The Social Identity Development of White Students Who Attend Historically Black Colleges and Universities

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This dissertation titled

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ABSTRACT

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The Social Identity Development of White Students Who Attend Historically Black Colleges and Universities

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In a time when higher education accountability is increasing, it is essential that institutions, no matter their mission and purpose, produce higher rates of retention, persistence and graduation. Funding remains a scarce resource; therefore, more institutions with lower success rates are being closely scrutinized. In that context, a debate continues concerning the relevance of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). HBCUs are not just “Black Colleges” only serving Black students, but institutions that have evolved into providing service students no matter their racial or cultural background.

This research study employed qualitative inquiry as a means to examine the experiences of nine White students who attended two HBCUs in the Midwest: Central State University and Kentucky State University. As temporary minorities, these White students shared that their HBCU experience has provided a wonderful educational and social opportunity where they were able to receive one-on-one attention from their faculty members, engage closely with staff, and develop connections with their peers. Although these HBCUs do not offer programs specifically targeted for minority students, the participants felt that they mattered to their institution and that being temporary
minorities allowed for them to gain personal racial understanding and deeper insight into race related issues.

Findings from this study showed that the success rates of White students at these HBCUs exceeded those of overall student rates. However, it was noted that these students did not receive active outreach from these institutions. It was concluded that HBCUs must be inclusive in their recruitment practices in order to appeal to non-African American students. Students of all races may see HBCUs as possible college options if the institutions actively reach out to them. As HBCU relevance is being questioned, these institutions must take an active stance as to whether they will rest on an identity solely connected to the historic mission or if the institutional practices will evolve to meet current circumstances.
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*I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me* Philippians 4:13.

My Aunt Mattie quoted this scripture to me my freshmen year of college. I can definitely say 12 years later that it has carried me through my personal life and professional career. Reaching this point academically would not have been accomplished without the favor and blessings of God.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) are not traditionally White institutions (TWIs) with a suntan. Rather, they are higher educational institutions that were created and developed because of the racial divide of the era in which they were founded… The challenges, customs, and operational procedures of these institutions because of isolation and lack of support are distinct, but they all have made tremendous contributions to human capital pool of the nation. (Hale, 2006, p. 43)

Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) have produced a large number of graduates who have left defining marks on the world. Although many of these institutions struggle financially and experience challenges, they still provide a valuable academic experience for many students. Roebuck and Murty (1993) noted that there has been controversy surrounding the role of these institutions within the larger higher education framework since the late 1800s. Historically, although HBCUs were considered “Black colleges,” they have evolved considerably, providing access for anyone wanting to attain a higher education. One of the most significant changes is that the student population of these institutions has expanded to include students of various racial backgrounds and cultures.

Over the past three decades enrollment of White students at HBCUs has increased by about thirty percent (CNN U.S., 2000). The National Center for Education Statistics documents that enrollment of White students at HBCUs has increased from 21,040 in 1976 to 34,154 in 2004 (Provasnik & Shafer, 2004). The earliest research conducted on
this topic dates back to the 1970s. According to Closson and Henry (2008), White students choose to attend HBCUs due to the low cost of tuition, and proximity to home, yet there are some students who have an interest in experiencing the minority status, and seek to immerse themselves in a Black experience in order to gain racial understanding. Additional research is needed in order to determine if these reasons are still valid and serve as drivers for attendance to HBCUs.

**Why do White Students Attend HBCUs?**

The historical mission of HBCUs was to provide an education for Black Americans. Despite this mission, Black colleges have always accepted students of varied racial backgrounds. For most of their history, HBCUs enrolled White students in small numbers; however, in 1995 White student enrollment at HBCUs reached 35,963 students (Gasman et al., 2007). Gasman et al. (2007) speculated that the increase of White student enrollment is affected by court orders that required an increase in diversity at HBCUs. As such, increasing White enrollment has led to Whites being the majority on many HBCU campuses. White students now represent more than fifty percent of the following schools’ populations: Bluefield State College (90%), West Virginia State University (83%), Shelton State Community College (Alabama) (65%), and Lincoln University (Missouri) (64%) (Gasman et al, 2007). Despite the large White student population at HBCUs, there is little research studying this phenomenon.

Throughout history various court cases drove the evolution of HBCUs. Some of the court cases include *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896), which introduced the idea of “separate but equal”; *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas, 1954*, which challenged the
previous case, stating “separate is not equal”; *Adams v. Richardson*, which called for a review of the question “Can Separate be Equal?” as it pertains to the ability of an institution to receive public funding; and a more recent case over the past twenty years, *United States v. Fordice*, 1992. The Fordice case challenged the continued segregation in the Mississippi public university system.

Although these cases provide partial understanding for the increase in White student enrollment, there are likely additional social and economic reasons for this phenomenon, including access to an affordable education. The cost of attending most public HBCUs is cheaper than attending a public predominately White institution (PWI). Two examples of this are Central State University and Kentucky State University. Central State University, Ohio's only public HBCU, has an in-state tuition of $5,000 per year, compared to Wright State University ($8,000) and Kent State University ($9,000), which are two of Ohio's predominantly white public institutions. Kentucky State University, the state’s only HBCU, prices tuition at $5,862 per year versus Eastern Kentucky University ($6,000) and Northern Kentucky University ($7,000), two of the state’s public universities (U.S. News and World Report, 2012). These two institutions are illustrations of cases in which a student may see an HBCU as a more affordable option.

Strayhorn’s (2010) research has considered White students who attend HBCUs as “voluntary” or “temporary” minorities. Nixon (1988) revealed that some White students at HBCUs thought it was important to experience a minority status and wanted to immerse themselves in a Black environment in order to gain racial understanding. The
reasons indicated above provide a few perspectives as to why White students choose to attend HBCUs.

**Academic Experience as a Minority**

Strange and Banning (2001) state that people understand their collegiate environment based on perceptions of the campus and the individuals within the environment. The ways in which individuals perceive, evaluate, and construct their environment determine their ability to be stable and satisfied. This tends to be a major point to consider when a student is of a different race or cultural background from the majority population (Closson & Henry, 2008). Being a successful minority college student requires intentional actions from the student and the institution in order to make this experience successful.

A number of researchers have explored the experiences of students of color attending PWIs. Some studies have concluded that people of color have been very successful at PWIs, while others have suggested that these students face many challenges preventing them from being able to adapt socially to this environment (Closson & Henry 2008). Tinto (1993) found that African American students often face unique challenges in the areas of academics and social integration at PWIs due to an incongruence of values and norms compared with those of the White majority. Students who are unable to find a connection with their environment are less likely to persist. Furthermore, the ability of these students to adjust socially to an academic environment is essential for their success.

Phillips (2005) conducted a study of Black and White students at two, four-year public institutions where he reviewed the difference in perceptions of the campus
environment. His study discussed the reality that Black students felt marginalized and did not believe that there was an equal opportunity for them to succeed. Furthermore, Phillips (2005) found that these students held a belief that their needs were not considered. They felt isolated and experienced pressure to represent their entire race in classes in which they were the only Black student. On the other hand, White students in this study were not aware of the different challenges experienced by Black students, as their experiences were substantially different from their African American counterparts.

Closson and Henry (2008) discussed the idea of social adjustment amongst minority undergraduate students on an HBCU campus. This study concluded that, unlike Black students who attend PWIs, White students enrolling in HBCUs have not experienced the same inequalities. Tinto (1993) states that social integration influences the persistence of African American students, and that it is difficult for an African American to “find and become a member of a supportive community within the college” (p. 74) while attending a PWI. On the contrary, White students at HBCUs are said to experience open and friendly environments with supportive faculty and are not subjected to overt racism (Closson & Henry, 2008). Both of these studies illustrate that there are environmental factors that play a role in a student being able to have a positive or negative experience.

It should be the goal of the faculty, staff, and administration to successfully graduate their students. However, along this path to attainment it is important that the student develops and learns that the institution provides positive life changing opportunities. Tinto (1993) speaks to the concept of student fit, commitment, and
integration. Tinto’s model highlights the importance of formal and informal academic and social interactions experienced by students. If an institution encourages these experiences through the vehicles of academic course work, interaction with faculty (both inside and outside of the classroom), extracurricular activities, and opportunities for positive peer-to-peer interaction, students are more likely to succeed.

Being a minority on campus can be a complicated experience. College provides an opportunity for students to learn more about who they are and who they desire to be. The developmental pathway of White students attending Historically Black Colleges and Universities is important and needs more in-depth understanding. It is also necessary to explore how White students adapt to an environment that was based on the ideals of supporting and cultivating the academic, cultural, and social experiences of African American students. A number of theories and supporting research help bring clarity to this internal development process.

**Theoretical Framework**

The success of a student within college can be attributed to two factors: 1.) A student’s internal identity development process, and 2.) The connection and experiences the student has with the campus environment. This section outlines the theoretical framework which will guide this study, Social Identity Development Theory: Rowe, Bennett, and Atkinson’s White Racial Consciousness Model and Bronfenbrenner’s Ecology Model.
Social Identity Development

The study of Social Identity focuses on characteristics such as ethnicity, race, gender, and sexual orientation and how these identities relate to other aspects of one’s life (Evans et al., 2010). This concept emphasizes the importance of maintaining a positive sense of self. In the 1960s and 70s, there was turmoil surrounding race relations in America; therefore, many people began to identify with their culture with more intensity as a means to establish their identities. Evans et al. (2010) further explain that during this era several Social Identity theories originated in areas relating to Black and White identity. In the 1970s, theories surrounding the women’s movement and gender related models formed, and additional theories arose in the areas of gay identity models as a result of the gay rights movement. White, Latino, Asian, and other ethnic models of identity development continued to evolve during the 1980s and as the twentieth century came to a close (Evans et al., 2010).

There was an explosion in Social Identity literature in the early twenty-first century. When looking at a student’s ability to adapt in an academic environment, Social Identity development is an important component to keep in mind. Within this family of theories there are many aspects that must be considered. One aspect of Social Identity Development that will be explored in this study is the students’ racial identity development using Rowe, Bennett, and Atkinson’s White Racial Consciousness Model.

Rowe, Bennett, and Atkinson’s White Racial Consciousness Model. Rowe, Bennett, and Atkinson (1994) developed the White Racial Consciousness Model (WRCM) in 1994. Rowe et al. describe WRCM as involving “one’s awareness of being
White and what that implies in relation to those who do not share White group membership” (p. 133). Racial consciousness is something inferred based on one’s attitudes and behaviors towards life experiences. With this racial consciousness model, there are two categories in which a person can be identified: unachieved racial consciousness and achieved racial consciousness. The foundational idea behind WRCM is that White people will reach a point where they possess an integrated view of their own identity in relation to people of color, making it easier for them to become committed to social change.

A person’s development is not only shaped by relationships with people, but by their interaction with the environment. For this study, researching how White students connect with the collegiate environment will be essential in understanding how it correlates to their development. Therefore, the use of Bronfenbrenner’s Ecology Model (Renn, 2004) will be included in this research study.

**Bronfenbrenner’s Ecology Model**

An individual’s development is shaped not only internally, but by environmental influences. Renn (2004) describes Bronfenbrenner’s Ecology Model as “a model that also accounts for interactions among and between the various subenvironments an individual encounters” (p.28). This model provides an understanding of how an individual interacts within the environment, and during this interaction with the environment and others within it, the individual constructs and reconstructs his/her identity. There are two central ideals surrounding Bronfenbrenner’s Model: a.) “Development is an evolving function of person-environment interaction” and b.) “Ultimately, this interaction must take place in
the immediate face-to-face setting in which the person exists” (Renn, 2004, p. 28). The concepts introduced in this model will provide a clear understanding of the fundamental link between identity development and environment. Bronfenbrenner’s Model is further explained in Chapter 2.

Statement of the Problem

Although it was the founding mission of HBCUs to be an educational resource for African American students, the student population has become more diverse over time. Many aspects of society are driven by the power and privilege of White Americans. There is rarely an occasion where Whites are not in the position of majority power. In light of these truths, when White students are placed in a situation as the minority, there may be difficulties in success and adjustment.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research is to examine the social identity development of White college students who attend HBCUs. There have been several studies surrounding African American students and their struggles attending PWIs. Within all of these studies several conclusions have been drawn about the Black experience at PWIs. According to Strayhorn (2010), Blacks experience inequalities from their peers and faculty at these institutions; moreover, students have feelings of social isolation, marginalization, and unwelcomeness. However, research has not fully concluded whether or not White students experience this same type of environment at HBCUs.

Although some White students choose to attend HBCUs, there are institutional drivers impacting the increase in White student enrollment. In order for HBCUs to
combat the ongoing conversations regarding their relevance, there is a need for these institutions to increase their enrollments and increase diversity. If there is a shift in the racial make-up in student populations, HBCUs must acknowledge the needs of their minority populations just as PWIs have been asked to do. This may mean enhancing services available to these students and/or creating programs and initiatives that are geared towards their academic and personal success. The experiences and needs of White students at HBCUs may be very different from Black students’ experiences at PWIs; therefore, this research is vital to further explore this concept.

**Research Questions**

This research will focus on the following questions:

1. How do students describe their unique experience while attending an HBCU?
   a. With the increase in White student enrollment at HBCUs, what role does the historical mission of HBCUs play on White student experiences?
   b. How do White students make meaning of their experience as a “temporary minority”?

2. How do White students experience psychosocial development in an HBCU setting?
   a. How do HBCU employees view their efforts to shape the social identity development of White students?
   b. What environmental and cultural factors exist within HBCUs to support the holistic development of White students?
Significance of the Study

With the challenges facing higher education, institutional accountability is a major priority. The importance of justifying value and worth is certainly a significant concern for HBCUs because they tend to have low rates of retention, course completion, and graduation. As a result, some government officials and other citizens have questioned their relevance. In order for HBCUs to support a claim that they contribute to society, they must transcend the “Black college” notion and demonstrate evidence of the capacity to create and educate global citizens of all races. Understanding how to serve all student populations within an institution is vital to its survival. It is essential for HBCUs to create an identity that recognizes their traditional past and embraces a diverse future.

Study Limitations

Within this study I used purposeful sampling as a means to identify the study population. Purposeful sampling is defined as the author’s intentional efforts to select information-rich cases that will help explore issues that are important to the study (Taylor-Powell, 1998). The use of purposeful sampling in this study limited the research population, but allowed for in depth analysis of the experience of White students. This study was conducted using two public HBCUs and is not purported to be generalizable to all such institutions.

Another important limitation is the racial sensitivity within the study. I am African American, while all of my student participants were White. The purpose of this study was to record the experiences of White students who occupy a temporary minority status. The social identities of the participants and the researcher shape the presentation
of the data. For example, there is a possibility that the students’ responses were shaped by my presence as an African American woman.

**Definition of Terms**

The terms listed below are ones that will be used throughout the study. It is essential for the reader to have a clear understanding as to how these words are being defined when used in the text.

*Blackness*- the quality or state of being black.

*Historically Black College/ University (HBCU)* - These are institutions that existed prior to 1964 with the main mission to educate African American students.

*Oppression* - When a population is exploited and subordinated while members of another group are granted privileges.

*Predominantly White Institution (PWI)* - Institutions with a primarily White student population.

*Social Identity* - the notion/concept of how ethnicity, race, gender, sexual orientation, etc. affects other aspects of an individual’s life.

*Privilege* - A concept which views the opportunities made available to a particular racial group over other racial groups.

*Racial Identity* - A “collective identity based on one’s perception that he or she shares common racial heritage with a particular racial group” (Helms, 1990, p. 3).

*Whiteness* - A system of benefits, advantages, and opportunities experienced by White persons.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

A Negro university, from its high ground of unfa ltering facing of the truth from its unblinking stare at hard facts does not advocate segregation by race; it simply accepts the bald fact that we are segregated, apart, hammered into a separate unity by spiritual tolerance and legal sanction backed by mob law, and that this separation is growing in strength and fixation; and that it is worse today than a half century ago and that no character address, culture, or desert is going to change it in our day or centuries to come…Our problem is how far and in what way can we consciously and scientifically guide our future so as to ensure our physical survival, or spiritual freedom and our social growth? Either we do this or we die.

~W.E.B. Du Bois (1933)

W.E.B. Du Bois included the excerpt above in his 1933 article entitled, “The Negro College.” Eighty years after the above passage was written historically Black colleges and universities continue to face the challenges of their relevance and survival. There must be a change in current student population, infrastructure, and practices. The mission of HBCUs is unique and has an historical purpose of servicing a particular type of student; however, movement towards embracing a system of diversity is necessary. When deciding on how and if an environment needs to be reshaped, it is vital to know its foundation. The identity development of White students attending HBCUs has a greater historical meaning than acknowledged today. This chapter will review the history of Black higher education in the US, the legislation and court cases surrounding the
Education Denied, but Needed for Survival

HBCUs are identified as institutions that were founded prior to 1964 with the mission of educating African American students (Coaxum, 2012). These institutions of higher education have been vital in providing access to education for thousands of people who have contributed positively to our society. America’s first HBCUs were founded in the north by religious organizations and Christian missionaries. Cheney University (Pennsylvania)-1837 and Wilberforce University (Ohio) - 1856, were the first two HBCUs established (Coaxum, 2012). Although these early institutions have experienced various struggles in maintaining viability over the years, both are still in existence today.

Prior to the idea of an HBCU, education for enslaved Blacks was forbidden from the inception of slavery. Roebuck and Murty (1993) state that there were two reasons that Blacks were unable to be educated: 1.) Belief in the intellectual inferiority of Blacks and 2.) Concern about competition from educated Blacks in politics and business. These ideas are somewhat contradictory, on one hand, there is an assertion that Blacks lack ability to learn; on the other, if educated, their prosperity could supersede that of Whites. In 1860, there was a population of 4 million Black enslaved people within the United States, with the majority living in the South (Roebuck & Murty, 1993). Although education was prohibited for Blacks, many free Blacks attended school and a number of enslaved people were self-taught.
Slavery served as a system intended to cripple the educational process of Blacks. Despite the laws prohibiting education for Blacks, most slave owners were businessmen who realized that in order to have economic success there was a need to provide training to their slaves (Bullock, 1967). This training led to the self-sustainment of plantations where slaves were trained as artisans, skilled in construction crafts, carpenters, blacksmiths, weavers, and seamstresses. As a result of the advanced skills held by slaves, there was a profitable turnaround for slave owners (Bullock, 1967). Slave owners continued to recognize the skills of their slaves and many of them sent their slaves to various parts of the south to receive in depth training.

Bullock (1967) told the story of a slave by the name of Henry Harris from Mississippi who was sent to Alabama to learn how to mold iron from a master craftsman (P. 6). Another slave by the name of Gregory from Charleston, due to his love of tools, was sent to serve as an apprentice to a master carpenter who taught him how to skillfully use a hammer. The training received by slaves was later identified by Booker T. Washington as the potential birth of an “industrial school” on plantations. Therefore, the system that was designed to keep a people enslaved could have actually been a foundation of Black education.

The educational attainment on plantations eventually led to opportunities for some slaves to develop their own business enterprises. There are examples of slaves who were eventually able to purchase their freedom as a result of being paid for their skills and talents (Bullock, 1967). Free and enslaved Blacks continued to receive education and in the late 1700s early 1800s, religious affiliated schools commenced for Blacks. Roebuck
and Murty (1993) state that there were only twenty-eight Blacks who received their baccalaureate degree from U.S. colleges and universities pre-Civil War. There were a few Blacks who received selective admissions to institutions such as Berea College in Kentucky and Oberlin College in Ohio.

Between 1846 and 1867, a total of 65 organizations were developed to support the education of Blacks (Bullock, 1967; Hill, 1985). On January 1, 1863, the Emancipation Proclamation became finalized by government which caused the migration of many slaves from southern plantations to cities in the north. Blacks looked for resources to sustain a safe and healthy lifestyle for their families. Various organizations, such as the National Freedmen’s Relief, were developed to provide training and school outreach programs for the freed slaves. The goals of these programs were to help Blacks to become self-supporting and gain economic independence.

The Freedmen’s Bureau worked diligently to establish an educational system for Blacks where the majority of the institutions began as common schools. These common schools primarily provided pre-college curriculum for students. Bullock (1967) reports that by 1865 there were 575 schools established with 1,171 teachers employed and 71,779 Black and White students enrolled. The Freedmen’s Bureau schools were not segregated institutions, but ones where Black and White students received the same education within the same facility.

In addition to the efforts of the Freedmen’s Bureau, other organizations such as the American Missionary Association (AMA) assisted in developing a formal school
system for Blacks (Roebuck & Murty, 1993). The AMA was credited with the founding of seven Black colleges and thirteen normal schools over nine years, beginning in 1861. Institutions that were developed from this system include Fisk University, Talladega College, and Atlanta University Complex.

The AMA continued the work of the Freedmen’s Bureau by creating an institution which served as training ground for Black teachers and leaders known as Hampton Institute (later renamed as Hampton University). The AMA and other missionary organizations united to create institutions that focused on religious training (i.e. Morehouse College, Shaw University, and Virginia Union). As stated above, most schools during this time offered primarily high school work to help provide college prep curricula for those students who needed it.

The work by missionaries to holistically educate (i.e. socially, economically, and spiritually) the freed slaves created great concern amongst White southerners. After 1877 more laws were developed to disenfranchise Blacks and to limit their educational growth, only permitting vocational education to be provided to them. In the 1890s, missionaries worked to establish equality for Blacks by promoting the availability of a liberal arts education (Roebuck & Murty, 1993).

The struggle to start education in America for Blacks was one that took great sacrifice, not only from missionary groups and organizations like the Freedmen’s Bureau, but from the Black community as well. Churches and families donated time, money, and energy to create schools in their communities. These collective efforts played an amazing role in shifting the direction of higher education. The work to provide access to higher
education was further expanded due to various court cases and government legislation. This next section discusses the role of the government to expand Black education in America.

**Court Cases and Legislation**

The HBCUs, which began in the early and mid-1800s, were primarily founded by missionary and religious-based organizations. The Morrill Act of 1862 preempted the creation of public HBCUs. In the early 1850s, Jonathan Baldwin Turner, a Yale-educated farmer, newspaper editor, and college professor proposed “A Plan of our State University for the Industrial Classes” (Campbell, 1995). The goal of these institutions was to provide access to higher education for the poor and middle class.

In 1857, Justin Smith Morrill, a representative and future senator of Vermont, sponsored land-grant legislation after receiving correspondences from Turner (Campbell, 1995). The basis of the first Morrill Act was for each state representative and senator to receive 20,000 acres of federal lands to establish a public institution (LaMay, n.d.). President James Buchanan vetoed the initial land grant bill that Morrill introduced to Congress. Morrill later presented another land-grant bill in 1861, which increased the amount of land given to 30,000 acres or equivalent land scrip for each senator and representative (Sherwood, 2004). These institutions were also required to offer military tactics (foundation of present day ROTC program) as a part of the curriculum. President Abraham Lincoln signed the bill into law on July 2, 1862 (Sherwood, 2004). The missions of these new land-grant institutions were to teach agriculture, military tactics,
and the mechanic arts, as well as provide a liberal arts and practical education component.

On August 30, 1890, the Second Morrill Act was passed, providing additional endowments for land grants in the amount of $15,000 at the end of the initial year, then an additional $1,000 for ten years to the maximum of $25,000/year (Campbell, 1995; Roebuck & Murty, 1993). Under the Second Morrill Act, funds were to be “equitably divided” between Black and White colleges. The act established the legalized separation of Black and White public colleges and mandated states to either admit Blacks to existing colleges or develop separate institutions for them. Seventeen land-grant institutions were created between 1890 and 1899 to provide non-degree-granting agricultural, mechanical, and industrial curriculum (Roebuck and Murty, 1993; Abelman & Dalessandro, 2009).

A court case, which later supported the 1890 Morrill Act, was the 1896 case *Plessy v. Ferguson*. This ruling established the defining philosophy of the times: “separate but equal” (Roebuck & Murty, 1993; Hill, 1985). *Plessy v. Ferguson* also upheld the laws of segregation as they pertained to railroad coaches, schools, churches, cemeteries, drinking fountains, and restaurants. After 1877, much of the work in the south by the Freedmen’s Bureau was demolished and southerners regained control of the state legislatures. Within this new system, more money was spent for White students on lower student-teacher ratios, and higher teacher salaries (Roebuck & Murty, 1993). Public HBCUs received unequal funding from their state treasuries. Many of the institutions remained in control by Whites who believed in black inferiority.
The Great Debate

The Black community recognized that although education was separate, the system remained unfair. As discussed above, southerners believed that vocational education was the only curriculum appropriate for Blacks. This idea stirred a great debate between conservative and radical Black leaders, two of them being W.E.B. Du Bois and Booker T. Washington.

Booker T. Washington was born a slave in Virginia in 1856. Following emancipation, his family settled in West Virginia. He attended Hampton Institute and was the founder of Tuskegee Institute, the nation’s premier Black vocational school (Roebuck & Murty, 1993; Bullock, 1967). Washington advocated for compromise with White Southerners and believed in practical education for Blacks. He agreed that education was a means to self-sufficiency and economic prosperity and acknowledged the rights of Blacks to receive classical training. Washington’s form of educational philosophy was known as the Tuskegee Experiment. The basic concept was to train Blacks to do better at things they had always done (Bullock, 1967). He argued that 1) “Black youth should be educated to appreciate the value of manual labor and understand that work is dignified and rewarding,” and 2) “Students should be taught practical skills, that, when coupled with Christian character, would deliver them from serfdom in the ‘New South’” (Roebuck & Murty, 1993, p. 30). Washington accepted social segregation as long as Blacks would be allowed to progress economically and have the opportunity for higher education.
Another point of view originated from W.E.B. Du Bois, a scholar and man educated at Fisk, Harvard, and Berlin. Du Bois was born a free man in Massachusetts in 1868. Du Bois was a professor at Atlanta University and an author, political activist, and editor of Crisis Magazine, the NAACP publication (Roebuck & Murty, 1993). Du Bois was a major critic of Washington. He felt that Washington’s approach to education was one of submission and acceptance of inferiority. Du Bois’ belief was that it was the duty of African-American leaders to oppose the apologies for injustice done to Black civil rights. He disagreed with Washington regarding vocational education as a means to an end. Du Bois believe that liberal arts were a foundation for the educational system and progress for Blacks. In his eyes liberal arts education was the key to African Americans’ social regeneration and a solution for racial conflict and cooperation. He further proclaimed that the top 10% of Black intellectuals would lead the fight against racial segregation and discrimination (Roebuck & Murty, 1993).

There were pros and cons to the arguments of both educational leaders. These two ideas had implications for Black education and the U.S. educational system overall. The types of schools promoted by Washington (Hampton and Tuskegee) and those promoted by Du Bois (Atlanta and Fisk) were both foundational for Black education. This system created an idea of schools which provided opportunities for 1.) Academic opportunity, adequacy, and equality, geared towards meeting the needs of “C” students; and 2.) Academic excellence, geared towards finding and educating “A” and “B” students (Roebuck & Murty, 1993). Both types of schools served a particular type of Black student, based on social class and economic means.
**Separate is Not Equal**

Despite Washington’s philosophy, the idea of nothing more than coexistence between the two races and maintaining separate communities was not sufficient for the sustainability of Black education during this time. Though *Plessy v. Ferguson* brought the concept of equality forward, the principle did not manifest as a reality for Black colleges for several years. In the mid-1900s court cases arose which would reshape the identity of Black colleges in America.

Under the guidance of the NAACP legal department, many Blacks began to enter suits against school districts claiming inequalities due to desegregation. One famous case at this time, *Brown et al. v. Board of Education of Topeka et al.*, involved Oliver Brown, who along with twelve parents, brought suit in the district court of Kansas regarding educational opportunities for children (Bullock 1967). This court case was consolidated with four others in which Black children were experiencing inequality of education (i.e. Harry Briggs Jr. and sixty other Black children brought suit against Clarendon County, South Carolina; Dorothy Davis brought a suit against the school board of Prince Edward County, Virginia; Ethel Belton joined Barbra Bulah and brought suit against Francis Gebhart and other school officials in Delaware) (Bullock, 1967). In all of these cases the plaintiffs were denied admission to public schools attended by White children per state segregation laws. When the Federal district court ruled against Oliver Brown, the NAACP began working on an appeal to the Supreme Court.

Bullock (1967) explains the following results of the other court cases, *Harry Briggs Jr. et al.* - The Clarendon, South Carolina case was denied by the Federal Court. It
was found that the Black schools were inferior to White schools, revoking separate but equal and ordered the defendants to take steps to make the schools equal, then to report back in six months. *Dorothy Davis* - In the Prince Edward County case the three-district court of Virginia stated that the Black schools had inadequate facilities and ordered the board to pursue a building program which it already had begun. *Ethel Belton and Barbara Bulah* - On April 1, 1952, the Delaware Court ordered immediate admission of Black students to schools previously attended by Whites. The state Supreme Court affirmed this in a unanimous decision on August 28, 1952. Although this court case ruled in the plaintiffs’ favor, the lack of vigor by the lower court created a feeling that segregation laws might once again be enforced (p. 232-235).

The nature of these cases illustrated that the fundamental issue under attack was the legality of segregation, not the inequality inherent in schools. On May 17, 1954, the court concluded that separate education for Blacks in public schools was unconstitutional due to the inequality of facilities (Harper et al, 2009). Chief Justice Warren read in the opinion of the court, “Whatever may have been the extent of psychological knowledge at the time of *Plessy v. Ferguson*… this finding is amply supported by modern authority…We conclude that in the field of public education the doctrine ‘separate but equal’ has no place” (Anderson & Kharem, 2009, p. 188).

Although this case focused on students as a part of the K-12 system, it still had an impact on post-secondary institutions. During this time some HBCUs were closed while others were merged with PWIs (Hill, 1985). The end of segregation was a win for the African American community, but was detrimental to some HBCUs. The Brown v. Board
of Education (1954) case began requiring states to eliminate their dual education systems. However, prior to this ruling, many post-secondary institutions had already begun desegregation programs.

Bullock (1967) discussed the admission of a Black female student to the University of Arkansas Medical School in 1948. In the same year the University of Delaware announced that it would give Black students the opportunity to enroll in courses that were not available at their institution, Delaware State College for Negroes (currently Delaware State University- Delaware’s only HBCU), and later in 1950 the University of Delaware admitted Blacks without restriction (p. 262). Between the early and mid-1950s more post-secondary institutions began to open their doors to Black students (i.e. University of Kentucky, Louisiana State University, University of Maryland System Law Schools, University of Missouri, etc.).

The speed of desegregation varied among states, but by 1961 it was estimated that only 17% of public White institutions in the South had admitted Black students (Hill, 1985). All the public institutions in Kentucky, Maryland, and Oklahoma were desegregated. Blacks attended six out of seven colleges in Tennessee; ten out of fifteen schools in Missouri; and 27 out of 73 colleges within Southern states, excluding schools in the Deep South (Bullock, 1967, p. 263). Desegregation became inevitable for public institutions across the country and even some private White institutions began admitting Blacks.

Over the years various court rulings have focused on discrimination through segregated enrollments (Peterson & Hamrick, 2009). One major court case, Adams v.
Richardson, called for a review of the question “Can Separate be Equal?” This case identified violations in the law regarding discriminatory practices in education. The NAACP Legal Defense Fund filed a suit against the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW) regarding their funding methods to public schools that still participated in racial discrimination (Egerton, 1974). It was found that HEW was out of compliance with Title VI. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 states:

No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, or be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance (Pub. L. No. 88-352, 78 Stat. 241).

This ruling ultimately forced colleges and universities in 10 states to produce comprehensive desegregation plans; failure to do so could result in eliminating federal assistance to these institutions. Although it appears that public HBCUs would fit into this ruling, they were exempted from Title VI enforcement due to their importance in providing educational opportunities for African Americans (Peterson & Hamrick, 2009).

Another case that did not exempt HBCUs from being in violation of Title VI was United States v. Fordice, 1992. This court case challenged the continued segregation in the Mississippi public university system, demonstrating Mississippi maintained five institutions that were almost completely White and three institutions that were almost completely Black (FindLaw, 2012; Peterson & Hamrick, 2009). The lawsuit alleged that state officials did not operate in accordance with Equal Protection Clause of the
Fourteenth Amendment and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 by not dismantling the dual educational system.

In light of cases such as those outlined above, other institutions along with HBCUs have taken measures to change their enrollment strategies with the intention/objective of increasing the diversity of their student body.

**Diversification of HBCUs**

The Brown Case not only set into motion the desegregation of White institutions, but also affected the demographics at HBCUs. In 1954, of the 51 original Black colleges in existence, fifteen accepted White students (Bullock, 1967). Morgan State College in Baltimore was an institution that had admitted White students since its inception in 1867. The desegregation of HBCUs occurred noticeably at three institutions: West Virginia State College, Lincoln University at Missouri, and Texas Southern University at Houston. No more than a day after the Brown Case, White students contacted the registrar’s office of West Virginia State College regarding the opportunity to enroll. In the fall of 1957, more than 1,000 White students were registered at West Virginia State College. During the same period, more than one-half of the students enrolled at Lincoln University in Missouri were White (Bullock, 1967, p. 264).

Texas Southern was a very unique institution at this time. It began enrolling a small number of White students, but what made it significant was that it was the only HBCU in Texas that was desegregated at the time, as well as the only state college with a desegregated faculty. Something else that was significant at Texas Southern is that it was probably the only post-secondary institution in the nation where White students
participated in demonstrations for admission on the ground that their constitutional rights were being violated (Bullock, 1967, p. 265).

Although there were some HBCUs that became diversified post-1954, there were some institutions that admitted White students from their inception. Howard University is located in Washington, D.C. and was founded in 1867 by the U.S. Congress. Howard was named for General Oliver Otis Howard, who served as the commissioner of the Freedmen’s Bureau. This institution is significant in that its first students were four White females who were daughters of two Board of Trustee members (Bullock, 1967). Howard created this institution to be one that was coeducational and multicultural, despite the segregated practices of this time.

Despite the mission of HBCUs, White students still opted to attend these institutions. In 1976, 12% of students at HBCUs were from other races and nationalities (Hill, 1985). Between 1976 and 1980 the enrollment increases experienced by HBCUs were due to non-Black student matriculation. Hill (1985) documents that there was a 20% increase (18,390-23,040) in White student enrollment from 1976-1982. During this time, White students who attended HBCUs primarily enrolled in graduate and professional programs. In 1982, among the 39 public HBCUs, one-quarter of them had student bodies that comprised at least 15% White students. There were four institutions documented to have over 50% of their student populations that were White (Kentucky State, Lincoln University- Missouri, Bluefield State College, and West Virginia State College) (Hill, 1985; Bullock, 1967). Even today, these institutions still have a significantly large portion of White students.
Despite the thousands of White students who attended HBCUs in the past, there are very little data that capture the success of these students. However, there are several statistics on Black graduate success. For examples, Abelman and Dalessandro reported high proportions of Black professionals who graduated from HBCUs, including: Black Officers in the US Military (80%); Black federal judges (80%); and Black attorneys (65%). HBCUs are institutions with supporting evidence for yielding high success rates for its Black students. However, to show that these institutions are more than “Black colleges” it’s necessary to demonstrate their effectiveness in educating and graduating non-African American students.

**Evolving Mission**

The foundational mission of HBCUs was based on the idea of creating educational opportunities for African Americans, not to prevent access to other races. Since their inception, HBCUs have been inclusive to all people; in essence they embraced an “open door policy” welcoming all applicants (Peterson & Hamrick, 2009; Brown & Ricard, 2007). Currently and historically, HBCUs have existed to uplift the Black community and make an educational contribution to African American students. However, despite this foundation, Brown (2002) explains that these institutions have never been monolithic, monocultural, or homogenous, but have embodied a rich history and embraced diversity (p. 267).

According to Rose and Bylander (2006), the diversification of HBCUs will be beneficial for both White and Black students. Research suggests that White students are least likely to engage in crossing racial and ethnic lines on college campuses. Rose and
Bylander (2006) also note that students of color, primarily African American students, need interactions with both White and same race peers to have a well-rounded and fully beneficial diverse higher educational experience. The idea of Whites attending HBCUs can enhance growth and identity development for both cultures. One might ask if this experience could be generated without the existence of HBCUs. Possibly, but the diversification of an environment where Whites are in the minority versus the majority (HBCUs) could generate a different developmental experience.

Therefore, as HBCUs continue on this path of diversity through increasing their recruitment of non-African American students, the campus environment must be prepared to foster holistic development and to maximize learning for these students. In learning how to better serve any group of students, it is vital to understand their developmental process. In order to understand White students’ development and ability to function as a minority, it is also essential to understand their identity as being a member of a dominant racial culture. The next section reviews the theoretical framework surrounding social identity development of White students, with specific focus on Rowe, Atkinson, and Bennett’s White Student Consciousness Model.

**White Social Identity Development**

Social Identity includes characteristics such as ethnicity, race, gender, and sexual orientation, and how these characteristics shape one’s life (Evans et al., 2010). Social identity development includes the following ideas: privilege, oppression, multiple identities, and diversity development. These concepts have contributed to societal perspectives of different populations. In higher education, it is important to understand
these various components as they relate to a student’s ability to adapt to the collegiate environment. A student’s past experiences can significantly impact his/her actions when placed in a situation where one is the “minority.” The following is a brief description of privilege and racial identity of Social Identity Development as outlined in Evans et al. (2010).

**Privilege**

Privilege is a concept that is important when reviewing social inequities between the dominant culture (e.g. White people) and minority populations (e.g. people of color). Some examples of privilege include the potential of college being only available to members of upper economic classes, inequity in pay amongst men and women when comparable work is performed, or discriminatory actions against people of color while the dominant culture is provided the access to particular opportunities. Rowe et al. (1994) explain that sometimes the concept of privilege is unrecognizable by people of the dominant culture; therefore, there are times where they unknowingly take advantage and use it for their benefit. Wise (2011) states that Whites are unlike people of color, for they were born to, belong and rarely have to prove themselves deserving of their presence here (p. 3). In thinking about Wise’s perspective it further confirms that the idea of privilege could be non-existent for some White people.

There are two types of privilege: 1) unearned entitlement, which Evans et al. (2010) describe as “privileges we should all possess, such as feeling safe in the workplace” (p. 237), and 2) conferred dominance, which is defined as unearned advantages given to a group and which has been characterized as an expression of power.
that is generally unacknowledged by the group that possesses the power (Pinterits et al., 2009; Evans et al., 2010). Members of the dominant group tend to appear as oppressors with power. The phenomena of oppression and privilege are directed toward keeping power in the hands of the privileged and systematically dominating members of other groups (Evans et al., 2010). Evans et al. (2010) describes privilege as “like a lopsided scale of justice…bestows privilege in a manner that impacts relationships between people who would otherwise be peers” (p. 238). With this research study, where White students are coming from the dominant culture into a minority state, there is a shift in the balance of power resulting in the privilege group changing. One type of privilege, which lends perspective to the concept of Whites being in the minority is the idea of White privilege.

**White Privilege.** White privilege is based on the evident power assumed by light-skinned people of nearly every culture (Evans et al., 2010). Pinterits et al. (2009) suggest that the awareness of White privilege is based in strong affective, cognitive, and behavioral reactions, referred to as White Privilege Attitudes. Three components of White privilege attitude include: 1.) acknowledgement of fear and guilt; 2.) Awareness of cognitive feelings ranging from denial to moral consciousness; and 3.) Reactions that include the avoidance or lack of desire to discuss White privilege, and furthermore the intent and actions to undo its existence (Pinterits et al., 2009). These concepts are not necessarily stages, but a person could experience any of these attitudes at different times in life based on his/her experiences.

Evans et al. (2010) explain that as an identity construct, “Whiteness is ill-defined, illusory (as an identity marker) and elusive. By contrast, White privilege is
explicitly defined, but often hard for Whites, while easy for non-Whites, to see as a system of benefits, advantages, and opportunities experienced by White persons bestowed solely because of skin color” (p. 239). McIntosh (1988) states, “I have come to see white privilege as an invisible package of unearned assets that I can count on cashing in each day, but about which I was ‘meant’ to remain oblivious” (p.94). This quote by McIntosh supports the notion that White privilege is an idea that has existed for hundreds of years; however, it has been a difficult concept for many to accept and acknowledge. When something is a part of a person’s way of life, to “name” it as something good or bad may pose difficulties.

In McIntosh’s 1988 paper regarding White privilege, she discusses a sense of oppressiveness Whites have with people of color, which is unconscious to them. She further explains that one’s privileged state causes them to be placed “ahead” of others, but while doing so there is an unrecognized damage that is going on internally. The damage is based on people not realizing the differences made between them and people of color. Unrecognized White privilege causes people to take for granted the opportunities that were afforded to them while it also causes them to believe that people of color have the same benefit. People who fall into this “unrecognized” category do not believe racism affects them and they do not see “Whiteness” as a racial identity (McIntosh, 1988; Tatum, 1997).

If the above concepts are true, White privilege is an issue that requires more research and in-depth understanding. White privilege is resurfacing as a topic of discussion within counseling, higher education, and student affairs. As research on this
topic continues to grow there is value in studying how White privilege and identity are viewed and experienced when a White person is in a minority status.

**Racial Identity**

Racial Identity is an important component of personal development. “Racial identity is defined as a sense of group or collective identity based on one’s perception that he or she shares a common racial heritage with a particular racial group” (Helms, 1990, p. 3). Steck et al. (2003) state, “Race is a key component of identity, particularly for minority groups. In the United States, individuals construct racial identity in the context of a society that has oppressed African-Americans (and other minority groups) and privileged European-Americans” (p. 58). Racial identity development is important for college students as they begin to create their own personal view of self.

According to racial identity development theories (Cross, 1971; Fhagen-Smith, 2001), individuals initially understand race identity based on the environment in which they were raised and based on the ideals taught to them by family. Racial identity development process is typically slower for Whites than people of color (Wise, 2011; Tatum, 1997). The idea behind this concept is that because of the dominant role Whites have within society, the acknowledgement of differences between racial groups is not as immediate or of necessity for many of them. Of course this idea does not apply to all White people; as stated above the understanding of racial identity begins with family structure and environmental factors.

There are studies that suggest that by age eight, black children are cognizant of negative stereotypes about their race (Wise, 2011). People of color tend to recognize
early on that they are someone apart from the “other” group, and begin to understand the idea of Whiteness. This concept is highly recognized in Black Identity Development, specifically Cross-and Fhagen-Smith’s model, which places racial identity development in six stages from early infancy/early childhood into adulthood.

The White racial identity development process is broken down in three phases 1.) Realizing the unearned privilege that exists in society; 2.) Completing self-examination of the individual’s role in maintaining the status quo; and 3.) Concluding with an idea of self-awareness and making a commitment to social justice for all groups of people (Ponterotto and Park-Taylor, 2007). Within the developmental process, some Whites tend to see themselves as individuals versus identifying as a member of a group.

The view of oneself as an individual is very compatible with the dominant ideology of rugged individualism and the American myth of meritocracy. Understanding racism as a system of advantage that structurally benefits Whites and disadvantages people of color on the basis of group membership threatens not only beliefs about society but also beliefs about one’s own life accomplishments (Tatum, 1997, p. 103).

Tatum further highlights the fact that White identity development is a process that may be difficult and will take some time to accomplish. As with all development, every person is unique and may or may not reach every stage of development. The process of identity development is important for college students regardless of their race. However, it is even more important when someone is in an environment as a minority. Knowing who you are will help to shape one’s goals and experiences. This next section will discuss the 1994
racial identity development theory created by Rowe, Bennett, and Atkinson, the White Racial Consciousness Model.

**Rowe, Bennett, and Atkinson’s White Racial Consciousness Model (WRCM).**

Rowe, Bennett, and Atkinson first created the White Racial Consciousness Model (WRCM) in 1994 in response to concerns they identified from Helm’s White Racial Identity Development Model. Rowe et.al (1994) describe WRCM as involving “one’s awareness of being White and what that implies in relation to those who do not share White group membership” (p. 133). Having racial consciousness may be, for some people, a part of their sense of identity. Racial consciousness is something inferred based on one’s attitudes and behaviors towards life experiences.

The White Racial Consciousness Model is derived from Phinney’s 1989 Ethnic Identity Stage Model. Within this model, the attitude of White racial consciousness is divided into two statuses: Unachieved White Racial Consciousness and Achieved White Racial Consciousness. Each status contains types of identities that are not stages and have no linear sequence. People can move from one type to another based on experiences. The amount of dissonance that exists allows for an individual to transition and move between unachieved and achieved racial consciousness. Rowe et al. (1994) describe the model as such:

- Unachieved White Racial Consciousness- is defined as those types of attitudes for which either exploration or commitment, or both, are lacking and which we have termed avoidant, dependent, and dissonant. There are three types of Unachieved WRC: avoidant, dependent, and dissonant.
Avoidant Type- Individuals have attitudes that are indicative of avoidance and include a lack of consideration of one’s own White identity as well as an avoidance of concern for racial/ethnic minority issues. White Americans have the option of minimizing the impact of racial awareness by dismissing the issue in various ways, which is different for racial/ethnic minorities who have little choice concerning their awareness of racial identity (p. 136).

Dependent Type- Individuals characterized by this type appear to have committed to some set of attitudes regarding White racial consciousness; they have not personally considered alternative perspectives. Racial attitudes are superficial and not “owned” to the degree that these attitudes have been internalized by others (p. 136).

Dissonant Type- Individuals are clearly uncertain about their sense of White racial consciousness and racial/ethnic minority issues. They are open to new information because it might reduce their uncertainty, but they lack commitment to the ideas they might express (p.137).

Achieved White Racial Consciousness- Comprises four types: dominant, conflictive, reactive, and integrative.

Dominant Type- Characterized by a strong ethnocentric perspective, this justifies the dominance of racial/ethnic minority peoples by the majority culture. Dominant might be expressed in more or less passive or active modes. Active expression involves overt negative or hostile
behavior. This ranges from indirect behavior resulting in negative consequences for minority persons. Passive expression might involve a reluctance to interact with members of visible racial/ethnic groups, except in clearly dominant/submissive roles (p. 137).

- **Confictive Type**- Opposed to obvious discriminatory practices, yet are usually opposed to any program or procedure that has been designed to reduce or eliminate discrimination (p. 138).

- **Reactive Type**- Aware of racial/ethnic discrimination as a significant feature in American society and are reacting to this acknowledgement. They are likely to hold views based on the premise that White Americans benefit from and are responsible for the existence of discriminatory attitudes and practices. Individuals are often very sensitive to the potential for discrimination to be a factor in situations and might be particularly vigilant in identifying inequitable acts (p. 139).

- **Integrative Type**- People display a variety of behaviors derived from a pragmatic view of racial/ethnic minority issues. This view is based on moral responsibility, but it is pragmatic in the sense that conduct is tempered by the reality of what will make a difference. These individuals are not compelled to respond to a reductionist worldview in predictable, predetermined ways. Moreover, they appear to have integrated their sense of Whiteness with a regard for racial/ethnic
minorities. They value a culturally pluralistic society and often have a more complex or sophisticated understanding of sociopolitical factors affecting racial/ethnic minority issues (p. 141).

With this model, a person moves from one status to another based on the environmental experiences and events that take place in his/her life. A person may remain in one of the earlier stages for several years, never reaching a place of autonomy.

White Racial Consciousness Model (WRCM) has been used in a few studies regarding student development. A study by Mueller and Pope (2003) entitled *The Relationship of Demographic and Experience Variables to White Racial Consciousness Among Student Affairs Practitioners* discusses Oklahoma Racial Attitudes Scale to examine the White Racial Consciousness of 534 White student affairs practitioners. Mueller and Pope were able to find a correlation among the participants’ age, gender, and social marginalization and specific WRC types. A White student’s identity development may be shaped by his/her collegiate experiences. Therefore, understanding the impacts of the campus environment on development is essential.

**Campus Environment Shapes the Experience**

The existence of separate, publicly supported colleges for [African Americans] has embodied a series of legal and educational paradoxes. The public [Black] college has been expected to serve the unique educational requirements of Black students while it duplicates the curriculum offered to Whites. It has been a center both to preserve Black culture and to prepare Black students for the mainstream of American life... Its continued existence has been defended as necessary to
maintain segregation and as essential to increase integration. Its improvement has been mandated in order to segregate Black students and to attract White ones. Its virtues have been hailed by segregationists and its weaknesses condemned by integrationists. Ambivalence toward the Black college has confounded the definition and implementation of desegregation. (Preer, 1982, p. 1)

Preer (1982) suggests that the segregation of Black colleges is necessary as a means to increase integration. The idea behind this is that HBCUs serve as a means to empower Black students and provide a unique educational experience not provided at PWIs. Ultimately this segregated experience will make the integration into mainstream America easier because these students will have a sense of identity and will have gained certain skill sets to be successful.

Whether or not Preer’s passage is true, HBCUs must argue and show that they are not segregated institutions because of their student demographics. The identity of HBCUs within higher education has to be defined by the institutions, not society. It is necessary for these institutions to show they have the ability to educate and graduate students of all racial and cultural backgrounds.

Yearly, students and parents across the country participate in campus visitation programs. The goal of a campus visit allows a student to determine the types of academic and co-curricular opportunities available, meet faculty, staff, and current students, tour campus facilities, and ultimately conclude if there is a “fit.” When exploring this notion of fit, a student may ask: ‘Do I see myself here?’ The student will assess a variety of
factors before concluding if he/she is able to call an institution “home” for the next four, five, or six years.

The people who attend or work on a college campus shape the institutional culture and climate. Strange and Banning (2001) state, “Culture, with roots in anthropology, sociology, and social psychology, is inherently a perceptual construct in that the culture of any environment reflects the assumptions, beliefs, and values inhabitants construct to interpret and understand the meaning of events and actions” (p. 100). A college campus may or may not embrace certain types of people, ideas, or changes due to the systemic beliefs established. In an environment such as an HBCU with a foundational mission, goals, and traditions centered on the empowerment of African American students, there will be particular practices and a culture that exists. When HBCUs begin to see an influx of White students on their campuses, there will be a need to adjust their culture in order to be inclusive of their diverse student populations. This change is not to be perceived as bad or damaging, but whenever change is introduced in an environment, the inhabitants must determine how they will facilitate this process.

**Bronfenbrenner’s Ecology Model of Human Development**

A student’s identity development is impacted and shaped by the environment in which he/she is in, as well as by the individuals who inhabit it. When considering some of these concepts, Urie Bronfenbrenner’s ecology model of human development lends a perspective to this process (Renn, 2004). Urie Bronfenbrenner was a developmental psychologist who primarily studied child development. In the 1970s, he began expanding
his research and first introduced the ecological model of human development.

Bronfenbrenner (1977) defines ecology of human development as

the scientific study of the progressive, mutual accommodation, throughout the
life span, between a growing human organism and the changing immediate
environments in which it lives, as this process is affected by relations obtaining
within and between these immediate settings, as well as the larger social contexts,
both formal and informal, in which the settings are embedded. (p. 514)

Within this model, Bronfenbrenner argues that in order to understand human
development, one must consider the ecological systems with which an individual
interacts.

Renn (2004) describes Bronfenbrenner’s model as one that takes into account the
interactions that exist between an individual and various sub-environments. She
examines a student’s experience throughout college, focusing on how one constructs and
reconstructs one’s identity based on relationships with others and messages a person
receives from interacting environments (p.28). Bronfenbrenner’s model is illustrated as
an equation of $D=f(PE)$, which highlights development as the function of interactions of
person and environment (Renn, 2004). This model is rooted in the concept that people do
not develop solely based on internal choices and processes, but based on how they
experience people, places, and ideas around them. However, Bronfenbrenner’s model
further shows that this development process is two-directional. An environment not only
impacts the development of a person, but a person is a dynamic influencer on an
environment.
Renn (2004) further discusses the basic concepts of this model, which are person, process, context, and time (PPCT). *Person* refers to the individual, one’s current state of development, and characteristics that lead the individual to engage in particular ways with particular environments; *Process* represents the interactions between the person and the environment, as well as the influence those interactions have on the individual and the environment; *Context* consists of the immediate settings in which the individual experiences development, as well as one’s interaction between those settings; *Time* reviews the timing of events in the life of the individual as well as the broader sweep of development.

Although the four parts of the ecology model are important, *context* serves as one of the most vital components. Context is important because it focuses on the environment surrounding the individual. As the environment around a person changes he/she will experience behavioral differences, alterations in personality and purpose, and ultimately one’s identity is redefined. *Context* is divided into four levels of the ecological environment: micro-, meso-, exo-, and macrosystems (Renn, 2004). These levels are concentric structures each contained within the next. These interacting systems explain how the closest relationships and environments of a student, as well as the external societal view can shape their development.

**Four levels of ecological environment.** Bronfenbrenner (1977) defines *Microsystem* as, “the complex of relations between the developing person and environment in an immediate setting containing that person (e.g. home, school, workplace, etc.) (p. 514). For a college student, some microsystems are voluntary while
others are not (Renn, 2004). Voluntary microsystems include participation in certain student organizations, athletics, working at a certain location on campus, church attended while in school, friendship groups, and dating relationships. Involuntary microsystems include residence halls (new students may not be able to select their housing and/or roommate) and course selection (i.e. required classes for graduation). A student’s ability to adjust to particular microsystems determines the influence that setting will have on his/her development.

Mesosystems comprise the connections and processes that exist between two or more settings (e.g. the relations between home and school, school and workplace, etc.) containing the developing person. A mesosystem is a system of microsystems. An example of this may be one of the participants introducing a roommate to one’s local church, allowing the roommate to meet and interact with one’s clergy and church members.

Bronfenbrenner (1977) defines exosystems as “an extension of the mesosystem embracing other specific social structures, both formal and informal, that do not themselves contain the developing person but impinge upon or encompass the immediate settings in which that person is found, and thereby influence, delimit, or even determine what goes on there” (p.515). This system speaks to external factors which can internally impact a person’s ability to develop. In other words a study participant may not be able to take advantage of a scholarship opportunity due to the institution’s funding agency having a policy which restricts the award to students apart from underrepresented populations (i.e. African American, Hispanics, etc).
The final level is *Macrosystem*. Bronfenbrenner (1977) defines this as “the overarching institutional patterns of the culture or subculture, such as economic, social, educational, legal, and political systems, of which micro-, meso-, and eco- systems are the concrete manifestations” (p.515). The macrosystem level is one that has a very important significance to this study as it relates to HBCUs. As discussed earlier in the chapter, the historical nature of these institutions was to serve the educational interest of African American students. Although many of the institutions have diversified, their purpose is grounded in shaping and developing future African American leaders who will give back to the Black community and become global citizens. This mission and practices on these campuses can affect the development of a White student. Although the student may not experience overt racism, a feeling of discomfort and a true sense of not belonging could potentially exist.

**Ecology Model and Racial Identity Development**

During students’ first few weeks of college they enter into various microsystems which include roommate/hall mates, classmates, and peers in student organizations. The interaction between these microsystems creates a mesosystem of peer culture (Renn, 2004). However, there are some students who may decide to avoid settings that are diverse and contain people of various racial, ethnic, and cultural groups. Some students seek to remain in an environment where they can be immersed in a group with others like themselves. The campus peer culture that exists plays a significant factor in someone’s identity realization and exploration. At an HBCU, White students will not have this environment that allows them to be immersed with students who look like them.
Therefore, it is important that these students be able to find other microsystems that allow for them to identify with and feel comfortable in those settings.

As it relates to this study, when entering a campus environment as a minority, White students who have been raised in an environment where they were in the majority population may experience acts of racism and have difficulty adjusting. Even those White students who may have lived and gone to school in a predominantly Black community may still experience challenging interactions when entering an HBCU. These negative experiences can be triggers for further racial development as the student gains a new understanding of race and racial identity (Renn, 2004).

These students’ microsystems will continue to shift as they move through various developmental stages. A potentially challenging aspect of the White students’ HBCU experience, which differs for Blacks and Hispanic students who attend PWIs, is the ability to create an organized microsystem focused solely on them (i.e. White Student Union, White Students United, etc.). There may be some institutional factors/resistance which prevents them from creating something of this nature. In order for the racial identity process to occur, it is necessary for campus administrators to provide an environment which is conducive to and supportive of this population of students.

**White Student Experiences at HBCUs**

White students have attended HBCUs since their inception and have had both challenging and successful experiences. The experiences of White students are not completely parallel to those of African American students who attend PWIs. In a research study on White students at HBCUs, Donald (2010) found that the students did
not experience a lot of racism on campus. He also found that although many of his participants attended African American high schools, their interaction with Black students changed based on the type of student they encountered. For some White students there is a feeling of being an “outsider” which is similar to how some African American students describe their experiences at PWIs. Closson and Henry (2008) found similar results stating that White students did not have direct incidents of racism, but they expressed acknowledgement that there were some negative feelings associated with their experience.

The way in which a person previously experienced an environment will not necessarily prepare one for events that may occur in future environments. This holds true for people no matter their racial background. One challenge that has not been discussed in great length is how White students deal with family and friends’ responses to them attending an HBCU. This concept may also play a major factor in this student’s ongoing social identity development.

Schlossberg’s (1989) Theory on Marginality and Mattering states that students feel marginalized when they feel as if they do not fit in, and this can lead to “self-consciousness, irritability, and depression” (p. 7). When an institution recruits a student no matter the race, ethnic classification, or socioeconomic status, it is essential that one has the tools and resources necessary to help him/her be successful. Thus, according to Schlossberg’s theory, it is important that HBCUs consider their approach to making White students feel as if they matter. It is essential that the campus create connections
among these students, faculty, and staff, allowing them to believe and know their worth to the institution.

Conclusion

The diversification of HBCUs serves as a benefit for both African American and non-African American students. For African American students, having White students or other races present on campus can aid in disconfirming stereotypes. This is important because many of the African American students who are used to segregated high school environments will benefit from a diversified environment. White students also benefit from attending HBCUs in that it aids them in becoming culturally competent as it relates to the African American race; some will have the opportunity to be immersed in the Black experience; and others may seek to have the experience of being a temporary minority (Closson and Henry, 2008). Diversity in HBCUs creates an environment that will allow for everyone in the environment to have internal and external learning experiences.

At the beginning of this chapter a quote by W.E.B. Du Bois was introduced. HBCUs were not created to embrace or encourage the ideal of segregation, but they were developed to provide an educational opportunity for those who did not have one. For the past few decades the purpose and relevance of HBCUs has been challenged. These institutions have graduated a significant portion of the nation’s Black doctors, lawyers, teachers, military officers, etc. As such, HBCUs have served as a nurturing ground to grow Black leaders.
However, despite the statistics of their success, HBCUs have continued to miss the mark as it relates to retention, course completion, and graduation of their students. As a result, some policy makers question why the doors of these institutions should remain open. They ask questions such as “Why are federal dollars being allocated to these segregated colleges?” and “Why continue to invest in homogenous institutions that are not producing desired results?” Statements such as these must ignite HBCUs to show that they have evolved beyond their original missions, and have grown to be institutions of higher education educating diverse student populations.

Being a temporary minority at an HBCU can present successes and challenges to internal development. White students who attend HBCUs experience this environment in a unique way. Existing in an environment as a minority may induce feelings of exclusion, isolation, and lack of support. Therefore, it is the duty of the institution to help these students through the stages of their development as they would help the majority population. In order for this to take place, administrators have to recognize this population of students as important to their success. It may be necessary for HBCUs to create diversity initiatives and support systems similar to those at PWIs. HBCUs must begin looking at White students and other non-African American students as essential in their fight against the charge of “institutional relevance.” It is important for HBCUs to understand that their evolving mission does not mean they will completely desert their identity.
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Qualitative Approach

Being a minority in any setting provides an opportunity for an environment to shape this individual as well as for the person to shape the environment. In order to gain an understanding of this transitional process, a method of research is needed which allows for in-depth inquiry. “Qualitative research is intended to penetrate to the deeper significance that the subject of the research ascribes to the topic being researched. It involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter and gives priority to what the data contribute to important research questions or existing information” (Higgins & Green, 2008, p.20.2). Qualitative research provides researchers with an opportunity to gain a greater understanding of how and why someone makes meaning of a particular experience.

Qualitative research has many advantages: 1.) It allows the researcher to gain a greater understanding and connection with the participants and environment; 2.) It permits the researcher to explore different factors and influences that arise during the study; 3.) It promotes an increased opportunity to support new ideas and theories; 4.) There is more relevance and interest able to be revealed for practitioners; and 5.) There is the ability to investigate the symbolic dimensions which surface during the study (Ospina, 2004). Qualitative research permits researchers to learn things about their participants and environments they may not have anticipated.

This study undertook the goal to record the “lived experiences” of nine White undergraduate students enrolled at two, four-year public HBCUs. In addition to student
participants, eight university employees from both institutions were solicited to participate in this study. The perspective gained from the employees aided in understanding how they view the institution’s approach to servicing this student population. With the qualitative research techniques employed in this study, the researcher was able to form a connection with the participants and the environment in order to gain a deeper understanding of their experiences at an HBCU. From this study the researcher gained new ideas and strategies which can be shared with HBCU higher education professionals to aid in how to better serve this population of students.

The research questions that guided this study were specifically focused on the experiences of White students who attended two, four-year public HBCUs. This study considered the social identity development of White students who were in a minority position, and their ability to adjust, interact, and connect with an HBCU environment. The goal was to address the following questions:

1. How do White students describe their unique experiences while attending an HBCU?
   a. With the increase in White student enrollment at HBCUs, what role does the historical mission of HBCUs play on White student experiences?
   b. How do White students make meaning of their experience as a “temporary minority”?

2. How do White students experience psychosocial development in an HBCU setting?
a. How do HBCU administrators (i.e. deans, vice presidents, etc.) view their efforts to shape the social identity development of White students?

b. What environmental and cultural factors exist within HBCUs to support the holistic development of White students?

Since 2008, there have been at least two studies focusing on the experience of White students who attend HBCUs; however, there was only one that studied their identity development (Strayhorn, 2010; Peterson and Hamrick, 2009). Peterson and Hamrick (2009) researched the racial consciousness among White male undergraduate students who served as the “temporary minority.” This was a qualitative study with seven White male participants.

Within this study, Peterson and Hamrick (2009) identified three main themes: Classroom Environments, Social Environments, and Greater Awareness of Race and Privilege (i.e. Experiences with discrimination and bias, Perceptions of race and privilege, and Personal growth). Overall, this study concluded that there are internal and external conclusions that can be drawn when placed in the experience of being a minority. Externally, the experiences of these students illustrated that as a minority, one may be more apt to analyze if and how one will react to difficult situations posed by an environment; meaning that one is more likely to practice self-censorship due to fear of statements being judged and misunderstood because of their race. Internally, it was an idea that attitudes regarding racial beliefs and understandings are shaped by their experiences within an environment.
Research on White students enrolled at HBCUs is important in light of the ever-changing higher education system. As stated in Chapter 1, there are many research studies that focus on how minority students experience academic success and other educational opportunities at a PWI. However, there is a gap in literature that speaks to White student enrollment at HBCUs. The information gathered in this study will help HBCUs understand how they can create a better environment that is culturally sensitive and welcoming to non-African American students.

**Phenomenological Research Method**

Phenomenological method is an approach in which the researcher gathers “deep information and perceptions of individuals and/or environments through inductive, qualitative methods such as interviews, discussions and participant observation, and representing it from the perspective of the research participant(s)” (Lester, 1999, p.1). Patton (2002) states, “Phenomenology aims at gaining a deeper understanding of the nature or meaning of our everyday experiences” (p. 104). This methodology allows for the researcher to study the experience from the perspective of the person and gain insights into one’s motivations and actions.

Patton (2002) provides two major considerations of phenomenological research: 1.) What is important to know is what people experience and how they interpret the world; and 2.) The only way for us to really know what another person experiences is to experience the phenomenon as directly as possible for ourselves (p. 106). As the researcher, using phenomenological method means that one must be willing to intentionally experience the lives and environments of their participants. It was the goal
of the researcher to determine how these participants make meaning of their experiences as temporary minorities.

With phenomenological research, “The aim of the researcher is to describe as accurately as possible the phenomenon, refraining from any pre-given framework, but remaining true to the facts” (Groenewald, 2004, p. 5). Therefore, within the data collection process it was essential that the researcher expressed the importance for the participants to deliver the truth about their experiences and not to feel reluctant to be completely honest.

**Researcher Perspective**

During this research study it was essential that as the researcher I got to the heart of the matter, to understand the experiences of the participants. Patton (2002) states, “the quality of qualitative data depends to a great extent on the methodological skill, sensitivity, and integrity of the researcher” (p. 5). Reflecting on Patton’s (2002) quote, it was a necessity that I was sensitive to my participants’ stories and experiences. In light of my background of having attended predominantly White institutions during my secondary and post-secondary academic career, I had the ability in some sense to understand some of their experiences but not all of them.

Studies noted in Chapter 1 explained that students of color at PWIs have experiences of racism and isolation due to an inability to connect with the campus environment. Based on my experiences, this is in part very true. The responsibility to connect with my academic environments seemed to fall more on me than the institution. I felt that the only way I was going to have a better experience at the institution was
through making a conscious effort and not waiting for the institution to reach out to me. These experiences played significant roles in shaping all that I did professionally and academically thereafter. A person experiences an environment based on his/her own personal perspective and preconceived expectations. However, despite this personal knowledge, it was vital that I did not allow my experiences to become a distraction during the study, but rather a tool to demonstrate relation and understanding regarding the participants being minority students. This was helpful in gaining their trust to be willing to be open about their experiences at Central State or Kentucky State.

As the researcher, I had the ability to positively or negatively impact the results of the study based on my data collection practices. Patton (2002) further explains the role of the researcher within a qualitative inquiry: “In qualitative inquiry, the researcher is the instrument. The credibility of qualitative methods, therefore, hinges to a great extension the skill, competence, and rigor of the person doing fieldwork---as well as things going on in a person’s life that might prove a distraction” (p.14). As the instrument, I had to be in tune to what was taking place in the research and be prepared to change tempo if needed.

Going through the data collection process, I gained a deeper knowledge of processes of student development, and the interaction between individuals and their environment. Harling (2002) explains that when data collection begins the researcher must play “an interpretive role, making observations, using subjective judgment, analyzing and synthesizing, and recognizing all the while her own consciousness” (p. 5). Ultimately, it was my goal to bring to light new understandings of the phenomenon of
White students in the role of temporary minority.

There were challenges to conducting this study due to my identity as an African American. I attempted to gain the trust of the White participants and make them feel comfortable with me during the data collection process. It was important for me to help the participants understand that they were able to share their HBCU experiences without the concern of offending me. Being an administrator at Central State also presented a challenge. It was essential to reassure the participants that my role was that of a researcher during interviews and not as an administrator. Since I had no connections with Kentucky State participants, the biggest difficulty was getting them to be willing to talk to me since I was a total stranger. I tried to place their minds at ease as much as possible. I committed to preserving confidentiality with the participants through my signature on all the “Intent to Participate Forms” as well as through verbal assurance.

Research Sites

Central State University

Central State University (CSU) is Ohio’s only public HBCU, and is located in Wilberforce, Ohio. The institution has a total of approximately 1,950 undergraduate students, offering thirty-three bachelor’s degree programs and one master’s degree program. CSU’s mission is:

To academically prepare students with diverse backgrounds and educational needs for leadership and service in an increasingly complex and rapidly changing world. An open access institution, Central State University fosters academic
excellence, providing a strong liberal arts foundation with majors in selected fields (Central State University, 2012).

Students have an opportunity to engage in academic and co-curricular activities throughout their matriculation at CSU.

At CSU, the Division of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management contains over 40 staff members in the areas of Financial Aid, Admissions, Career Services, Student Life and Development, Greek Affairs, Residence Life, Police and Safety, Judicial Affairs, Student Health and Counseling Services, and the University College. Dr. Jerry Briggs, the Vice President for Student Affairs, describes the division’s goal:

“The community is a living and learning environment full of ‘teachable moments.’ It teaches valuable lessons about self and others that cannot be fully taught in the classrooms or found in textbooks. Some lessons must be lived. It is our role in Student Affairs to assure that these experiences do not merely supplement your college experience; rather, they are substantial and a significant part of the college education in and of itself” (personal communication, Central State University, 2012).

The philosophy and practices of the Division of Student Affairs at Central State will be investigated in this study as the divisional practices pertain to how the institution interacts with students. Students spend a large portion of their time outside of the classroom; therefore, Student Affairs is expected to play a vital role in the co-curricular experiences.
Kentucky State University

Kentucky State University (KYSU) is Kentucky’s only HBCU and is considered an 1890 land grant institution. KYSU has an undergraduate student population of 2,296 and offers 31 undergraduate degree programs (four Associates and 27 Bachelors) and six Master’s degree programs. The mission of Kentucky State is

Building on its legacy of achievement as a historically Black, liberal arts, and 1890 land-grant university, affords access to and prepares a diverse student population of traditional and non-traditional students to compete in a multifaceted, ever-changing global society by providing student-centered learning while integrating teaching, research, and service through high-quality undergraduate and select graduate programs. Kentucky State University is committed to keeping relevant its legacy of service by proactively engaging the community in partnerships on civic projects driven by the objective of positively impacting the quality of life of the citizens of the Commonwealth (Kentucky State University, n.d.).

KYSU has a variety of opportunities for students to engage in the campus environment via curricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular activities. At KSYU the Division of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management contains the following offices: Office of Student Life and Holistic Development, the Office of Career Planning and Placement, the Office of Residence Life, the Student Health Service, and University Police Department. The mission of this division is as follows:
The mission of the Division of Student Affairs is to develop, organize, administer, monitor and coordinate a variety of services, programs and resources which contribute to the positive, holistic development of a diverse, multi-cultural student body. We are committed to the development of students who possess the competencies and skills which will equip them to compete in and contribute to a complex, global economy (Kentucky State University, n.d.).

As noted in the mission of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management, its purpose is to create an environment that serves students of all racial backgrounds. Based on the inclusivity stated on the institution’s website, it was a goal of this study to determine if the institution provides an enriched experience that presents opportunities for all students.

Identification of Population and Selection of Sample

I employed purposeful sampling of White college students who attended Central State University and Kentucky State University. Purposeful sampling was selected because it allowed for an in-depth study of a phenomenon and it allowed for me as the researcher to select “information-rich” cases that I could gain/learn from for the study (Patton, 2002; Creswell, 2007). With this type of sampling, I used maximum variation as a means to select participants. This enabled me to identify patterns that cut across different variables. Furthermore, the use of this type of sampling increased the likelihood that the research findings reflected differences or different perspectives (Creswell, 2007).

When determining the sample size for this study I considered what population would be appropriate to answer my research questions. Marshall (1996) states that some research questions call for a sample size in single figures while complex studies require
large samples and a variety of sampling methods to be used. Charmaz (2006) states that a sample size should be determined by the aims of the study and the ultimate driver is the project design. In order to reach sufficient saturation, Creswell (2007) recommends a sample size of five to 25 participants; Morse (1994) recommends at least six participants.

For this study, I interviewed nine student participants. I also interviewed eight university administrators/faculty/staff members. The purpose of interviewing the students was to learn about and understand their experiences of being a temporary minority at Central State University or Kentucky State University. This information provided a variety of perspectives as to how this institution has played a role in their collegiate student development. Interviewing administrators/faculty/staff at each school provided insight on how the governing body perceived the campus environment meeting the needs of White students, in compliance with their respective missions and resources.

After conducting the interviews with the nine student participants, data saturation had been achieved.

The criteria used to select student participants included the following:

- Full-time Central State or Kentucky State student, who had completed at least one full semester
- Self-identified as being White, based on records in the Registrar’s Office
- Students could be male or female
- Students could be from any socioeconomic background and geographic area.
Central State and Kentucky State have a large number of non-traditional part-time White students; therefore, it was important to be specific and restrict the population to traditional aged students only. Traditional aged students experience college differently from non-traditional students. The geographic location was also something that lends importance. Understanding that a person’s experiences shape his/her perceptions, it was necessary not to limit the population to only students from certain backgrounds. Some students’ previous experiences may have influenced their decision to attend an HBCU, indicating this as an important factor to consider.

The criteria used to select the administrator/faculty/staff participants included the following:

- Employed at Central State or Kentucky State at least one full academic year.
- If individual is a faculty member, one must be a full-time faculty member
- Male or female employees may participate
- All age and races are welcomed
- Must hold a position which requires daily student interaction 60% of the time (for example: in an 8 hour work day, they must engage with students a minimum of 4.8 hours a day)

The study was restricted to full time employees and individuals who have been at the university at least one academic year. Furthermore, it was even more pertinent to speak with individuals whose position requires them to directly interact with the student population more than 4 hours in an 8 hour day. This helped to give a more accurate picture of what they had witnessed and heard from the students.
**Process to Initiate Research**

My initial step was to submit the appropriate paperwork for the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Ohio University (OU). Concurrently, I contacted Central State to inquire about their IRB process and whether or not they will accept the OU IRB as a “blanket” approval. As a result of being unable to identify enough participants at Central State University, Kentucky State University was introduced as a second research site. IRB approval was also requested from this institution.

**Student Participant Recruitment**

After gaining IRB approval I worked with the Registrar’s Office at Central State to obtain a list of all the students who had identified as “White” on their academic record. This list included the email, local address, and phone number of each student. The initial contact with the students was made via email explaining the purpose of the study and requested their participation. Many student responses were gathered via email. If the student agreed, we set up an in-person meeting. This meeting took place in my office based on the preference of the student. A follow up email was sent to the student to verify the meeting date, time, and location and provided him/her with the consent form for review. During the initial meeting, the student reviewed and completed the consent forms and the interview was conducted.

After obtaining IRB approval from Kentucky State, and since I did not have any direct connections with any departments of the institution, I contacted the Office of Institutional Research and the Office of Residence Life to seek assistance in securing a student list. Due to directory restriction indications made by the students, the participants
were then recruited based on referrals. I sent the participant recruitment letter to individuals in Residence Life and they agreed to forward it to students. In addition, some of the other employees I spoke with volunteered to connect me with students who were interested in participating. Students who volunteered contacted me via phone or email. I emailed the consent forms to the participants and then we scheduled an interview time. Due to the distance, I provided the option of phone or Skype interviews to the participants.

**Employee Participant Recruitment**

To recruit administrator/faculty/staff members at Central State University, I extended an electronic invitation via the university’s ALL-FYI system. At Kentucky State I solicited volunteers via direct emails to individuals in various departments across campus. It was my goal to secure 5-10 individuals from different areas and ranks on both campuses. Eight employees were interviewed.

After the administrators/faculty/staff members were identified, an e-mail was sent to determine an interview date and time, and I provided them with the consent forms. Due to the limited time available for many university employees, the signing of study participation forms and the interview took place during one meeting.

The recruitment materials used for both populations consisted of a letter, which was sent via e-mail. Additional recruitment efforts were used such as phone calls, social media, referrals, and in person solicitation. No posters/flyers were used to recruit participants.
Data Collection Procedures

The data collection procedure used was in the form of interviews and information gathering from institutional reports. Patton (2002) states that interviewing is used as a means to find out what is in and on someone else’s mind in order to gather stories (p. 341). It was important that my data collection methods were clear and concise and thus the most effective during the research process. I used institutional reports to gather data regarding the enrolment and success rates of White students at both research sites.

Due to schedule limitations I met with all participants only one time. During this meeting the consent forms were reviewed and I allowed for questions prior to the beginning of the interview. All interviews were audio recorded. The length of time set for the interview was a minimum of one (1) hour; however, interview length varied based on the participant.

Within two to three weeks of the interview, I contacted the participants and provided them with their interview transcript for member checking. A majority of the participants requested their transcripts electronically to allow them to make corrections; however, in-person meetings were conducted on an as needed basis.

In addition to interviews, data were collected from the Office of Institutional Research on both campuses. These data included information on White student success rates, residential statistics, and other pertinent enrollment data. This information aided in the discussion regarding the infrastructure and environmental factors of the institution. Additional information will be requested from the Division of Student Affairs regarding student development initiatives, student organizations, and student programming.
Development of Data Collection Instrument and Process

In this study, I used a semi-structured interview approach (Patton, 2002). This interview method allowed for flexibility and conversational-style feel during the data collection process. The interview questionnaire developed for the student participants contained 15 guiding questions and the employee questionnaire contained five to seven guiding questions, which were asked of each participant. However, the responses of the participants provided guidance on additional questions to be asked.

Data Analysis

Yin (2003) states that data analysis consists of "examining, categorizing, tabulating, testing, or otherwise recombining both quantitative and qualitative evidence to address the initial propositions of a study" (p.109). As the researcher, it was essential that I developed a general analytical strategy to perform the study. There are three general strategies discussed in Yin (2003) to be considered for qualitative analysis: 1.) Relying on theoretical propositions, 2.) Thinking about rival explanations, and 3.) Developing a case description. For this study, I used the “Relying on Theoretical Propositions” strategy. This strategy is based on using the research design and the data collection plan in order to give priorities to the analytic strategy. With the use of this strategy I was able to implement a cross-case synthesis, which permitted me to aggregate the findings across the individual cases.

This research study used interviews as the main data collection tool. In order to analyze the interviews, the process of analysis discussed in Creswell (2007) was used:

1. Prepare and organize data into a transcript format
2. Reduce the data into themes through a process of coding and condensing codes

3. Represent data on figures, tables, or discussion

The interview transcripts were transcribed through the use of a third party company. In order to ensure that the interviews were accurately transcribed, I compared the audio recordings and the written transcript. The technique of member checking was used in order to ensure the accuracy of the transcribed information.

Once the transcripts were checked and any necessary corrections were made, the next step was categorizing information, or coding. Taylor-Powell and Renner (2003) refer to categorizing information as coding the data or indexing the data. This process required reading and re-reading the text and identifying particular categories. These categories were assigned using abbreviated codes and were ultimately used to develop themes. The final step in the analysis was creating a summary and interpretation of findings for each interview, attaching meaning and significance to the analysis, and completing a cross-case analysis between interviewees.

Following the transcription of the interviews, I consulted with my dissertation chair to look over the interview summaries to help in the analysis and to provide feedback. This feedback helped to ensure that the interpretation I made from the interviews was reasonable.

**Trustworthiness and Credibility**

To establish trustworthiness, data triangulation was used. Triangulation is defined as a process that involves determining the consistency of different sources to shed light
on a theme or perspective (Creswell, 2004; Patton, 2002). Therefore, Institutional Research reports and any other university documents were used when analyzing the interviews. From these documents, information regarding campus climate, programs, and services was extracted as needed. Moreover, interviewing students and university employees served as another form of triangulation. It was a goal to see consistency amongst both groups regarding the university environment.

In addition to triangulation, Shenton (2004) suggests that in order to obtain credibility in the data collection process, a researcher should use “tactics to help ensure honesty in informants.” These tactics included giving every person asked to be in the study the opportunity to refuse participation so that only those genuinely willing to take part were included. Encouraging participants to always be open and frank during the data collection process was essential. Establishing a rapport with all participants allowed for them to feel free to share their experiences without fear of losing my respect or credibility. As an administrator at Central State, it was a strong possibility that I had already had a connection with some of the participants. I had worked with some of the Central State participants on committees or organizations, so they were more open to sharing their true feelings with me.

Shenton (2004) also suggests that data credibility be secured through “iterative questioning.” This form of questioning encourages the use of probes or rephrasing questions, which were raised earlier in the interview. This helped me to detect contradictions of previously shared information and clear up any discrepancies. Within
this method it was essential to be very strategic in the line of questioning and not make a participant feel as if I was showing disbelief in their previous statements.

A final form of credibility that was implemented in this study as suggested by Shenton (2004) is called “peer scrutiny of the research project.” During this study, I had a total of five people read and provide feedback on my research. I welcomed the opportunity for colleagues, peers, and academicians to provide feedback throughout the duration of the research. Individuals such as those above provided a fresh perspective and challenged assumptions I made as the researcher. These individuals introduced questions and made observations that enabled me as the researcher to make changes in my methods where necessary.

**Summary**

Within this study, I used phenomenological methodology. This type of research permitted me as a researcher to explore a phenomenon in great detail. There were nine students and eight employees interviewed on Central State and Kentucky State campuses. Following the data collection process, each interview was transcribed, coded, and themes developed. This qualitative research study provided an in-depth analysis of student experiences within a college environment, bringing answers and clarity to the topic of White students as temporary minorities.
CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

“Transdemography offers HBCUs an opportunity to both enrich the student campus context and encourage intercultural communication within the academic environment” (Brown, 2002, p. 264). An HBCU possesses a unique heritage of educating young Black leaders to go out and impact the world; however, HBCUs serve more than Black students. HBCUs are institutions of higher education with the capacity to educate all students regardless of the racial, cultural, or socioeconomic background.

With the realities of globalization, and the increase in diverse populations within the United States, racial identity in college is of growing importance for higher education professionals. It is necessary for Student Affairs professionals to create supportive learning environments with adequate services that aid students in their self-exploration (Mercer, 2003).

Life changes such as going away to college, getting a full time job, and moving out on one’s own facilitates the self-identity exploration process. We live in a race-driven society in which it becomes important to have an awareness of one’s own racial identity and to be conscious of racial minority issues. Mercer and Cunningham (2003) explained that while in college, an adolescent’s racial identity is strongly influenced by diverse social interactions and curriculum. Collegiate environments provide students with opportunities to engage with various types of people who look the same and different from them.
Research Sites

Central State University

Central State University is Ohio’s only public HBCU with a student population of approximately 1,950 students. The student racial breakdown for the institution is 95% Black or African-American, 1% Hispanic/Latino, 2% White, and 2% Race/ethnicity unknown (NCES, 2012). Despite CSU’s minimal racial diversity, it is still essential for it to holistically attend to the diverse needs of its student body, however modest. Central State University offers 33 undergraduate degree programs and one master’s degree program within four academic colleges. The mission of this institution is to

Academically prepare students with diverse backgrounds and educational needs for leadership and service in an increasingly complex and rapidly changing world. As an open access institution, the University fosters academic excellence through a strong liberal arts foundation and majors in selected professional fields (Central State University, 2013).

Over the past three years, CSU has maintained around 41 enrolled White students, with a median age of 28 years. These students primarily major in Education, Music, and STEM. Most students are from Dayton, Xenia, and Jamestown, Ohio, with a few students from other areas in Ohio and out of state.

Because the minority population is relatively small, very few white students participate in campus activities. Of the 2% White student population, only 12-15 students fall within the traditional college student age (18-24). Of these 12-15 students, only three to four have resided on campus during their matriculation. Most enrolled White students
were local residents, living approximately ten minutes from campus, and chose to commute. Commuters primarily chose not to engage in campus activities because of work/job commitments, leaving little time for extracurricular activities.

The majority of Central State student participants reported that they did not participate in campus activities. A couple of participants mentioned involvement with academic clubs and programs. According to the Coordinator of Student Leadership Development, there is only one White student documented as a participant in a registered student organization. This number does not account for student involvement in academic related co-curricular activities that are housed outside of Student Activities.

**Kentucky State University**

Kentucky State is the only 1890 land grant institution in the state. Their total student enrollment as of fall 2012 was 2,296 students. The student enrollment breakdown is African Americans-1,327 (52%), White-510 (22%), other races- 514 (22%), and Foreign students- 53 (2%) (KYSU Mini Fact book, 2013). The institution offers 31 undergraduate degree programs (four Associates and 27 Bachelors) and six Master’s degree programs. The mission of Kentucky State is as follows:

Building on its legacy of achievement as a historically Black, liberal arts, and 1890 land-grant University, Kentucky State affords access to and prepares a diverse student population of traditional and non-traditional students to compete in a multifaceted, ever-changing global society by providing student-centered learning while integrating teaching, research, and service through high-quality undergraduate and select graduate programs. Kentucky State University is
committed to keeping relevant its legacy of service by proactively engaging the community in partnerships on civic projects driven by the objective of positively impacting the quality of life of the citizens of the Commonwealth. (Kentucky State University, n.d.)

In fall 2012, Kentucky State had an enrollment of 510 White students: 43% (222) of which were non-traditional students. The non-traditional students were workers and attended classes in the evening. An employee of Kentucky State shared that the institution is known for being an "HBCU during the day and a PWI at night."

Kentucky State is large and racially diversity, emphasizing the need to ensure all students receives holistic development and positive community experiences. Residing on campus provides an opportunity for people to engage with their peers outside of the classroom, which can be instrumental to a student’s collegiate experience. However, the majority of the White students who attend the institution do not reside on campus. According to the Office of Institutional Research, in Fall 2012, only 24 White students lived on campus and 486 were commuters. All of the Kentucky State research participants stayed on campus, citing scholarships, which paid for room and board, as their primary reason. If they did not have scholarships, living off campus would be more cost effective.

**Purpose of Research**

The purpose of this study was to illuminate how White students undergo their HBCU experience and to capture the perspectives of university faculty/staff regarding how these institutions serve the needs of White students at the institution. The primary
research questions in the study were as follows:

1. How do students describe their unique experience while attending an HBCU?
   a. With the increase in White student enrollment at HBCUs, what role does the historical mission of HBCUs play on White student experiences?
   b. How do White students make meaning of their experience as a “temporary minority”?

2. How do White students experience psychosocial development in an HBCU setting?
   a. How do HBCU employees view their efforts to shape the social identity development of White students?
   b. What environmental and cultural factors exist within HBCUs to support the holistic development of White students?

The research questions led to gathering data not only about the students’ perceptions of their experiences at this institution, but also from employees of Central State and Kentucky State sharing their perceptions of the inclusivity of the universities’ missions in serving all students regardless of racial identification.

The purpose of this research was to explore the Social Identity development of the student participants, specifically their racial development. The theory used for this research study was Rowe, Atkinson, and Bennett’s (1994) White Racial Consciousness Model (WRCM). Each participant was classified according to identity types defined within this model. Classifications were determined by my interpretation of the lived experiences shared by the student during this study.
The findings of this study will be presented based on grouping the participants based on their racial identity classification. Each participant interview will be shared with a primary focus on questions related to 1.) The reasons they selected their institution; 2.) Their classroom experiences and peer interactions; 3.) Self-identification of minority status; 4.) Feelings of mattering; and 5.) Connection with the institution. In addition to focusing on these primary topics, an explanation of the participants’ racial identity type will be provided.

Eight university employees and nine White students at Central State and Kentucky State universities were interviewed. There were a total of five male and four female student participants. Each participant attended either institution for at least one semester. Table 1 below provides information on each student participant including their racial identity classification
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Major</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>WRCM Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>James</td>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>Computer Science</td>
<td>Cleveland, Ohio</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Central State</td>
<td>Achieved Integrative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Dayton, Ohio</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Central State</td>
<td>Achieved Integrative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carter</td>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>Mathematics Education</td>
<td>Xenia, Ohio</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Central State</td>
<td>Achieved Integrative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cameron</td>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>Biology</td>
<td>Xenia, Ohio</td>
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<td>Unachieved Dependent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Junior</td>
<td>History</td>
<td>Eastern Kentucky</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Kentucky State</td>
<td>Achieved Integrative</td>
</tr>
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<td>Kentucky State</td>
<td>Unachieved Avoidant</td>
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<td>Achieved Reactive</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>Manufacturing Engineering</td>
<td>Chicago, Illinois</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Central State</td>
<td>Achieved Integrative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Participant Interviews: WRCM Achieved Integrative Type

The first racial identity that will be discussed is Achieved Integrative Type. Six of the participants were classified as this type. Integrative Type is defined as:

Persons who maintain integrative White racial attitudes display a variety of behaviors derived from a pragmatic view of racial/ethnic minority issues. The view is solidly based on moral responsibility. They value a culturally pluralistic society and often have a more complex or sophisticated understanding of the sociopolitical factors affecting racial/ethnic minority issues. (Rowe et al., 1994, p. 141)

The participants who were classified as this type have become immersed into the HBCU environment and have gained a deeper understanding of racial minority issues. Through their participation in the classroom and/or extracurricular activities, they have learned more about their racial identity as it relates to their African-American peers. These participants have also had experiences before and/or while in college that have allowed them to gain a deeper sense of African-American culture. The participants in this category were consciously aware of their social identity as Whites, but they also embrace diversity.

James

It’s just, you know, my high school was Blacks, Latinos, Arabs, Mexicans, Whites, all sorts of people in just one high school. So we all kind of got together and it was just like, all right you’re White, I’m Black so what? We’re going to be cool anyways.
James is a traditional student in his sophomore year at Central State. He is 19 years old, enrolled full-time, and working on a degree in Computer Science. James carries over a 3.5 GPA and is involved in student organizations on campus. His experiences prior to and during CSU have made him successful while on campus. As an inner city Cleveland native, James was exposed to a diverse group of people and attended multi-cultured schools.

James has always been on the path to go to college. In a discussion about attending college, he expressed his high school emphasizing it as the next step:

Basically in high school you can kind of say I was smart, but I really just did my work. I was very sports-oriented. I wrestled and ran track so I was pretty disciplined to the point where it was just like school, practice, and competition. It wasn’t really until my senior year where I started to really have a lot of free time. But college is just, you know, all through high school they just hammer you with go to college, go to college, go to college. So basically that was just the influence there. That was basically the next step.

James indicated that college was expected to be a time for learning, and also a moratorium to delay some adulthood responsibilities.

So that was really just the influence just to keep going, and trying to get as much experience out of life as I can and college would definitely give me those next four years of just … not really having all the responsibility of bills and all that, and the struggle of trying to make rent all the time, and getting to work and car breaking down, but it was just the next step in life.
James’ determination to go to college led to academic success. James had a 4.63/5.0 GPA and ranked second in his high school class. He had a lot of post-secondary options available to him.

I always wanted to go to Ohio State and like I said I was a pretty smart student. My ACT was like a 24 or something like that, not too high, but definitely above average. So I’m thinking about applying to Ohio State, I’m going to get all this money, I’m about to go to O-State and be a Buckeye. I love it. I applied, but I only got $1,000.00 besides my financial aid. So I would owe … I would be taking $10,000.00 out a year or $10,000.00+ a year to go where I really wanted.

James noted that he also was accepted to a private university and received scholarship money. However, the financial assistance at that institution or Ohio State did not offset the high tuition cost.

Despite James’ desire to attend a top tier university, financial barriers were present, which led him to look at less expensive options.

So it came down to one of my friends actually goes here. He’s a junior, named Hasan, and he went to Central State. He kind of just told me like, “Well why don’t you just apply to Central. They’ll give you money. They’re looking for students. I applied and I basically got a full ride, $1,000.00 loan and all these other things. So it was like, okay, yes, yes. Let’s go to Central then. I didn’t know it was a HBCU until I got accepted and I told my counselor and she was like, well that’s a historically Black college. And I was like, oh well that’s why I got all the money. So then I decided to come here, and here I am now.
James’ college choice was determined by money rather than academic or co-curricular program offerings.

**Student involvement and leadership.** James has been a well-known student on campus since his freshmen year, as he served as Freshmen Class Vice President. From the time he stepped on campus James participated in leadership opportunities and became very engaged in the campus community:

> Being involved, that just really doesn’t hold any type of bias, but the fact that, you know, just something to add to the list of things you say when, oh there’s a White man who goes to Central State named James. He does this, this and this, you know, he pledged this and this. I don’t think it really overshadows the fact that I’m White going to a HBCU. It was just something that enhanced it. I think a lot of people, I think a lot of faculty members on campus, they really seen what I could do as a leader and I wasn’t even the leader.

James was carrying a lanyard of one of the Divine Nine Fraternities (Historically Black Fraternity) and he elaborated on the experience of being Greek.

> When I first got here, of course, I didn’t know anything about Greek life. I don’t have any Greek life in my family. I know one of my close friends back home is in a PWI fraternity. I don’t want to just say White fraternity, but he goes to Cleveland State. They’re all about the same service, scholarship, all this stuff. But going here you don’t have that. They don’t have the D9 organizations. So that’s all you see is just the Alpha’s, Omega’s, Iota’s, you know, all those fraternities.
Fraternities and sororities within the Divine Nine do not actively recruit students to join their organizations. Therefore, it is up to students to express their interest, complete the necessary paperwork, and engage in the intake process. James’ decision to join his fraternity played a role in his personal development and created a greater connection with the institution.

In addition to joining a fraternity, James also served as president of the campus’ NAACP chapter. As a member of both of these organizations and attending an HBCU, James does not see his race as a limitation to his abilities to be successful. However, when he shared with people that he attended an HBCU they often introduce race as a factor or provide other responses:

Basically, when I tell people who don’t know me, they just, oh you go to HBCU. It’s kind of like the shock factor. Oh you go to … how is it? How many White people are there? When you tell people that, they really got the shock reaction and I haven’t really met somebody who really just said well okay I see why you go to Central. It’s just kind of like, oh really and then … but that’s the reaction you get when you go to Central.

Two years ago he went home for Christmas break and visited his old high school. He was known in the school by the security guards and some of the staff. However, there was an administrator who did not know him, which resulted in his arrest for criminal trespassing. By sharing that he attended Central State, it provided him a positive outcome to this situation:
I had to go to court and the court date comes up. I go in there and I’m waiting for my turn. I look at my mom like let’s just get out of here, you know, whatever. I go up there and the judge is Black, so she’s like so what happened? I’m like well I went to my old high school. I’m here for winter break from college and I go in there just to say what’s up to my old teachers, so and so. There’s actually a forum going on. I just went for it about the alumni. She was like so you go to … I’m like, no I’m in college. She says oh which college do you go to? I’m like Central State University and she just like starts laughing. Not like the … because I go to Central but, really, like … and it was just all the professionalism thrown out the window, like you go to Central? Really? How do you like it? Oh, well case is dropped, go home.

This particular incident showed James that although there are some people who question his decision to attend Central State, being a temporary minority has its advantages.

**Race and privilege.** James’ experiences engaging in activities at CSU have been fulfilling. The perspectives from others regarding his presence at an HBCU have been different depending on the individual’s view about the institution. James shared his feelings about being one of a few White students at CSU:

I think being White coming here is just, you get a lot more love than if you were to say just being a regular dude. I mean, there’s people who you would never think, speak to you like, what’s up man, yeah, and I’ll even go so far to say, even people who hate the people I hang around may still like me. I feel like there’s a
lot more love. Saying What’s up, you know, not acting timid or scared of the environment.

James shared that he feels comfortable about being White in this environment and that he receives a lot of support and protection from his peers:

You feel kind of protected by the people that are here. I mean just off of how they react to you it’s not to say like, okay what happens if we get into a fight are they really going to be there. So I just feel like there’s not a lot of people who don’t like me, but that’s just how it is. I don’t really know how to explain it any further than that. Everybody knows me. I haven’t really done anything to anybody for them to hate me, but either way I just feel more protected.

The idea James stated about feeling more “protected” as a White student, led to deeper exploration of his perceived significance at CSU:

As a minority, I mean, if we just look at it definition-wise, yes I’m a minority on campus. In the world, if we look at statistics, no I’m not. But really, I don’t really look at skin color too much as what everybody’s doing. I’ve taken it to a broader level. I forget what I used to say, but everyone … I used to say, okay skin color is something else, but everybody has a brain, you know, and that’s how I look at it. Okay, you can put me in the category as White, but you can also put me in a category of being in college that has just as many Black people as foreigners so okay diversified, alright whatever. But when you put us in a common group or a common goal, I don’t even think a minority even exists for that type of stuff.
James has interacted with a diverse group of people prior to his arrival at Central State. From his high school experiences in Cleveland, he has gained a perspective on race that acknowledges the differences between White and Black, but he possesses the understanding that when people of different races are going towards a common goal race does not matter.

When the discussion about mattering began, James focused on how the university needs him for various public relation activities. Though at times he feels exploited, he also feels his service to his university is valued:

It’s sometimes overbearing how much I think I do matter. This is just going off the fact that there’s been so much last minute stuff that people ask me to do. “Hey we got an open house tomorrow we need you to wear this. I need you to be there …” “All right, man, I’ll be there.” “We need you to do this photo shoot for this.”

I think I matter to Central State because of the fact that I am so out there, but at the same time I feel like I matter because they need me. They need me to show, you know, I don’t know open the door for other people who’d be a minority here to come through. I feel like I do matter, but sometimes it’s just kind of like, okay I’m just a business opportunity for them or a future business opportunity for them.

Yes, I do matter.

James commented on whether or not Central State needs to provide more programs to attract non-African American students:

So I don’t think there are too many programs that they could do because of the fact that many HBCU’s are guided off the history and what not. So programs I
don’t think, would help but I think it would be better to try to reach out to when we go to recruit and stuff, to kind of put ourselves in positions where there will be more Whites, Latinos, Mexicans, putting ourselves in more situations where maybe they’ll see. For example, if you want to sell Girl Scout cookies you don’t go to the back where there’s just electronics, then you only see people who are trying to buy electronics. You put it at the front of the store where you see everyone. That’s kind of what I feel HBCU’s do. I feel like a lot of it has to do with just trying to put yourself in the right spot, to try to grab the interest of those people who are not Black.

James acknowledges the unique identity of an HBCU, and by creating minority-based programs, it would be more like other colleges. However, a point he highlighted is that HBCUs may not have a large portion of White students because it does not recruit them.

Though Central State was not James’ first, second, or third choice, it was a financially feasible option. It was important to determine whether or not his experiences would cause him to choose Central State if he had to make his college choice all over again:

If I had to, the answer … it’s a 50/50 answer. Yes I would choose a HBCU because of the fact that you get so much love being White. You get so much attention so to speak, but things just come a little easier being the token or being something that’s rarely seen on campus. I probably would’ve chose the HBCU because of the money. Mainly college is definitely supposed to be the best years of your life and coming to a HBCU you’re so closed, like if you were to look
around what’s around us, we have cornfields in Xenia, like what is there to do in a
town called Xenia? And then you got Dayton, which is definitely like another
failing city. Like I said, I want to get the best experience possible and here I’m
sunken in. I’ve got two years under my belt now. I’m involved in all this. I’m
doing so much. It would be kind of hard now to leave, but if I had just came here
as a regular student, went to class, did what I did and then transfer, it wouldn’t be
a big deal as it would now.

James’ reason for attending Central State could have been swayed because of its location,
in comparison to some larger schools. The financial support received from Central State
outweighed the geographic factor. James also alludes to the fact that his social
involvement has played a part in his remaining and being successful at Central State. For
him, without the social connection he may not have remained at the institution.

Sarah

As a White woman, I feel there’s like … I actually did research about Naomi
Sims, who was a Black supermodel and not because she excelled because she was
Black, but she also excelled because she was a woman. So it’s not all about the
color, it’s about being who we are and progressing forward from that point.

Sarah is a 21-year-old young woman from Dayton, Ohio. She currently is a junior
majoring in Criminal Justice. It is Sarah’s long-term goal to become a police officer in
Dayton. Sarah transferred to Central State from Sinclair Community College in the Fall
of 2012, with a dual degree in Corrections and Law Enforcement. Sarah began by sharing
the influences that led her to go to college:
I grew up in a house where there was no option. You had to go to college or you went to the military, and my parents made sure that they told us you’re not going to excel in life unless you have a college degree, which is completely evident with the way the economy is faced now. You can live comfortably, but you can’t … if you’re going to raise a family and you’re going to have children, you’re going to need a college degree to make money to do so. So basically, my parents were the main reason why I ended up going to college.

Sarah always held the expectation that college was necessary in order to succeed. That being said, her main decision was choosing a college to attend:

I actually had a dual degree at Sinclair, one in corrections, one in law enforcement, and figured I needed to get a four year degree, Central, Ohio University and UC were my three options, and Central was the cheapest and all my credits transferred there. Although it was a HBCU, that didn’t bother me at all. So I ended up going there last semester. Fall 2012 was my first semester there. I took 16 credit hours. I had a 4.0. I am taking 18 credit hours right now, and after this semester’s over I’ll have nine classes until I’m completed with my degree. There is an articulation agreement between Central and Sinclair, which was great. So I ended up coming in as a junior, I could’ve went to Wright State, but I would’ve had to start as a freshman because they didn’t take my credits. So it was cheapest, it took all my credits; it was close to home, and a HBCU.

Sarah’s choice to attend Central State was based on realities that are common to many college students. Central State provided Sarah with the opportunity to complete her
degree in a shorter amount of time by accepting all of her transfer credits. Affordability and proximity to home were also components of Sarah’s decision to attend an HBCU.

There was some concern from her family and friends regarding her decision to attend an HBCU. When Sarah informs people she attends an HBCU, she typically receives interesting responses:

Well, at first everybody was a little terrified. They think immediately … when they think of HBCU they have no idea what they were. And nor did I. I didn’t even know they existed until I found out about it. So I looked into it. I didn’t have a problem with it. I’m not racist. Prejudice, of course, everybody is. Racist, no. But my family, they were a little freaked out about it. They were taken aback because they didn’t want their so-called “White daughter” around all those Black people because they don’t know and the unknown kind of brings fear. After I went there I had no problems. I lived on campus the first semester and it was fine. And once I gave them feedback on how the college was, they felt a little better, but like I said the unknown kind of terrorized them. My friends, I mean, two of the girlfriends that I went to Sinclair with, they were thinking about going there but they ended up going another route with their careers. They were going to go too and they were White females as well.

Sarah shared the concern of being in an environment as the minority resulted in some fear for her family. Sarah received similar responses from non-family and friends when she told them she attends an HBCU:
They’re shocked. They want to know why. Everybody always asks why. Why are you going there? Are you scared? I’m always kind of confused, like no I’m not scared at all but yes, everybody is always … Even during recent job applications that I applied for, which I ended up declining the position, that was the first question that they asked. They said why Central, and I always say why not. And they’re like, well you are a minority and I’m like, yes I understand that but that doesn’t bother me though.

Sarah’s responses to these individuals suggest her feeling that attending an HBCU is equally the same as attending a PWI.

**That one white person.** Sarah stated she lived on campus during her first semester at CSU, allowing her to experience the university in and out of the classroom:

The first semester I moved in. I lived in Honors dorm so everybody kind of … I was the only White person so everybody kind of stared at me and I think that was expected so that didn’t bother me. Actually, my boyfriend is Black so we go here together, and every time we would go to the café we would ride our bikes to the café because it was a cross campus thing. I would walk in and at the time I had really blonde hair so my hair it like stuck out. Every time I would just get really dirty looks from people and I didn’t let that bother me because I knew I was kind of like in their space. It wasn’t one Black person and a group of all White people. I was that one White person in a group of all Black people. So I could expect to be stared at and dirty looks were often given from mainly women, which is fine, I
mean, I never gave dirty looks back or anything because that’s not my place to do so.

Sarah further discussed her experiences in the classroom, where some of her classmates attempted to make her feel comfortable during certain controversial topics. This prompted her to try to ease their apprehension. However, Sarah shared how the learning experience at CSU was more holistic and well-rounded versus her other academic experiences:

In the classroom, I’ve noticed a lot of, especially my history classes, when the topic of slavery gets brought up everybody says, no offense. I sit there and I’m like no offense is taken, like I promise you can say that. I totally maintained the silent role because I’m the only White person in both of them. And when they start talking I just kind of feel like I sink down in my seat because I want to crawl underneath my table and hide. Because I almost feel that. I feel like there’s still a lot of animosity in their environment. I’m just here like I just want to sink down in my chair and hide.

Although Sarah shared some uncomfortable classroom moments, overall she enjoyed the learning environment and experiences she had with her classmates.

But the learning is definitely different. I would say here, at Central, it’s more of lifelong skills that you’re learning, along with academics, of course, but at Sinclair you don’t learn from the people. Here, everybody chimes in. You learn from everybody in the classroom instead of just the instructor, which I really like that because I learn a lot better talking back and forth.
Despite these difficult classroom discussions, her experience has still been a beneficial and holistic one, allowing her to learn class material and expand her knowledge about life and others’ experiences.

**Feeling out of place.** Sarah was not involved in any on-campus activities because she worked a lot. She mentioned attending campus functions such as basketball games, but did not comment on those experiences. The discussion transitioned into her feelings of self as it pertains to attending an HBCU. She shared some insight on her feelings as a minority:

> On main campus I did and it kind of made me, not out of place because I don’t feel out of place when I’m around a group of Black people, but they kind of make it known that I’m around by the looks that I’m given. It’s a little awkward at times but other than that you kind of got to let this stuff roll off your shoulder

Sarah was only aware of her minority status because others made it an issue, but it was not something she considered in her day-to-day interactions. However, for Sarah it was not something that she thought much about in her day-to-day interactions.

At times, classroom experiences were not so welcoming, causing Sarah to withdraw. This transitioned to her thoughts on whether or not programs geared towards non-African American students were needed:

> I don’t think so. I don’t think they should develop it. I mean I feel like at a HBCU it’s a historically Black school for a reason. It’s intended to learn the Black history, to be around the Black culture, and I feel like you’re kind of taking away from the HBCU if you’re creating it for other races. I feel like you’re just
kind of stripping them of that. Let us come in, let the minorities comes in, and learn what they’re learning and understand that culture, instead of everybody else always trying to understand like per se “the White man’s culture.”

Sarah states that the HBCU environment is the way it is for a reason. To change the environment, that would be taking away from the identity of the institution.

**Cultural immersion, professional development.** After having attended a predominantly white high school and diversified community college, going to an HBCU enhanced Sarah’s opportunities to engage with other races. Though her identity had been shaped by these previous experiences, she still wanted to learn more about Black culture through academic and personal interactions:

> I find my instructor or professor she always says it’s a great day to be Black. It’s so funny because me and my boyfriend I always tell him, I say it’s a great day to be Black. Although I’m not Black, I’m around Black people all the time and I love being around Black people. I feel like there’s so much learning that could be done instead of just holding myself in this group around my White family.

Sarah decided to immerse herself in a predominantly black environment instead of the predominantly White environment in which she was raised:

> I’ve kind of stepped outside of my box and before I came here I’ve always had relationships with guys who were always Black. Like I said, kind of stepped out of your box and it makes you realize although the media makes everybody think that all Black people are bad. I’m like no because I attend school every day with them and I talk with them, and they’re just like everybody else and they’re not all
bad. We all come from different places and we’re all trying to get to the same place. So I mean I don’t really think of race anymore.

Being in a predominantly Black environment was not new to Sarah because of her current and prior dating relationships. She has attempted to dispel people’s perceptions about Black people through her experiences.

Central State has prepared Sarah in achieving her professional goals and develop personally. Being exposed to different types of Black people has allowed her to become more educated about Black culture and gain racial awareness. She hopes to gain social capital as a police officer in the Black community based on what she learned from peers and classmates:

Well, I’m actually in the process of being a police officer and the place that I would be working would be in a predominantly Black community and on the west side of Dayton I feel like a lot of the Black people hate the police and being that I am a White woman and I would be considered they would be hating the White police, I can kind of relate to them and pull topics that I’ve learned from school and what I’ve learned from my peers and my classmates, and I don’t want them to think that I’m the bad guy because I’m not. I’m there for them and I try to understand their history, and I feel like they respect that more when somebody tries to understand where they came from.

Considering hindsight is 20/20, Sarah indicated she would choose an HBCU again, because of her experiences at CSU:
No questions asked. I would definitely share with other White students to be open to the fact that it’s not all Black people who go to HBCU’s. There are White people who go here as well. It’s the same as any other college around here. If anything, I feel like you learn more here on a broader spectrum, not just the academics. You learn so much more about life and about people, and that’s stuff I feel like you remember most, more than the academics. You remember the people and what you learn from them. And especially to the White people, don’t be scared to come to an HBCU. There’s nothing to be scared of.

Sarah summed up her time at Central State by encouraging her White peers not to be afraid of the environment. She shows that an HBCU can be a great experience like any other college and that it provides a holistic development experience for students.

Carter

I wouldn't say that I really thought about race in any different way. I've always thought we're all treated the same way and we all should be. I feel like that being here hasn't really changed any of my views of that.

Carter is a 19-year-old sophomore and Mathematics major from Xenia, Ohio. He is a commuter and works several hours at an off-campus job. Carter’s commitments off campus make it difficult for him to fully engage in the college experience; however, he has had success academically and socially as a student.

The interview began with a discussion of factors that influenced Carter to go to college:
I was always college bound. My parents were always after me about going to college. They always told me to use my brain and not my back: because, I was pretty smart in high school and pretty smart going through school. That's what influenced me the most, parents.

Being raised in a household where college was encouraged made Carter’s college transition somewhat easier. With Central State being only 5-10 minutes away from home, it was an easy decision for him to choose to attend the institution:

I wanted to stay local. Local was my biggest thing because, it's right up the road from where I live. It's one of those things that I could still stay at home and still manage to keep my job. That was one of my biggest things.

Geographic proximity has been noted in the literature as one of the reasons White students choose to attend an HBCU. He shared that because of convenience, Central State was his first choice. As such, the conversation transitioned to the thoughts and feelings of family, friends, and non-family members about his attendance at an HBCU:

They (my family) don't mind it at all. They think it's great. Friends and stuff at first in high school, they are like, "You're going where?" Family was completely supportive of my decision. They (non-family) look at me kind of funny. They are like, really? They question whether I do. I'm like, I seriously do go to Central State. I'm not afraid to say it and proud to be part of Central State.

Carter explains to people with pride that he attends an HBCU. He expressed his excitement and feelings about being a student there, which led to a discussion regarding Carter’s experiences in and out of the classroom:
So far, so good. I haven't had any big major issues. The only major issue I've had is with the Education Department. It seems like technology is kind of in the past. They don't have anybody working on the printers over there and that kind of thing. You can't really print anything. Management, not management, but faculty and staff have been very helpful. Right now I'm having an issue with financial aid. Financial Aid is pulling through it and Ms. Jackson is helping me out.

**Positive campus environment.** Carter’s issues at CSU have not been based on negative interactions with peers or faculty, rather the availability of resources. He has been able to identify faculty and staff to help him navigate these issues more smoothly. Carter has been successful in the classroom; however, college is intended to allow for both academic and social experiences. Carter’s out of classroom experiences are limited:

I'm part of DOSTEM which is Diverse Ohio in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics and that's it. Right now I'm really booked between going to class and then work, because I work split shifts, so not right now. Somebody was trying to get me interested in being a tour guide for the new students coming in, but I just don't know if I can do it or not. Manage with work and school.

Though Carter’s campus involvement is minimal due to work and school commitments, his inability to be involved has not prevented him from enjoying his college experience.

**Apart of the family.** Carter is happy and proud of attending his institution, and the next conversation topic was how he views himself within this environment:

I don't really consider myself to be a minority to be honest with you. I went to Cedarville University for a conference and I really felt out of place there. I'm not
going to lie. I told one of my friends, I said, "There's just too many White people here." It's kind of weird to say it. It's kind of weird to admit, but I felt out of place.

This experience at Cedarville illustrates how Carter had become adapted to the HBCU academic environment. He had grown accustomed to being the minority in the classroom that this experience felt somewhat awkward. This led into a deeper discussion about how he has learned more about the African American culture while being at CSU:

I feel like that I really realized how family, I guess you can say that African Americans are compared to White. African Americans seem like they bond a lot better. Everybody almost knows everybody by name and that kind of thing. Everybody can walk down the hallway, walk into the Ward Center and everybody knows everybody it almost seems like. I don't feel like us as Whites really do that as much. I find it really hard to kind of adapt to that, but I'm getting a lot more used to it because, a lot of people know me. I'm starting to get used to more names, know more names to name the faces.

The family-oriented culture exhibited at CSU is unfamiliar to Carter amongst White people he interacts with. Carter does not feel ostracized in the environment, but he feels accepted and that people know him:

I feel like I'm included. I feel like I get along with everybody out here. I haven't had any problems with really anybody. To be honest with you, more people know my name than I know theirs. Which is kind of crazy, but I sit there and I'm like, oh what's that guy's name? I don’t really remember it though. It seems like
everybody is really friendly out here and that kind of thing. It's not like you walk
by somebody, whether it's a head nod or hey, how's it going today?

Carter believes he matters at the institution, which segued into a discussion
concerning the need for programs targeted to non-African American students:

I think that they do with the DOSTEM Program. I would like to see more local. I
don't know what they do really with Xenia, whether they come in, you know that
kind of thing, where they show the school, trying to get more Whites or people of
different races to come to Central State. I know when I graduated I think there
was, I want to say about seven total from Xenia or so. I know we've lost a couple
of them along the way. I know it was only me and two other students who were
actually White that actually came.

Carter’s comments on the university having programs such as DOSTEM can be
attractive for White students, and he further sheds light on recruitment improvements he
believes are needed by the institution. If Carter, had the choice to pick a college all over
again he would still choose to attend an HBCU. One reason that Carter would reselect an
HBCU is that he feels as if he matters to the university and makes a difference to
institution.

I don't have any regrets about coming here, that's for sure. I love it being local. I
love it being a four-year college; because, that was another thing. I applied to
Central State, Wright State, Sinclair, and Wilmington. Central State was my first
one. I received a phone call and I ended up accepting what they had to offer. I
don't have any regrets and wouldn't change it for anything. Overall I feel very welcomed. I feel like I'm actually part of the group of Central State in general. I feel like I can make a difference and really help the school the way, academically basically. I typically have a 4.0 and I feel that I can help this school out, showing that academically. I may not show it participating in events and that kind of thing, but I feel like I can show it academically.

Carter has a clear perspective or opinion on race. He was raised with the mindset that there is no difference between race and this idea has remained neutral while being in this environment. He has begun to gain a deeper insight on racial attitudes and how his identity is further developed as he interacts with his peers and the environment. As Carter matriculates at CSU, his presence in the environment will further lend some perspective on his career as an educator and his ability to connect with a diverse student population.

**Amanda**

I think sometimes, you know, you can get a good education wherever you go. You don't need to go to, like ... you know, you can go to an HBCU as a White person and still get a good education.

Amanda is a 21-year-old junior, majoring in History at Kentucky State. Her engagement in the academic and social environment at her school has shaped her opinion about it. When Amanda shared her reasoning for attending college and more specifically Kentucky State, her responses were closely related to those of other participants.
Well, I come from a poor part of Kentucky, Eastern Kentucky; there are not many job opportunities. My mom's side of my family is from Upstate New York. So they're very educated. My dad's part of the family is not. I decided that I did not want to be the person who was without an education in the family. I wanted to better myself and my future by going to college.

Well, I did two years at Bluegrass Community & Technical College in Lexington, Kentucky. Through that experience, I was awarded a presidential scholarship to Kentucky State University, which meant that the rest of my education would be paid in full by the college. So that was a big motivation for me. They also have a really great business program.

Amanda’s decision to attend college was motivated by familial patterns on both sides of her family. The factors that influenced Amanda to attend Kentucky State were academic and financial. In addition to these two things, she also had a more personal reason for attending:

Well, actually, my little sister is adopted, and she's African-American; so she was really excited that I was attending an HBCU. Then, actually, before then, I think sometimes, you know, you can get a good education wherever you go. You can go to an HBCU as a White person and still get a good education. It's what you make of it. It's not the content or the racial makeup of the students that attend there.
Campus engagement. Amanda’s experiences at KY State have been shaped by her interactions in and out of the classroom, including her experience as an on-campus resident. Small class sizes have allowed for positive interactions:

Well, I like the small size. My classes right now are averaging between, like, 15 and 30 students, which is really nice for upper-level education. It can be an interesting thing at some time. I'm not going to lie. When I first went there, I did get a lot of the jokes before. So it was aggravating but I'm learning.

Amanda is involved in a variety of campus organizations and holds positions on executive boards, “I'm actually president of the Creative Writing Club. I'm also vice president of Alpha Kappa Mu and the sciences and arts honors organization.”

In addition to campus involvement, Amanda is one of a few White students who lived in the residence halls. Her experience in campus housing was positive overall with some general roommate issues, but nothing racially triggered. Amanda has built connections and rapport with her peers across campus, which has helped her adjust to college life.

Self-reflection and identity. When discussing her experience as a temporary minority Amanda’s thoughts were centered on her ability to learn about herself and others:

I think it's kind of, just, really ironic and kind of funny to me that I am a minority there. I'm not treated like a minority there. I think it took a while for new friends to warm up to me stuff like that. I think it doesn't -- I don't feel like a minority at an HBCU.
Actually, it makes me laugh because people … it's kind of funny. Like, I have a pretty good sense of humor. So a lot of people don't know me on campus. They'll be, like, "Oh it’s that White girl. You know, that White girl that lives in that dorm with us]. I get a lot of jokes about do I get a minority scholarship.

The reactions Amanda receives from her peers do not create discomfort for her; she does not take these comments as offensive or negative. Another idea that Amanda introduces is the HBCU experience providing a different perspective on the African American race versus stereotypical or negative things she has heard.

Well, I think being a White American, especially, like, the high school I went to, you are given a very one-sided view of race in America. So before I attended an HBCU, you know, there are still issues just like in the African-American community. Really, they're not bad. They don't really apply to me and stuff like that.

Amanda described the transformation in her thinking that has come from enrolling in an HBCU:

As a White American attending an HBCU, I've become way more aware of problems that are revealed that are facing the African-American community. I think it just opens your eyes to things that society kind of wants to sweep under the rug sometimes and not make a big deal about. It's been more aware to me. It's also made me want to, you know, help other students find a voice. I'm very proud to say that I am attending an HBCU and I am part of one.
Amanda’s experience at Kentucky State has definitely shifted her perspective about who she is as a White woman and how she perceives race.

Amanda feels like she matters at Kentucky State. She has become connected with the environment and has seen where she adds value, as well as how the institution imparts value in her life. Amanda acknowledges the uniqueness of the HBCU environment; however, she recognizes that her institution needs to diversify its student population:

I think that the concept of an HBCU is a really good thing. I think it's a great place, you know, to have colleges for people from a similar background. In the program that I'm in at Kentucky State isn't necessarily geared towards the African-American community. I think that HBCUs maybe could try to draw in a little more diversity without having to give up the essence of what makes their college special.

Most of the professors that I have, the color of your skin doesn't matter to them. Like, you try to make a difference in the world and try to grow as a student is what is important to them as a whole. I feel like my professors have really helped me grow as in a young adult and as a student through my experience.

As a result of her positive collegiate experiences, Amanda would make the decision to choose Kentucky State again if given the opportunity. The college has provided countless opportunities, which have aided in her personal and professional development:

I've been really happy with the college. I've made a lot of great friends, and I've actually had opportunities to ... I spoke at a press conference earlier this year for
Kentucky State University and I was able to expand my career options more than I think I would have been able to expand it from more, like, UK, or a bigger institution, where I would just follow the other students. I would do it all again in a heartbeat. I wouldn't change anything.

Amanda exuded excitement and passion for her school. Kentucky State has made a positive imprint on her perception about HBCUs and the African American community.

**Olivia**

I just feel as if we're all the same, we're there for the same purpose and it's all about what you do to get, to achieve your goal.

Olivia is a young woman full of energy and excitement about college. Despite some challenges, she has excelled personally and academically. Olivia is a 21-year-old student from Owenton, Kentucky. She is a Psychology major and a Child Development Family Relations minor. Olivia aspires to become a pastor.

Olivia’s decision to go to college and to attend Kentucky State was driven by her passion for music and financial support from the institution.

I actually was in the top 10% of my class so I received a commonwealth scholarship which covers room, board, fees, books; it covers everything. Also because Dr. Smith, I went in and sang for him a classical and contemporary selection and he was also giving me a scholarship on top of what I already had obtained and that's what got me and drew me to Kentucky State University was the concert choir. I just loved their energy. I loved the atmosphere. I just loved everything about Kentucky State so that's what drew me.
Participating in the concert choir allowed for Olivia to begin creating a connection with the institution beginning in her first year. Olivia displayed joy in her voice when talking about the choir.

The support Olivia has received from her family and friends has also been a positive aspect of her success at Kentucky State:

My friends and my family, they're happy. They don't mind that it's an HBCU. They're just happy that I'm going to college, and that I'm successful at what I'm doing and they're grateful for the opportunity I may have on a full-ride scholarship. They were just proud of me and they had nothing negative to say, that I can think of, so they were just happy that I was going to school and that I'm successful.

**Color blind perspective.** Olivia’s feelings about Kentucky State involve inclusivity of all people. Even when she shares with strangers about her reasons for attending the institution, she projects a colorblind perspective.

I'm more of an outgoing person. I accept everybody. I love everybody and skin color, ethnicity has nothing to do with anything, so when people ask me how do I feel about going to or being in an HBCU, or "Do you feel awkward?," I'm just like "No," because we're all people and despite the color of our skin, it doesn't matter to me, so I'm going to get an education and I'm going to help others along the way so when they ask me that question I just say I don't feel any different than an African American student. I fit in. I don't try to be somebody that I'm not and I'm accepted.
This open and accepting personality Olivia possesses, as well as her positive self-identification aids her in becoming more acclimated and connected to the campus. The confidence Olivia exudes concludes that she has a clear sense of her White identity and she also has an understanding of racial minority issues. Olivia shared her thoughts regarding her minority status at the institution:

For me, statistics say that I am minority, but I look at myself just as anybody else on campus. Like I said, I don't look at ethnicity as anything different. I think that we all go through the same thing. We all go through the same struggle. We all can achieve the same things and goals and be successful. As far as looking at myself differently, I believe that there's nothing, anything different about me than an African American student. I've always had an accepting view.

Olivia has a belief that everyone is equal regardless of his or her race. Furthermore, the idea that she and her peers possess a shared goal of obtaining an education is an indication of equality.

Olivia is a religious person. She explained the role her spirituality plays in shaping her perspective on race.

I feel like, as a woman of God, we're all God's children and He doesn't look at us any different so why should I? Why should I judge somebody based on the color of their skin, or their background or their culture, or ethnicity or any of that? I feel like my job is to love everyone equally and that's always been my mindset, that's always what my parents have taught me and, actually, I've never … I am a Caucasian and I've never dated my own race. I'm currently with an African
American student. It's not because I prefer African Americans over White. It's just my parents always taught me, "Be with who is good to you, whoever is good to you, and treats you right, then that's fine." It doesn't matter where you come from as long as they treat you good. I've never had any bad experiences with African American people. That's just my motto, I look at everybody the same.

One negative experience. Olivia espouses a philosophy of racial equality. However, she has had some challenging experiences at Kentucky State that caused her to be rejected because of her race.

I had one negative experience. It was while I was in the concert choir. And they were doing the opera, *Porgy and Bess*… We were coming together with the University of Kentucky. They came and I learned all the music and I came early and came back from break early, and then they come to Kentucky State and we were all fine and I was in practice and rehearsal, but the first practice that I went to at UK, when I got back, Dr. Smith had to pull me to the side and he was very kind of upset, and they would not let me be in the opera because I was a Caucasian. That was something that I was not aware of, at first. . . . I went to our president, and she apologized for my experience and apologized for what had happened. Then said that they should have more thoroughly read it knowing that there was a Caucasian in the concert choir and should have thought about that before accepting being able to do the *Porgy and Bess* as a role. That whole event, that was fine, I understood, but it's kind of hard. You go in there and you practice and do your best. You love it and the energy's high and then they tell you, you
can't be in it because you're White. And then you go and there’s a White person in it. … A lot of people in the concert choir were just like "Can we paint her skin, can we paint her skin? We really want her to be in it, we need her," and all this other stuff, so they were upset as well, so it was kind of an emotional type thing.

Olivia’s experience rallied support from her classmates, some even stating it was reverse discrimination. Although, Olivia decided not to participate in the performance, the idea by her classmates about painting her skin in black face introduced a potentially negative racial situation for the institution. Olivia further expressed her feelings on the matter.

… Knowing that stuff like that still happens, and then there were other people who were African Americans who were upset about it saying, "Well, if the shoe were flipped," if a Caucasian were to tell an African American that they could not be a part of an opera, or a play or anything, then that would be a big deal about it. They were kind of on the political side, they were kind of wrestling with that, but I was okay with it because I did not want to mention anything or take the whole concert choir out of the program because of me, and I was proud of them, and I wanted to see them do well. That was my only negative experience.

**Building a connection is important.** Olivia described this as her only negative experience, but it did not cause her to think negatively about the institution; she has continued to have positive experiences in and out the classroom:

Positive experiences are all of my professors. I know my professors, one on one. They know me when I come into the office. I make sure I make it a part of my
duty as a student to build a relationship with my professors 'cause you never know when you might need them down the road. Or when they can vouch for you for something else and just to build a positive relationship with them.

Classroom experiences: Sometimes, I see people not really working to the best of their ability. At the same time, I've been in their same situation where I haven't really felt like doing anything so I can't really speak negatively or positively about the classroom experience. It's kind of in the middle for me. Yeah, that's my experiences.

Olivia has taken an active role in her education, realizing that it takes a genuine interest not only from her professors, but also from her in order to have a positive academic experience. In addition to choir, Olivia has gotten involved in a variety of student organizations, allowing her to meet a variety of people on campus.

Olivia has participated in several campus activities that have strengthened her tie to the university. In addition to campus organizations, Olivia has also lived on campus during her entire collegiate career and describes residence life as a positive experience as well. She did not have any issues outside of common roommate disagreements.

Attending Kentucky State as a White student has not been difficult for Olivia. Attending KY State as a White student has not been difficult for Olivia and has shaped her belief that establishing more programs tailored for non-African American students is unnecessary:

To be honest, I think that if minority students come to an HBCU, then they know what they're getting into. I mean, it's a Historically Black College University so if
you're minority, you're going to know that when you enter into an HBCU that there might be a few White people, or a few Koreans, or a few Spanish people, but I don't think that … I think all the programs at Kentucky State have … are fine, as far as minorities. I don't think that there's anything that might kind of block people out that are not African Americans.

Olivia expressed that when choosing to come to an HBCU, it is important to acknowledge that one may be entering an environment where one is a minority. She further concludes that minority students must step out and actively involve themselves in the community:

I just think that the minority's job, if you're going to the HBCU, is to get involved. Because when you sign up, to the HBCU, a Historically Black College University, and you're a minority, it's going to be 1 to 4 or 1 to 3, or whatever the ratio is. It's going to be that. I think it's all about just getting involved and making sure that you put yourself out there. If you're the type of student that just sits back and relaxes, then you don't have a good experience because you're not getting involved.

Olivia believes it is the responsibility of the student, not the institution, to engage in the campus environment and make the experience gratifying.

As a connection with the institution is formed, Olivia has determined her value at Kentucky State:

I do. People know who I am. I have a very positive attitude all the time. Walk with a smile on my face, know the president one-on-one. I'm very involved with
the faculty and I'm very involved with the student body. I attend the pep rallies, I
attend the games and I'm just very social.

Building relationships with faculty, staff, and students has created meaningful
experiences for her. If Olivia had to make her college decision, she would undoubtedly
choose KY State.

Aaron

Why are you even here?" Some people they ask that, but it's not in a bad way. I
guess, a lot of people, they don't see that. I guess the stereotypes are keeping a lot
of White people away from such schools.

Aaron is an 18-year old freshman from Chicago, IL majoring in Manufacturing
Engineering. He had a very diverse academic experience prior to coming to college; he
attended public and private institutions from urban to suburban schools. Aaron’s varied
experiences have shaped his perspective on race and diversity. When asked what made
him decide to attend college and more specifically Central State, Aaron shared his
passion for being involved in one of the major activities on campus.

It's just that time and age where I … you kind of have to go to school to be
something. Besides doing something, some fast food restaurant. By working day
to day for the rest of your life, there's no real plan or anything, so I basically
consider college as the only resort to have a career and a fallback so I can retire
one day.

Well, honestly the band. Mr. Bey, he was a band director at Julienne, and I went
to Proviso East, which is one of the rival schools that we used to battle a lot and
everything. I had some students that … some classmates of mine that went here, and actually one of my best friends that I grew up with is attending here with me right now. Basically, it's just … basically the marching band.

Aaron’s choice to attend Central State was not one that received considerable dissuasion from his family. By accomplishing the goal of being a first generation college student, the school he chose was not of importance to his family.

My family doesn't really care because, technically, I'm like the first one to officially go to college. Well, okay, put it this way. On dad's side, my real father's side, he started college, couldn't do it, and ended up dropping out. I really don't know that side of the family that well, but my mother's side, they're all geniuses, literally. So most or a lot of them are in jail or, they used their smarts to do other things that don't get them where they want to be in life. What else? Yeah, so basically, that's me right there, I'm the first one so they're just looking like, "You're going to college, you're doing something," (laugh) so it doesn't matter and my friends. My friend's like they're pushing for me he's like the same way as long as I'm going to school and I'm doing something with myself then it really doesn't matter.

The encouragement from his family and friends to go to school solidifies that he is not doing this solely for himself – he is representing his entire family.

**Campus environment.** Aaron has also experienced a positive atmosphere both in and out of the classroom:
I'm generally getting along with everybody. I haven't … well, there was this one altercation but that's a different story, but (laughing). Everyone's pretty friendly.

No one's really had any conflict with me.

Outside of the classroom, Aaron is involved in Alpha Phi Omega Service organization and the marching band. He alluded to his involvement in other campus organizations, but did not elaborate on those.

**Race doesn’t matter.** As it pertained to his minority status, Aaron acknowledges the fact that there are obvious reasons he is considered a minority, but this is not a self-identification he makes. Also the experience at Central State has not truly shaped the way he views his identity or his view of race:

Well, technically, I am considered a minority here, but I mean it really doesn’t matter to me 'cause either way, I'm getting my education, so why would it matter to anybody else if I'm getting it?

I mean, not really. I mean, I'm a really hard guy to influence, to change who I am, but I don’t know, if that might just be the way I was growing up … I grew up, raised (laugh). That would be the way I was raised, but it takes a lot to want … to try to change me. I might be a little stubborn, but it takes a lot (laugh).

Aaron shares that the environment has not influenced his feelings on race; however, the way that he was raised has shaped his perception of self and others.

Not really because I … even though I grew up around a lot of races … I've had times I've grown up around White people, a lot of Hispanics or Black people, but for the past 8 years of my life and I'm 19 now, I've been off around basically all
Black people. My high school, generally going in from freshman year to graduating that's really all it's been, them and Hispanics. And it's really kind of the same environment. I'm kind of use to it.

Aaron’s pre-college environment permitted him to become adjusted to being a minority, making his adjustment to CSU less difficult. He has a clear sense of his racial identity and becoming more aware of racial minority issues as needed.

**We are not welcomed.** When asked about HBCUs responsibility to develop programs to meet the needs for non-African American students, Aaron addressed the cultural connection the university makes with cultural activities and events.

Well, I mean, there's a lot of things, being at an HBC, you ask what it's going to be like. You can have a lot of, historically Black things going around, on every corner. Especially Black History Month, things like that where everything is like, this after this after this, like events and everything. I mean, I don’t see why the school would have to change for anybody or anything, if that's what they've been doing for all of these years, you know?

Aaron does not see a problem with the culturally focused activities the university facilitates. However, these efforts may not appear to be open to all. Aaron shares his thoughts that White students may think they are not welcomed at the institution:

When a White person sees an HBC, a lot of times they generally think that a lot of White people aren’t welcome. And that's not generally because it's a historically Black college, but it's just like, they see that if they go there, they're going to be ridiculed or questioned, not like this, but questioned period.
Like "Why are you even here?" Some people they ask that, but it's not in a bad way. I guess, a lot of people, they don't see that. I guess the stereotypes are keeping a lot of White people away from such schools.

Aaron believes that regardless of his race, he matters at his institution because he contributes to the university’s statistics “I mean every student matters. If they're in the classroom learning, then they're still a statistic of the school. Either way, I'm going to be counted as a student.”

The final question I asked Aaron was about his willingness to attend an HBCU if he had to make the choice again. He reiterated that his main reason for attending Central State was only because of the band.

Yeah, I mean. Well that was mainly because of the band. I'm a big band guy (laugh). My style of marching band is like this one: high-stepping marching. I love the music that we play. Everything from … even radio music like future to Earth, Wind & Fire songs, to Cameo to, basically anything. It is just my style of music. I couldn't picture myself marching chorus style to … I hate marching. I hate actual marches but that's … yeah, I see myself going to an HBC. I mean I try; I honestly don't know because I've had that band stuff for so long. That's really influenced me. I really don't know what my college life would be if I didn't choose for a band. If I was playing football, I'd probably be at O-State or something like that. Because when I was playing football, I was starting and everything. I was a quarterback and everything. I was real good. I was playing
varsity my freshman year, and it was just, I don't know. I'd probably be at O-State or a Big 10 somewhere …

Aaron made a choice to attend an HBCU due to his desire to be a part of the marching band. As with some of the other participants, the decision to choose their respective institution related to participation with a program and/or activity.

**Participant Interview: WRCM Achieved Reactive Type**

One of the nine participants was classified as Achieved Consciousness- Reactive Type. Reactive type is defined by Rowe et al. (1994) as:

*Persons who embody reactive White racial attitudes are aware of racial/ethnic discrimination as a significant feature in American society and are reacting to this acknowledgment. They are likely to hold views based on the premise that White Americans benefit from and are responsible for the existence of discriminatory attitudes and practices. They often are very sensitive to the potential for discrimination to be a factor in situations and might be particularly vigilant in identifying inequitable acts (p.140).*

Jennifer is most closely identified as the Reactive type. She appears to have a clear sense of who she is as a White female, but has demonstrated a passive expression regarding her racial attitudes. Her experiences and interactions with people of color have been fruitful and have shaped her perspective concerning race. Rowe et al. (1994) describe this passive expression as people not personally involving themselves in activities to eliminate racial issues; however, they become knowledgeable about the issues and are able to articulate them in conversation with minorities. Although Jennifer
has not begun to take an active role in activities regarding minority issues, it is perceived as she develops in college and ultimately in profession as a social worked her involvement will evolve.

Jennifer

I was brought up in a diverse community and being here has only solidified my opinion that race issues will only die once past generations die or change.

Jennifer is a junior Sociology major from Cincinnati, Ohio. She is ambitious, driven and very focused on her academics. Jennifer’s decision to go to college and attend Central State was not a difficult one:

It was assumed I would attend college. I knew there was no other way to get in the place in my life where I would go far and obtain all my dreams. My dad works here so tuition cost here was easier to deal with than any other school.

The financial burden was lessened for Jennifer because her father is an employee.

Not only did her father’s employment at CSU reduce the financial burden of attending college, it rallied familial support for her attendance at the HBCU. Non-family and friends are not always as receptive about her going to a predominantly black college:

My friends and family don’t really care, but don’t want me on campus at night. Not because I am White, but because I am a woman alone. When I tell people I attend an HBCU, they are surprised, confused, and curious. People wonder how I am treated and what my feelings are as a student.

Despite people’s feelings or concerns, Jennifer still perseveres to achieve her academic goals.
**Limited to the classroom.** Jennifer’s engagement on campus is limited because she is a commuter student. She does not attend any social gatherings or participate in any student organizations. Jennifer’s classroom experiences are positive for her. “In general all my professors and classmates treat me with respect. There have been a few isolated incidents, but overall I have had positive endings.” I asked Jennifer to elaborate on the isolated incidents, but she chose not to respond.

**Racial awareness.** Jennifer’s self-reflection is very straightforward and steers away from minority classification, “Though this is idealistic, I see myself as a student and number on campus here to get an education. But my status as an Arab American makes me less of a minority at times but you can’t tell at first glance I am Arab.”

Jennifer has identified herself as White, but when discussing her minority status she identifies closely with her Arab background. Her father is Palestinian and her mother is White. Her experience at Central State has made her more aware of racial issues and challenges:

I am a more independent and focused student. Because classes are smaller my professors are able to challenge me more. I have more become more aware that race issues are still prominent. I was brought up in a diverse community and being here has only solidified my opinion that race issues will only die once past generations die or change.

Jennifer’s opinion about the status of race issues in society associates the ideology of racial issues with previous generations not the current. Therefore, this alludes to the notion that the current generation is not as fixated on race and racial issues.
The campus environment has been beneficial for Jennifer as a future Sociologist. She has become more aware and knowledgeable about race and cultural differences. “This environment has made me more culturally aware of African American issues or clarified things for me. I feel as a future sociologist it will help me be even more open minded.”

Jennifer shared her feeling on whether or not she matters and if she would choose Central State if she had the chance to make her college decision again, “I prefer to blend in, but I like that I matter to my professors. If I had to choose all over again, I would come to Central State straight out of high school.”

Overall, Jennifer is a young woman who has used her time a Central State to grow and achieve her professional goals. She chooses not to be actively engaged with the environment outside of her academics; however, she continues to be successful.

**Participant Interview: WRCM Unachieved Avoidant Type**

One of the participants closely classified as Unachieved White Racial Consciousness-Avoidant Type:

Individuals have attitudes that are indicative of avoidance include a lack of consideration of one’s own White identity as well as an avoidance of concern for racial/ethnic minority issues. White Americans have the option of minimizing the impact of racial awareness by dismissing the issue in various ways, which is different for racial/ethnic minorities who have little choice concerning their awareness of racial identity. (Rowe et al., 1994, p.136)
There were challenges in acquiring in-depth responses from John causing difficulty in assessing his racial identity type. John was a student who was very timid and did not appear to be very open about his racial identity nor his feelings towards ethnic minorities. Due to being from a small town, John’s exposure to diversity was minimal. His experiences at Kentucky State have not prompted him to gain an in depth perspective regarding race or personal racial identity. John shared that he has had positive experiences in college; however, there has not been deeper exploration of his identity related matters.

John

John is a Sophomore Computer Science major from a small town in Kentucky. During the interview John was a little more reserved in his responses. Unlike other participants he answered questions directly, with minimal elaboration. Attempts were made to obtain more in depth responses from him.

The discussion began by asking John his reasons for attending college, and more specifically, Kentucky State:

I went to Grant County High School and graduated. I got a scholarship to Kentucky State so I came down here. I'm two years in. The reason I went to college right now is because I got the Presidential scholarship up here and if I didn't use it now, I would lose it. Also, it’s also pretty close to home.

John’s family and friends fully supported his decision to attend KY State. His mother, grandmother, and aunt attended Kentucky State for their undergraduate degrees.
Outside of an initial shock, John rarely receives negative feedback from people outside of his family.

**Campus experiences.** John states that his overall classroom experiences have been positive:

Well, the classes are all right. They're pretty, about medium-sized, they're not really too large. My peers, they're all polite. I've never had any problems with anybody, so far. The people have always come forth, if I need them for anything. His faculty and peers have aided in his adjustment to the institution. At this point, John has not sought to join any student organizations on campus. He resided on campus during his first and second years in college. John stated that he got along with his roommates and people in his hall. There were no challenges experienced.

**Racial identity.** In assessing his own identity and minority status, John has not established an attitude regarding his racial identity or concern regarding minority issues. Not much of a minority. There's quite a few people … there's quite a few Caucasian people here, but not in many of those other places. I don't really consider myself one. I haven't really changed much. I'm pretty much the same as whenever I came here. I've always had the same views about it. Not really much difference.

John’s thoughts towards his minority status connect closely with the fact that he sees a lot of White students on campus. This feeling of non-minority status could be due to his major in STEM because there could be a large enrollment of White students in his
classes. As John continues his education at Kentucky State and begins interacting more with the environment and his classmates, his identity will become more defined.

**University outreach was limited.** For the past two years at Kentucky State, John has been successful and enjoyed his collegiate experience. Developing relationships with peers and employees who are invested in his academic progress has helped him feel connected to the institution. However, prior to John’s attendance, the institution did not provide much outreach:

I feel like I matter a lot because I had … I've made a lot of friends here in my dorm. People like me. I've always had people greet me and stuff. I feel like I matter. However, I was never contacted by Kentucky State; I actually had to contact them. They didn't send out a paper or anything to me. That might bring in more people.

Although John believes that he matters, the institution did not do its part in engaging him during the recruitment process.

John indicated that if he had to make the decision to attend an HBCU all over again, there would not be any hesitation.

If I had to make the choice again, I'd still probably choose Kentucky State because it's very convenient. It's close; the classes are easy and small. It's been a good experience so far.

This HBCU has provided John a convenient and enriched academic and social experience.
Participant Interview: WRCM Unachieved Dependent Type

One participant was classified as Unachieved Racial Consciousness- Dependent Type which are, “Individuals characterized by this type appear to have committed to some set of attitudes regarding White racial consciousness; they have not personally considered alternative perspectives. Racial attitudes are superficial and not ‘owned’ to the degree that these attitudes have been internalized by others” (Rowe et al, 1994, p. 136).

Cameron has a clear sense of his White racial identity; however, it appears that he has not gained an understanding regarding racial issues overall. The interaction he has in college has not really changed or further shaped his feelings towards race. Cameron seems to hold a “superficial” attitude towards race. He is aware of various things about the Black community as a result of his exposure to the environment; however, despite being a minority student at an HBCU, his personal attitudes and feelings about race have not changed.

Cameron

I wouldn’t have had all the opportunities that I’ve had here, like at a big university,
I wouldn’t be able to be one-on-one with all the professors. I wouldn’t be able to meet all the awesome staff that we have at Central State.

Cameron is a 22-year-old senior at Central State University, majoring in Biology. He is from Xenia, Ohio. During his four year attendance at CSU he has never lived on campus, but has become involved in activities connected with his major. Cameron’s reasons for attending college and choosing Central State were similar to other participants:
Both my parents went to college, so it was kind of, I really didn't have an option to go to college, almost. It was just I knew I wanted to. I hadn't really thought about it before. I was a senior. I wanted to go to one of the bigger universities, like Ohio State, or somewhere like that. Then when I didn't get as much money from them and I saw how much I could get from Central State, I decided I wanted to go there.

College was always considered the next step after high school for Cameron, so he did not receive negative feedback from his family regarding his choice to attend Central State. Cameron’s experiences with people outside of his family were similar to most participants: people are shocked and some have questions regarding his reasons for choosing the institution.

**Adjustment to campus.** Cameron’s experiences at Central State have been positive both with his professors and peers. The relationships he has built have aided in his success and development:

It's been a really good experience. I like how the class sizes are very small, so there's not a lot of student to professor ratio. It's very nice. They're always available whenever you have questions, and their office hours and everything. I really enjoy that.

Cameron did not note any issues that impacted his adjustment at Central State. He has become connected to the institution, specifically in his major through participation in the Biological Honor Society.
Racially informed. Cameron’s acclimation to Central State was something that took him a little bit of time to adjust, due to his experience of attending a primarily White high school. His experience at Central State has been able to make Cameron more racially informed.

At Central State I'm definitely a minority. It was kind of, at first, it was a little different because I came from a school where it was a very majority a White school. It was kind of a shock at first, but after the first couple of weeks there, I had no issues.

I may be a little more … I don't know how to explain it. From where I came from, I live in a little town near Xenia, and there's not ... there's maybe one or two Black families there. It just kind of gave me more of a look into the lives of African-Americans, and everything like that. Like how African-Americans do their thing and everything.

Being a minority helped Cameron gain more knowledge about a culture other than his own. Cameron noted, however, that although his HBCU experience has taught him a lot, it is not a realistic view of the world:

In the real world, you're not going to be in that kind of environment, you're going to be with people from all kinds of races. I feel like it should be a little more diversified. They are, I guess, they're working on that. Maybe go into the more, not just urban areas where they get most of their students, they could go out to the little, more rural areas, and that might bring in a few more. Diversify the campus.
Cameron’s point signifies that the environment created at this institution is unrealistic for developing holistic students.

When asked to respond on his willingness to repeat the HBCU experience if given the opportunity, Cameron indicated his time here has been beneficial:

More amenities and stuff like that because it's kind of in the middle of nowhere. The university can't really help that, but they could have more things on campus that might draw students there, away from other universities. However, I would definitely go back. I would definitely choose Central State again because if I hadn't, I wouldn't have been able to experience all of the things. I wouldn't have had all the opportunities that I've had here, like at a big university, I wouldn't be able to be one-on-one with all the professors. I wouldn't be able to meet all the awesome staff that we have at Central State.

Cameron appears to be someone that has a clear sense of his racial identity. Through his experience at Central State, he has begun to learn the surface of African-American culture. At this point, it does not appear that he is interested in gaining deeper understanding of African-American culture, but rather obtaining necessary knowledge to make sense of his environment.

**Conclusion**

This chapter provided the experiences of each participant based on the interview questions, which focused on the following topics: 1.) The reasons they selected their institution; 2.) Their classroom experiences and peer interactions; 3.) Self-identification of minority status; 4.) Feelings of mattering; and 5.) Connection with the institution. In
addition to focusing on these primary topics, an explanation of the participants’ racial identity type will be provided.

The participants shared that they had positive experiences during the collegiate career. The majority of the participants felt a part of their campus community and have experienced growth in their personal identity development. The participants note that their experiences as a minority in this environment have allowed them to see the commonalities shared between their African American peers. In addition, they appreciate learning about differences between the cultures, which have contributed to their well-rounded learning experience.

In chapter 5 a cross case analysis is provided illustrating the research themes and sub-themes that were generated from the participant interviews.
CHAPTER 5: CROSS CASE ANALYSIS

“Cross-case analysis enables case study researchers to delineate the combination of factors that may have contributed to the outcomes of the case, seek or construct an explanation as to why one case is different or the same as others, make sense of puzzling or unique findings, or further articulate the concepts, hypotheses, or theories discovered or constructed from the original case” (Khan & VanWynsberghe, 2008, para. 2). After completing each participant interview, I reviewed and listened to each interview transcript multiple times to identify the consistent themes that evolved from the participants lived experiences.

The cross-case analysis of the student participants resulted in answers to the first research question that guided this study:

1. How do students describe their unique experience while attending an HBCU?
   a. With the increase in White student enrollment at HBCUs, what role does the historical mission of HBCUs play in White student experiences?
   b. How do White students make meaning of their experience as a “temporary minority”?

The following sections use cross-case analysis to examine the themes generated as the nine student participants described their experiences as temporary minorities at HBCUs.

Participant Themes

The following themes were drawn from the cross-case analysis of the student participants: 1.) Choosing to attend an HBCU, 2.) Experiencing institutional outreach, 3.)
Becoming racially aware, and 4.) Connecting to the campus environment. Figure 1 illustrates the themes and sub-themes produced from the research.

Figure 1. Participant Themes-Emerging participant themes from cross-case analysis.

**Choosing to Attend an HBCU**

It was common that all of the participants opted to attend their respective HBCU for reasons that related to close proximity to home, financial assistance from the
institution, or opportunity to engage in a specific campus program (e.g. Band, Choir, etc.). This theme was important to note because students have access to many college options and understanding the reason why these students chose to attend an HBCU was essential.

**Financial Assistance from the University**

Seven out of the nine participants opted to attend their respective HBCU because they received scholarships or financial assistance (i.e. non-loan dollars), which covered more than 50% of their expenses. All the participants from Kentucky State either received the Commonwealth Scholarship or the Presidential Scholarship, both of which covered tuition, fees, room, board, and books. Two of the Central State participants were awarded DOSTEM Scholarships, covering tuition and fees; one received a Presidential scholarship, which covers tuition, fees, room, board, and books; and one student received tuition remission as her parent is a faculty member. Paying for college is a common issue for students, regardless of racial background. As such, being offered larger scholarship packages made HBCUs more appealing to the participants.

**Proximity to Home**

Institutional proximity to a student’s hometown can provide financial and personal benefit. Students who live off campus can save on residence hall fees and are able to maintain their family support system during their years in college.

Five out of the nine participants were commuters. Of the five, four resided with their parents, and one moved off campus during his/her second year.
I wanted to stay local. Local was my biggest thing; because, it's right up the road from where I live. It's one of those things that I could still stay at home and still manage to keep my job. That was one of my biggest things. (Carter)

A few of the other participants wanted to commute; however, their scholarship required them to stay (or live) on campus.

**Campus Activity**

The activities that exist on a campus serve as recruitment and retention tools. Student involvement may determine a student’s desire to select, remain, or leave an institution. Some institutional activities outside of academics include fine/performing arts and/or athletics. Two of the nine student participants in this study, Olivia and Aaron, selected their colleges to join choir or band, respectively. Olivia commented:

Dr. Smith, I went in and sang for him a classical and contemporary selection and he was also giving me a scholarship on top of what I already had obtained and that's what got me and drew me to Kentucky State University was the concert choir. I just loved their energy. I loved the atmosphere.

Although Aaron did not state that he received a scholarship for Band from Central State, the band was his main reason for attending the institution.

Well, honestly the band. Mr. Bey, he was a band director at Julienne, and I went to Proviso East, which is one of the rival schools that we used to battle a lot and everything. I had some students that … some classmates of mine that went here, and actually one of my best friends that I grew up with is attending here with me right now. Basically, it's just … basically the marching band.
Financial, geographic proximity and campus engagement were the three primary factors that caused the participants to select their institution. A few of the participants had secondary reasons for selecting the institution, which included family members or friends who attended the school and/or had an interest in one the academic programs.

**Experiencing Institutional Outreach**

Outreach from postsecondary institutions takes place in a variety of manners. These efforts include partnerships with local secondary schools, access groups, and community organizations; utilizing employees who are members of local churches, community groups, and boards; and contacts with local media outlets and businesses. All of these connections provide avenues for the university to attract, recruit, and retain students. The primary role of the Office of Admissions is to reach out to students by visiting high schools, working with access organizations and representing the institution at college fairs and recruitment events.

A recruitment concern expressed by one of the participants was the college not being proactive in recruiting students at predominantly white high schools. The participants received information about their HBCU as a result of the efforts they made in contacting the institution directly or by friends/family connection with the school.

I think it would be better to try to reach out to when we go to recruit and stuff, to kind of put ourselves in positions where there will be more Whites, Latinos, Mexicans, putting ourselves in more situations where maybe they’ll see. (James) Cameron’s response was similar. The institution needs to expand its areas of outreach to be inclusive of non-urban areas.
Maybe go into the more, not just urban areas where they get most of their students, they could go out to the little, more rural areas, and that might bring in a few more. Diversify the campus. (Cameron)

Xenia is a town very close to Central State (five to ten minutes away). However, there are not many people in the town who decide to attend Central State because rarely does the college showcase within the community.

I would like to see more local. I don't know what they do really with Xenia, whether they come in, you know that kind of thing, where they show the school, trying to get more Whites or people of different races to come to Central State. (Carter)

The diversification of the universities is needed to aid in developing a better-rounded experience for students. Cameron further alludes to the fact that the institution’s approach to outreach and recruitment needs to enhance beyond a certain geographic area. This enhanced outreach will likely increase the number of non-African American students on campus.

Intentional outreach efforts in a variety of schools and communities are necessary in order for students of all racial backgrounds to learn more about the institution. Currently HBCUs approach recruitment by targeting high school students they believe will be attracted instead of making it appealing to any student. Carter states:

CSU can actively engage more in the recruitment of White students, or at least offer opportunities to showcase the institution. Although an HBCU may lack the
resources and certain luxuries, it still has the ability to offer connections and relationships that will promote student success.

The image of the institution also plays an important role in appealing to students. The public relations piece is important to draw the interest of students. If HBCUs are illustrated as institutions that only admit Black students, then they will not appeal to students of other races and cultures. The institution must show how a student will fit regardless of who they are and where they come from. If a student is able to see how they fit in the institution, they are more likely to be recruited and retained.

**Becoming Racially Aware**

College is an important time for students to further develop their identity outside of their family. During this time students have the chance to meet people of different races, cultures, and backgrounds. One of the research questions in this study focused on how White students make meaning of their experiences as a temporary minority.

**Minority Status**

An interesting aspect of this study was learning if participants viewed themselves as a minority. Based on the responses, four of the participants stated “yes” they view themselves as a minority, four students stated “no” they did not see themselves as a minority, and one participant was uncertain. After reviewing the responses of participants who stated “yes,” their minority identification hinged upon their acknowledgement of being white in a predominantly Black environment. Steck et al. (2003) state, “Whites have been advanced by unfair privilege…the reality is that Whites do not often have to
self-consciously consider race” (p. 60). This statement supports the idea regarding the participants’ feelings towards their minority status.

I think it's kind of, just, really ironic and kind of funny to me that I am a minority there. I'm not treated like a minority there. I think it took a while for new friends to warm up to me stuff like that. I think it doesn't -- I don't feel like a minority at an HBCU. (Amanda)

Some students acknowledged their minority status because statistically they realized that is how the university counts them.

For me, statistics say that I am minority, but I look at myself just as anybody else on campus. Like I said, I don't look at ethnicity as anything different. (Olivia)

Well, technically, I am considered a minority here, but I mean it really doesn’t matter to me 'cause either way, I'm getting my education, so why would it matter to anybody else if I'm getting it? (Aaron)

A few of the participants made statements such as “I don’t feel like a minority” or “I look at myself just as anybody else.” Such comments imply that the participants attribute being a minority as experiencing a hardship or being treated differently than the majority. Race is more significant to the identity and self-reflections of people who are marginalized. Parham (2001) explained, “Whenever there exists a social reality where underrepresented folks must fight for legitimacy and self-affirmation, there will be instances of unjustified suffering, unmerited pain, and undeserved harm,” (p.162).

Although the participants are the minority they do not experience a struggle for the equality or self-preservation against the majority population.
A few of the participants responded “no” to identifying as a minority. This could be connected to their lack of “feeling” like a minority, despite the obvious physical difference.

I don’t really consider myself to be a minority to be honest with you. I went to Cedarville University for a conference and I really felt out of place there. I’m not going to lie. I told one of my friends, I said, "There are just too many White people here." (Carter)

Carter had grown accustomed to being in an academic environment where he looks different from his peers; thus, being in an arena where he was the majority was foreign to him. He sees his campus environment as being “home” for him and a place where he has become comfortable. Carter does not see race as a prominent factor to distinguish him from his Black peers. The connection he has begun to form with the HBCU community extends beyond race.

On paper, Jennifer identifies as being White; however, when asked about being a minority, she references her Arab heritage. As such, she does not consider herself a minority because of the growing Arab American population in the U.S.

Though this is idealistic, I see myself as a student and number on campus here to get an education. But my status as an Arab American makes me less of a minority at times but you can’t tell at first glance I am Arab. (Jennifer)

The reasons that many of the participants did not feel like a minority are 1.) They have adapted to the environment and do not see themselves as different and/or 2.) Seeing more white people on campus makes them feel as if they are not alone.
For people of color, “minority” is a societal classification and a self-identification. Even in places where people of color are in the majority, the entire race is still classified as a “minority.” Responses from the participants concluded that minority status is not connected with the notion of looking different or being represented by small number; within the student population. Many of the participants acknowledged that statistically they are in the minority, but that is not conveyed in their racial self-identification.

Flagg (1993) explains the concept of transparency phenomenon, which is defined as “the tendency of whites not to have to think about whiteness, or about norms, behaviors, or perspectives that are white-specific” (p.957). White people are more likely to conceptualize race as an identifier for people of color, but not for themselves. The participants assume that minority status is associated with experiences that resemble situations of isolation and/or unfair treatment from their peers. Many of the participants made comments such as “I don’t feel like a minority,” thereby connecting a psychological and emotional response to their minority status.

**Racial Experiences**

Within this study, the majority of the participants shared that they did not have any negative experiences as a White student. Overall, their experiences with faculty, staff, and other students were positive. A few negative experiences were reported by female participants:

The first semester I moved in. I lived in Honors dorm so everybody kind of … I was the only White person so everybody kind of stared at me and I think that was expected so that didn’t bother me. Actually, my boyfriend is Black so we go here
together. I was that one White person in a group of all Black people. So I could expect to be stared at and dirty looks were often given from mainly women, which is fine. I don’t feel out of place when I’m around a group of Black people, but they kind of make it known that I’m around by the looks that I’m given.

(Sarah)

Sarah’s experience on campus created temporary issues of discomfort; however, it did not affect her ability. Sarah’s experience highlights that though her peers recognize her being different, it is not something she gives merit. Though this unwarranted attention is sometimes uncomfortable, Sarah understands how her dissimilarity justifies notice. Sarah thinks that it is understandable and not surprising that people would give attention to her because of her difference; this attention is sometimes uncomfortable. Sarah’s experience was difficult for her and similar to what some students of color experience at PWIs. Phillips (2005) discussed the reality that Black students felt marginalized and did not feel that there was an equal opportunity for them to succeed.

Olivia was another participant who had an experience that was racially motivated. This experience related to a production in which the Kentucky State choir was asked to participate. Olivia was asked not to participate in the performance because of her race.

Dr. Smith had to pull me to the side and he was very kind of upset, and they would not let me be in the opera because I was a Caucasian. That was something that I was not aware of, at first. I went to our president, and she apologized for my experience and apologized for what had happened. I understood but it's kind of hard.
People had a … a lot of people in the concert choir were just like "Can we paint her skin, can we paint her skin? We really want her to be in it, we need her," and all this other stuff, so they were upset as well, so it was kind of an emotional type thing … (Olivia)

Olivia’s experience could have potentially created a major issue for the institution. Not only could this experience result badly for the institution, but it could have impacted her psychosocial development. However, Olivia did not want to escalate the situation because she knew her classmates worked very hard.

An interesting piece to this particular issue was that her classmates wanted her to still participate in the production by putting her in “Black face.” As explained in Chapter 4, “Black face” is something that started in the 19th century and was used in minstrel shows. After several years of actors using Black Face, it became something that was racially unacceptable and was seen as offensive in the Black community. Placing Olivia in Black Face would have potentially been more detrimental to the Kentucky State and University of Kentucky production than not allowing her to participate.

Despite this situation, Olivia still spoke highly about her experience at Kentucky State. The support of Olivia’s peers expressed their empathy with her during her experience as a discriminated minority. Their own experiences may have inspired them to address the injustice she encountered despite potential negative ramifications. The response Olivia received may have been different if she was a Black student at a PWI. Although her White peers may have been upset because she was mistreated, their ability to empathize is limited if they have not shared similar experiences.
Racial Identification

Racial identity development is a process that takes place throughout the course of someone’s life and is shaped by the experiences individuals have with people within and outside of their race. Rowe et al. (1994) states, “Attitudes that most Whites develop about their own group and other racial/ethnic groups are reinforced by the stereotypes of the dominant society” (p. 130). The study of White racial identity development is a discussion that has existed for years. It has been suggested that Whites are typically unaware of their racial identity development and that most racial identity development models are reserved for people of color (Steck et al, 2003). Furthermore, given their dominance in history, there was no reason to explore the social identity of Whites in terms of their rank in society.

For the purpose of this study, the racial identity development for the participants was based on Rowe, Bennett, and Atkinson’s (1994) White Racial Consciousness Model. Rowe, Bennett and Atkinson defined White racial consciousness as “one’s awareness of being White and what that implies in relation to those who do not share White group membership” (p.134). The responses of the participants related to 1.) Self-identification as a minority, 2.) Personal view of their identity development while being at an HBCU, and 3.) How they described their experiences of interacting with their African American peers. The participants were categorized in one of two major consciousness categories: Unachieved White Racial Consciousness (Avoidant, Dependent or Dissonant) or Achieved White Racial Consciousness (Dominative, Conflictive, Reactive or Integrative). Chapter 4 provided the identification of each participants WRCM type.
As discussed in Chapter 4, the racial identification types designated for the participants were based solely on my interpretation of their shared lived experiences as related to the theory. Although students may have shared similar responses to certain questions, I looked at all the experiences shared in order to determine the most closely related racial type. Therefore, the designations are not conclusive. I recognize that there are other experiences in the students’ lives not shared during the interview, which could change the racial type designation.

**Deeper Connection**

Olivia, Amanda, and Sarah all have connections to the African American community, which extend beyond their attendance at an HBCU. Olivia and Sarah both are involved in interracial relationships and Amanda has an adopted sister who is African American. Their knowledge about race, specifically the African American community, is deeper than the other participants.

As a White American attending an HBCU, I've become way more aware of problems that are revealed that are facing the African-American community. It's also made me want to, you know, help other students find a voice. I'm very proud to say that I am attending an HBCU and I am part of one. (Amanda)

Amanda’s experiences at Kentucky State have made her more open and knowledgeable about issues that need to be addressed in the African American community. She is committed to helping other students take an active role in shedding light on racial matters. Sarah further elaborates on how her HBCU experience has caused her to continually step out of her comfort zone to learn and educate others about Blacks.
I’ve kind of stepped outside of my box and before I came here I’ve always had relationships with guys who were always Black. Like I said, kind of step out of your box and it makes you realize although the media makes everybody think that all Black people are bad, they’re just like everybody else. So I mean I don’t really think of race anymore.

Sarah and Amanda’s interaction with their environments have allowed them to gain perspectives that encourage them to inform others about the positive aspects of the African American community. Olivia was raised to accept people for who they are, no matter the race; she welcomes all who add value to her life.

I am a Caucasian and I've never dated my own race. I've always dated outside of my race. I'm currently with an African American student. It's not because I prefer African Americans over White. It's just my parents always taught me "Be with who is good to you, whoever is good to you, and treats you right, then that's fine." I've never had any bad experiences with African American people. That's just my motto, I look at everybody the same.

A consistent theme shared by these young ladies was equality. Engaging with the African American community has taught them that despite physical differences, everyone deserves the same respect and fair treatment.

**Connecting to the Campus Environment**

College is a time for people to gain a deeper understanding of who they are and what they want to become. Chickering and Reisser (1993) suggest that student development is influenced by the educational environment. A college experience is
shaped by the academic and social interactions a student has within the campus environment. These experiences may have taken place in and out of the classroom. When students reflect on college, they tend to think about the faculty or staff member who impacted them the most, the friends they made, and/or the exciting time they had at social events on campus. These experiences are what cause people to gain a strong connection to their campus even beyond their years at the institution.

**Influences to Go to College**

A person’s college experience can be shaped by the reason(s) he/she decided to attend college, and more importantly why he/she selected a particular college. A student is more likely to be successful in college, when they are motivated and have the needed support. Primarily all of the participants were raised in families where college was the expectation and next step after/following high school.

I grew up in a house where there was no option. You had to go to college or you went to the military, and my parents made sure that they told us you’re not going to excel in life unless you have a college degree, which is completely evident with the way the economy is faced now. So basically, my parents were the main reason why I ended up going to college. (Sarah)

Carter received the same expectation from his parents.

I was always college bound. My parents were always after me about going to college. They always told me to use my brain and not my back, because I was pretty smart in high and pretty smart going through school. That's what influenced me the most, parents.
Familial support is imperative to college success and completion. Students who have family members who encourage them to do well in college and set high expectations are more likely to be successful.

**Shock and Awe**

As stated in the section “Reasons for attending college,” participants selected their institution because of its geographic proximity, financial assistance, and participation in a campus activity. Many of the participants received supportive feedback from their family and friends about attending an HBCU. Sharing their decision to attend an HBCU with those outside their immediate circle elicited astonished remarks and questions. The participants do not take offense to these responses; instead they dismiss it with laughter and explain to people that they enjoy their school and it is no different than attending a PWI.

They’re shocked. They want to know why. Everybody always asks why. Why are you going there? Are you scared? I’m always kind of confused, like no I’m not scared at all. And they’re like, well you are a minority and I’m like, yes I understand that but that doesn’t bother me though. (Sarah)

Sarah’s feedback from people regarding being fearful in the environment created some confusion for her. She doesn’t see why she should be afraid to attend the school; it is her belief that her Black peers are no different than her White peers. Carter receives similar responses from people and he reinforces excitement about attending Central State.
They (non-family) look at me kind of funny. They are like, really? I'm like, I seriously do go to Central State. I'm not afraid to say it and proud to be part of Central State. (Carter)

These students feel that they are able to receive a valuable education at their institution, regardless of it being an HBCU. They shared a lot of amazing experiences and connections they have developed while on campus.

**Campus Experiences**

As stated above, all the participants were pleased with their HBCU experiences. They have developed friendships and have enjoyed the interactions they have had with faculty, staff, and students. A few of the students have become involved in campus life, which has enriched their time in college. Some have not become engaged outside of the classroom; however, they still have enjoyed college life.

Being involved, that just really doesn’t hold any type of bias, but the fact that, you know, just something to add to the list of things you say when, oh there’s a White man who goes to Central State named James. I think a lot of faculty members on campus, they really seen what I could do as a leader and I wasn’t even the leader. (James)

During the interview, James shared that he began getting involved during his freshmen year. From him joining student organizations, he became recognized as a rising leader by faculty, staff, and administrators on campus. James’ involvement has opened a multitude of doors for him academically and professionally. Sarah and Amanda have
differing perspectives concerning classroom experiences they have had while attending college.

But the learning is definitely different. I would say here, at Central it’s more of lifelong skills that you’re learning, along with academics, of course, but at Sinclair you don’t learn from the people. Here, everybody chimes in. You learn from everybody in the classroom instead of just the instructor, which I really like that because I learn a lot better talking back and forth. (Sarah)

Sarah highlights the opportunity of being able to learn not just from her instructor, but also from her peers. This exchange allows for students to gain a variety of outlooks on course topics, which ultimately can enhance the learning experience. She also indicates that the curriculum provides life skills in addition to textbook knowledge.

Amanda and Cameron argue small class sizes have enhanced their academic experience.

Well, I like the small size. My classes right now are averaging between, like, 15 and 30 students, which is really nice for upper-level education. It can be an interesting thing at some time. I'm not going to lie. When I first went there, I did get a lot of the jokes before. So it was aggravating but I'm learning. (Amanda)

It's been a really good experience. I like how the class sizes are very small, so there's not a lot of student to professor ratio. It's very nice. They're always available whenever you have questions, and their office hours and everything. I really enjoy that. (Cameron)

Key factors in student success and retention include small class sizes, a classroom environment that fosters holistic learning, and faculty/staff recognition of student
potential for leadership. The participants’ responses and current success at their institutions support this claim.

Four of the participants lacked campus involvement. Though they may occasionally attend campus functions, Jennifer, Sarah, Carter and John do not actively participate in any social clubs. Although student organizations tend to create primary social circles for students, these participants have created friendships and connections with other students in their classes. A few of the participants have work commitments, preventing them from engaging in campus life. A couple of the students chose not to get involved on campus so they may focus solely on academics. This lack of co-curricular integration has not negatively impacted the persistence or retention of these students. All of these students have remained in good academic standing and are on the path to graduate from their respective programs in 4 to 5 years.

No Change Necessary

College provides a time for students to explore who they are through experiences with their academic and social environment. As an institution of higher education, it is essential to develop programs and services that will meet the needs of all students. PWIs tend to address the needs of their minority students through the creation of multicultural offices, programs, and student organizations. These programs are designed to further aid in the development, retention and success of minority students. When speaking with the participants regarding the need to develop programs for non-African American students at their institution, all the participants responded that additional programs were not
necessary. Sarah, Olivia, and Aaron share that HBCUs should maintain their current programming as it is connected to the culture of the institution.

I don’t think so. I don’t think they should develop it. I mean I feel like at a HBCU it’s a historically Black school for a reason. It’s intended to learn the Black history, to be around the Black culture, and I feel like you’re kind of taking away from the HBCU if you’re creating it for other races. (Sarah)

To be honest, I think that if minority students come to an HBCU, then they know what they're getting into. … I think all the programs at Kentucky State have ... are fine, as far as minorities. I don't think that there's anything that might kind of block people out that are not African Americans. (Olivia)

Well, I mean, there's a lot of things, being at an HBC, you ask what it's going to be like. You can have a lot of, historically Black things going around, on every corner. Especially Black History Month, things like that where everything is like, this after this after this, like events and everything. I mean, I don’t see why the school would have to change for anybody or anything. (Aaron)

Student participants do not think it is necessary for the institution to have programs for non-African American students. They believe that having particular programs for a certain group would take away from the “culture of the institution” or “mission of the institution”. Olivia supports this assertion, stating that when choosing an institution, students should expect activities that cater to the majority. Because campus activities catering to the minority were not important to research participants, it is
difficult to conclude if the introduction of these activities will enhance the temporary minority college experience.

Yes, I Matter

Another consistent theme amongst all the participants was that they feel that they matter at their institution. Whether it was because they performed well in the classroom, served as a student leader, or participated in campus recruitment efforts, they all felt they contributed to the success of their institution. When institutions focus on mattering and greater student involvement, this will result in campuses where students are more successful, motivated to learn, and more likely to stay in school (Schlossberg, 1989). Participants have had positive experiences, causing them to feel valued at their institutions.

I do. People know who I am. I have a very positive attitude all the time. Walk with a smile on my face, know the president one-on-one. I'm very involved with the faculty and I'm very involved with the student body. I attend the pep rallies, I attend the games and I'm just very social. (Olivia)

Olivia’s experience has permitted her to engage with faculty, staff, and students academically and socially. She has built relationships, which made her feel that she is important on her campus. For Amanda, her professors have made her feel that she matters and that race is race is a non-factor. They have provided her with an experience that has encouraged her to make an impact on the world.

Yes. I feel that most ... I mean, of course you're going to have some bad professors. Most of the professors that I have, the color of your skin doesn't
cmatter to them. Like, you try to make a difference in the world and try to grow as a student is what is important to them as a whole. I feel like my professors have really helped me grow as in a young adult and as a student through my experience. (Amanda)

James shares how he feels he matters to his institution. He has the opportunity to showcase how all students, regardless of their race, can have a well-rounded HBCU experience.

Yes, yes I do. I think I matter to Central State because of the fact that I am so out there, but at the same time I feel like I matter because they need me. They need me to show, you know, I don’t know open the door for other people who’d be a minority here to come through. I feel like I do matter, but sometimes it’s just kind of like, okay I’m just a business opportunity for them or a future business opportunity for them. Yes, I do matter. (James)

These students have shown that they feel they matter to their institutions in different ways. Whether it’s in the classroom, participation in activities, relationships developed, or serving as a spokesperson for the institutions, these students feel valued. They believe that the institution has their best interest in mind and it desires to help them be successful.

I Would Choose an HBCU Again

Overall, the HBCU experience has contributed to the participants’ academic and social development. A few of the participants have had a couple of negative experiences; in spite of this, they have been embraced in the environment. Being a temporary minority
has positively shaped some of the participants’ identities. Many of them have become more informed regarding the issues pertaining to people of color, and have become empowered to help change society’s perceptions.

Support from faculty members has helped participants grow academically; their social experiences have also molded their development. If these students had to make their college choice all over again, they would choose to attend an HBCU. Jennifer stated, “I like that I matter to my professors. If I had to choose all over again, I would come to Central State straight out of high school.” Amanda also shares the satisfaction she has with her institution. She has had the chance to represent her school in the public, connect positively with the environment, and expand her career opportunities.

I've been really happy with the college. I've made a lot of great friends, and I spoke at a press conference earlier this year for Kentucky State University and I was able to expand my career options more there than I think I would have been able to expand it from more, like, UK, or a bigger institution. I would do it all again in a heartbeat. I wouldn't change anything.

The participants are internally motivated and would likely have done well at either a PWI or HBCU due to family and self-expectations for them to succeed. However, the social involvement piece may have been different at a PWI for some of them. At larger PWIs there are over 100 student organizations, programs, and/or events available for students. This variety may have shaped their development and changed their college experience in different ways.
Interactions with other students, Black or White, may have also been different. Depending on the institution, these students may not have had a significant amount of interaction with students of color. The lack of engagement may have triggered different ideas or feelings related to their White identity and/or racial attitudes. Overall, the students have adapted well at Central State or Kentucky State and their college experience has been positive and enriched. Having the opportunity to be a temporary minority will add value to their lives while in college and beyond.

Integrating into the campus environment is important whether it is in the classroom or through participation in campus activities. All the participants shared positive experiences while in college; however, it is realistic to assume that not every White student at either campus has the same positive outlook. Aaron provides a very critical assessment of the HBCU environment. Although he has had positive experiences, he shares that some White students may be hesitant to attend the institution because they may feel unwelcomed.

When a White person sees an HBC, a lot of times they generally think that a lot of White people aren’t welcome. That's not generally because it's a historically Black college, but it's just like, they see that if they go there, they're going to be ridiculed or questioned, not like this, but questioned period.

The perspective shared by Aaron regarding the comfort level of White students in an HBCU environment may be the reality of several students and the reason they choose not to attend. In essence, students want to be able to attend a college or university without fear of being publicly ridiculed because of racial difference. The feelings shared by
Aaron are similar to that of Black students who attend PWIs. Aaron’s perceptions are worth nothing when considering how welcoming HBCUs are to White students.

**Staff Interviews**

The interviews conducted were not only from students, but also with faculty and staff from Central State and Kentucky State Universities. Eight staff members were interviewed. The breakdown of interview participants is listed below. The interview of the employees will not be detailed case by case as with the students, but an overall assessment will be provided based on the consistent themes shared by the participants. The staff interviews serve to answer the 2nd research question:

2. How do White students experience psychosocial development in an HBCU setting?
   a. How do HBCU employees view their efforts to shape the social identity development of White students?
   b. What environmental and cultural factors exist within HBCUs to support the holistic development of White students?

The staff members who participated in this study are listed in Table 3.

The purpose of interviewing the employees at Central State and Kentucky State was to determine staff’s perceptions of the institution’s efficacy in meeting the needs of non-African American students. There were three main themes drawn from the employee interviews: 1.) Embrace color blind attitude towards students, 2.) Diversify recruitment practices and public relations strategies, and 3.) Enhance institutional image
Table 2. Staff Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Time at Institution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carey</td>
<td>Student Affairs</td>
<td>1 ½ years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denise</td>
<td>Enrollment Management</td>
<td>1 year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Jared</td>
<td>Academic Affairs</td>
<td>12 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raymond</td>
<td>Enrollment Management</td>
<td>2 ½ years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Sarah</td>
<td>Academic Affairs- Faculty</td>
<td>5-10 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Leslie</td>
<td>Academic Affairs- Faculty</td>
<td>2 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ken</td>
<td>Instructional Counselor</td>
<td>24 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jason</td>
<td>Residence Life</td>
<td>9 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Embrace Color Blind Attitude towards Students

Employees, regardless of years of experience or position, concluded that their institution is color-blind concerning serving students. This notion of color-blindness is tied to the idea that each student is an individual whose needs are met irrespective of his/her racial background.

Ninety-nine percent. You can agree with me. If you are highly educated, you become more color blind. The lower education, in both, in any race, makes you want to, you can see … you want anything to hold on. The best thing, education makes you color blind, or race blind or accent blind. Just admit. You don’t see it.

(Dr. Sarah)
Dr. Sarah shares the belief that an individual’s education level plays a role in how he/she views race-related matters. It is the idea that the more education one has, the more likely one is not to use race as a factor in the treatment and/or education of people.

Dr. Leslie’s opinion echoes that of Dr. Sarah:

There really should be, and in fact from my perspective really is, nothing distinguishing about White students. In order to teach effectively and teach honestly, it doesn’t matter who is receiving the information, you have to provide that information.

Ken agreed, using the term “race neutral” as a recruitment approach:

Not exclusively, no. No, I think that our institution, at least, has embraced the full range of ethnicities and backgrounds. I would say that, largely, and I don't want this to sound like an advertisement or anything, but I think it's been largely race neutral. I mean, I think that White students stand to learn … I think that White students stand to get an education on what it is to come from an African American perspective. Whether they realize that they're getting that education or not, I think that they cannot help but walk away from this experience with that.

The term “race neutral” was introduced by Ken. The use of this term supports the idea of the university employees treating all students fairly. In addition to this, Ken shared his opinion that White students gain the opportunity to learn from an African American perspective while attending an HBCU. This statement is supported through research by Closson and Henry (2008), which explains that one of the reasons White students attend HBCUs is in order to be immersed in the cultural experience.
The theme of color-blindness and race neutrality was also endorsed by Denise:

Well, basically because we don't really characterize them as White students. You just call them "students." So when I go out to - like I've been out to Dayton Public Schools, where I used to work at. And I have been doing a little bit of recruiting myself, because we have these seniors now, and I've been doing college-readiness, and I've been trying to promote our program so that we at Central State can start getting these higher GPAs and ACT/SAT score students to come to Central State. I am not looking at their color; I'm just looking at their intelligence.

The statements expressed by the staff stress the importance of treating all students the same. They do not give special treatment to any students because of their racial identification. Denise speaks about her outreach efforts in local schools, and how she seeks to recruit students to the institution based on their college readiness, high GPAs, and test scores. She reiterates the fact that she recruits students based on their intelligence, not their race.

Being color blind is important within an educational setting. Students are successful in the academic environment as a result of their interaction with their instructors. Therefore, it is essential that the faculty members do not discriminate against their students. This is the same as it relates to non-faculty employees. Whether in the residence hall, campus activities, or support offices all staff should view the students the same and race should not be factor. A color blind perspective can ensure fairness for all students.
Diversify Recruitment Practices and Public Relations Strategies

Another theme noted by the employees was the institutions’ approach to student recruitment. As explained by student participants, choosing CSU or KY State was motivated by various factors, race not being one of them. It is imperative that this ideology exists in the university’s admissions office. The institution attracts students based on how it presents itself in the community. This is not to say recruitment/marketing strategies are the sole responsibility of the admissions office. However, this office has a critical role in selecting the high schools and college fairs it will visit to attract new students. If the office only chooses to recruit in areas with a high concentration of African American students, then that will be the primary population attending the institution. The diversification of admissions practices and marketing strategies has been deemed necessary by some of the employees.

I think that when you do have a non-African-American student come in, they’re handled very well. I don’t know if they are recruited as actively as they could or should be. I know that personally, to me, a student is a student. I don’t see anything other than someone wanting to get a college degree and needing my help with the financial aid, and that’s how I approach everyone that I work with.

(Raymond)

Carey further supported the idea that institutional publications need to become more diverse:

I think Central State overall can make Central State more appealing by placing our non-African-American students on publications, actually putting their faces
out there so students of other races and other backgrounds will be more comfortable with coming, because they would understand and know that they're not the only White student that would be here. That's definitely something that the university as a whole can do from a marketing standpoint, is putting those students in the forefront versus always having the African-American students in the forefront.

Denise shares that it is necessary for White students to be seen in the marketing of the institution:

It needs to be put on a Web site. And needs to be put on brochures. And it needs to be - White people need to be seen, because as it stands right now, I have not seen any one of any other race but African Americans. If you don't have their pictures, or on TV or any other media source, these students don't realize that there are people of many colors here - color - there's a rainbow of colors here. From the lightest to the darkest. And we need to show that.

Carey and Denise share their perspectives on the importance of all students being reflected in the institution’s marketing materials as a means to recruit them. If students do not see someone who looks like them within the institution, it could possibly introduce the idea that they would not “fit.” The diversification of marketing materials would potentially cause these institutions to be considered as options for non-African American students.

Dr. Sarah shares her concern that recruitment is not done in majority White schools:
The students. They are embraced as soon as they have their ID. Tell me one reason why do we not go and recruit from 90 percent White students population? Why don’t we do that? They don’t have financial aid, why? I cannot understand it. We go only after school districts that are 100 percent Black. Tell me how are we empowering these Black kids? By taking from them with no, any interference with any different type of work, and bring them to the same thing? What after us? Is this the end of the road?

Dr. Sarah stressed the importance of the institutions need to increase exposure at predominantly White schools. It is essential that the recruitment activities of the institutions are enhanced to be inclusive of schools in rural, suburban, and urban areas. This notion was also introduced by the student participants. A couple of the student participants shared that their institution did not actively recruit them, but that they first had to reach out to their institution. This practice may be worth additional review by these institutions, as well as other HBCUs who do not recruit at majority White high schools.

**Enhance Institutional Image**

Image is everything. If the message appears to be a “Blacks only college,” that is what will be conveyed. Such practices will continue to discourage non-African American students and families from enrolling. A few of the employees who live and interact in communities beyond the institution, commented that many of the non-African American students choose not to attend the institution because of its reputation, not because it’s an
HBCU. Furthermore, limitations in the services provided and resources available deter students from attendance.

They don't say, "HBCU." They're just using the stereotype of the negativity of the press just as a whole, as a university. A lot of people in Dayton are not looking at Central State as an HBCU. They're looking at it as a university. So the White students aren't even - it's not even an issue for them. The issue is the negative press that has been received from years ago. (Denise)

Image is essential for higher educational institutions as relates to their recruitment efforts. As Denise states above students in the local area choose not to attend Central State due to the negative press it has received over time, not because of its institutional type. As students are exploring their post-secondary options, the reputation of the institution is vital in their decision making process. If an institution has a bad image, families may feel that this will impact the value of their degree upon graduation.

Dr. Leslie added that student involvement and campus resources are also contributors to institutional image:

If you have built a vitality of student organizations, and again, if we stay true to our mission, the faculty, a university providing quality education, I really don’t see any reason that a White student would have an issue just because they are White. I just came from a predominantly White school, and in terms of like being able to use technology in the classroom, you know that Central State is disadvantaged.
Student organizations are important to the success and retention of all students. Students of all races are interested in institutions that have resources and opportunities for them to engage in and out of the classroom. HBCU funding is limited in comparison to PWIs (Abelman and Dalessandro, 2009); however, it is necessary that the resources these institutions have are invested properly to create an enhanced student experience.

Raymond spoke about the limited academic offerings available to students:

I think there’s a lot of things that the university traditionally does that they’re not really keeping up with what the students’ wants are, as far as like degree programs. We’re not preparing ourselves or giving ourselves something that puts us at a competitive advantage that’s going to draw, not just the students that would normally come here, but the students that would want to come here for other things.

Raymond made mention of the fact that the institution needs to have a competitive advantage to draw students. Students are seeking degree programs that will allow them to obtain a good job after college. Therefore, it is important to provide academic programs that will attract students. There are several institutions offering the same degree programs; thus, it is vital that HBCUs create a message that distinguishes them from the rest.

Carey shares the need to improve services for all students as a contributor to building institutional image:

I believe Central State University can improve its services to all students, not just White students. In ways such as, the way that they deal with students, their
customer service, their timeliness and response, their professionalism. I believe in ways like that, they can improve overall. Positive customer service and professionalism are important within this environment. Although there are some people who refuse to use the term “customer” in higher education, it is necessary to view students as customers when considering their interaction with employees. Students must feel that they are treated with respect and receive high quality service. This plays an important part in student retention and recruitment.

The Central State and Kentucky State employees highlighted key ideas, which contributed to the ability for any students, not just White, to be successful at their respective HBCUs. The three main themes shared by the employees were 1.) Embrace color-blind attitude towards students, 2.) Diversify recruitment practices and public relations strategies, and 3.) Enhance institutional image. These themes are outlined as areas of improvement to be reviewed by these institutions and other HBCUs.
CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION

I have been privileged to work at two Historically Black Universities during my higher education career. As an administrator working in retention, it is important to know how students experience the campus environment. Student success hinges on their interactions and experiences with the campus environment; thus, it is important to create an atmosphere that embraces all students and develops their identity throughout their college career.

White student enrollment has recently become a growing area of interest within the HBCU community. In May 2013 the Washington Post published an article by Alyssa Paddock, a White student who attends Howard University. In her article entitled Why I Chose to Attend a Black College, Paddock (2013) shares information regarding her reasons for choosing to attend an HBCU and the positive experiences she has had thus far. Paddock’s experiences are very similar to the student participants in this study. The notion of White students attending HBCUs is not something new; White students have attended these institutions since their inception. With the growing discussions surrounding HBCU relevance and survival, diversifying HBCU campuses is one solution that can help to address this issue. This study provides findings and implications that may help Central State and Kentucky State Universities, and other HBCUs alike.

The research findings of this study feature the connectedness between the historical mission of HBCUs and the development of White minorities on these campuses. This chapter provides a summary of the study, restatement of the study’s purpose and problem, research setting and methods, study significance, an examination
of the findings as they relate to the research questions, and suggestions for future research.

**Summary of Study**

Having been a minority through the course of my academic career, I have experienced moments of isolation, social difficulty, and tough situations in the classroom. While these experiences were challenging, they were instrumental to my growth in college and taught me much about myself and other racial groups. Being a minority within a higher educational setting can be different for a student depending on his/her race and the type of institution he/she attends. Closson and Henry (2008) assert that the ways in which individuals perceive, evaluate, and construct their environment determine their ability to be stable and satisfied. It was my goal to use the White Racial Development Model and student integration theories to explore how White students make meaning of their experiences at HBCUs. In addition, I examined how the historical HBCU mission affects the service and development of White students.

College provides an important setting for shaping students’ identities. Some researchers have explored the experiences of students of color attending PWIs. Some studies have concluded that people of color have been very successful at PWIs, while others have suggested that these students face many challenges preventing them from thriving (Closson & Henry 2008). Closson and Henry (2008) also discussed the idea of social adjustment among undergraduate students who are in the minority on HBCU campuses. This study concluded that, unlike Black students who attend PWIs, White students enrolling in HBCUs have not experienced the same challenges. Many White
students have shared that they have had positive experiences while attending HBCUs, helping them become more racially conscious and gaining a sense of personal identity. It is important that the environment is inviting and invested in making White students feel like they matter and can be successful.

This topic is of great interest to me as a higher education professional at an HBCU. I have seen and believe in the contributions these institutions make to the world. However, I understand that in order for them to remain relevant and continue to thrive, performance rates must improve and the level of education and service must be enhanced, regardless of the students’ race. The first HBCU was established over 150 years ago. In order to continue this legacy of producing global leaders and change agents, the HBCUs image and practices must evolve beyond being “Black Only Colleges.”

Restatement of the Problem

Although it was the founding mission of HBCUs to serve as educational resources for African American students, the student population has become more diverse over time. Many aspects of society are driven by the power and privilege of White Americans. There is rarely an occasion where Whites are not in the position of power. In lieu of these truths, when White students are placed in a situation as the minority, there may be difficulties in success and adjustment.

Restatement of Purpose

The purpose of this research was to examine the social identity development of White college students who attend Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). There have been several studies surrounding African American students and
their struggles attending Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs). According to Strayhorn (2010), Blacks experience inequalities from their peers and faculty at these institutions; moreover, students have feelings of social isolation, marginalization, and unwelcomeness. However, it is not clear whether White students have a parallel experience at HBCUs.

In order for HBCUs to combat the ongoing conversations regarding their relevance, there is a need for these institutions to increase their enrollment, diversity, and success rates. If there is a shift in the racial make-up in student populations, HBCUs must acknowledge the needs of their minority populations just as PWIs have been asked to do. This may mean enhancing services available to these students and creating programs and initiatives that are geared towards their academic and personal success. The experiences and needs of White students at HBCUs may be very different from Black students’ experiences at PWIs; therefore, this research is vital to further explore this concept.

This research focused on the following research questions:

1. How do White students describe their unique experiences while attending an HBCU?
   a. With the increase in White student enrollment at HBCUs, what role does the historical mission and structure of HBCUs play in shaping White students’ experiences?
   b. How do White students make meaning of their experience as a “temporary minority”? 
2. How do White Students experience psychosocial development in an HBCU setting?
   
   a. How do HBCU employees view their efforts to shape the social identity development of White students?
   
   b. What environmental and cultural factors exist within HBCUs to support the holistic development of White students?

   **Significance of the Study**

   Higher education faces many challenges, chief among them being institutional accountability. This is of considerable concern for HBCUs because they tend to have lower rates of retention, course completion, and graduation than their PWI counterparts. As such, government officials and citizens question their relevance. The perception that the millions of dollars spent at these institutions are not producing the needed outcomes pose many questions. In order for HBCUs to defend their purpose, they must transcend the “Black college” notion and be seen as institutions with the capacity to create and educate global citizens of all races. Understanding how to serve all student populations within an institution is vital to its survival. It is essential for HBCUs to create an identity that recognizes their traditional past and embraces a diverse future.

   **Setting**

   Within this study, a total of nine White students and eight employees were recruited from two four-year public HBCUs. It was my goal to learn about the lived experiences of White students as temporary minorities. I desired to gain information on their racial identity development and racial consciousness. Concurrently, I hoped to
explore the influence of the historical mission of HBCUs on the experiences of White students.

The institutions used for this study were two public HBCUs: Central State University located in Wilberforce, Ohio, and Kentucky State University located in Frankfort, Kentucky. Central State has an undergraduate population of roughly 1,950 students with a White student population of about two to three percent. Kentucky State’s student population is approximately 2,296 students, with a 22% White student population. Both institutions provide programs and services for all of their students no matter the race. Their faculty and staff support students in the classroom as well as through social, personal, and professional development opportunities. Efforts are made by both institutions to promote student success, regardless of race.

**Summary of Methods**

To collect data, I interviewed nine White undergraduate students concerning their college experiences. In addition to student participants, eight university employees were solicited to participate in this study. Perspectives gained from employees provided insight about the institutions’ approaches to servicing their minority population. The interviews were conducted from February to May 2013. I employed interviewing techniques that enabled me to form an environment that fostered connectedness. The input given during this study provided new ideas and strategies to help HBCU professionals best serve their minority population.

The interview guide approach was used during this study (Patton, 2002). According to this method the interviewer creates an outline of topics and issues to be
covered and decides the general sequence and wording of the questions for the interview. Additionally, this method allows flexibility and a conversational-style approach for data collection. The student questionnaire consisted of 10-15 questions and 5-7 for the employees; participant responses elicited additional discussion questions. In addition to interviews, I used institutional reports provided by the Office of Institutional Research to gather data regarding the enrollment and success rates of White students at CSU and KY State.

The interviews were recorded on a digital recording device and transcribed verbatim. To ensure accuracy, member checking and comparison to audio transcriptions were performed. After making necessary corrections to audio transcripts, I categorized (coded) the interview data. The aforementioned data collection and analysis methods resulted in findings about White students as temporary minorities and the influence of the historical mission of HBCUS in the campus environment. The following sections will provide a more in-depth review of the findings from the research focusing on the work of HBCUs, White student success rates, and the experiences of the White students

**Research Findings**

**Review of Research Questions**

The purpose of this research was to examine the experiences of White students in an HBCU environment through the exploration of the following research questions:

1. How do White students describe their unique experiences while attending an HBCU?
a. With the increase in White student enrollment at HBCUs, what role does the historical mission and structure of HBCUs play in shaping White students’ experiences?

b. How do White students make meaning of their experience as a “temporary minority”?

2. How do White Students experience psychosocial development in an HBCU setting?

a. How do HBCU employees view their efforts to shape the social identity development of White students?

a. What environmental and cultural factors exist within HBCUs to support the holistic development of White students?

During the interviews, the students and employees provided examples as to how these institutions have aided in the development of this student population.

Research question 1. The historical mission of HBCUs was to provide educational opportunities for Black students and to build the Black community. The students were knowledgeable of the historical purposes of their institution and embraced this heritage. They did not see this environment as a hindrance to their development. They enjoyed being engaged on their campus and have gained a better understanding of various aspects about Black culture.

Student participants provided evidence of positive experiences through connections made with peers and faculty. A few of the participants engaged in extracurricular activities that helped to strengthen their bond with their institutions. There
were some students who opted not to get involved in campus activities; despite this they have still developed linkages with their classmates and professors.

Most students did not report feeling isolated or ostracized as commonly reported by students of color who attend PWIs (Strayhorn, 2010). Instead, students assert that their college experiences enhanced their racial identities. Noting shared goals with Black peers, student participants felt race should not divide them. Furthermore, learning about racial inequalities and inaccurate social perceptions of Blacks encouraged them to become voices of change in their own communities.

**Research question 2.** University employees argue that their institutions foster a learning environment open to all students, regardless of race. Employees attest to impartial treatment of students and make opportunities equally available to all.

Sub-question B is, “What environmental and cultural factors exist within HBCUs to support the holistic development of White students?” Neither university reported offering programs targeted towards the White student population; such as Black Student Unions, Multicultural Affairs Services, or minority student scholarships, which are comparable programs offered at PWIs. Rather all campus organizations and activities are admissible to every student.

Although this research showed that Central State and Kentucky State aided in the development of student participants, it further illustrated that these institutions do not have targeted programs for their minority student populations. This student population’s development is intertwined into the programs and initiatives provided to all students. As
such, there is no way to conclude if there are specific programs at these institutions that play a role solely in White student development.

**White Students as Temporary Minorities**

Overall, research participants from Central and KY State reported positive and successful experiences. All students felt they mattered at the institution and that faculty and staff cared about their well-being. Most of these students chose to attend their respective institution due to geographic proximity; furthermore, most participants chose their respective institutions for financial support, or involvement with campus programs (e.g., Band or University Chorus).

Geographic proximity was of great importance because of family and jobs; attending an HBCU granted them this opportunity. With the increase in college cost, affordability is a vital factor when making a college decision (U.S. Department of Education, 2008). Some participants considered attending PWIs, but the lack of scholarship dollars compared to cost made the HBCU a more pragmatic decision. Seven of the nine participants received either partial or full scholarships to attend their institution. Lastly, campus involvement was another important factor for students. Having the opportunity to join the band, choir, or co-curricular activity attracted students to their institution. This also created a sense of belonging and connection to the campus. Additional influencing factors included family, alumni, and acceptance of transfer credit.

The students at both universities have taken pride and enjoyment in their HBCU experience and do not regret their decision. Their families have been supportive of their college experience and have not questioned their decision to attend an HBCU. The only
skepticism the students have received has come from strangers, to which they respond with confidence and pride about their college choice.

Just like any other institution, there is no one-size-fits-all experience. Collegiate encounters vary based on the background, personality, and interests of students, as well their engagement on campus. Some of the participants found that attending an HBCU has increased their cultural awareness about the Black community, referencing being educated about historical and current inequalities. Many participants share the idea that “we are all the same.” They could not understand why society creates such distinction between Blacks and Whites. Their positive experiences have inspired them to educate others about information they have learned about Black culture.

In reviewing the academic performance of White students, despite their status as temporary minorities, they have higher graduation rates than do their Black counterparts. For instance, at CSU graduation rates by race are 67% for Whites, 23% for African Americans, and 29% for Hispanics (NCES, 2012). This is similar at KY State, African American graduation rate at 13% and 20% for White (Kentucky State Mini Factbook, 2013). The reasons for the difference and, in the context of this study, the success of White students is important to understand.

**Being a Minority**

How do institutions of higher education define minority? Is minority determined by the number of people in a group who all look the same, then compare that number to the total population? Or is there a deeper meaning to what the term “minority” means? In our society the term “minority” is typically used to define people of color. This label is
given to these individuals regardless if they are in the position of being in the majority. Furthermore, does the recognition of being a minority introduce a more in-depth connection with self-awareness and identification and not population size? All of these questions are important when looking at college student populations. Subramanian (2012) states, “the white demographic is on its way to becoming a ‘majority minority’: it now only represents 63.4 percent of the U.S. population” (para. 3). As colleges are creating strategies to increase their student enrollment and focus on diversity, the way in which “minority” is defined is an essential to be determined.

The U.S. is becoming more of a multicultural society where the notion of who is the minority group(s) is a perplexing question. If the definition of minority is more complex beyond the idea of numbers, but more so connected to the level of oppression and discrimination a population of people has experienced, can someone of the majority group truly be labeled as a “minority”?

For the purposes of this study “minority” was defined as based on the low number of White students who attended each institution in comparison to the number of Black students. The majority of the students articulated some degree of identity development as a result of being temporary minorities. Many of them had a sense of who they were as a White person, but they received further insight about their racial identity as they were in the position of being a minority. Miville et al. (2005) state White college students rarely include race as a salient dimension, while students of color place emphasis on race as an important characteristic of their self-identification. Most students acknowledged that while physical difference made them a minority they did not feel
internally different. Wise (2011) suggests that the racial identity process is slower for Whites than people of color because of the dominance they hold in society, with little need to reflect on their race and actions of discrimination.

The reaction of the participants regarding their minority status is very similar to the analogy of how a student feels when they decide to study abroad. When an American student decides to study abroad in Japan, they visit the country with the intent of studying the culture, language, and/or academic subject. During this experience they engage with people that look and speak different than them. In spite of these distinctions, the primary focus of the student is to achieve the goal of their program. Regardless of the obvious fact that he/she is a minority they still maintain allegiance to who they are as an American.

Another aspect to students not viewing themselves as a minority also coincides with their HBCU environment being open and accepting. These students have not experienced oppression, discrimination, or open acts of racism from peers, staff, or faculty. Strayhorn (2010) also noted that Whites students at HBCUs do not have the negative experiences as shared by their Black peers at PWIs. Therefore, the environment plays a key role in how well someone is able to adjust and be successful.

**Experiences of racial tension.** Even if faced with racial tension, Whites do not deeply reflect upon the circumstance, often having the luxury of maintaining distance from confrontational situations. Two participants shared moments they experienced marginalization or racial tension during their collegiate experience. One example was the scenario in which Olivia was told that she could not participate in the production of *Porgy and Bess* due to her being White. Olivia chose not to escalate or pursue the matter
further because she wanted to see her classmates still be able to participate in this production. This situation could have resulted not only in public relation issues for the institutions, but also could have resulted in psychosocial difficulties for Olivia.

The empathy projected by her peers could be due to their shared experience of being a minority. Some of them may have been victims of discrimination throughout their life and as a result they did not want to see the same injury to their peer. There was an understanding of the effects of unfair treatment due to race. Although her peers may not have been aware of the negative connotation of “Black face,” their willingness to explore options to help showed a level of care they had for Olivia.

Sarah was another participant who shared some racially tense situations. She spoke of her experience while living on campus with some of her peers and in the classroom. Sarah expressed that she lived on campus her first semester at Central State. During that time she dated a Black male and hung out regularly with him and his friends. When entering the eatery Sarah reported many times experiencing dirty looks from some of the Black females. In her social circles she felt that other people placed more of an emphasis on her being White. Sometimes this created discomfort, but she did not allow it to affect her overall attitude towards attending the institution.

Another situation Sarah shared occurred in her History class. During this class there were various racially-focused topics discussed. While these discussions took place, Sarah did not comment and sometimes felt uncomfortable to the point that she would sink lower in her seat. The hesitation to engage was in an effort to make sure she did not make statements that offended her classmates or lead to her being viewed as a racist. Even
though she did not engage in some of the class discussions, Sarah felt the overall interactions were valuable because she learned a lot from her classmates. Sarah explained that these classroom dynamics provided her a wealth of knowledge about life and people, beyond course content.

The experiences of Olivia and Sarah provided opportunities for racial understanding, fostering a sense of how it feels physically and mentally to experience life as a minority. They both were able to become knowledgeable of inequalities and uncomfortable situations that may occur often in the lives of their Black peers. These experiences have shaped Sarah and Olivia’s racial identity, making them more aware of racial minority issues.

This study also found that the research participants’ success and retention did not require out-of-class engagement on campus. Though some students were not involved in campus events, they have maintained solid academic achievement and still found their college experience valuable and full of opportunities for success. Students interacted with faculty members for academic and professional purposes and some developed personal relationships with their peers. All of the students indicated personal motivation for continuing their pursuit of racial understanding. Given another opportunity, all students said they would still chose to attend an HBCU.

**White Student Development**

College is a time where students begin to develop their identity independent from that of their parents and family. Reviewing the general development of the participants
was beyond the scope of this study; however, due to the students’ experiences in this environment their identity was shaped in different ways.

The focus of this research studied the racial identity development of White students who attend HBCUs. Developmentally, most of the participants had a clear understanding of their racial identity as a White person; as such they also were open to learning more about racial minority issues. Not only were they interested in learning about these issues, but they were committed to change negative societal perceptions about Black people. A few of the participants were still early in their racial identity development; they had a sense of their White identity, but did not have knowledge of racial minority issues. Participants experienced racial identity development at different levels; for some race was more salient due to their interaction with their peers and connection with the campus environment, for others their racial identity is still evolving. The racial salience of White students is often the goal for Multicultural educators.

The faculty, staff, and administrators do not make intentional efforts to distinguish students because of race. The level of comfort for some students varies based on their prior experiences as a temporary minority. Despite some individual interactions that caused discomfort, students expressed feeling valued and connected to their institutions. Several of the participants expressed a high level of satisfaction and that they have thrived in this diverse environment. The exposure to being a temporary minority allowed them to learn about the African American culture and provided a wonderful opportunity to grow personally and professionally.
This study found that being in this environment enhanced the development of White students. The campus organizations and activities provided by the institutions contributed to inclusivity of White students, giving them a sense of belonging and the ability to build relationships with their peers. The students shared that they were involved in the choir, marching band, Alpha Kappa Mu Honor Society, History Club, DO-STEM Program, NAACP, and Biology Society. All of these organizations welcomed their participation in the organization(s).

Each student shared it was not necessary for their institutions to create programs targeting the non-African American population. Some student participants felt providing such programs would take way from the authenticity of the HBCU. Others shared it should be expected for an HBCU to provide programs that focus on the majority (i.e. Black students). Not having race-specific programs has not impacted their college experience.

**Environmental Ecology**

Bronfenbrenner's ecology model accounts for interactions among and between the various sub-environments and individual experiences (Renn 2004). This model gives insight into how individuals interact with their environment, and from those interactions, how individuals construct and reconstruct their identities.

**Four Levels of Ecological Environment**

Bronfenbrenner’s Model contains four system levels, which define the environments in which the students interact. These systems include Microsystems, Mesosystems, Exosystems, and Macrosystems.
**Microsystems.** Microsystems are “comprised of a complex array of relations between the developing person and environment in an immediate setting” (e.g. Home, school, workplace, etc.) (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, p 515). Renn (2004) further describes two subcategories of Microsystems: voluntary and involuntary. Voluntary Microsystems are those environments an individual has the option of, and freely chooses to identify with, while involuntary Microsystems are mandated environments. Participation in campus activities like band, choir, fraternities, etc. are voluntary Microsystems. Residence hall locations and required classes are involuntary.

Creating microsystems on campus can further aid in the participants’ racial identity development. For example, growing up in schools with diverse environments has allowed for some of the participants to adjust to being a minority. For instance, James attended public schools in Cleveland with primarily Blacks and Hispanics, and these pre-college relationships contributed to his ability to build microsystems in college. James was the president of the NAACP and a member of a Black fraternity. Other participants illustrated the development of voluntary microsystems: Aaron’s participation in the marching band and Olivia’s involvement in the choir.

Examples of involuntary microsystems include Sarah’s requirement to enroll in a history course because it was a general education requirement, and John’s scholarship that required that he reside in a residence hall. Microsystems provide the framework for racial identity development and the molding of these perspectives are crucial in adapting to the interactions at the mesosystem level.
**Mesosystems.** Mesosystems are the connections and processes that exist between “two or more settings containing the developing person” (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, p. 515). Sarah's narrative offers an example of a manifested mesosystem. Sarah is in an interracial relationship with another student at Central State. The knowledge gained from classroom experiences increases her understanding of Black culture, allowing her to apply that information during interactions with her boyfriend's family.

Jennifer's narrative also exemplifies mesosystem ecology. As an employee, her father reinforces her expectations to succeed at home and at school. Her independent experiences as a daughter and a student influence one another. As she shares classroom experiences at home to reduce misconceptions of Blacks, her father may also share his perspectives which may support or conflict with her observations. Her collegiate experience is shared with her father’s experiences as an employee. Based on the interaction of the mesosytems, this can further influence the participants’ development within the HBCU environment.

**Exosystems.** Bronfenbrenner (1977) defines *exosystems*:

An extension of the mesosystem embracing other specific social structures, both formal and informal, that do not themselves contain the developing person but impinge upon or encompass the immediate settings in which that person is found, and thereby influence, delimit, or even determine what goes on there (p.515).

Exosystems have an indirect effect on the individual, but they can influence aspects of life outside his control. Examples of Exosystems include new institutional policies regarding the awarding of scholarships, restrictions placed on membership in campus
organizations, or federal policies regarding institutional recruitment and retention initiatives.

An example of this system is most closely illustrated with the experience described by Olivia and her inability to participate in *Porgy and Bess*. The historic foundation of this opera was the use of an all-Black cast. Therefore, when selecting this play the producers at Kentucky State and University of Kentucky made a decision to conduct the performance the same way. As a result this affected Olivia’s opportunity to participate. This action could have negatively impacted Olivia’s perceptions of her institution and African Americans overall.

As a Cleveland native, James was raised around a diverse group of people. He was taught not to view race as a hindrance or a reason to discriminate. Coupling his environment with his beliefs provided James with skills to promote his adaptation to a predominantly Black environment. His experiences furthermore provided him with the confidence necessary to join a ("historically") Black fraternity and run for president of the NAACP chapter at his school.

Exosystems can be challenging no matter a person’s racial identification; however, on campuses where there may be programs, scholarships, or other initiatives that are geared towards serving underrepresented populations, this ultimately eliminates White students. This may not be as big an issue at PWI institutions because White students are in the majority and may be eligible for additional opportunities. Although White students are “underrepresented” at an HBCU, they still are not eligible for certain
initiatives because they are not considered a part of the disadvantaged population. Exosystems introduce limitations.

**Macrosystems.** Bronfenbrenner (1977) defines *macrosystems*:

The overarching institutional patterns of the culture or subculture, such as economic, social, educational, legal, and political systems, of which micro-, meso-, and exo- systems are the concrete manifestations. Macrosystems are conceived and examined not only in structural terms but as carriers of information and ideology that, both explicitly and implicitly, endow meaning and motivation to particular agencies, social networks, roles, activities, and their interrelations (p.515).

HBCUs were created to serve the social and educational needs of the Black community. The historical foundation of HBCUs shaped the identities of these institutions, hence creating a certain culture within the environment. Culture influences the external perception, the internal infrastructure, and practices of HBCUs and as a result these institutions are viewed by some as homogenous and segregated. This perception may negatively influence the decision for White students to attend HBCUs. Therefore, it is essential that HBCUs create an environment that embraces diversity and inclusivity, which will promote a welcoming campus community.

Choosing the right college is an important decision for students and families. A college education is simultaneously considered as an economic challenge for families, as well as an opportunity for economic freedom. College affordability is a primary higher education issue, and a key component considered by the participants when making their
college decision. Most of the participants initially had interests in attending a PWI, but due to the cost and receiving a scholarship, an HBCU became a more viable choice.

Bronfenbrenner's (1977) theory provides structure in understanding how connections between people and environments influence and are vital to the development of individual students. As students continue to maturate, the four ecology levels will continue to inform who they are and who they will become.

**HBCUs Relevance and Diversification**

**Evolving Mission**

The Higher Education Act of 1965 defined HBCUs as “…any historically black college or university that was established prior to 1964, whose principal mission was, and is, the education of black Americans…” (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.). The honorary distinction of ‘HBCU’ is something these institutions should embrace. As a result of this designation, HBCUs have been eligible to receive special government funding, allocated grant dollars from business and foundations, and scholarship dollars specifically for their students. However, in consideration of the definition above, this mission is no longer consistent as HBCUs no longer have the principle mission of only educating Black Americans.

HBCU relevance is challenged by low academic standards, upholding segregation, problems with retention and persistence, declining enrollment, accreditation challenges, technological inferiority, and competition for quality students and qualified staff (Hamilton, 2002; Dancy 2005; Abelman & Dalessandro, 2009). Though many of these problems hold true for some HBCUs, 105 of these institutions are still standing
with respectable enrollment and graduation rates. Abelman and Dalessandro (2009) state that HBCUs were not established to thrive, but were created to serve as “hold institutions” to prevent Black students from being admitted to PWIs. James Merisotis, president of the Institute for Higher Education Policy states, “Historically, Black colleges are the only group of institutions in this country whose right to exist is questioned daily by members of the public” (Abelman & Dalessandro, 2009). It is important for HBCUs to embrace their historical identity but they must evolve in order to survive. This study has affirmed their value and shown that HBCUs have the ability to provide advantageous environments for the success of students from different races.

The historical mission of HBCUs does not have to negatively impact the enrollment, retention, and/or graduation rates of non-African American students. The historical mission connects the college/university to its foundation, but it does not necessarily influence all of its current practices. This study concluded that many of the participants understood and embraced the historical mission of their institution and it did not adversely affect their experience. Furthermore, many students supported the culture of their institution and appreciated the opportunities it afforded through a nurturing environment that permitted personal and professional growth.

HBCUs have always been open access institutions, providing opportunities for all students no matter their racial identification. As noted in Chapter 2, Howard University’s first enrollees were White students. Embracing the founding mission of HBCUs is vital for history; however, it should not influence the current identity and perception of these
institutions. The idea of being labeled as institutions with a homogenous population is creating difficulties for sustainability.

**Study Implications**

If the academic environment of HBCUs is positive and students experience well rounded opportunities, why is their relevance being questioned? The purpose of this study was 1.) To review the role the historical missions of HBCUs play in shaping experiences of White students and 2.) To learn about the developmental experiences of White students at HBCUs. HBCUs are not institutions created just for African Americans. They have the ability to successfully retain and graduate students regardless of race. However, the image of some HBCUs only appeals to one racial demographic.

When an HBCU targets schools with high concentrations of Blacks and does not expand its recruitment efforts to predominantly White schools, enrollment will not likely yield significant diversity. If the literature being shared at recruitment events, on billboards, and other marketing avenues only showcases Black students, people will perceive it as a “Black only” institution. Participants in the study stated that they were not actively recruited by their HBCUs, and had to initiate contact to find out more information about the school. It is essential that HBCUs share their stories and show that they are a viable educational opportunity for students no matter their race.

Relevance is challenged only when value is not recognized. The relevance of HBCUs is being questioned because of low student success rates and perceived segregation. However, if HBCUs emphasize their diverse culture and ability to serve all student populations, their reception may be different. It is not suggested that HBCUs
disconnect from their historical identity, nor suggested that an influx of White students will eliminate the controversy of HBCU relevance. It is, however, the goal of this research to articulate that HBCUs cannot move forward if they are viewed only as a “Black” college.

HBCUs are valuable entities to the higher education community because they provide a family atmosphere and nurturing environment for their students. This finding was supported by participants because they feel they are more than just a number. Students of all racial backgrounds will appreciate such an environment. As such, HBCUs should capitalize on and promote these as strengths when recruiting students. Therefore, HBCUs should capitalize on this strength and promote it as a positive reason to choose the institution.

Implications for Practice

HBCUs have experienced a shift in their enrollment of Black students since the 1960s. Currently HBCUs enroll 11% of Black college students (NCES, 2011). Due to this change in enrollment, diversifying HBCU campus is a must. A contributor to the change of student populations begins with the Admissions and marketing processes.

Diversifying the institutions’ student recruitment and areas of marketing to high school constituents is vital. It is important for Enrollment Management offices to connect with local schools with a high concentration of White students. Developing pre-college programs that invite local students onto the HBCU campus may begin the discussion on how this institution is a viable choice for their college career. It may be necessary to
develop some pre-college partnership programs, which will invite local students onto the campuses so they can begin to experience the environment.

Institutional exposure in diverse markets is vital. Visiting schools, attending programs, and hosting events in rural and suburban areas can help HBCUs establish visibility in these communities. Targeted outreach to local organizations can serve as a pipeline for the institution. Building partnerships with these groups can showcase the institution in a positive light and serve as a vehicle to recruit minority students.

It is also important for HBCUs to study the experiences of their minority population. As stated previously, graduation and retention rates are higher amongst Whites compared to minorities. Understanding the implications of their success can provide effective strategies to increase the success rates of the majority population at HBCUs. Researching this topic must extend beyond classroom engagement. The majority of the participants in this study were not involved in campus activities. It would be important for student affairs professionals to reach out to these students to see why they choose not to get involved so as to encourage participation. Although involvement had no bearing on their academic performance, building social relationships can further inform their racial identity development.

HBCU leadership must prioritize diversity for strategic growth. This diversity can extend beyond race. Regardless of the focus, diversity is important to long term sustainability. Similar to their PWI peers, creating a diversity committee may be necessary in order make this a priority. This committee may focus on university recruitment strategies of students, faculty and staff; make recommendations on increased
diversity programming and initiatives; and/or review the university branding in the attraction of a diverse campus population.

**Implications for Future Research**

The findings of this study described results similar to Strayhorn’s 2010 article *Majority as Temporary Minority: Examining the Influence of Faculty–Student Relationships on Satisfaction Among White Undergraduates at Historically Black Colleges and Universities* and Closson and Henry’s, 2008 article *The social adjustment of undergraduate White students in the minority on a historically Black college campus*. Both studies concluded that the HBCU experience for Whites has been positive; their environments have helped shape their identities and made them more racially conscious. These studies also reported that HBCUs provide a welcoming environment, offering equal opportunities for all students.

Although qualitative research is not generalizable, experiences of White students have been similar at other HBCUs across the country (Alyssa Paddock at Howard University and 2008 Morehouse Valedictorian Joshua Packwood). Moving forward, it is important for these institutions to be prepared for a shift in diversity. Such change may require additional services and/or initiatives to be introduced.

The research surrounding HBCU diversification is important, because there may be an increase in non-African Americans beginning to see HBCUs as a potential college choice. One topic of interest would be researching the impact of HBCU diversification on the Black community. This study could examine the perspectives and feelings of Black
students, alumni, and community members on how diversifying HBCU campus
alters/enhances the institution’s identity and mission.

As it relates to this study, additional research should be completed in the area of
White alumni of HBCUs. The students in this study spoke very highly about their
experiences and how connected they were to their institution; however, does this same
excitement remain post-graduation? Exploring career success and ongoing connections
with their alma mater could be topics of interest. It would also be worthwhile to note
how, if at all, their experiences as temporary minorities impacted their racial perspectives
after entering mainstream society.

**Conclusion**

HBCUs are relevant institutions of higher education and have the capacity to
holistically educate students regardless of race. It is essential that these institutions take a
closer look at their student populations, determine where high levels of success are
experienced, and then capitalize. During a speech in 2013 President Obama stated, “We
remember that at a critical time in our nation’s history, HBCUs waged war against
illiteracy and ignorance -- and won. You’ve made it possible for millions of people to
achieve their dreams and gave so many young people a chance they never thought they’d
have -- a chance that nobody else would give them” (White House, 2010).

**Personal Reflection**

This study provided me with the opportunity to gain deeper insight and
perspective on the history and current status of HBCUs. As an HBCU staff member,
working in the area of student retention, it important that I learn about my campus’
student population. Such knowledge will help me develop programs and strategies to best serve students and provide them with a holistic collegiate experience.

As a researcher this study helped me to realize the challenges and complexity of race. Race is not just a Black and White topic, but there are shades of gray. It is difficult to remove biases and preconceived notions about someone’s feelings concerning race. Before starting this research, I thought I could predict the experiences of the participants based on my knowledge of being a minority. However, from the interviews and literature I realized that minority experiences are different based on one’s race. It was important for me to ask uncomfortable questions, constantly increase my knowledge of the literature, and expand my recruitment methods in order to gain an in-depth understanding of the participants.

This research also allowed me to learn more about the institutions being studied. Central State and Kentucky State are great institutions that provide students of all walks of life great opportunities; however, I do not think this potential is fully recognized. During my tenure at Central State, I realized that the institution has a lot offer students, but it must do things differently in the area of student recruitment and marketing in order to attract students of different races. More importantly if the university changes its strategies and increase its enrollment of students from other racial backgrounds, then it must create programs that will appeal to its entire student population. Changing the internal and external face of Central State will be necessary for its survival.

Personally, this study has helped me gain a different insight on race, minority status, and identity. As someone who has been a minority throughout my academic career
it was eye opening to realize that White people view minority status very differently. Regardless of setting, I always identify with being a minority; it is intertwined with how I view myself and make meaning of life experiences. I often wonder if it is possible to reshape my identity such that race is a less salient factor in how I define myself and make meaning of my interactions with society. This study inspired me to conduct additional research as it relates to racial identity development and the experiences of temporary minorities.

HBCUs are valuable to the system of higher education. They have provided access to a number of students who would not have had the opportunity to attend college. Although I did not attend an HBCU, I have worked at two of them. Through my experiences I have recognized the support and care these institutions show their students and the family atmosphere created. However, simultaneously I have seen their weakness and detrimental activities.

Too many HBCUs have rested on their historical missions to defend their existence. In June of this year, after 125 years of existence, St. Paul College closed. Prior to its closure this institution experienced a loss of its accreditation, a drop in enrollment, and financial difficulties. Despite the efforts of campus constituents the institution did not survive. Many HBCUs are experiencing two of the three things above and sometimes more. Before these institutions similar destiny as St. Paul, they must transform their practices and policies and create strategies of success and sustainability. The state of HBCUs is troubling and it is essential that change happen before they reach a place of no return.
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APPENDIX A: RECRUITMENT LETTERS

Recruitment Letter: Kentucky State Employee Letter

Dear Colleagues,

I am beginning research for my qualitative dissertation project for Ohio University entitled THE SOCIAL IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT OF WHITE STUDENTS WHO ATTEND HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES. I plan to recruit Kentucky State University faculty, staff, and administrators who have worked at the institution for at least one year and must hold a position where 60% of their day is primarily student interaction. I would appreciate your assistance through participation in this study.

The first step will be that I will send the participation forms to you via email, as well as, we will establish an interview time. The first in person/phone meeting will be the interview. During this meeting the researcher will collect the participation forms and answer any additional questions the participant may have. The interviews will be audio recorded; no video camera will be used. The interviews will be scheduled for 30 minutes. The second meeting will take place within two to three weeks of the interview. The purpose of this meeting will be for interview transcript review and to answer any additional questions. This second meeting can be conducted electronically and over the phone.

Information sharing as I build my data and dissertation will follow these interviews. The actual audio/skype interview recordings will not be shared with anyone. My dissertation committee will review interview transcripts and analysis; however, your identity will remain confidential through the use of a pseudonym. Your participation in this research study is voluntary, but would be appreciated.

If you are interested in participating in this research study please contact Stephanie Krah at Stephanie.krah@gmail.com or via phone at 937-408-4978.

Sincerely,

Stephanie L. Krah
Ohio University
Higher Education Administration Doctoral Candidate
Recruitment Letter: Kentucky State Student Letter

Dear KSU Student,

I am beginning research for my qualitative dissertation project for Ohio University entitled THE SOCIAL IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT OF WHITE STUDENTS WHO ATTEND HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES. I would like to invite you to participate in this study. The findings from this study will be used to inform Kentucky State and other HBCUs on how to better serve non-African American students who attend their institutions.

The time commitment for this study will be no more than two hours over two different meeting times. I will provide you with additional information about the study and participation forms prior to our initial meeting. During our initial meeting you will be given an opportunity to ask any questions that you may have about the study. If you decide to participate in the study we will schedule a meeting date and time the interview. The interview can be conducted over the phone or via skype. If neither of these methods will accommodate you, an in person meeting will be scheduled.

All interviews will be audio recorded. The length of time set for the interview will be no longer than one (1) hour. Within 1-2 weeks of the interview, I will contact you and allow for you to review your interview transcript and to ask any additional questions about the study.

Information sharing as I build my data and dissertation will follow these interviews. The actual audio / skype interview recordings will not be shared with anyone. My dissertation committee will review interview transcripts and analysis; however, your identity will remain confidential through the use of a pseudonym. I hope that you will consider taking part in my research, it will help to improve higher education for students HBCUs.

If you are interested in participating in this research study please contact Stephanie Krah at Stephanie.krah@gmail.com or via phone at 937-408-4978.

Sincerely,

Stephanie L. Krah
Ohio University
Higher Education Administration Doctoral Candidate
Dear Colleagues,

I am beginning research for my qualitative dissertation project for Ohio University entitled THE SOCIAL IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT OF WHITE STUDENTS WHO ATTEND HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES. I plan to recruit CSU faculty, staff, and administrators who have worked at the institution for at least one year and must hold a position where 60% of their day is primarily student interaction. I would appreciate your assistance through participation in this study.

The first step will be that I will send the participation forms to you via email, as well as, we will establish an interview time. The first in person/phone meeting will be the interview. During this meeting the researcher will collect the participation forms and answer any additional questions the participant may have. The interview will be conducted in a mutually determined location. The interviews will be audio recorded; no video camera will be used. The interviews will be scheduled for one (1) hour. The second meeting will take place within two to three weeks of the interview. The purpose of this meeting will be for interview transcript review and to answer any additional questions. This second meeting can be conducted electronically and over the phone.

These interviews will be followed by information sharing as I build my data and dissertation. Interview transcripts and analysis will be reviewed by my dissertation committee; however, your identity will remain confidential. Your participation in this research study is voluntary, but would be appreciated.

If you are interested in participating in this research study please contact Stephanie Krah at Stephanie.krah@gmail.com or via phone at 937-408-4978.

Sincerely,

Stephanie L. Krah
Ohio University
Higher Education Administration Doctoral Candidate
Recruitment Letter: Central State Student Letter

Dear CSU Student,

I am beginning research for my qualitative dissertation project for Ohio University entitled THE SOCIAL IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT OF WHITE STUDENTS WHO ATTEND HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES. I would like to invite you to participate in this study. The findings from this study will be used to inform Central State and other HBCUs on how to better serve non-African American students who attend their institutions.

The time commitment for this study will be no more than three hours over two different meeting times. During the initial meeting, you will be provided with forms, which outline the purpose and goals of the study, participant/researcher expectations, how the interviews will be conducted, and finally the consent form. You will be given an opportunity to ask any questions that you may have about the study. Before the conclusion of this initial meeting, a meeting date, time, and location, will be determined for the interview. The interview will take place within a week of the initial meeting.

The second meeting will be the actual interview. The interview will be conducted on Central State’s campus. The specific building/room of the interviews will be determined based on your comfort. All interviews will be audio recorded. The use of a video camera will be used, if you are comfortable. The length of time set for the interview will one (1) hour. The second meeting will take place within two to three weeks following your interview. This meeting will allow for you to review your interview transcript and to ask any additional questions about the study.

These interviews will be followed by information sharing as I build my data and dissertation. Interview transcripts and analysis will be reviewed by my dissertation committee; however, your identity will remain confidential. I hope that you will consider taking part in my research, it will help to improve higher education for students HBCUs.

If you are interested in participating in this research study please contact Stephanie Krah at Stephanie.krah@gmail.com or via phone at 937-408-4978.

Sincerely,

Stephanie L. Krah
Ohio University
Higher Education Administration Doctoral Candidate
APPENDIX B: CONSENT AND DEMOGRAPHIC FORMS

Informed Consent Form

Explanation of Study
The purpose of this research is to examine the social identity development of White college students who attend Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). Blacks experience inequalities from their peers and faculty at predominantly White institutions; moreover, students have feelings of social isolation, marginalization, and unwelcomness. However, research has not fully concluded whether or not White students experience this same type of environment at HBCUs.

This study will discover the experiences of White students as HBCUs and aid in informing HBCU administrators as to what services and infrastructure need to be in place for this student population. The research questions in this study include 1.) How do White students describe their experiences of attending an HBCU? and 2.) How do White students experience psychosocial development in an HBCU setting?
I propose to answer these questions through in-depth interviews with students who identify as being “White” who attend Central State University. My research proposes to help create a HBCU campus environment which promotes the social identity development of White Students.

The data collection procedure will begin with an initial meeting to explain and identify White students who meet the participant criteria. I will then conduct in-depth intensive conversational interviews with the participants, with some pre-determined questions designed to guide the conversation. Throughout the process, I will seek validation by checking with participants on the evolving themes and theory, in order to move forward with the project. If you agree to participate, you will be asked to commit a total of 3-4 hours to the study. 60 minutes of interview time, and a follow up meeting for you to read their interview transcript.

All interviews will be audio recorded. All audio recordings will be kept in a locked cabinet. Once transferred to a computer, the data will be password protected and will be destroyed following the completion of the study—expected to be complete by September, 2013.

Risks and Discomforts
There is a possibility that through self-reflection and describe some experiences within the campus environment, the participants may become uncomfortable sharing their answers. If this is the case, the student will not be pushed to answer a question verbally, but be offered an opportunity to submit a written response. If a student feels at any time that they do not wish to continue, they may discontinue their participation.
Benefits
This study is important to higher education because there has been a mandate of
accountability placed on post-secondary institutions. They must begin to produce higher
study success rates or be at risk of losing financial support the state and federal
government. In order for HBCUs to combat the ongoing conversations regarding their
relevance, there is a need for these institutions to increase their enrollments and increase
diversity. If there is a shift in population, HBCUs must acknowledge the needs of their
minority populations just as PWIs have been asked to do. This may mean altering
services available to these students and creating programs and initiatives that are geared
towards their academic and personal success.

This study will allow the researcher to have and share a better understanding about
creating more opportunities for non-African American students who attend HBCUs.

Confidentiality and Records
Participants’ interviews will become part of a public dissertation. Participants will use
their first names or an alias during the interview. If an alias is used, no document will be
published that links the actual name with the alias. Only the researcher will know the true
identity of participants.

Additionally, while every effort will be made to keep your study-related information
confidential, there may be circumstances where this information must be shared with:
* Federal agencies, for example the Office of Human Research Protections, whose
responsibility is to protect human subjects in research;
* Representatives of Ohio University (OU), including the Institutional Review Board, a
committee that oversees the research at OU.

Contact Information
If you have any questions regarding this study, please contact Stephanie Krah at
Stephanie.krah@gmail.com, 937-408-4978 or Dr. Pete Mather at matherp@ohio.edu,
740-593-0664.

By signing below, you are agreeing that:
• you have read this consent form (or it has been read to you) and have been
given the opportunity to ask questions and have them answered

• you have been informed of potential risks and they have been explained to
your satisfaction.

• you understand Ohio University has no funds set aside for any injuries you
might receive as a result of participating in this study

• you are 18 years of age or older
your participation in this research is completely voluntary
you may leave the study at any time. If you decide to stop participating in the study, there will be no penalty to you and you will not lose any benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Signature__________________________________ Date________________

Printed Name ____________________________________________

Version Date: [1/3/13]
CONSENT TO AUDIO- OR VIDEO RECORDING & TRANSCRIPTION

The Social Identity Development of White Students who attend Historically Black Colleges and Universities

Stephanie Krah, Ohio University

This study involves the audio or video recording of your interview with the researcher. Only the research team will be able to listen (view) to the recordings. Only your first name will be asked during the interview; however, an alias will be used for reporting purposes. The researcher will be the only person able to connect the participant with their true identity.

The tapes will be transcribed by the researcher and erased once the transcriptions are checked for accuracy. Transcripts of your interview may be reproduced in whole or in part for use in presentations or written products that result from this study.

By signing this form, I am allowing the researcher to audio or video tape me as part of this research. I also understand that this consent for recording is effective until the following date: September 30, 2013. On or before that date, the tapes will be destroyed.

Participant's Signature: __________________________________ Date: ____________

Investigator's Declaration

I have explained and defined in detail the audio recording procedures in which the subject (or legal representative has given consent) has consented to participate.

_________________________________________________ _______________________
Principal/Co-Principal Investigator’s Signature Date:
Completing this demographic form is voluntary for all participants.

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APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

Interview Questions for Students
1. Tell me about yourself, specifically where you are from and about your family.
2. What influenced your decision to come to college?
3. What made you choose Central State University?
4. How do your friends and family feel about you attending an HBCU?
5. When you tell people you attend an HBCU, how do they respond to you?
6. Please describe your experiences here at Central State.
   a. In the classroom with your professors and classmates
   b. Out of the classroom in student organizations, and social gatherings.
7. What are your primary challenges here? How do you navigate them?
8. Who are your biggest sources of support? Please explain.
9. Do you consider yourself a minority? If so, how does that make you feel?
10. Please describe how you’ve changed from the time you started to attend CSU until now. What experiences at the university promoted that change? How has attending CSU affected how you think about yourself? Your identity? Your career choice? Etc?
11. Do you think HBCUs should create more programs and services targeted towards non-African American students? Would you find programs such as this helpful for your development?
12. How has your experience here changed the way you think about race?
13. Do you feel being in this environment has made you more or less culturally aware about African Americans? How do you feel this knowledge will help or hinder you in the future?
14. Do you feel like you matter here at Central State?
15. What can Central State do to better serve non-African American students?
16. If you had to make your college choice all over again, would you choose to attend an HBCU?

Interview Questions for Employees
1. Tell me about your career here at Central State. Please describe your interactions with faculty, staff, and students.
2. The historical mission of HBCUs was to educate and empower the African American community, based on this do you feel Central State’s mission still focus only on empowering African American students?
3. How would you describe the experiences of White Students here at Central State?
4. College is a time for helping a student not only develop academically, but also personally. How well do you feel Central State develops White students?
5. Are there ways in which you believe CSU and HBCUs in general can improve their services to non-African American students?