. <https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/insights/industry/public-sector/college-presidency-higher-education-leadership.html>
- Coleman, C. (2021, January 19). *How literacy became a powerful weapon in the fight to end slavery*. History. <https://www.history.com/news/nat-turner-rebellion-literacy-slavery>
- Collins, P. H. (2000). Gender, Black feminism, and Black political economy. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 568(1), 41–53. <https://doi.org/10.1177/000271620056800105>
- Collins, P. H. (2015). The social construction of Black feminist thought. In *Women, Knowledge, and Reality* (pp. 222–248). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.1086/494543>

- Cox, T., & Nkomo, S. M. (1990). Invisible men and women: A status report on race as a variable in organizational behavior research. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 11(6), 419–431. <https://doi.org/10.1002/job.4030110604>
- Crenshaw, K. (1989). Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: A Black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory and antiracist politics. *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, (1989),1. <http://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/uclf/vol1989/iss1/8>
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). Sage.
- Crites, S. N., Dickson, K. E., & Lorenz, A. (2015). Nurturing gender stereotypes in the face of experience: A study of leader gender, leadership style, and satisfaction. *Journal of Organizational Culture, Communications and Conflict*, 19(1), 1–23. <https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/nurturing-gender-stereotypes-face-experience/docview/1693690505/se-2>
- Cross, T., & Slater, R. B. (1997). In higher education Black women are far outpacing Black men. *Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, 17, 84–86. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2963239#:~:text=Today%2C%20there%20are%20320%2C00%20more,than%20there%20are%20black%20men.>
- Cullen, D. L., & Luna, G. (1993). Women mentoring in academe: Addressing the gender gap in higher education. *Gender and Education*, 5(2), 125–137. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0954025930050201>
- Davis, S., & Brown, K. (2017). Automatically discounted: Using Black feminist theory to critically analyze the experiences of Black female faculty. *National Council of Professors of Educational Administration*, 12(1), n1. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1145466.pdf>

- Dawson, A. E., Bernstein, B. L., & Bekki, J. M. (2015). Providing the psychosocial benefits of mentoring to women in STEM: CareerWISE as an online solution. *New Directions for Higher Education*, 2015(171), 53–62. <https://doi.org/10.1002/he.20142>
- Deloitte's Center for Higher Education Excellence in partnership with Georgia Institute of Technology's Center for 21st Century Universities. (n.d.). *Pathways to the university presidency: The future of higher education leadership*. https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/insights/us/articles/3861_Pathways-to-the-university-presidency/DUP_Pathways-to-the-university-presidency.pdf
- Derks, B., Ellemers, N., Van Laar, C., & De Groot, K. (2011). Do sexist organizational cultures create the queen bee? *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 50(3), 519–535. <https://doi.org/10.1348/014466610X525280>
- Efstathiou, J. A., Drumm, M. R., Paly, J. P., Lawton, D. M., O'Neill, R. M., Niemierko, A., Leffert, L. R., Loeffler, J. S., & Shih, H. A. (2018). Long-term impact of a faculty mentoring program in academic medicine. *PLoS ONE*, 13(11), 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0207634>
- Ellemers, N., Van Den Heuvel, H., de Glider, D., Maass, A., & Bonvini, A. (2004). The underrepresentation of women in science: Differential commitment or the queen bee syndrome? *British Journal of Psychology*, 43(3), 315–338. <https://doi.org/10.1348/0144666042037999>
- Elsesser, K. (2020, August). Queen Bees still exist, but it's not the women we need to fix. *Forbes*. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/kimelsesser/2020/08/31/queen-bees-still-exist-but-its-not-the-women-we-need-to-fix/?sh=6c72d10a6ffd>

- Ensher, E. A., & Murphy, S. E. (1997). Effects of race, gender, perceived similarity, and contact on mentor relationships. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 50(3), 460–481.
<https://doi.org/10.1006/jvbe.1996.1547>
- Etikan, I., Musa, S. A., & Alkassim, R. S. (2016). Comparison of convenience sampling and purposive sampling. *American Journal of Theoretical and Applied Statistics*, 5(1), 1–4.
<https://doi.org/10.11648/j.ajtas.20160501.11>
- Faniko, K., Ellemers, N., Derks, B., & Lorenzi-Cioldi, F. (2017). Nothing changes, really: Why women who break through the glass ceiling end up reinforcing it. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 43(5), 638–651. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167217695551>
- Finfgeld-Connett, D. (2010). Generalizability and transferability of meta-synthesis research findings. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 68(2), 246–254. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2648.2009.05250.x>
- Fisk, S. R., & Overton, J. (2019). Who wants to lead? Anticipated gender discrimination reduces women’s leadership ambitions. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 82(3), 319–332.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0190272519863424>
- Forbes Coaches Council. (2021, June 24). *14 important benefits of a more diverse leadership team*. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbescoachescouncil/2021/06/24/14-important-benefits-of-a-more-diverse-leadership-team/?sh=4765e4fd1f9b>
- Gaddis, S. M. (2012). What’s in a relationship? An examination of social capital, race and class in mentoring relationships. *Social Forces*, 90(4), 1237–1269.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/sf/sos003>

- Gagliardi, J. S., Espinosa, L. L., Turk, J. M., & Taylor, M. (2017). *American College President Study*. American Council on Education Website. <https://www.aceacps.org/women-presidents/>
- Gallicano, T. (2013, July 22). An example of how to perform open coding, axial coding and selective coding [Web log post]. <https://prpost.wordpress.com/2013/07/22/an-example-of-how-to-perform-open-coding-axial-coding-and-selective-coding/>
- Gant, E. (2015, January 3). Shirley Ann Jackson highest paid college president. *Black Enterprise*. <https://www.blackenterprise.com/shirley-ann-jackso-highest-paid-private-college-president/>
- Garner, C. (2010, December 3). *Mary Jane Patterson (1840-1894)*. Blackpast. <https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/patterson-mary-jane-1840-1894/>
- Gartzia, L., & Baniandres, J. (2016). Are people-oriented leaders perceived as less effective in task performance? Surprising results from two experimental studies. *Journal of Business Research*, 69(1), 508–516. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2015.05.008>
- Ghosh, S. (2020, December 18). *Gender identity: Definitions, development of gender identity – usual patterns, development of gender identity – unusual patterns*. Medscape. <https://emedicine.medscape.com/article/917990-overview#:~:text=Gender%20identity%20is%20defined%20as,that%20reflect%20the%20gender%20identity>
- Giacumo, L. A., Chen, J., & Seguinot-Cruz, A. (2020). Evidence on the use of mentoring programs and practices to support workplace learning: a systematic multiple-studies review. *Performance Improvement Quarterly*, 33(3), 259–303. <https://doi.org/10.1002/piq.21324>

- Gino, F., & Coffman, K. (2021, October). Unconscious bias training that works. *Harvard Business Review*. <https://hbr.org/2021/09/unconscious-bias-training-that-works?registration=success>
- Gopaldas, A. (2013). Intersectionality 101. *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing*, 32(1_suppl), 90–94. <https://doi.org/10.1509/jppm.12.044>
- Griffin, K. A. (2020). Institutional barriers, strategies, and benefits to increasing the representation of women and men of color in the professoriate. In Perna L. (Eds.), *Higher Education: Handbook of Theory and Research*. *Higher Education: Handbook of Theory and Research* (Vol 35). Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-31365-4_4
- Gromkowska-Melosik, A. (2014). The masculinization of identity among successful career women? A case study of Polish female managers. *Journal of Gender and Power*, 1(1), 25–47. <http://hdl.handle.net/10593/11289>
- Grossoehme, D. H. (2014). Overview of qualitative research. *Journal of Health Care Chaplaincy*, 20(3), 109–122. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08854726.2014.925660>
- Hall, W., Schmader, T., Aday, A., & Croft, E. (2019). Decoding the dynamics of social identity threat in the workplace: A within-person analysis of women’s and men’s interactions in STEM. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 10(4), 542–552. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1948550618772582>
- Harvey, C. (2018). When queen bees attack women stop advancing: Recognizing and addressing female bullying in the workplace. *Development and Learning in Organizations*, 32(5), 1–4. <https://doi.org/10.1108/DLO-04-2018-0048>

Hastwell, C. (2020, January 7). What are employee resources groups? *Great Place to Work*.

<https://www.greatplacetowork.com/resources/blog/what-are-employee-resource-groups-ergs>

HBCU Editors. (2014, March 4). *Black women are ranked the most educated group by race &*

gender. HBCUBuzz. <https://hbcubuzz.com/2014/03/black-women-are-ranked-the-most-educated-group-by-race-gender/>

HBCU Executive Leadership Institute. (n.d.). <https://www.cau.edu/hbcueli/index.html>

Henshaw, S., Estes, L., & Olson, L. (2018). Inter-female hostility: Attractiveness and femininity vs. likeability. *Sigma: Journal of Political and International Studies*, 35(4), 67–81.

<https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/sigma/vol35/iss1/4>

Hezlett, S. (2005). *How do formal mentors assist their protégés? A study of mentors assigned to cooperative education students and interns*. ERIC.

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED492458.pdf>

Hill, L. H., & Wheat, C. A. (2017). The influence of mentorship and role models on university women leaders' career paths to university presidency. *The Qualitative Report*, 22(8),

2090–2111. <https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/influence-mentorship-role-models-on-university/docview/1929693822/se-2?accountid=7106>

Hirsh, E., & Cha, Y. (2017). Mandating change: The impact of court-ordered policy changes on managerial diversity. *ILR Review: The Journal of Work and Policy*, 70(1), 42–72.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0019793916668880>

History of the Presidency. (n.d.). <https://www.harvard.edu/president/history/>

- Holmes, S. L. (2004). An overview of African American college presidents: A game of two steps forward, one step backward, and standing still. *Journal of Negro Education*, 73(1), 21–39. <http://libproxy.usc.edu/login?url=http://search.proquest.com>.
- Huddy, L., & Terkildsen, S. (1993). The consequences of gender stereotypes for women candidates at different levels and types of office. *Political Research Quarterly*, 46(3), 503–525. <https://doi.org/10.2307/448945>
- Ivankova, N. V. (2015). *Mixed methods applications in action research*. Sage.
- Jackson, S., & Harris, S. (2007). African American female college and university presidents: Experiences and perceptions of barriers to the presidency. *Journal of Women in Educational Leadership*, 119–137. <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1000&context=jwel>
- Jacob, S. A., & Furgerson, S. P. (2012). Writing interview protocols and conducting interviews: Tips for students new to the field of qualitative research. *The Qualitative Report*, 17(42), 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2012.1718>
- Jean-Marie, G., Normore, A. H., & Brooks, J. S. (2009). Leadership for social justice: Preparing 21st century school leaders for a new social order. *Journal of Research on Leadership Education*, 4(1), 1–31. <https://doi.org/10.1177/194277510900400102>
- Johnson, W. B., & Smith, D. G. (2018). The best mentors think like Michelangelo. *Harvard Business Review*. <https://hbr.org/2018/01/the-best-mentors-think-like-michelangelo>
- Jones, M. W. (2015, August 28). *10 things about fundraising that new presidents need to know*. LinkedIn. <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/ten-things-new-not-so-new-presidents-need-know-mark-w-jones/>

- Kao, K., Rogers, A., Spitzmueller, C., Lin, M., & Lin, C. (2014). Who should serve as my mentor? The effects of mentor's gender and supervisory status on resilience in mentoring relationships. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *85*(2), 191–203.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2014.07.004>
- Kay, K., & Shipman, C. (2014, May). The confidence gap: Evidence shows that women are less self-assured than men—and that to succeed, confidence matters as much as competence. Here's why, and what to do about it. *The Atlantic*.
<https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2014/05/the-confidence-gap/359815/>
- Knorr, H. (2005). *Factors that contribute to women's career development in organizations: A review of the literature*. ERIC. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED492334.pdf>
- Korstjens, I., & Moser, A. (2018). Series: Practical guidance to qualitative research. Part 4: Trustworthiness and publishing. *European Journal of General Practice*, *24*(1), 120–124.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13814788.2017.1375092>
- Lee, J. M., & Keys, S. W. (2013). *Land-grant but unequal state one-to-one match funding for 1890 land grant universities* (Issue Brief No. 3000). Association of Public Land-Grant Universities. <https://www.aplu.org/library/land-grant-but-unequal-state-one-to-one-match-funding-for-1890-land-grant-universities/file>
- Light, I., & Bonacich, E. (1990). Immigrant entrepreneurs: Koreans in Los Angeles 1965–1982. *Journal of Asian Studies*, *23*(3). <https://doi.org/10.2307/2058495>
- Livingston, R. W. (2013). Gender, race, and leadership: An examination of the challenges facing non-prototypical leaders. *Gender and work: Challenging conventional wisdom*. [Symposium]. Presidents and Fellows of Harvard College.

Lobe, B., Morgan, D., & Hoffman, K. A. (2020). Qualitative data collection in an era of social distancing. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, *19*, 1–8.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406920937875>

Macauley, F. (2019, April 10). *The surprising benefits when men mentor women*. Inc.com.

<https://www.inc.com/fiona-macauley/advice-for-men-who-are-uncertain-about-mentoring-women.html#:~:text=You%20Benefit%2C%20Too&text=That's%20not%20because%20men%20are,to%20increase%20their%20interpersonal%20skills.%22>

Martins, L. L. (2020). Strategic diversity leadership: The role of senior leaders in delivering the diversity dividend. *Journal of Management*, *46*(7), 1191–1204.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206320939641>

McAfee, N. (2018, September 21). Feminist philosophy. In *Stanford Encyclopedia of*

Philosophy. Stanford. <https://plato.stanford.edu/cgi-bin/encyclopedia/archinfo.cgi?entry=feminist-philosophy>

McDermott, C. (2013, July 31). U.S. higher-education system perpetuates White privilege, report says. *Chronicle of Higher Education*. https://www.chronicle.com/article/u-s-higher-education-system-perpetuates-white-privilege-report-says/?cid2=gen_login_refresh

McGee, E. O., Botchway, P. K., Naphan-Kingery, D. E., Brockman, A. J., Houston, S., & White, D. T. (2021). Racism camouflaged as impostorism and the impact on Black STEM doctoral students. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, *24*(4), 487–507.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/13613324.2021.1924137>

Mete, M., Dickman, J., Rowe, S., Trockel, M. T., Rotenstein, L., Khuldenev, G., & Marchalik,

D. (2022). Beyond burnout: Understanding the well-being gender gap in general surgery

- by examining professional fulfillment and control over schedule. *American Journal of Surgery*, 223(4), 609–614. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.amjsurg.2021.08.033>
- Mintz, S. (2019, November 6). Career preparedness. *Inside Higher Ed*.
<https://www.insidehighered.com/blogs/higher-ed-gamma/career-preparedness>
- Moradi, B., & Grzanka, P. R. (2017). Using intersectionality responsibly: Toward critical epistemology, structural analysis, and social justice activism. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 64(5), 500–513. <https://doi.org/10.1037/cou0000203>
- Moses, Y. T. (1989). *Black women in academe. Issues and strategies*. The Association of American Colleges. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED311817.pdf>
- National Center for Education Statistics. (2020, June). Degrees conferred by race/ethnicity and sex. <https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=72>
- National Center for Education Statistics. (n.d.). *National assessment of adult literacy*.
https://nces.ed.gov/naal/lit_history.asp
- National Center for Education Statistics. (2018, April). *Projections of education statistics*.
<https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2018/2018019.pdf>
- National Research Council. (1995). *College of agriculture at the land grant universities: A profile*. The National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/4980>
- Neal, S., Boatman, J., & Miller, L. (2013). *Women as mentors: Does she or doesn't she?* Developmental Dimensions International.
https://www.ddiworld.com/ddi/media/trendresearch/womenasmentors_rr_ddi.pdf?ext=.pdf
- f

- Neubauer, B. E., Witkop, C. T., & Varpio, L. (2019). How phenomenology can help us learn from the experiences of others. *Perspectives on Medical Education*, 8(2), 90–97.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s40037-019-0509-2>
- Northouse, P. G. (2007). *Leadership: Theory and practice*. Sage.
- Olivet Nazarene University. (2018). *Study explores professional mentor-mentee relationships in 2019*. <https://online.olivet.edu/research-statistics-on-professional-mentors>
- Orenstein, P. (2000). *Schoolgirls: Young women, self-esteem, and the confidence gap*. Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group.
- Oriol, M. D., Brannagan, K., Ferguson, L. A., & Pearce, P. F. (2015). Understanding career trajectory: A degree alone is not enough. *International Journal of Nursing & Clinical Practices*, 2(153), 1–6. <https://doi.org/10.15344/2394-4978/2015/153>
- Paige, D. (2018, May 31). *Why are there so few Black women leaders on college campuses?* The Nation. <https://www.thenation.com/article/archive/why-are-there-so-few-black-women-leaders-on-college-campuses/>
- Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (4th ed.). Sage.
- Pilgrim, D. (2000, October). *The Mammy caricature*. Ferris State University.
<https://www.ferris.edu/HTMLS/news/jimcrow/mammies/homepage.htm>
- Rafnsdottir, G. L., & Heijstra, T. M. (2013). Balancing work-family life in academia: The power of time. *Gender, Work, and Organization*, 20(3), 283–296.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0432.2011.00571.x>
- Ramnund-Mansingh, A., & Seedat-Khan, M. (2020). Understanding the career trajectories of Black female academics in South Africa: A case study of the University of Kwazulu-

- Natal. *Perspectives in Education*, 38(2), 56–69.
<https://doi.org/10.18820/2519593X/pie.v38.i2.04>
- Ross, P. T., & Bibler Zaidi, N. L. (2019). Limited by our limitations. *Perspectives on Medical Education*, 8(4), 261–264. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40037-019-00530-x>
- Rudolph, F. (2021). *The American college and university: A history*. Plunkett Lake Press.
- Sadler, G. R., Lee, H. C., Lim, R. S. H., & Fullerton, J. (2010). Research article: Recruitment for hard-to-reach population subgroups via adaptations of the snowball sampling strategy. *Nursing & Health Science*, 12(3), 369–374. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1442-2018.2010.00541.x>
- Saldana, J. (2014). Coding and analysis strategies. In P. Leavy (Eds.). *The oxford handbook of qualitative research* (1st ed., pp. 581–605). Oxford University Press
- Seegmiller Renner, A. M., Borgwardt, H. L., Coyle, M., Moeschler, S., & Bhagra, A. (2022). Using employee resource groups to develop GRIT in female healthcare leaders: A case study. *Leadership in Health Services*, 35(2), 267–284. <https://doi.org/10.1108/LHS-04-2021-0028>
- Seltzer, R. (2017, April 19). Making a modern president. *Inside Higher Ed*.
<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2017/04/19/report-finds-unsettled-pathways-college-presidency>
- Shaw, A. R. (2016, April 11). *10 powerful women who attended Spelman College*. Rollingout.
<https://rollingout.com/2016/04/11/10-powerful-women-attended-selman-college/>
- Smith-Ligon, P. (2011). *An examination of African American female college presidents' professional ascendancy and mentoring experiences* (Doctoral dissertation, Mercer University). Retrieved from ProQuest. (UMI 3506921).

- The Society for Personality and Social Psychology. (2020 March 1). Intersectionality Influences Stereotypes of Individuals with Multiple Marginalized Identities [Press Release].
<https://spsp.org/news-center/press-release/intersectionality-influences-stereotypes-individuals-multiple>
- Spelman College At a Glance. (n.d.). <https://www.spelman.edu/about-us/at-a-glance>
- Stankovic, A. K. (2021). Breaking the silence of caged birds: Maya Angelou’s autobiography, Black feminism and the #metoo movement. *TEME: Casopis za Društvene Nauke*, 45(3), 973–986. <https://doi.org/10.22190/TEME201126057K>
- Stein, S. (2020). A colonial history of the higher education present: Rethinking land-grant institutions through process of accumulation and relations of conquest. *Critical Studies in Education*, 61(2), 212–228. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17508487.2017.1409646>
- Steinmetz, K. (2020, February 20). *She coined the term “Intersectionality” over 30 years ago. Here’s what it means to her today.* Time. <https://time.com/5786710/kimberle-crenshaw-intersectionality/>
- Stephoe, T. (2010, January 29). *Spelman College (1881-)*. Blackpast. <https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/spelman-college-1881/>
- Stitt, R. L., & Happel-Parkins, A. (2019). “Sounds like something a White man should be doing”: The shared experiences of Black women engineering students. *Journal of Negro Education*, 88(1), 62–74. <https://doi.org/10.7709/JNEGROEDUCATION.88.1.0062>
- Suveren, Y. (2022). Unconscious bias: Definition and significance. *Current Approaches in Psychiatry*, 14(3), 414–426. <https://doi.org/10.18863/pgy.1026607>
- Syakir, A. (2019). The origin of mentoring and its evolution. *LinkedIn Pulse*. <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/origin-mentoring-its-evolution-ahmad-syakir/>

Theelin, J. R., Edwards, J. R., Moyen, E., Berger, J. B., & Calkins, M. V. (n.d.). *Higher education in the United States; Historical development, system.*

<https://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/2044/Higher-Education-in-United-States.html>

Theofanidis, D., & Fountouki, A. (2018). Limitations and delimitations in the research process.

Perioperative Nursing, 7(3), 155–162. <http://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.2552022>

Thomas, D. (2002). The truth about mentoring minorities: Race Matters. *Harvard Business*

Review. <https://hbr.org/2001/04/race-matters>

Tuval-Mashiach, R. (2021). Is replication relevant for qualitative research? *Qualitative*

Psychology, 8(3), 365–377. <https://doi.org/10.1037/qup0000217>

U.S. Census Bureau. (2019). *Quick facts*.

<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US/RHI225219#RHI225219>

Virick, M., & Greer, C. R. (2012). Gender diversity in leadership succession: Preparing for the future. *Human Resource Management*, 51(4), 575–600.

<https://doi.org/10.1002/hrm.21487>

WebCE. (2020, July 16). *What is professional development and why is it important?*

<https://www.webce.com/news/2020/07/16/professional-development#3>

Whitehead, M. (2017). *A phenomenological study of the barriers and challenges presented to African American women in leadership roles at four-year higher education institutions* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Louisiana at Lafayette).

<https://www.proquest.com/docview/1943006285?pq-origsite=gscholar&fromopenview=true>

- Whitford, E. (2020, October 1). Retirement wave hits presidents amid pandemic. *Inside Higher Ed*. <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2020/10/01/many-college-presidents-are-leaving-say-pandemic-isnt-driving-them-out>
- Williams, M., & Moser, T. (2019). The art of coding and thematic exploration in qualitative research. *International Management Review*, 15(1), 45–55.
<http://www.imrjournal.org/uploads/1/4/2/8/14286482/imr-v15n1art4.pdf>
- Wilson, A. (2015). A guide to phenomenological research. *Nursing Standard*, 29(34), 38–43.
<https://doi.org/10.7748/ns.29.34.38.e8821>
- Witt, N. H. (2013). *Coding: An overview and guide to qualitative data analysis for integral researchers* [White paper]. Integral Research Center.
https://www.academia.edu/9864164/Coding_An_Overview_and_Guide_to_Qualitative_Data_Analysis_for_Integral_Researchers
- Wright, G. G., & Chan, C. D. (2022). Applications of intersectionality theory to enhance career development interventions in response to COVID-19. *Professional School Counseling*, 26(1b). <https://doi.org/10.1177/2156759X221106807>
- Yates-Richards, M. (2020). Hearing what Black women have been telling us all along: On Patricia Hill Collins's Black feminist thought. *Post 45*.
<https://post45.org/2020/05/hearing-what-black-women-have-been-telling-us-all-along-on-patricia-hill-collinss-black-feminist-thought/>

Yeong, M. L., Ismail, R., Ismail, N. H., & Hamzah, M. I. (2018). Interview protocol refinement:

Fine-tuning qualitative research interview questions for multi-racial populations in

Malaysia. *The Qualitative Report*, 23(11), 2700–2713.

<https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/interview-protocol-refinement-fine-tuning/docview/2151128806/se-2?accountid=7106>

Yukl, G. (2012). Effective leadership behavior: What we know and what questions need more

attention. *Academy of Management Perspectives*, 26(4), 66–85.

<https://doi.org/10.5465/amp.2012.0088>

Appendix A: IRB Approval

ABILENE CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY
Educating Students for Christian Service and Leadership Throughout the World

Office of Research and Sponsored Programs
320 Hardin Administration Building, ACU Box 29103, Abilene, Texas 79699-9103
325-674-2885

May 3, 2022

Breonna Collins
Department of Graduate and Professional Studies
Abilene Christian University



Dear Breonna,

On behalf of the Institutional Review Board, I am pleased to inform you that your project titled "Exploring the Lived Experiences of African American Female College Presidents: The Path to Presidency in Higher Education",

(IRB# 22-057) is exempt from review under Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects.

If at any time the details of this project change, please resubmit to the IRB so the committee can determine whether or not the exempt status is still applicable.

I wish you well with your work.

Sincerely,

Megan Roth

Megan Roth, Ph.D.
Director of Research and Sponsored Programs

Appendix B: Solicitation Email

Hello Ms./President XXX,

The purpose of this email is to request your participation in a study concerning the underrepresentation of African American female college presidents. While research suggests that aspiring African American female college presidents have the same credentials as their counterparts, African American females fail to be promoted to college presidency at the same rate. This study will be part of a doctoral dissertation designed to describe the lived experiences, pathways, and successful strategies used during career trajectory by former or current African American female college presidents in the United States. The exploration might also provide strategies and insights to prospective African American females who are interested in pursuing college presidency in the future.

The study will consist of a semistructured interview, held via Zoom, which will take approximately 45 - 60 minutes to complete. Although the semistructured interview will be audio taped and transcribed for accuracy in the data analysis, the information you provide for this study will be kept confidential and no identifying information will be reported.

If you are interested and willing to participate in such an interview, please reply to this email affirmatively, and a Consent Form will be sent to you. Additionally, please feel free to pass this email along to any current or former African American female presidents that may be in your professional or social network. If you have further questions please let me know. I may be contacted at xxxxxxxx@acu.edu or (xxx) xxx-xxxx.

Thank you for consideration.

Breonna Collins
Abilene Christian University, Doctoral Candidate

Appendix C: Interview Protocol

Introductory Questions:

1. Tell me about your educational background (degrees earned, certifications, etc.).
2. How many years have you serve/did you serve as a college president?
3. Have you served as a college president more than once, if so how many times?
4. Tell me about the previous positions you held prior to becoming a college president.
5. How would you categorize the institution in which you serve/served as president (e.g., 4-year, community college, HBCU, public, for-profit, etc.)?
6. How would you describe your presidential predecessor (male, female, black, white, etc.)?
7. Were you the first African American female college president at your institution? If so, how would you describe that experience?

Interview Questions Associated with Research Questions

RQ1: How do current or former African American female college presidents describe their experiences during their pathway to college presidency?

1. What factors (negative and/or positive) do you perceive as having an influence during your pathway to college presidency? Describe how you overcame any negative factors (if any).
2. Please explain to what extent (if any) you feel your gender impacted your pathway to college presidency?
3. Please explain to what extent (if any) you feel your race impacted your pathway to college presidency?

RQ2: Based on their lived experiences, how do current or former African American female college presidents perceive the impact of the Queen Bee phenomenon on their pathway to college presidency?

1. Describe your relationships with your female colleagues during your pathway to college presidency.
2. Describe your perception of other female leaders' willingness to network, mentor, or guide you during your pathway to presidency.

3. Describe a time (if any) when you experienced discrimination from a female colleague.
4. How has gender discrimination from your female colleagues (if any) impacted your pathway to college presidency? How did you overcome the discrimination?
5. What strategies did you use to maintain or create a positive work environment with your female colleagues?

RQ3: Based on their lived experiences, how did mentorship impact their pathway to college presidency?

1. Describe the extent to which having/not having a mentor influenced your pathway to college presidency?
2. Describe your ideal mentor. Why are these characteristics important to you?
3. Describe any networking or professional development opportunities that you participated in, or were encouraged to participate in, during your pathway to college presidency.

RQ4: Based on their lived experiences, what type of strategies, support services, and/or roadblocks do current or former African American female college presidents believe had an impact on their pathway to college presidency?

1. When thinking of your overall career path, what were the key strategies you utilized that you believe led you to achieving college presidency?
2. When thinking of your overall career path, what type of support did you receive that you believe led you to achieving college presidency?
3. When thinking of your overall career path, what types of roadblocks (if any) did you experience that you believe hindered or delayed your path to college presidency?

Appendix D: Coding Matrices

Influence during pathway to college presidency - Positive and Negative Factors

<i>Recurring Remark/Theme</i>	<i>n</i>
God's calling	1/6
Negative Factor: Balancing priorities between family and career	1/6
Negative Factor: Initially undereducated	2/6
No Roadblocks	1/6
Positive Factor: Encouraged by academic authority	1/6
Positive Factor: Examples of strong female predecessors	1/6
Positive Factor: Exposure to professional leadership development opportunities	3/6
Positive Factor: Familial example of education black men and women	2/6
Positive Factor: Internal Confidence, Commitment to Achievement, and Leadership	6/6
Positive Factor: Affirmative Action	2/6
Positive Factor: Supportive Mentor(s)	4/6

Gender impact during pathway to college presidency

<i>Recurring Remark/Theme</i>	<i>n</i>
Women have to exceed expectations to prove capabilities	2/6
Nurturing Disposition Women are used to rebuild troubled institutions	4/6
Right place at the right time - benefited from the focus on Affirmative Action	1/6
Required to balance priorities between being a wife/mother and being a career woman	1/6
Women are overlooked for opportunities	1/6
The Good Ol Boys	2/6
Strong examples of black female predecessors	1/6
Gender has had no perceived impact on pathway to Presidency	1/6

Race impact during pathway to college presidency

<i>Recurring Remark/Theme</i>	<i>n</i>
Race caused doubt in capabilities and belonging	3/6
Race breaks tradition	1/6
The Good Ol Boys	1/6
Race has had no perceived impact on pathway to Presidency	1/6

Mentor impact during pathway to college presidency

<i>Recurring Remark/Theme</i>	<i>n</i>
Mentors are a critical need to success	6/6

Ideal Mentor - Important Characteristics

<i>Recurring Remark/Theme</i>	<i>n</i>
God given connections	1/6
Mentoring comes from the heart	4/6
Believe in me more than I believe in myself	3/6
Group of diverse mentors to meet different needs and bring different perspectives	3/6
Connection to out of reach networks	2/6

Networking and professional development impact during pathway to presidency

<i>Recurring Remark/Theme</i>	<i>n</i>
National Leadership Development Workshops	1/6
Harvard's Institute for Management and Leadership in Education	4/6
Not exposed to professional development opportunities	1/6

Key Strategies to Achieve College Presidency

<i>Recurring Remark/Theme</i>	<i>n</i>
Gain experience in all academic nuances	1/6
Be an intentional game changer based on the needs of institutions	4/6
Identify your core values and an institution that aligns with those values	2/6
Find your safe space	1/6

Support Systems

<i>Recurring Remark/Theme</i>	<i>n</i>
Mentors	2/6
Familial Support	1/6
It Takes a Village - myriad of support to include mentors, family, colleagues, etc.	3/6

Roadblocks

<i>Recurring Remark/Theme</i>	<i>n</i>
Queen Bee	3/6
Double Whammy: Race & Gender Discrimination	3/6
Commitment to familial role	2/6
Lack of terminal credential	1/6
None	1/6

Appendix E: Participant Follow-Up and Confirmation

Dear Dr. XXX,

Thank you for your willingness to participate in my dissertation research study titled “Exploring the Lived Experiences of African American Female College Presidents: The Path to Presidency in Higher Education.” As previously shared, the study will consist of a semistructured interview, held via Zoom, which will take approximately 45 - 60 minutes to complete. Although the semistructured interview will be audio taped and transcribed for accuracy in the data analysis, the information you provide for this study will be kept confidential and no identifying information will be reported.

The next step is to schedule your Zoom interview and provide your informed consent. Below I have listed my availability for the next two weeks. Please review and let me know if you are also available during any of the dates and times listed below. Please note that all times are in the central time zone. If the dates/times do not work for you, please reply to this email with alternatives that work best for your schedule.

Date	Time (central time zone)
XX/XX/2022	00:00 AM/PM
XX/XX/2022	00:00 AM/PM
XX/XX/2022	00:00 AM/PM
XX/XX/2022	00:00 AM/PM
XX/XX/2022	00:00 AM/PM

Shortly, I will send you an electronic Consent Form to this email address via HelloSign. Please review, sign, date, and submit the form. I will be notified once your Consent Form is complete. Once we have confirmed a date/time, and your Consent Form has been submitted, you will receive a confirmation email with your interview date, time, and Zoom meeting details. If you have any questions or concerns regarding the interview process please do not hesitate to contact me. I can be reached at XXXXXXX@acu.edu or at (XXX) XXX-XXXX.

Best regards,

Breonna Collins

Abilene Christian University, Doctoral Candidate

Appendix F: Consent Form

Title of Study: Exploring the Lived Experiences of African American Female College Presidents: The Path to Presidency in Higher Education

Principal Researcher:

Breonna Collins, M.Ed.
Abilene Christian University
(xxx) xxx-xxxx
xxxxxx@acu.edu

Purpose of Study:

You are being solicited to participate in a research study. Before proceeding, it is important that you understand the purpose of the study and next steps. Please read the following information carefully. Please notify the researcher if you have any questions or concerns.

The purpose of this phenomenological qualitative research study is to describe the lived experiences, pathways, and successful strategies used during career trajectory by former or current African American female college presidents in the United States.

Study Procedures:

You will be asked a series of questions in which you will describe your personal experiences during your career trajectory to college presidency. You may terminate your involvement at any time if you choose. Interviews will be held via Zoom and will be recorded to assist with the accuracy of your responses. You have the right to refuse the audio recording.

Please select one of the following options:

I consent to audio recording: Yes _____ No _____

Time required: Approximately 45 – 60 minutes

Risks and Benefits: There are no foreseen risks to participate in this study. There is no incentive for participating; therefore, you will not be adversely affected in any way if you choose not to participate.

Confidentiality:

Your identity will be kept confidential. Your name will not be used or any identifying information changed concerning you or any others you speak about. Exact quotes may be used in the data or quoted without identifying you specifically. When the study is completed and the data have been analyzed, the data will be destroyed. Your name will not be used in any report or publication.

Contact Information:

If you have questions at any time about this study, or you experience adverse effects as the result of participating in this study, you may contact the researcher whose contact information is provided on the first page. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant,

or if problems arise which you do not feel you can discuss with the Primary Researcher, please contact the Institutional Review Board at xxx-xxx-xxxx.

Voluntary Participation:

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you decide to take part in this study, you will be required to sign a consent form. After you sign the consent form, you may still terminate your involvement at any time if you choose. If you withdraw from the study before data collection is completed, your data will be destroyed.

CONSENT:

I have read and I understand the provided information. I have had the opportunity to ask the Primary Researcher any questions that I may have. I understand that my participation is voluntary, and I may terminate my involvement at any time. I understand that I will be given a copy of this consent form. I voluntarily agree to take part in this study.

Signature of research participant

Date

Signature of researcher

Date