Racial battle fatigue, role strain, and African-American faculty at public community colleges

Tamara N. Stevenson

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RACIAL BATTLE FATIGUE, ROLE STRAIN, 
AND AFRICAN-AMERICAN FACULTY AT PUBLIC COMMUNITY COLLEGES

by

Tamara Nichele Stevenson

in partial fulfillment of 
the requirement for the 
degree of 

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION 
in 
Educational Leadership

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accepted for the faculty of 
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ABSTRACT

African Americans remain disproportionately underrepresented in the faculty ranks at institutions of higher education in the United States. The faculty role is critical to the quality and exchange of teaching and learning, particularly at public community colleges. The extant literature documents how “chilly” campus climates and racially charged encounters can be harmful to African-American faculty. Moreover, along with the traditional responsibilities and demands of the faculty role, African-American faculty members contend with racism, discrimination, and an anti-Black sentiment in academia as a microcosm of society, likely resulting in race-related role strain. Overall, this exploratory study sought to understand the nature and extent to which full-time male and female African-American faculty at public community colleges experience Racial Battle Fatigue because of racial microaggressions (i.e., the exchange and response to race-related mental, emotional, and physical tensions) and the racialized stressors associated with their faculty role.
I dedicate this doctoral dissertation to my wonderful parents,

Mr. Jesse F. and Mrs. Saundra J. Stevenson, Jr.,

for their everlasting love, prayers, and support.

Their sacrifices gave me the freedom to imagine, to dream, and
the strength and courage to pursue and achieve goals beyond belief or expectation.

Mom and Dad, I love, honor, and cherish you forever. (Exodus 20:12)
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For the inspiration, strength, and endurance to complete this life-changing personal and professional endeavor and scholarly labor of love to the best of my ability, I looked to:

The Lord Jesus Christ, the Author, and Finisher of my faith (Hebrews 12:2).

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Myself… just because…. I made it… I did it… and there is more to do….
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CHAPTER ONE:

INTRODUCTION

When Harvard College first opened its doors in 1636, access to formal higher learning in the United States was exclusive to those who were White, male, and wealthy. About 375 years and more than 6,600 colleges and universities later as of 2009 (NCES, 2011), postsecondary educational options have expanded and evolved from their homogenous beginnings in several aspects, including the racial demographic of the student body. However, only slight change has occurred within a pivotal sphere of American higher education: the racial demographic of the faculty. In consideration of the proliferation of higher education and the mission of the community college to expand access to postsecondary education, community colleges provide an intriguing context to explore the racial demographics and the participation of faculty to student populations.

Community colleges (also known as two-year colleges), are accredited, open-admission institutions that provide a range of educational options, including vocational/technical training, remedial education, continuing education, and general education courses (e.g., classes that transfer to four-year institutions and may be applied to baccalaureate degree requirements). Along with awarding certificates in a variety of occupational fields, the associate degree is the highest degree conferred by a community college (Cohen, 2001; Cohen & Brawer, 1994, 2008; McCormick & Cox, 2003). Community colleges are commonly classified by institutional control (public or private). Publicly controlled community colleges are operated by publicly elected or appointed officials and supported by public (federal, state, and local) funding; privately controlled (non-profit and proprietary) institutions function with major funding from non-public sources (Katsinas, 2003, 2005). One of the chief contributions of the community college is the
expansion of access to postsecondary education for students who may not have participated otherwise (Cohen & Brawer, 1994, 2008). For example, the community college historically has been a major postsecondary option for African-American\(^1\) students and continues to be a viable and attractive gateway into higher education for Blacks (Bower, 2002; Lewis & Middleton, 2003; Lovell, Alexander, & Kirkpatrick, 2002; Solmon, Solmon, & Schiff, 2002; Zamani, 2006). Nearly half (i.e., 46 percent) of African-American undergraduates are enrolled at community colleges (The Chronicle of Higher Education, 2010).

**African-American Faculty Representation**

As of Fall 2009, African Americans composed 6.6 percent of the American college and university professoriate (NCES, 2010). This is a relatively slight increase from 5.3 percent in Fall 2005 and 4.9 percent as of Fall 1998 (Johnson & Pichon, 2007; NCES, 2007). These numbers demonstrate a largely disproportionate underrepresentation of African-American faculty in higher education, who compose approximately 13 percent of the general U.S. population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). In comparison, more than 75 percent of the full-time college and university faculty posts were held by Whites in Fall 2009; faculty of color\(^2\) (defined as African American/Black, Hispanic (or Latino), Asian, and Native American) held 18 percent of faculty positions collectively, up slightly from 16.5 percent in Fall 2005 collectively (NCES, 2007, 2010).

\(^1\) African American and Black will be used interchangeably throughout this document.

\(^2\) The terms faculty/students of color will be used to refer to racial/ethnic minority populations in this study in concurrence with Laden and Hagedorn’s (2000) statement preferring to avoid a derogatory connotation conveyed through the term minority.
African-American faculty remain underrepresented on college and university campuses, including historically White institutions³ (Alexander-Snow & Johnson, 1998; Bowman & Smith, 2002; Cole & Barber, 2003; Feagin, Vera, & Imani, 1996; Flannigan, Jones, & Moore, 2004; Harvey & Scott-Jones, 1985; Jayakumar et al., 2009; Kayes, 2006; Laden & Hagedorn, 2000; Lewis & Middleton, 2003; Smith et al., 2004; Tuit et al., 2009); and Black faculty are in short supply across academic ranks and in lower-ranking positions (Allen et al., 2002; Bower, 2002; Cross & Slater, 2000; Solmon et al., 2002; Turner, Myers, & Creswell, 1999; Villalpando & Delgado, 2002). The one exception to this pattern of underrepresentation occurs at historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs; Cross & Slater, 2000; Smith, 1992). As of Fall 2001, African-American faculty composed nearly 60 percent of the full-time faculty at HBCUs (NCES, 2004). Overall, African-American faculty are the least proportionately represented, less promoted and tenured, positioned in lower academic ranks, and under researched (Allison, 2008; Allen et al., 2002; Altbach, Lomotey & Kyle, 1999; Branch, 2001; Brown, 1988; Cross & Slater, 2000; Evans & Chun, 2007; Harvey, 2007; Smith, 1992, Smith & Witt, 1993). Cross and Slater (2000) estimate that it will take “more than two centuries before Blacks achieve a level of parity in faculty positions compared to the Black percentage of the total U.S. population” (p. 23).

In view of the dearth of Black faculty in colleges and universities overall, stratification is reflected by institutional type and control as African-American faculty are generally found at public community colleges and at such privately controlled special focus schools as HBCUs.

³The use of historically White institutions versus predominantly White institutions addresses the historical and present racialized environment, inclusive of campus climate and institutional structure that favorably serves Whites while disadvantaging African Americans and other populations of color, in addition to identifying the numerical composition of the majority group on campus (Smith, Allen, & Danley, 2007).
Nationwide, African Americans constitute close to seven percent of full-time, public two-year faculty (Chesler, Lewis & Crofoot, 2005; Townsend & Twombly, 2007). Although African-American faculty have made some gain in instructional employment, they remain significantly underrepresented in community colleges (Bower, 2002; Harvey, 1994; Jackson & Phelps, 2004; Lewis & Middleton, 2003; Manzo, 2000; Smith et al., 2004; Zamani, 2006).

The Role of African-American Faculty at Community Colleges

The faculty role is significant to fostering student success, collaborating with colleagues, and supporting administrative functions. Common components of the faculty role across institutional type and control include student advising and evaluation, serving on internal (department and campus) committees, and participating in service activities external to the college (e.g., professional associations), as well as promotion and tenure review. Although teaching is a core faculty function at both two- and four-year institutions, community colleges are often described as teaching colleges; quality instruction is the chief expectation and teaching excellence is a defining component of the community college mission (Bower, 2002; Grubb, 1999; Hardy & Laanan, 2006; Harvey, 1994; Harvey & Valadez, 1994; Outcalt, 2002; Somers et al., 1998; Townsend & Twombly, 2007; Turner, Myers, & Creswell, 1999).

In addition to the traditional features of the community college professoriate, certain race-related assignments are expected to be fulfilled by African-American faculty. These functions include mentoring students of color, attending to diversity-related committee work, teaching multiculturally focused courses, and/or participating in designated service activities (Feagin, Vera, & Imani, 1996; Laden & Hagedorn, 2000; Patitu et al., 2000; Somers et al., 1998; Turner, Myers, & Creswell, 1999). Such racially interlaced tasks and responsibilities may compound an already demanding workload for the African-American faculty member.
addition, such competing race-related role expectations from students, colleagues, and administrators can overload the role and performance of African-American faculty, subsequently producing role strain (Banks, 1984; Bowman, 1989; Bowman & Smith, 2002). The low numbers of African Americans on college and university faculties illustrate the disproportionate representation to the overall population of Black students and—unlike the overrepresentation of their White counterparts in correspondence to the number of White students—exacerbates this excessive workload (Branch, 2001; Brayboy, 2003).

**African-American Faculty and Campus Climate**

The experiences of African-American faculty (along with other faculty of color) in academe are dramatically different from their White colleagues (Laden & Hagedorn, 2000). According to Harvey (1994), the campus climate for African-American faculty at community colleges parallels the experiences of African-American faculty at historically White universities. Overall, African-American faculty experience isolation; course overload; excessive committee work; racial, gender, and language biases; and minimal guidance or mentoring relating to promotion, tenure, and reappointment (Cooper & Stevens, 2002; Harvey, 1994; Jayakumar et al., 2009; Johnson & Pichon, 2007; Laden & Hagedorn, 2000; Sutherland, 1990; Turner & Myers, 2000; Turner, Myers, & Creswell, 1999). Distinctive race-related issues include dealing with perceptions of tokenism, being typecast as an “ethnic specialist,” the devaluing of research focused on race, and negotiating a conflicted path to promotion and tenure due to ambiguous and wavering expectations, requirements, and evaluation criteria (Harley, 2008; Somers et al., 1998; Turner & Myers, 2000; Tuitt et al., 2009; Turner, Myers, & Creswell, 1999). Along with isolation, Johnson and Pichon (2007) suggest that stress and racism hinder African-American faculty in the academy. African-American faculty members as well as other faculty of color
believe they are expected to work harder—twice as hard—to be equal to White faculty (Laden & Hagedorn, 2000). These conditions amount to what Branch (2001) labels a discriminatory campus climate.

Turner and Myers (2000) describe a *chilly climate* as the underrepresentation of Black faculty and other faculty of color in higher education and a “White-male-dominated institutional culture that undervalues the contributions and/or presence of women and people of color” (p. 78). Unlike their White counterparts, African-American faculty members are constantly reminded about the issue of race as a prominent aspect of their existence in both two- and four-year academic settings (Bower, 2002; Turner, Myers & Creswell, 1999). At historically White institutions, composed of mainly White students, staff, and faculties, African-American faculty members recognize racial discrimination and stereotypes perpetuated in the institutional culture (Alexander-Snow & Johnson, 1998). Bennett (2004) suggests that racism is institutionalized in higher education as colleges and universities are distinctive types of American organizations that mirror the racial antipathy of the larger society.

African Americans have struggled to achieve equitable participation in higher education. More often than documented, African-American faculty function under routine racially hostile conditions that exist both in society and in the “ivory towers” of academia. In fact, Lynn and Adams (2002) contend that the educational establishment is a key arena “where the impact of racism is felt most” (p. 87). Just as racial life is historically institutionalized in American society, so too is it reflected in the practices and operations of postsecondary educational institutions (Chang et al., 2003; Chesler, Lewis & Crofoot, 2005; Smith, Yosso, & Solórzano, 2006; Thompson & Louque, 2005). “Understanding the nature of race and racism in higher education is inseparable from understanding the nature of race and racism in our society as well” (Chesler,
Lewis & Crofoot, 2005, p. 7). Allen et al. (2002) explain that due to society’s “great” influence on institutions of higher education, examinations about academe “cannot be analyzed apart from the larger social, historical, and cultural context” (p. 189).

**Purpose of the Study**

This research study intended to explore the perceptions and lived experiences of male and female, full-time, African-American faculty at publicly controlled two-year institutions of higher education situated in a state in the Midwestern region of the United States. Specifically, this research examined the nature and extent of Racial Battle Fatigue (RBF) experienced by African-American faculty as well as the strain on the faculty role exacerbated by race. This exploratory study used a multiple case study approach to examine RBF, defined as a person of color’s response to distressing physical, mental, and emotional conditions resulting from the constant exposure to racism and racial microaggressions (Smith, 2004) along with Role Strain: the felt or perceived difficulty in fulfilling role obligations (Goode, 1960). The conceptual base for this research study is informed by RBF as an outgrowth of Critical Race Theory (CRT). RBF will be examined in conjunction with Role Strain, a derivative of role theory.

**Statement of the Problem**

Racially hostile or chilly campus climates are problematic for African-American faculty. For Black faculty members, such environments may have a negative impact on their social, professional, and personal expectations of and subsequent behaviors in their faculty role. While previous research has addressed the experiences of faculty of color with regard to campus climate, little if any research has addressed the perceptions of African-American faculty at community colleges with regard to RBF and/or strain on their faculty role.
Racial Battle Fatigue (RBF) is a useful model to analyze the constant exposure to stress from encountering daily racism on the college campus (Smith, 2004). Additionally, Corbin (2001) notes the utility in exploring the perceived professional role expectations of community college faculty of color (including African-American faculty) and (White) women due to the increasing numbers of (White) women and students of color, and the corresponding need for women and people of color in the faculty ranks. In short, this research study intended to advance insight into the existence and occurrence of RBF. The resulting narratives from this collective case study should shed light on the perceived conditions in which African-American faculty function and the race-related strain on their faculty role. This research study aimed to contribute to the literature through its intentional focus on African-American two-year college faculty who have been largely neglected in the literature (Banks, 1984; Smith, 1992; Smith & Witt, 1993; Stanley, 2006).

**Significance of the Study**

There is a dearth of research on faculty of color at community colleges (Bower, 2002; Brown, 1988; Corbin, 2001; Perna, 2003; Stanley, 2006; Sutherland, 1990; Turner & Myers, 2000). There are few qualitative inquiries on community college faculty of color, particularly African-American faculty in the literature (Alexander-Show & Johnson, 1998; Bower, 2002; Stanley, 2006; Townsend & Twombly, 2007). Additionally, the “problem” of racial microaggressions (Solórzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000) and inquiry into Racial Battle Fatigue (RBF; Smith, 2004) is underresearched. Gaps in the literature concerning urban (and rural) faculty of color at community colleges have been identified, and literature on faculty of color issues in the community college is almost nonexistent (Isaac & Boyer, 2007).
Several studies (Allen et al., 2002; Cooper & Stevens, 2002; Evans & Chun, 2007; Isaac & Boyer, 2007; Johnsrud & Sadao, 1988; Laden & Hagedorn, 2002; Lovell, Alexander, & Kirkpatrick, 2002; Olsen, Maple, & Stage, 1995; Smith et al., 2004; Stanley, 2006; Townsend, 2006; Turner, Myers, & Creswell, 1999; Villalpando & Delgado, 2002) have contributed to the overarching discussion of diverse faculty (i.e., faculty of color and White female faculty members). However, while the existing literature illustrates attempts of inclusive inquiry, little of it is solely focused on African-American faculty, especially at two-year institutions (Johnson & Pichon, 2007; Thompson & Dey, 1998). Researchers have noted the limited amount of literature centered on African-American faculty overall (Allison, 2008; Banks, 1984; Johnson & Pichon, 2007; Smith, 1992; Smith & Witt, 1993; Sutherland, 1990). In their review of research published between the years 1990 and 2000 in the *Community College Journal of Research and Practice* on African Americans in community colleges, Lewis and Middleton (2003) found only 11 articles with a direct or indirect focus on African Americans. Just two articles attended to faculty issues, with neither article specifically addressing African-American faculty issues. Of the four articles that focused on African Americans, none focused on topics about faculty. One of the three themes identified from Lewis and Middleton’s (2003) review of the 11 articles articulated the need to increase faculty diversity, noting the severe shortage of Black public community college faculty and their influence on African-American students and other students of color. The other two themes that emerged described factors of general success for African-American community college students and African-American administrators.
Guiding Research Questions

1. To what extent is Racial Battle Fatigue (RBF) experienced by full-time male and female African-American faculty members at public community colleges?
2. What racial microagressions do African-American community public college faculty encounter in their faculty roles?
3. What is the nature and extent of Role Strain experienced by African-American public community college faculty?
4. How does Role Strain intersect with RBF? In other words, to what degree does RBF produce and/or exacerbate race-related role strain on African-American public community college faculty?

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this research study is interdisciplinary, informed by literature originating from several disciplines: education, law, organizational studies, psychology, and sociology. Critical Race Theory (CRT) is the overarching perspective. Racial Battle Fatigue (RBF) is the central phenomenon of exploration, and Role Strain is the complementary construct to RBF.

Critical Race Theory. Critical Race Theory (CRT) serves as a core framework for this research study as RBF aligns with the central tenets of CRT. CRT is a useful lens to consider and understand the “more subtle, but just as deeply entrenched, varieties of racism that characterize our times” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p. xvi) by “studying and transforming the relationship among race, racism, and power” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012, p. 3). The basic tenets of CRT
illuminate the cryptic patterns and practices of race, racism, and racial exclusion and calls for the voices and perspectives of African Americans and other people of color to “reexamine the terms by which race and racism have been negotiated in American consciousness….“ (Crenshaw et al., 1995, p. xiv).

Arising from the Civil Rights Movement’s grassroots traditions of resistance, the scholarly articulation of this framework emerged through two social movements—Critical Legal Studies and radical feminism—in the mid-1970s by legal scholars Derrick Bell and Alan Freeman as a response to the seemingly sluggish progress of civil rights legislation to produce meaningful racial reform (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 1999; Roithmayr, 1999; Tate, 1997, Villalpando & Delgado, 2002). CRT emerged from the legal arena to “uncover the deep patterns of racial exclusion” (Parker & Lynn, 2002, p. 12). The central propositions of CRT are that racism is a normal, permanent fixture in American society; calls for the use of counter storytelling to record and analyze the lived experiences of racism; challenges ahistoricism, calling on analyses inclusive of context and history of institutional policies; insists on the recognition and knowledge of people and communities of color in the analysis of society, and interest convergence, defined as the belief that “Whites will tolerate and advance the interests of people of color only when they promote the self-interests of Whites” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Lopez, 2003; Morfin et al., 2006; Tate, 1997; Villalpando & Delgado, 2002). CRT has continued to attain interdisciplinary prominence since the late 1980s and has expanded and evolved to acknowledge its interdisciplinary applicability and its function toward eliminating racism and all forms of oppression (Dixon & Rousseau, 2005).

Gloria Ladson-Billings and William Tate (1995) ushered CRT into educational research in response to the necessity to discover ways to discuss race, which, they claimed, had not been a
theorized subject of inquiry in educational scholarship. Theoretical frameworks such as CRT can facilitate the engagement of complex and compelling examinations of race and propel conversations about race and racism from the fringes to the center of scholarly discourse (Tate, 1997).

Two of CRT’s principal tenets—the ingrained, endemic existence of racism in society (and subsequently, education) and the importance of detailing the stories of people of color to challenge the long-standing notions of race and racism—bridge and inform the philosophical underpinnings of CRT to Racial Battle Fatigue (RBF). As RBF functions as the depiction of those embedded actions and outcomes outlined in CRT (William A. Smith, personal communication, July 28, 2006), the resulting counter narratives of the experiences of African-American public community college faculty can expose and illuminate their perceptions of and responses to the racialized academic environment.

**Racial Battle Fatigue.** Racial Battle Fatigue (RBF) is a person of color’s reaction to the troubling conditions that occur from dealing with racism on a daily basis (Smith, 2004). Symptoms of RBF are physiological, psychological, and behavioral in nature, ranging from tension headaches, constant anxiety, and ulcers to increased swearing and complaining, insomnia, rapid mood swings, difficulty thinking or speaking, and social withdrawal (Smith, 2004; Smith, Yosso, & Solórzano, 2006; See Appendix G for the graphic representation of the Racial Battle Fatigue model).

RBF is the physical, mental, and emotional response to racial microaggressions: subtle, unconscious, layered, and cumulative spoken and unspoken insults directed at people of color based on race and other distinguishing characteristics that cause unnecessary stress upon Blacks while benefiting Whites (Smith, 2004; Smith, Yosso, & Solórzano, 2006; Solórzano, Ceja, &
Yosso, 2000). Accumulated over time, racial microaggressions can cause various forms of mental, emotional, and physical strain. For African Americans and other populations of color, the ongoing exposure to and accrual of racial microaggressions generates RBF.

The constant threat of racial microaggressions can cause RBF to remain “switched on” and symptoms can occur in anticipation of a racist event: rapid breathing, upset stomach, frequent diarrhea, or urination (Smith, 2004). Not only does the constant battle with racial stress agitate the lives of people of color, the subsequent psychological and physiological symptoms of RBF can be lethal when gone unnoticed, untreated, misdiagnosed, or dismissed (Smith, Yosso, & Solórzano, 2006).

**Role Strain.** Role Strain is defined by Goode (1960) as “the felt difficulty in fulfilling role obligations” (p. 483). This concept derives from Role Theory, the organization of individual and collective social behavior functioning in positions and roles (Biddle, 1986; Turner, 2002). An individual has a status set (a collection of several statuses linked via human relationships). Each status has a role: a set or pattern of culturally defined expectations and behaviors associated with a specific position (Ballentine & Roberts, 2007; Colbeck, 1998; Hilbert, 1981; Merton, 1957; Sieber, 1974; Van Sell, Brief, & Schuler, 1981). Role Strain is normal because of the impossibility for a person to meet every demand of one’s total role network (Goode, 1960).

Role Strain (also referred to as Role Stress) may result from one (or a combination) of conflict, overload, and ambiguity within a particular role. Role conflict occurs when the role expectations from one role are incompatible with the role expectations of another role. Role overload refers to the perceived (or actual) lack of time to fulfill role obligations. The lack of information or clarity about expectations to meet role obligations is defined as role ambiguity (Goode, 1960; Kahn et al., 1964). Kahn and colleagues’ (1964) seminal work on role conflict
and role ambiguity in industrial work environments explored the nature, sources, and consequences of role conflict and overload as causes of stress “to make understandable the effects of the contemporary environment on the individual, especially his physical and mental health” (p. 11).

Exploring the expected instances of Role Strain of the African-American community college faculty member, along with the consequences of a racially hostile academic environment, can draw attention to the consideration of stress on work roles exacerbated by race. Role Strain from a racialized perspective complements Racial Battle Fatigue (RBF) by bridging the sociological and organizational underpinnings of Goode’s (1960) and Kahn et al.’s (1964) perspectives of Role Strain with the individual and psychosocial aspects of RBF.

**Definition of Terms**

*African American (or Black)*: a person of native-born United States citizenship with ancestry from any of the Black racial groups of Africa [enslaved in the U.S.] (Fox, 2001)

*African-American Community College Faculty Member*: a male or female of native-born American citizenship with ancestry from any of the racial groups of the continent of Africa (enslaved in the U.S.) with full-time employment in an instructional role at an accredited public institution of higher education in the United States

*Community college (or two-year college/institution)*: an accredited institution of higher education in the United States whose highest degree conferred is the associate’s degree (Cohen & Brawer, 2008)

*Critical Race Theory (CRT)*: an interdisciplinary framework developed in the mid-1970s from Critical Legal Studies, the Civil Rights Movement, and radical feminism to expose ingrained patterns of racial exclusion (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, 2012)
Racial Battle Fatigue (RBF): the psychological, physiological, and emotional/behavioral response(s) to accumulating distressing mental and emotional conditions (racial microaggressions) that result from facing racism daily (Smith, 2004, 2006, 2007, 2011)

Racial microaggressions: subtle, unconscious, layered, and cumulative spoken and unspoken insults directed at African Americans (and other people of color), based on race and other distinguishing characteristics that cause unnecessary stress upon Blacks while benefiting Whites (Smith, 2004; Smith, Yosso, & Solórzano, 2006; Solórzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000)

Role: a set or pattern of attitudes and activities (potential behaviors) associated with a specific office (Kahn et al., 1964)

Role ambiguity: the discrepancy (in content and/or articulation) between the information available and the information required for adequate performance of a role (Kahn et al., 1964)

(Intra) Role conflict: the condition in which one set of attitudes and behaviors (role expectations) are incompatible or incongruent with another set of attitudes and behaviors within the same role (Kahn et al., 1964)

Role expectations: certain norms that determine the attitudes and behaviors required for an individual in a particular role (Kahn et al., 1964)

Role overload: confrontation of excessive demands to carry out role obligations (time; Kahn et al., 1964)

Role Strain: the felt or perceived difficulty in fulfilling role obligations (Goode, 1960)
Contents of the Dissertation

This chapter outlined the background, purpose, and significance of this research study along with the statement of the problem, guiding research questions, theoretical framework, and definition of terms of the research study. Chapter Two will provide a review of the literature central to the major components of the study, including the origins of the junior/community college movement, Racial Battle Fatigue, Role Theory, Role Strain, and campus climate of the African-American community college professoriate. Chapter Three will describe the methods and procedures the researcher employed to conduct this research study. Chapters Four and Five will outline this research study’s major findings and themes. Chapter Six will address the major conclusions, implications, and recommendations resulting from this research study.
CHAPTER TWO:

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter outlines the literature relating to the nature and extent of Racial Battle Fatigue and its relationship to the strain on the role of African-American faculty at public community colleges. An overview of the origins of the junior/community college movement is offered, followed by explanations relating to the theoretical and pertinent empirical work of Racial Battle Fatigue and Role Strain. Finally, the campus climate and occupational environment for African-American faculty are discussed.

Origins of the Junior/Community College

The American community college, initially labeled as the junior college, has been described as unique, radical, and revolutionary. From its unchartered beginnings to its enduring contemporary existence as a distinctive enterprise, the two-year institution of higher education was designed to expand access to millions of people who otherwise would not have participated in postsecondary education (Brint & Karabel, 1989; Cohen, 2001; Cohen & Brawer, 2008; Mellow & Heelan, 2008; Ratcliff, 1994; Witt et al., 1994). The community college, uniquely positioned between the secondary (or high) school and the baccalaureate institution, has contributed most to the availability of higher education to those other than the few and wealthy (Cohen & Brawer, 2008; Mellow & Heelan, 2008; Ratcliff, 1994).

Cohen and Brawer (2008) define the comprehensive community college as “any institution regionally accredited toward the associate in arts or the associate in science as its highest degree” (p. 5), inclusive of both public and private comprehensive two-year colleges and technical institutes. The term comprehensive refers to the wide variety of both credit and non-credit program offerings (Levinson, 2005). Institutions beyond this description include those
independent, proprietary, and trade schools categorized as two-year institutions according to the specifications stipulated by various educational accrediting agencies. Presently, there are 1,285 community colleges throughout the United States, ranging in size from less than 100 to more than 40,000 students; approximately one tenth are privately controlled institutions (Cohen & Brawer, 2008).

Extant literature frequently cites the efforts of founding University of Chicago president William Rainey Harper that eventually resulted in the 1901 establishment of Joliet Junior College in the state of Illinois (Boggs & Cater, 1994; Brint & Karabel, 1989; Cohen & Brawer, 2008; Dougherty, 1994; Drury, 2003; Eells, 1931; Fields, 1962; Levinson, 2005; Medsker, 1960; Neufeldt, 1982; Wattenbarger & Witt, 1995; Witt et al., 1994). In 1892, Harper reorganized the University of Chicago by dividing the institution into junior and senior levels and introduced the associate’s degree at the junior college (Boggs & Cater, 1994; Drury, 2003). It would be nearly a decade later that Joliet High School principal J. Stanley Brown (described as Harper’s colleague and friend) introduced college-level courses into the Joliet High School curriculum to form Joliet Junior College as the first independent, publicly funded junior college in the nation (Boggs & Cater, 1994; Brint & Karabel, 1989; Drury, 2003; Fields, 1962; Koos, 1925; Medesker, 1960). Subsequent public junior colleges were organized similarly: as upward extensions of secondary schools. At the same time, “smaller, weaker” four-year colleges were urged to reconfigure their institutions by truncating upper-level courses to become junior colleges (Boggs & Cater, 1994; Cohen & Brawer, 2008; Drury, 2003; Fields, 1962; Kolins & Stackpole, 1999; Koos, 1925; Witt et al., 1994). In addition, private, religious-affiliated institutions contributed to the gradual growth of junior colleges in the early years of the 20th century (Cohen & Brawer, 2008; Drury, 2003).
Koos (1925) identified three main types of junior colleges according to institutional control: public, state, and private. Public junior colleges were administered primarily by local school authorities. State-controlled junior colleges were linked with normal schools and teacher-training colleges; many junior colleges first began as normal schools (Ratcliff, 1994). Private colleges were operated by churches or religious denominations, special-type non-denominational groups (e.g., a women’s-only school governed by a board of trustees), or single administrative-led institutions (Drury, 2003; Eells, 1931). A fourth type of junior college, the lower division (the first two years beyond secondary schooling), were uniquely attached to six universities located in the western and Midwestern regions of the country (Koos, 1925).

Although the first public community college was founded in the state of Illinois, the early proliferation of junior colleges occurred in California, Florida, Illinois, Michigan, and North Carolina (Brint & Karabel, 1989; Cohen, 2001; Cohen & Brawer, 2008; Drury, 2003; Fields, 1962; Pedersen, 2005; Wattenbarger & Witt, 1995; Witt et al., 1994). In 1922, junior colleges had been established in 37 of the-then 48 states; 440 institutions existed by 1930. Comparably, one fifth of the public junior colleges were founded in California. Among the speculations for the rapid growth in California included strong advocacy from university leaders and the appeal of democratic ideals and legislative reforms evidenced in western states (Brint & Karabel, 1989; Cohen & Brawer, 2008; Fields, 1962; Medsker, 1962; Witt et al., 1994).

As early as 1907, the state of California passed legislation to authorize high school boards of education to offer postsecondary courses. Successive laws permitted junior colleges to organize as districts independent of secondary schools (Cohen & Brawer, 2008; Fields, 1962). University leaders in other states followed the lead of advocates in Illinois and California to establish junior colleges. For example, the state of Michigan is noted as one of four states that
adopted the first legislation in 1917 to identify junior colleges in the state law and permit local school districts to use public funds to start and operate the institutions (Eells, 1931; Fields, 1962; Martorana, 1957; Pedersen, 2005; Witt et al., 1994). Grand Rapids Junior College (GRJC) is often cited as the first publicly supported two-year college in Michigan. GRJC was established in 1914 as part of the Grand Rapids school district (Cohen, 2001; Eells, 1931; Kolins & Stackpole, 1999; Martorana, 1957; Morsch, 1971; Witt et al., 1994). However, sources note the prior existence of a junior college in Saginaw, and Detroit Junior College may have been established one year before Grand Rapids Junior College (Eells, 1931; Witt et al., 1994).

Subsequent institutions were established as local transfer or feeder institutions to the University of Michigan: Highland Park (1918), St. Clair (1923), Mott (1923), Muskegon (1926), Jackson (1928), Gogebic (1932), and Henry Ford (1938). Four more schools established as K-12 extension districts followed: Lake Michigan (1946), Northwestern Michigan (1951), Alpena (1952), and Macomb (1954; Kolins & Stackpole, 1999). Several junior colleges were started in the 1920s (as part of high school districts in Bay City, Dearborn, Flint, Grand Rapids, Highland Park, Jackson, Port Huron, and Saginaw) with the support of the University of Michigan (Brint & Karabel, 1989; Kolins & Stackpole, 1999; Martorana, 1957; Witt et al., 1994). The earliest legislation for Michigan community colleges passed in 1955 to authorize local K-12 school systems to organize approved community colleges (Kolins & Stackpole, 1999; Morsch, 1971). The state’s largest growth in independent (detached from a school district or university) public community colleges took place between 1955 and 1968: Kellogg (1956), Delta (1957), Lansing (1957), North Central Michigan (1958), Schoolcraft (1961), Bay de Noc (1962), Monroe (1964), Oakland (1964), Southwestern Michigan (1964), Glen Oaks (1965), Mid Michigan (1965), Montcalm (1965), Washtenaw (1965), Kirtland (1966), West Shore (1967), and Wayne County
Michigan was one of six states where federally funded emergency junior colleges were founded in 1934 in response to federal mandates to generate job opportunities for unemployed Americans. Michigan’s emergency college program included 100 colleges with more than 6,000 students, the largest of its kind at the time (Witt et al., 1994).

In their respective states, both Michigan and California considered geography and demographics to determine the initial placements of junior institutions to maximize accessibility to postsecondary education. For example, in 1910, the city of Fresno, California, requested a junior college on the basis that no other college or university existed within 200 miles of the city (Boggs & Cater, 1994; Cohen & Brawer, 2008; Wattenbarger & Witt, 1995). Michigan school officials were advised to follow California’s policy to establish junior colleges in response to the geographical needs of the population (Martorana, 1957).

Federal legislation complemented the formation of public junior and community colleges at the state and local levels. The Morrill Land-Grant Acts of 1862 and 1890 directed resources to publicly supported institutions, expanding access to higher education to racial and ethnic populations, for example, who had been otherwise excluded (Cohen, 2001; Cohen & Brawer, 2008; Drury, 2003; Witt et al., 1994). Agricultural institutes and teacher training colleges were among such schools that provided lower-cost options to private colleges and the elite universities that were too expensive for new high school graduates (Cohen & Brawer, 2008; Ratcliff, 1994; Witt et al., 1994). The Smith-Hughes Act of 1917 distributed funds to secondary school districts to hire teachers and secure equipment for vocational instruction. Junior colleges benefited inadvertently from this funding due to sharing facilities with high schools and thereby having access to the equipment to deliver vocational (or “shop”) classes (Cohen, 2001; Cohen & Brawer, 2008; Levinson, 2005; Wattenbarger & Witt, 1995; Witt et al., 1994). According to
Brint and Karabel (1989), the lack of Smith-Hughes Act, funding to junior colleges was a form of federal indifference to the role of junior colleges as vocational training centers. The 1937 George-Deen Act also advanced junior college vocational education with the appropriation of federal funds to institutions that offered preparatory courses for employment in industry versus regular liberal arts college courses (Cohen, 2001; Cohen & Brawer, 2008; Witt et al., 1994).

Brint and Karabel (1989) describe the passage of the 1944 Serviceman’s Readjustment Act (commonly known as the GI Bill) as a major historical moment in American higher education. The primary goal of the legislation was to provide financial assistance (tuition, books and related materials, and living expenses) for returning World War 2 veterans desiring to attend a college or university (Cohen, 2001; Cohen & Brawer, 2008; Drury, 2003; Levinson, 2005; Witt et al., 1994). The legislation also resulted in the expansion of access to higher education for people who had been “untouched” by postsecondary education (Witt et al., 1994, p. 163). Enrollments at both two- and four-year colleges and universities rose past two million, including more than 60,000 women and 70,000 African Americans (Levinson, 2005; Witt et al., 1994). The Vocational Education Act of 1963 provided $450 million in new funding toward the construction and operation of two-year institutions focused on vocational education (Cohen, 2001; Witt et al., 1994). Amendments to the Act approved in 1968 and 1974 distributed monies for equipment grants, curriculum development, and programs for economically disadvantaged and physically challenged students (Cohen & Brawer, 2008; Witt et al., 1994).

The influence of commissioned reports accompanied federal and state legislative efforts in the design, growth, and work of the junior college. At the request of the governor of California, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching’s June 1932 report, *State Higher Education in California*, outlined the status of public higher education in that state in
response to legislative contention to transform its two-year junior and teachers’ colleges into
four-year liberal arts institutions (Brint & Karabel, 1989). The results of that report validated the
role, function, and fiscal viability of the junior college as a terminal institution to provide low-
cost educational opportunities, especially for the majority of its student population (Brint &
Education in American Democracy*, called for the full availability of educational opportunity to
Americans regardless of race, gender, religion, or economic status, with the provision of this
mandate to be fulfilled by the junior college (or its newly evolved label *community college*; Brint
& Karabel, 1989; Gleazer Jr., 1994; Levinson, 2005; Wattenbarger & Witt, 1995; Witt et al.,
1994). The report was an outcome of President Harry S. Truman’s request for a review of the
nation’s higher education system due to the perception that postsecondary education “had
remained elitist too long” (Witt et al., 1994, p. 130).

**Key Leaders of the Junior/Community College Movement**

The key leaders of the community college movement shared similar assumptions and
perspectives about higher education in the United States, influenced in part by their European
schooling and their various leadership roles in four-year institutions. William Rainey Harper,
founder of the University of Chicago and responsible in part for the establishment of
Joliet Junior College, is considered a major influence in the evolution of the junior college
movement (Brint & Karabel, 1989; Dougherty, 1994; Drury, 2003; Levinson, 2005; Medsker,
1960; Wattenbarger & Witt, 1995; Witt et al., 1994). Influenced by the ideas and prior attempts
of fellow university presidents Henry Tappan (University of Michigan), William Folwell
(University of Minnesota), William Mitchell (University of Georgia), and David Starr Jordan
(Stanford University), Harper was the first educator to successfully separate and design junior
and senior divisions at the University of Chicago in 1892. He added an associate’s degree for graduates of the junior level (Brint & Karabel, 1989; Medsker, 1960; Neufeldt, 1982; Witt et al., 1994).

Along with Harper, Tappan, Folwell, Jordan, and Mitchell, other American university leaders who either were educated in Germany or were influenced by the German educational model held certain sentiments about the role, function, and ideal population of the university, including Edmund J. James (University of Illinois president) and Alexis Lange (Dean, University of California School of Education; Cohen, 2001; Cohen & Brawer, 2008; Drury, 2003; Griffith & Connor, 1994; Ratcliff, 1994). Essentially, they believed that the first two years of postsecondary education (freshman and sophomore years) should extend either from the high school level or detach from the university to facilitate an upper-level institutional focus on research and training for the intellectual elite (Boggs & Cater, 1994; Brint & Karabel, 1989; Cohen & Brawer, 2008; Drury, 2003; Fields, 1962; Koos, 1925; Medsker, 1960; Neufeldt, 1982; Ratcliff, 1994; Snyder, 1930; Witt et al., 1994). University leaders referred to the German model’s celebrated reputation in research and scholarship to support an American replication of the German example where students would remain in a secondary school, or “the gymnasium, until about 20 years of age. Most gymnasium graduates needed no further education beyond a general education and the few who did matriculate to the university were academically qualified and ready to specialize” (Witt et al., 1994, p. 7). With regard to the ideal university population, the reasoning was such that the university was designed for the “academically minded” student while the vocational schools were for the “manually minded” student (Snyder, 1930). According to Wattenbarger and Witt (1995), William Rainey Harper’s proposal for a two-year college system included the speculation that “many students in the junior college system were likely to
end their postsecondary schooling after two years and pursue jobs as teachers or in the business sector” (p. 566).

Efforts beyond universities and local public school districts occurred to define and influence social and political aspects of the junior college movement, starting with the establishment of the American Association of Junior Colleges (AAJC) in 1920 (Brint & Karabel, 1989; Drury, 2003; Eells, 1931; Levinson, 2005; Witt et al., 1994). The early AAJC leaders—Leonard Koos, Doak S. Campbell, Walter C. Eells, and George C. Zook—held instructional and/or executive positions at universities across the country (Drury, 2003; Witt et al., 1994). Despite the opinion of many junior college leaders who saw the transfer function to the university as their sole task, the four initial AAJC leaders rationalized an expanded role for the junior college, especially since “American high schools were producing thousands of graduates who had no need of a bachelor’s degree” (Witt et al., 1994, p. 87). Between their first and second Junior College Conferences, held in 1920 and 1922, respectively, the AAJC leaders and conference delegates had begun to define and emphasize vocational education and community service as responsibilities of the junior college (Gleazer Jr., 1994; Wattenbarger & Witt, 1995; Witt et al., 1994). The American Association of Community Colleges, the contemporary form of the AAJC, is the leading national advocacy organization for community colleges.

Access to higher learning for those beyond the traditional socioeconomic and intellectual elite was an unpremeditated outcome yet has become a foundational ideology of the junior college movement. The directives of the early 20th century American educators who advocated for the division of the university into upper-and lower-scholastic divisions, combined with state and federal legislation, facilitated the inclusion of populations who would not have otherwise attended due to competitive or exclusionary admissions processes. Open access to higher
education includes anyone who has earned a high school diploma or equivalency, contending with the premise that college is for only the select few (Levinson, 2005; Mellow & Heelan, 2008). “Two years of postsecondary education is within reach—financially, geographically, practically—of virtually every American” (Cohen & Brawer, 2008, p. 35).

**Educational Philosophies and Ideologies of Community College Education**

In spite of what Witt et al. (1994) refer to as the “mixed parentage” of the community college—due to the community college’s origination as two additional years beyond high school or the first two years of university work—the distinguishing features of the contemporary community college are evident in its mission, curricular focus, and range of student population (Cohen & Brawer, 2008; Witt et al., 1994). The community college mission reflects its overarching charge to expand access to higher education through five major functions: liberal arts/academic transfer (collegiate/lower division general education for universities), vocational/technical education (collective term for occupational, career, and technical studies), continuing education (lifelong learning for public/civic support), developmental education (remedial, compensatory, preparatory, or basic skills), and community service (cultural centers for communities, recreational events, short courses, workshops, non-credit courses, etc.; Cohen & Brawer, 2008; Lorenzo, 1994; McPhail & McPhail, 2006).

In contrast to the traditional four-year college or university curriculum toward the baccalaureate, the community college programming structure is designed to promptly respond and adapt to shifting conditions instigated by students, surrounding communities, and local employers. For example, the inclusion of diverse populations (by race, gender, class, ability, educational goals, and aspirations) also brought about the demand for a wider variety of programs, and, conversely, the community college’s program offerings for academic and
occupational training appealed to greater varieties of individuals (Cohen & Brawer, 2008; Grubb, 1995). Per Cohen & Brawer (2008), the attraction of access and open admission to the community college is financial, geographic, and practical: inexpensive, close to home, and accessible to courses to obtain marketable skills. The proximity, curriculum, and admissions procedures of the community college are designed to meet the needs of its varied student population with personal, family, and work obligations that may have an impact on college participation. Community colleges have responded to such particular concerns with an array of student services, some of which are shared with four-year colleges and universities (recruitment and retention, counselors, orientation, student activities, judicial affairs, student health, financial aid, academic supports) and others that are distinctive to the two-year student body: transportation, child care, book supply vouchers, and other services tailored to the community college student (Cohen & Brawer, 2008).

**Characteristics of Significant Community College Stakeholder Groups**

**Students.** The characteristics of the community college student population are reflected in quantity and diversity across ability, race and ethnicity, gender, age, socioeconomic status, goals and aspirations, motivations, and persistence, thanks to the non-competitive, open-admission policy of the public community college. Nearly half of the nation’s undergraduates are enrolled at community colleges. For-credit enrollments numbered more than six million in 2005, and the range of students tended to be older, averaging nearly 28 years of age. Students of color composed 36.5 percent of two-year college enrollments nationwide. Women attended in greater numbers than men did, with nearly 63 percent of associate degrees earned by women, although degree attainment stratifies across discipline; women earned more degrees in business, education, liberal arts, and the health professions, while degrees in computer and information
sciences, mechanics, engineering, and protective services were earned more by men.

International students attended community colleges, with 15 percent enrolled and concentrated in California and Texas; the majority of international students were from Asia (Cohen & Brawer, 2008; Levinson, 2005; Mellow & Heelan, 2008). Students with comparably lower academic ability according to standardized testing are among the community college student population (Cohen & Brawer, 2008) along with those students considered “first generation” in which neither parent has obtained any form of postsecondary education (Levinson, 2005).

Averaging at about 61 to 62 percent, part-time for-credit enrollments consistently exceed full-time enrollments at community colleges (Cohen & Brawer, 2008; Levinson, 2005; Mellow & Heelan, 2008). Students attend community colleges for a variety of reasons: to transfer to a baccalaureate institution, to train or retrain for the job market, or for personal enrichment. Motives for suspending school attendance—ranging from health issues, childcare availability and concerns, changes in work schedule, family matters, financial difficulties, housing changes or attendance at another school—tend to be connected to “situations beyond the college’s control” (Cohen & Brawer, 2008, p. 68). Cohen & Brawer (2008) further speculate that a stoppage may also occur if the student’s personal objective was to enroll and complete one or two courses.

Just as the community college student population is varied demographically, it is also diverse in terms of personal and academic objectives. The two-year institution has been able to adapt to the changing conditions of student demand through its primary mission: expanding access to postsecondary education for those who would not otherwise participate. “For most students in two-year institutions, the choice is not between the community college and the senior
residential institution; it is between the community college and nothing” (Cohen & Brawer, 2008, p. 58).

**Faculty.** Although common components of the postsecondary faculty role include teaching, student advising and evaluation, committee work, service activities, and promotion and tenure review, community colleges are described as “teaching colleges” with quality instruction as the chief expectation and core function of the faculty (Bower, 2002; Cohen & Brawer, 2008; Grubb, 1999; Hardy & Laanan, 2006; Harvey, 1994; Harvey & Valadez, 1994; Outcalt, 2002; Townsend & Twombly, 2007; Turner, Myers, & Creswell, 1999). In 2005, more than 350,000 were full- and part-time faculty members at public community colleges; with 80 percent of the full-time positions held by White males averaging 50 years of age (Townsend & Twombly, 2007). While recent increases across race and ethnicity in the faculty ranks have been observed, faculty of color still compose less than 20 percent of full-time faculty (Cohen & Brawer, 2008; Townsend & Twombly, 2007). Approximately 50 percent of full-time community college faculty members are female, and the average age of both full- and part-time two-year faculty is about 48 years old (Townsend & Twombly, 2007). The master’s degree is the traditional educational credential of community college faculty; it is required for those who teach transfer courses, and in the vocational or occupational fields, faculty members usually hold a bachelor’s degree (Cohen & Brawer, 2008; Townsend & Twombly, 2007).

Nearly two thirds of public community college faculty members are part-time, which gives flexibility to institutions to respond and adjust to enrollment shifts, student demands, and scheduling changes as needed (Cohen & Brawer, 2008; Levinson, 2005; Townsend & Twombly, 2007). This part-time workforce percentage tops all other public institutions of higher education (Townsend & Twombly, 2007). Along with their teaching workload of one to two courses, many
part-time community college faculty members hold full-time professional positions in the same discipline in which they teach; full-time faculty usually teach four to five courses per term (Cohen & Brawer, 2008; Palmer, 2002; Townsend & Twombly, 2007).

Both full- and part-time community college faculty members teach credit and non-credit courses in academic/transfer or vocational areas (Townsend & Twombly, 2007). With the primary responsibility of community college faculty to instruction and focused attention to course content, they rarely conduct scholarly research or write for publication (Cohen & Brawer, 2008). Depending on the institution, full-time community college faculty may become tenured after a certain length of time, either after one year or at the conclusion of a three-year probationary period. Instead of tenure, other institutions may offer long-term teaching contracts of three to five years. These policies vary from state to state (Cohen & Brawer, 2008; Townsend & Twombly, 2007).

Administrators/Governing Boards/Trustees. The overarching governance structures of the community college are generally inclusive of both internal (administrative) and external (governing board) controlling functions; sometimes the terms governance and administration are used interchangeably in a collective reference of institutional activities (Cohen & Brawer, 2008). Community college administration shares similarities with corporate organizations with regard to personnel relations and goal setting and implementation, but the core component of teaching and learning has an impact on other managerial activities of the two-year college (Cohen & Brawer, 1994, 2008). In particular, organizational lines of authority are less formally segregated than business entities. Depending on the specific function or issue, coordinating activities can involve several administrative roles across the institution, including deans, department or division chairs, and directors working with faculty and executive leadership. Amey, VanDerLinden, & Brown
(2006) included presidents, chief academic officers, senior student affairs officers, business/fiscal officers, continuing educational directors, and occupational/vocational heads in their study on administrative career pathways in the community college.

The presidential role at the community college generally serves as the administrative liaison between the institution and its governing board (Cohen & Brawer, 2008). The community college governance structure occurs within a complex set of relationships with various stakeholders within and beyond the institution and serves as its decision-making authority (Cohen & Brawer, 2008; Lovell & Trouth, 2006; Mellow & Heelan, 2008). The majority of public community colleges are organized as single, independent districts with a publicly elected or governmentally appointed board of trustees with such responsibilities as mission and policy definition, human resource issues (including presidential appointments), facilities planning, and legal matters (Cohen and Brawer, 2008; Lovell & Trouth, 2006). Organizational forms of community college governance range from the single independent district or multi-campus independent district to state, university, and branch college systems (Cohen & Brawer, 2008; Dougherty, 2006). Along with the local organizational structuring, some states have coordinating boards arranged to include all higher educational institutions or as separate coordinating structures according to institutional context (Richardson Jr. & de los Santos, 2001).

An estimated 6,500 individuals serve as trustees on more than 600 community college governing boards in the United States, usually consisting of five to nine members elected for four-year terms meeting either weekly or up to once or twice a month (Cohen & Brawer, 2008; Mellow & Heelan, 2008). Research has indicated that, similar to university trustees, the common composition of community college governing boards have been middle-aged, high income, college-educated White males in professional or managerial occupations. This composition
adjusts to reflect more closely the institution’s service area population in large, urban areas (Cohen & Brawer, 2008).

The role of the community college governing board is to bridge, mediate, and buffer the community’s educational needs into viable policy and practice within the institution (Cohen & Brawer, 2008; Dougherty, 2006). Civic and philanthropic ideals motivate many community college board members—usually lay members from the institution’s service areas—serving with expertise in a variety of domains, including fundraising, fiscal, and organizational management. However, as trustee appointments may be politically motivated, it is possible for community college governance “to be subverted for personal or political reasons that limit the college’s ability to effectively serve the higher education needs of the community” (Mellow & Heelan, 2008, p. 82).

**Employers.** The defining characteristic of employers in relationship to the community college is the collective call for the two-year institution to provide training for new and returning entrants to the workforce (Brint & Karabel, 1989; Cohen & Brawer, 2008; Dougherty, 2001). In anticipation of local and regional employer needs, community colleges conduct labor market surveys and study labor projections to inform choices in developing new courses and programs (Brint & Karabel, 1989; Levinson, 2005; Mellow & Heelan, 2008). Often, employers collaborate with community colleges in coordinating workforce-training programs with representation on advisory committees (Brint & Karabel, 1989; Cohen & Brawer, 2008; Grubb, 1999). Employers utilize both for-credit and non-credit vocational programming to gain access to new labor market entrants. Contract training allows employers (including local businesses or governmental agencies) to request customized instruction for current employees to upgrade skills or preparatory training for the unemployed or recipients of public assistance (Dougherty, 2001;
Cohen & Brawer, 2008; Mellow & Heelan, 2008). Employers value the cost, reliability, and responsiveness of the community college as a training partner (Cohen & Brawer, 2008).

The initial sections of this review of literature expounded upon the origins, early leaders, philosophies and ideologies, and significant stakeholders of the community college, the institutional context of focus of this research study. The following sections will discuss the two major concepts of this study: Racial Battle Fatigue (the central phenomenon) and Role Strain (the complementary construct).

**Racial Battle Fatigue**

Racial Battle Fatigue (RBF) is described as the social psychological stress response by an African American (or other person of color) resulting from encountering racism on a constant basis (Smith, 2004). RBF locates its philosophical base in Critical Race Theory, a framework that emerged from Critical Legal Studies and the Civil Rights Movement to expose the ingrained patterns of racial exclusion (Delgado and Stefancic, 2000; Parker & Lynn, 2002). RBF functions as the depiction of those embedded actions and outcomes outlined in Critical Race Theory (Smith, personal communication, July 28, 2006). RBF, likened to the severe and life-threatening exchange of military combat, manifests through three concurrent, distinguishing forms: psychological, physiological, and emotional/behavioral. Psychological responses range from frustration, shock, anger, and anxiety to disappointment, hopelessness, helplessness, and fear. Headaches, high blood pressure, indigestion, fatigue, insomnia, and frequent illnesses typify physiological reactions of Racial Battle Fatigue (RBF). Emotional/behavioral responses include overeating or reduced appetite, procrastination, withdrawal or isolation from others, neglect of responsibility, and poor school or job performance (Smith, 2004; Smith, Yosso & Solórzano, 2006). The constant susceptibility to racial microaggressions can cause RBF to remain “switched
on” and symptoms can occur in anticipation of a racist event: rapid breathing, upset stomach, frequent diarrhea, or urination (Smith, 2004). Not only does the constant battle with racial stress agitate the lives of people of color, the subsequent psychological and physiological symptoms of RBF can be lethal when gone unnoticed, untreated, misdiagnosed, or dismissed (Smith, Yosso, & Solórzano, 2006).

Racial Battle Fatigue (RBF) is the physical, mental, and/or emotional/behavioral response to racial microaggressions: subtle, conscious or unconscious, intentional or unintentional, layered, cumulative, verbal and nonverbal, behavioral, and environmental insults directed at people of color based on race and other distinguishing characteristics that cause unnecessary stress upon people of color, including African Americans, while benefiting Whites (Smith, 2004; Smith, Yosso, & Solórzano, 2006; Solórzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000; Solórzano et al., 2002; Sue et al., 2007; Sue et al., 2008[1]; Sue et al., 2008[2]; Sue et al., 2009; Sue, 2010). The descriptor “micro” embedded within the term “racial microaggression” indicates the small, understated, obscure nature of these antagonistic occurrences against people of color. Environmental microaggressions are visible or invisible, conscious or unconscious words and behaviors that convey racially derogatory messages or systemically insult or invalidate people of color (Sue, 2010).

The emerging body of research that informs RBF derives from the social sciences, including psychology and counseling. The RBF framework has been advanced by University of Utah professor William A. Smith (2004), with an initial focus on African-American male collegians and university faculty. Smith’s 2004 article Black Faculty Coping with Racial Battle Fatigue: The Campus Racial Climate in a Post-Civil Rights Era offers a detailed explanation of the context, function, and impact of RBF on the African-American university faculty member.
Smith’s initial inquiries involving RBF confirm his declaration for the qualitative research paradigm to be the “first line of defense” to understand how racism has an impact on people of color (Smith, 2004). As Critical Race Theory (CRT) serves as the theoretical underpinning of RBF, the counterstorytelling tenet of CRT (which highlights the importance of detailing the stories of people of color to challenge the long-standing notions of race and racism) guides the extant RBF research to date. Empirical research has employed the counterstory to demonstrate (or materialize) the concepts of racial microaggressions and RBF and their collective impact on faculty of color (Smith, Yosso, & Solórzano, 2006). One qualitative study by Smith, Allen, and Danley (2007) explored RBF and the psychosocial experiences of Black male college students producing two major themes: anti-Black male marginality and stereotyping and increased surveillance and control of their whereabouts. Another recent study quantitatively examined the impact of mundane forms of racialized stress experienced by African-American males across educational attainment in historically White professional and educational environments (Smith, Hung, & Franklin, 2011). Data generated from telephone interviews with 661 Black males indicated that higher educational attainments and subsequent exposure to settings dominated by Whites are generative of Racial Battle Fatigue for African-American men.

**Role Theory**

Role theory, which considers relationships at various individual and collective levels (groups, organizations, societies), is a useful framework to understand the interactions of Racial Battle Fatigue and Role Strain among African-American community college faculty. Role theory focuses on individual and collective social behavior organized into social positions and roles (Biddle, 1986; Turner, 2002). An individual has a status set: a collection of several statuses linked via human relationships. Each status (or position) has a role, defined as a set, cluster, or
pattern of expectations and behaviors associated with a specific position or status (Ballantine & Roberts, 2007; Colbeck, 1998; Henning & Weidner, 2008; Hilbert, 1981; Merton, 1957; Van Sell, Brief, & Schuler, 1981; Turner, 2002). Every status and role has a set of socially and culturally defined guidelines for acceptable behavior in a specific role (Colbeck, 1998; Merton, 1957). Types of role theory include functional, symbolic interactionist, structural, cognitive, and organizational (Biddle, 1986; Turner, 2002).

Each role in an organization is constructed by a designated social position and set of expectations as defined by that organization. Each individual brings distinctive perceptions and expressions to the role held, which generates a variety of outcomes from the role. Every role and role process in an organization is designed to advance the mission and objectives of that organization (Turner, 2002). However, conflicting role demands from numerous sources “produce strain and must be resolved if the individual is to be happy and the organization is to prosper” (Biddle, 1986). Similar to the arrangement of roles in the larger society, so are work responsibilities in organizations arranged into roles (Turner, 2002).

Role Strain. Role Strain, a derivative of role theory, is defined by Goode (1960) as “the felt [or perceived] difficulty in fulfilling role obligations” (p. 483). Role Strain occurs when a person perceives tension between one or more sets of expected attitudes and behaviors. Goode (1960) suggests that Role Strain is normal because of the impossibility for a person to meet every demand of one’s total role network. In the individual’s effort to reduce Role Strain, interactions within the role occur in an ongoing chain of “role bargains” (Goode, 1960, p. 483), in which choices are made to determine the behaviors that will be allocated to fulfill role expectations accordingly. Role Strain can result from one or a combination of the following sources: role conflict (role expectations from one role are incompatible with the role expectations of another
role); role overload (lack of time to fulfill role obligations); and role ambiguity (lack of information or clarity about expectations to meet role obligations; Boardman & Bozeman, 2007; Goode, 1960; Kahn et al., 1964).

Within the research literature, Role Strain has been used interchangeably with role stress and role conflict, often referring to similar theoretical and practical models (Boardman & Bozeman, 2007). For example, role conflict can intersect with role overload (Coverman, 1989). While conceptual distinctions exist between role conflict and role ambiguity, relatable components may likely emerge between the two concepts in empirical testing (Van Sell, Brief, & Schuler, 1981). Distinctions amongst the terms can result according to context. For example, Boardman and Bozeman (2007) distinguish Role Strain from associated derivatives of Role Theory (e.g., role conflict) due to the orientation of Role Strain to individual perception. Overall, the majority of role concept studies share mutual theoretical origins in Role Theory (Boardman & Bozeman, 2007).

Several researchers refer to Kahn et al.'s 1964 seminal work *Organizational Stress: Studies in Role Conflict and Ambiguity* and its contribution to the development of Role Theory in a work-related context (Biddle, 1986; Boardman & Bozeman, 2007; King & King, 1990; MacKinnon, 1978; Shivers-Blackwell, 2004; Van Sell, Brief & Schuler, 1981). Its focus was to determine the nature, sources, and consequences of role conflict and ambiguity as causes of stress “to make understandable the effects of the contemporary environment on the individual, especially his physical and mental health” (p. 11). Kahn et al. (1964) define role as the set of activities (potential and actual behaviors) expected to be performed by the individual occupying a specified office (or position). These concepts link and locate the individual to the organizational set of relationships and activities.
Kahn et al.’s (1964) introductory work of Role Theory to organizational research examined the extent of role conflict and role ambiguity in industrial positions. The conceptual foundation included a role episode model emphasizing a role set, composed of a focal person and role senders (members of the organization who convey role expectations to the focal person), interacting within a context of organizational, interpersonal relations, and personality factors. Role senders convey role expectations (directly or indirectly, oral or written) to the focal person in the form of role pressures; the focal person perceives and processes the pressures as role forces to influence and determine behavior. The focal person will either conform to or rebel against the expectations of the role senders. This process has both objective and subjective components. “That is, objective role conflict and ambiguity are actual, verifiable conditions in the work environment, and subjective role conflict and ambiguity are internal states of the focal person” (King & King, 1990, p. 49).

Kahn et al. (1964) specify distinguishing forms of role conflict and role ambiguity. Of the five forms of role conflict, intrasender (contrasting expectations from one role sender/one role set), intersender (contrasting expectations from multiple role senders of the same role set), and interrole (contrasting expectations from role senders of two or more different role sets) are classified as sent role conflict, defined as “the simultaneous occurrence of two (or more) sets of pressures such that compliance with one would make more difficult compliance with the other” (Katz et al., 1964, p. 19). Person-role conflict occurs when role expectations or requirements violate the focal person’s moral standards. The fifth instance of role conflict is role overload, a type of intersender conflict where role senders with legitimate expectations call for the focal person to complete a number of activities that may be virtually impossible to fulfill within specified time limits. As Kahn et al. (1964) focused primarily on individuals in work roles
(managers in industrial positions), the *intrarole* form of role conflict is the presumptive emphasis of Kahn and associates’ (1964) role episode model (King & King, 1990; Shivers-Blackwell, 2004).

*Role ambiguity* is described as inadequate or uncertain information of role expectations conveyed to the focal person based on either the role sender’s inability to coordinate expectations or the inability to discern the needs and abilities of the focal person. Kahn et al. (1964) identified *task ambiguity* and *socioemotional ambiguity* as two major forms of role ambiguity. *Task ambiguity* refers to the lack of specifics about the performance of expected responsibilities and activities. *Socioemotional ambiguity* is defined as a focal person’s apprehension about the consequences of actions on the self and others within the organization.

Kahn et al. (1964) paired their theoretical account with a combined qualitative and quantitative research design to investigate role conflict and role ambiguity from the position of managers in industrial positions as focal persons and role senders. Interviews with 53 males between 25 and 59 years of age composed the intensive study. The national survey was composed of a sample of 725 people selected out of 1,300 adults over age 18 who reported working for pay for more than 20 hours per week at the time of the survey. While role conflict and role ambiguity have similar features, each condition occurs independently, thereby resulting in “a work environment that is both ambiguous and conflictual. When this occurs, however, [one] tends to suffer strains not significantly more severe than those evoked by either conflict or ambiguity alone” (Kahn et al., 1964, p. 95).

Proceeding from Kahn et al.’s (1964) research on organizational stress, role conflict, and role ambiguity, the majority of research on role stress has been informed by individual perceptions gathered via a self-reported questionnaire (Van Sell, Brief, & Schuler, 1981). Role
Strain and other concepts of Role Theory have received comparably less attention in higher education than in other contexts (Boardman and Bozeman, 2007). Of the recent studies on Role Strain, role expectations, and role performance in higher education (including college and university faculty), a qualitative approach was applied. Boardman and Bozeman (2007) explored the extent of Role Strain of university faculty members with academic appointments and affiliations with university research centers. Data collected from interviews with 21 scientists identified for the study showed no consistency in individual accounts of Role Strain (regardless of gender, discipline, tenure status, or length of tenure). However, at an institutional-level analysis (the academic department or the university research center), the perception of Role Strain occurred more frequently.

Colbeck (1998) examined the ways and degrees to which faculty integrate time and attention to teaching and research tasks. Interview data revealed that observed research participants simultaneously engaged in activities that satisfied expectations for more than one role. Alexander-Snow and Johnson (1998) explored perceptions of role expectations and role performance of new and junior faculty of color. After extracting factors from interviews that impacted the role expectations and behaviors of faculty of color, Alexander-Snow and Johnson (1998) presented a series of strategies for faculty of color, department chairs, White faculty, graduate students, and colleges and universities overall to redefine institutional policies and practices to clarify the role expectations and behaviors of faculty of color.

**Occupational Stress in the Academy**

Although the professoriate has been considered a low-stress occupation (Dunn, Whelton, & Sharpe, 2006; Smith & Witt, 1993; Thorsen, 1996; Winefield, 2003), a number of studies have explored the nature and extent to which faculty endure and manage occupational stress in a

Among the studies on faculty stress, an assortment of stress variables were quantitatively explored, utilizing data from large databases (e.g., UCLA’s 1989-90 and 2001-02 Higher Education Research Institute Faculty Survey) or surveyed via a Faculty Stress Index questionnaire developed by Gmelch, Lovrich, and Wilke (1988; Dey, 1994; Hendel & Horn, 2008; Lindholm & Szelenyi, 2008; Smith & Witt, 1993). Variables considered within the context of faculty stress include institutional context, tenure status, academic rank, race, gender, and work/life balance. Lack of institutional planning, time and resource constraints, low pay, poor working conditions, lack of recognition and reward, unsatisfactory interactions, unfulfilling or unrealistic career goals and expectations, and work/life imbalance were reported as common sources of stress (Dey, 1994; Gmelch, 1988; Larkin & Clagett, 1981; Seldin, 1987; Sorcinelli, 1992).

Only a handful of studies noted direct or indirect distinctions of faculty stress levels by race. For example, in Dey’s (1994) study, which identified 18 items generated from responses from the 1989-90 Higher Education Research Institute faculty survey, subtle discrimination emerged as the tenth commonly reported stressor; non-White women reported subtle
discrimination as an extensive source of stress in comparison to White men, White women, and non-White men. In their research of time stress among college and university faculty in a nationwide survey, Lindholm & Szelenyi (2008) did not expect to find African-American and Asian-American faculty to report lower levels of time stress in comparison to their White colleagues. Research by Smith (1992) and Smith and Witt (1993) appear to be the only study that directly examined stress levels among African-American faculty in comparison to White faculty via the National Faculty Stress Survey questionnaire. From analysis of matched pairs of Black and White faculty by age, gender, tenure status, academic rank and discipline, type of institution, and marital status, Black faculty reported similar levels of stress in teaching but higher levels of stress in the areas of research and service (Smith & Witt, 1993).

**African-American Faculty and Campus Climate**

The conditions that link Racial Battle Fatigue and Role Strain to the experiences of African-American faculty at two-year colleges include the parallels of racism in society and academia, a “chilly” or racially hostile campus climate, and faculty role expectations that go beyond traditional faculty tasks and responsibilities according to race. Race is a difference that appears to make a difference in academia (Moore, 1987). In a follow-up to the 2000 study conducted by the Center for the Study of Community Colleges (CSCC; Bower, 2002), a series of focus groups were conducted with African-American (and Latino) community college faculty to hear from minority faculty at community colleges not included in the original survey and to compare their responses with those from the original survey. Respondents reported being more likely than non-minority faculty to disagree with these three assertions: claims of discriminatory practices against women and faculty of color and administrators are greatly exaggerated,
interactions with colleagues and students are not influenced by race, and the issue of race is not one in which their non-minority colleagues have to navigate and manage.

Black faculty (and other faculty of color) experience racial and ethnic bias in the academic workplace (Johnsrud, 2002; Laden and Hagedorn, 2000; Turner, Myers, & Creswell, 1999). Racial and ethnic biases may be demonstrated through structural and attitudinal barriers designed to exclude people of color. Structural impediments consist of the lack of candidates of color in hiring pools or the lack of aggressive recruitment strategies due to the assumed preferences for employment in business and industry (Lewis and Middleton, 2003; Turner, Myers, & Creswell, 1999). Respondents in Turner, Myers, & Creswell’s (1999) study reported both covert and overt forms of racial and ethnic bias in the workplace environment, calling it the most “troubling” challenge they (the underrepresented faculty of color in the Midwest in the study) face (p. 55).

The covert, or subtle, forms of discrimination may manifest in a variety of ways. Laden and Hagedorn (2000) identified five points of subtle discrimination out of extant research, three of which were also mentioned in Turner, Myers, & Creswell’s (1999) study: overload due to new courses and excessive committee work; minimal guidance and mentoring regarding reappointment, promotion, and tenure; and disparagement of scholarly work due to a focus on racial or ethnic issues. The remaining points identified by faculty of color in Laden and Hagedorn’s (2000) study included dealing with colleagues who either ignore or make subtly racist comments about aspects such as appearance or linguistic skills and dealing with challenging and confrontational encounters with students unaccustomed or uncomfortable with people of color. In her article Silences as Weapons: Challenges of a Black Professor Teaching White Students, Gloria Ladson-Billings (1996), an associate professor of education at a four-year
university at the time, offered a first-hand account of the usage of silence as a form of resistance that White students might inflict upon a Black professor: “…the kind of silence I have been referring to here is that which students elect as a weapon or way to defy and deny the legitimacy of that teacher and/or the knowledge” (p. 5).

In-class experiences and encounters among faculty and students across race contribute to the components that compose campus racial climate (Hurtado et al., 1998, 1999). Although aspects of racial/ethnic diversity on college and university campuses has received attention in the extant literature, the nature and policy- and practice-related issues of campus race relations and climate have not been empirically explored to same extent (Hurtado, 1992; Hurtado et al., 1998). Hurtado’s (1992) study utilized a four-year (1985-1989) longitudinal student survey project from the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) and UCLA’s Higher Educational Research Institute to examine racial tensions and perceptions among Black, White, and Chicano students at several public and private four-year colleges and universities. Results from the study showed that one in four students perceived “considerable racial conflict.” Hurtado (1992) noted the necessity to consider the seemingly small proportion in the larger social context of reported racial hostilities occurring at several campuses at the time and the criticism from students about the priorities of institutions to improve the racial climate on campus. In order for institutions to take action toward enhancing campus race relations, research is necessary to bring “a better understanding of what constitutes a racially tense interpersonal environment…” (Hurtado, 1992, p. 540).

Based on an extensive multidisciplinary review and analysis of literature about the causes and results of campus racial climate, Hurtado et al. (1998, 1999) outlined a four-dimensional framework that institutions can use to comprehend, address, and improve campus racial/ethnic
climates through policy and procedural initiatives. The four dimensions of the framework guide institutions to acknowledge and examine the legacy of inclusion or exclusion of racial/ethnic groups; the numerical representation of racial/ethnic groups (structural diversity); the psychological environment composed of perceptions and attitudes of groups on campus, and the behavioral climate (intergroup relations). Hurtado et al. (1999) note that these dimensions are not mutually exclusive, but their interconnections challenge institutions to avoid the focus on numerical diversity “without recognizing how this change affects the psychological climate or for opportunities across different groups on campus….” (p. 6). This framework, combined with the revelations from the literature and policy recommendations, can assist institutional leaders and program and policy makers in developing strategies to improve campus diversity (Hurtado et al., 1998). The diversification of faculty was briefly mentioned in the overall consideration of campus diversity. The faculty role is key to the implementation of diversity on campus through curriculum, pedagogy, and in-class student interactions (Hurtado et al., 1999).

Issues of campus climate exist across institutional context. Townsend (2006) considered the components that generate a positive and negative organizational climate for women and people of color (students, faculty, and administrators) at community colleges. Essentially, a positive campus climate is reflected through the equal representation of people of color and (White) women in proportion to the percentage of the institution’s population, along with pay equity, and equality in opportunities for promotion across race/ethnicity and gender (Townsend, 2006). A negative organizational climate is influenced by institutional culture, which is informed by the values, rituals, styles, and customs of the dominant belief systems and norms for behavior and success, along with instances of institutional racism and sexism and destructive patterns of discourse. The organizational climate for people of color and (White) women can improve at
community colleges when “the perspective that women and minorities are not deficient because they do not fit the norms of White middle- and upper-class males” is embraced (p. 824).

In conclusion, this review of literature outlined the chief aspects of this research study’s institutional context (community colleges) and major frameworks (Racial Battle Fatigue and Role Strain). The exploration of the ordinary instances of strain on the faculty role from an African-American viewpoint within a racially hostile campus environment evokes an attendance to the consideration of faculty role strain exacerbated by race-related tensions. Role Strain from a racialized perspective complements Racial Battle Fatigue (RBF) by bridging the sociological and organizational underpinnings of Goode (1960) and Kahn et al. (1964) assertions of Role Strain with the individual and psychosocial aspects of RBF.
CHAPTER THREE:

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

A collective (or multiple) case study research design was utilized for this research study. The methods associated with the case study tradition correspond to the principles and characteristics of the qualitative research paradigm. Qualitative research has been described as an overarching form of inquiry that leads to understanding, explanation, and meaning of social phenomena with as little disruption as possible (Merriam, 1998). Denzin and Lincoln (2007) define qualitative research as “a situated activity that locates the observer in the world…attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (p. 3). Qualitative research consists of exploratory strategies that cultivate descriptive data uneasily treatable through statistical means (Bogdan & Bilken, 2007; Carspecken, 1996). The natural setting, significance of meaning, and detailed description are pivotal features of qualitative research. Other distinctions associated with qualitative research encompass the making of meaning via the research participant’s process and inductive analysis—forming theoretical outcomes as the data emerges (Bogdan & Bilken, 2007; Merriam, 1998).

Research Design

Several researchers note the complexity of classifying the case study approach due to the propensity of social scientists to categorize the case study as a qualitative or quantitative research design (process), a specific unit of study (principal), a concluding report (product), or even an instructional tool (Glesne, 2006; Jones, Torres, & Arminio, 2006; Merriam, 1998; Schram, 2003; Stake, 2006; Yin, 2003). Case studies are differentiated by content, discipline, or method,
including organizational and life histories, observational case studies, and the use of documents (e.g., photographs, videos, films, memos, letters, journals/diaries, medical records, etc.) as primary sources of data (Bogdan & Bilken, 2007). For this multiple case study, each case represents a male or female, full-time African-American faculty member at a public community college.

Qualitative case studies employ certain data-gathering and analytical techniques such as in-depth interviewing or participant observation to examine and interpret a single event, activity, episode, or particular phenomenon (Glesne, 2006; Jones, Torres, & Arminio, 2006; Merriam, 1998; Schram, 2006). The intent of the case study method is to allow researchers to preserve the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events with greater interest in process, context, and discovery rather than a test of a hypothesis (Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2003). The qualitative case study is particularistic, descriptive, and heuristic through its concentration on a specific situation, event, program, or phenomenon, its production of a robust, full-bodied illustration of the incident or event under investigation, and its guidance toward confirmation, discovery, and extension of meaning for the reader (Merriam, 1998).

A major assumption of the case study design is the criterion to examine a “single unit” or a “bounded system” (Merriam, 1998; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Stake, 2006; Yin, 2003). This defining aspect applies to either single or multiple case studies in which a case (inclusive of the phenomenon to be studied) has a semblance of an inside and an outside context (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Stake, 2006). “There is a focus, or ‘heart’ of the study and a somewhat indeterminate boundary defines the edge of the case: what will not be studied” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 25). In a collective study, each case has a unique relevance about the phenomenon under study as it belongs to a set of cases. According to Stake (2006), a new term,
quintain, was needed to represent the focus or ‘heart’ of the study. “A quintain is an object or phenomenon or condition to be studied—a target, but not a bull’s eye. This quintain is the arena or holding company or umbrella for the cases we will study” (p. 6). For this research study, the quintain was the African-American public community college faculty member’s experience and extent with Racial Battle Fatigue. Pioneering Racial Battle Fatigue scholar William A. Smith affirms this exploratory approach to examining African Americans and racial stress: “[t]he research field is wide open for understanding how racism affects folks of color…. Qualitative inquiry should be our first line of defense” (2004, p. 186).

**Research Participants**

The research participants in this collective case study are male and female, full-time, African-American faculty members at public two-year institutions of higher education. The two determining criteria for inclusion in this research were 1) to hold a full-time faculty role at a public community college and 2) to be a native-born citizen of the United States with ancestry from any of the groups of the continent of Africa; American citizenship was determined as self-reported by the research participant. This criterion was essential to include in relation to research participants’ exposure to and interaction with the distinctive complexities of race relations in the United States.

Through purposive sampling, research participants were sought and identified through telephone calls and emails to various departments and individuals in positions at public two-year colleges situated in a state in the Midwest region of the United States with close associations to faculty, e.g., faculty union officers, academic unit leaders, and human resources departments who then made referrals or shared the requests with African Americans with full-time faculty status. In addition, appeals for participation were sent via email (see Appendix B) to potential
research participants through information (and photos) posted on departmental/faculty web pages. A Participant Demographic Questionnaire (see Appendix C) was emailed to Black faculty members who indicated an interest in participating in this research study. The response to the question “Born in the United States” on the Questionnaire was used to determine eligibility to participate in the research study. Each participant signed an Informed Consent Document (see Appendix D), which outlined the purpose, procedure and expected benefits and risks of the research study, an explanation of the participant’s voluntary involvement in the research study along with the notice of withdrawal from the study at the participant’s discretion, and information about confidentiality and protection of identity. At the directive of Eastern Michigan University’s Human Subjects Review Board, contact information for the University’s mental health providers was included in the Informed Consent Document in the event that participants may experience adverse reactions to probing questions about situations that may be troubling to recall and discuss. Twenty participants from six public two-year colleges were interviewed for this research study. (See Appendix E for a series of tables of selected demographics of research participants). One research participant withdrew weeks later, citing “professional and ethical reasons.” Considerations about participant engagement with this research study will be discussed in the section “Methodological Observations and Concerns.”

**Data Collection**

The in-depth interview was the primary data collection technique for this multiple case research study. Qualitative interviewing offered the flexibility and latitude to the composition and delivery of questions designed to maximize the exchange between research participant and researcher. Interviewing as a main data-gathering strategy is useful to record the perspectives of research participants in their own descriptive words (Bogdan & Bilken, 2007). The interview
protocol for this research study (see Appendix F) consisted of a series of semi-structured, open-ended questions. Inquiries that comprised the interview protocol were informed by the research literature and elements of the conceptual framework and inspired by the researcher’s personal curiosity. In consideration of the contextual relationship of Racial Battle Fatigue to racial microaggressions, the specific point of inquiry to explore Racial Battle Fatigue occurred at the detection of a detail in a research participant’s account during the interview that could possibly be classified as a racial microaggression. Research participants were then asked to recall and describe their thoughts, emotions, and actions during the potentially microaggressive occurrence. When an incident under examination happened in the not so recent past, participants were encouraged to remember to the best of their knowledge.

Research participants’ narratives generated from the in-depth interviews were the sole source of data for this research study. Research participants were not asked to provide medical records or undergo any mental, emotional, or physical examinations to supplement or confirm their accounts. In many instances with research participants, data collection could have continued to obtain more information and insight into their experiences and perspectives; however, the notion to conclude the data collection process when data (or theoretical) saturation occurs (Bogdan & Bilken, 2007; Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006) is useful to manage time and resource constraints.

Prior to the initial interview, research participants completed a brief questionnaire to gather general demographic and work-related information along with a short set of open-ended inquiries to self-report general health status. Initial interviews were conducted in person with 20 research participants. Follow-up interviews occurred with approximately one-half of the research participants either in person or by email. Also, research participants were contacted after the
initial interviews to clarify identifying information and other details as needed. All in-person interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed for data analysis. Data collection took place from April 2009 to December 2009, with initial interviews occurring during the spring and summer months of the year. Interviews were scheduled at times and locations convenient to research participants. Interviews occurred at research participants’ faculty offices, homes, and libraries on campus or in local communities. Time lengths for interviews ranged from a minimum of 30 minutes to more than three (3) hours. Due to the approximately 1,700 minutes (or 30 hours) of audio recordings from initial interviews alone, resulting transcripts took several months to complete between interviews transcribed by the researcher and the use of professional transcription services.

Data Analysis

The data generated for this research study—transcripts of in-depth interviews with research participants—were multitudinously explored, inclusive of the identified tenets of Critical Race Theory, the stress responses that compose Racial Battle Fatigue, and the three dimensions of Role Strain. For this collective case study, data analysis occurred both within and across cases to observe actions and outcomes across several cases in alignment with Miles & Huberman’s (1994) assertion that “[e]ach case must be understood in its own terms, yet we hunger for the understanding that comparative analysis can bring” (p. 172). Preliminary data analysis occurred concurrent to data collection to contribute to the formation of the research as it progressed. Yet from the researcher’s perspective, it was also important to separate these two steps during most of the data gathering to avoid diverting from the established research focus. Also, researcher-generated memos, analytic files, and selected case profiles supported the data analysis by allotting time and attention for the researcher to reflect on and situate relevant
matters expected to emerge during data collection (Bogdan & Bilken, 2007; Glesne, 2006; Merriam, 1998).

Miles and Huberman’s (1994) three-part method of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing with the aid of NVivo 9, a qualitative data analysis software package, informed specific analytical processes. Such text-based management programs facilitate accessibility and efficiency in organizing the data for analysis (Weitzman, 2003). Bogdan & Bilken (2007) report NVivo as an adaptable coding system. Data reduction involved selecting, simplifying, and transforming transcripts through coding—choosing, summarizing and organizing the data according to emerging patterns. Coding consisted of a line-by-line examination of the interview transcripts to extract wording that explicitly described and conveyed experience, understanding, and meaning. Subsequent coding explored instances of commonalities and differences across cases with regard to experiences, encounters, perceptions, and responses. This pattern of coding and association within and among categories continued as additional data was incorporated into the analytic process. Used to a lesser extent due to the researcher’s choice of method to organize written information, data display occurred with the use of paragraph blocks with descriptive headings, still useful to prompt an ongoing review of the guiding research questions and assist in generating initial understandings of the data. Some of the headings morphed or ascended into broad groupings leading toward conclusion drawing and verification in which patterns, explanations, and meanings emerging from the data became increasingly coherent and robust.

**Trustworthiness (Validity and Reliability)**

In qualitative research, terms such as credibility, transferability, translatability, dependability, confirmability, plausibility, believability, and trustworthiness correlate to the
quantitative principles of validity (congruency of findings to reality) and reliability (extent of replication of findings; Carcary, 2009; Creswell & Miller, 2000; Glesne, 2006; Imel, Kerka, & Wonacott, (2002); Jones, Torres, & Armino, 2006; Koch, 2006; LeCompte & Goetz, 1982; Lietz, Langer, & Furman, 2006; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1995, 1998). This conversion reflects a significant distinction between these two methodological paradigms: the qualitative (constructivist) approach to scientific inquiry is conducted with different perspectives toward validity and reliability in comparison to its quantitative (positivist) counterpart; the imperative for rigor in ethnographic research is expected, yet due to the inapplicability of prevailing quantitative measures, such comparative strategies to ensure trustworthiness (rigor) are strongly advised and strategized in the research literature (Borman, LeCompte, & Goetz, 1986; Creswell & Miller, 2000; LeCompte & Goetz, 1982; Lietz, Langer, & Furman, 2006; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1995).

Positioned as the overarching concept to encapsulate the elements of rigor in qualitative research, trustworthiness occurs, according to Lincoln and Guba (1985), when “findings as closely reflect the meanings as described by the participants” (Lietz, Langer, & Furman, 2006, p. 444). Credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability are four factors to consider in establishing trustworthiness to coincide with the conventional functions of validity and reliability (Bowen, 2009; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1995). Credibility, as one qualitative indicator for (internal) validity, considers the accuracy, believability, and confidence of participant accounts and inferences to the realities of the sources and social phenomena (Bowen, 2009; Creswell & Miller, 2000; Imel, Kerka, & Wonacott, 2002; Koch, 2006; LeCompte & Goetz, 1982; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).
Transferability, similarly associated with (external) validity, broadly relates to the provision of substantive information to allow for consideration of contextual alignment with other studies (Borman, LeCompte, & Goetz, 1986; Bowen, 2009; Imel, Kerka, & Wonacott, 2002; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Among the variety of options in the research literature to clarify this description, Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest that the extent of transferability be actualized through the determination of “similarity between two situations,” labeled as “fittingness,” which they define as “the degree of congruence between sending and receiving contexts” (p. 124). These contexts of note consist of the findings and conclusions of the initial study to which the outcomes of past, present, or future studies may be considered or applied. However, the aim of applicability (or generalizability) as traditionally constructed in quantitative research is counterintuitive to the goals and objectives of ethnography, which seek to explore, understand, and make meaning of social phenomena (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1998; Schofield, 1990). Notwithstanding these methodological characteristics, the notion of transferability is feasible under certain conditions, starting with the provision of adequate information about the inquiry which, according to Lincoln & Guba (1985), is where “the responsibility of the original investigator ends…to make such similarity judgments possible” to equip readers to determine the potentialities of transferability (p. 298). “The best advice to give anyone seeking to make a transfer is to accumulate empirical evidence about contextual similarity; the responsibility of the original investigator ends in providing sufficient descriptive data to make such similarity judgments possible” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 298).

Borman, LeCompte, and Goetz (1986) assert that translatability (explicit identification of methods, categories, and characteristics of phenomena and groups) and comparability (usage of standard terminology and detailed characteristics and boundaries of the inquiry) can lead to
generalizability similar to Lincoln and Guba’s (1985) directive of detailed descriptions of the inquiry. “When these canons are followed, qualitative researchers can indeed make generalizations, assuming that they are careful to document the number of studies upon which the generalizations are based, and the manner in which the studies and circumstances differed” (Borman, LeCompte and Goetz, 1986, p. 48). Miles and Huberman (1994) acknowledge the paradoxical importance of cross-case analysis to enhance generalizability, yet they concur with Yin’s (2003) view of the case study as generalizable to theoretical propositions, not to populations or universes. In doing a case study, “the goal is to expand and generalize theories (analytic generalization) and not to enumerate frequencies (statistical generalization; p. 10).

Qualitative inquiry seeks to derive universal statements about general social processes (Bogdan & Bilken, 2007; Merriam, 1998). Although Stake (2006) considers the existence of a “healthy tension” between generalization and particularization, the fundamental role of case study is about particularization, not generalizability. “There is an emphasis on uniqueness and that implies knowledge of others that the case is different from, but the first emphasis is on understanding the case itself” (Stake, 1994, p. 8). Further emphasizing the point of particularity versus generalizability in case study research and the variety of meaning that can arise from qualitative data, Carspecken (1996) suggests that the vast potentialities of meanings and themes can be analyzed within a “meaning field” as part of the process of meaning reconstruction. This multifaceted process facilitates the exploration of qualitative data that consists of information, ideas, and opinions from research participants, or “actors” in which neither the intent, nor the “impressions of meaning” cannot be known “for certain” (p. 96). A meaning field can be used to “specify [the range of] possibilities” that could exist in the words and expressions of qualitative data.
As an ethnographic criterion for reliability, dependability addresses the integrity or consistency of a qualitative inquiry’s outcomes to the data collected (Borman, LeCompte, & Goetz, 1986; Bowen, 2009; Imel, Kerka, & Wonacott, 2002; LeCompte & Goetz, 1982; Koch, 2006; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1995). Similar to concerns about internal/external validity and generalizability/applicability through conventional (quantitative) means, the expectation for replication in qualitative research is both impossible and impractical.

“…qualitative research cannot be replicated exactly…. Part of the problem lies in the extent to which ethnographic and qualitative research have purposes that are different from controlled or quasi-controlled experimental studies and hence must address concerns for reliability differently” (Borman, LeCompte, & Goetz, 1986, p. 46-47). Instead of determining the extent to which a study’s findings may be replicated, the question of reliability in qualitative research seeks to align the data with reality or the actual occurrences in the settings being investigated. The unpredictability of human behavior makes reliability problematic in the traditional sense. “The question then is not to whether the findings will be found again but whether the results are consistent with the data collected” (Merriam, 1998, p. 206). Similar to activities that enhance transferability, dependability (and likewise comparability) may be established by delineating “the physical, social, and interpersonal contexts within which data are gathered” along with “descriptions of contexts [that] should include function and structure as well as specification of features” to enhance replicability (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982, p. 39). However, it is important to acknowledge that comparability is a reasonable purpose of the approximate replication of a qualitative inquiry due to the inability to generate exact conditions as the original inquiry.

Borman, LeCompte, and Goetz (1986) call for a “careful accounting for those changes in the field site or researcher role that may have generated observed differences in results…data should
be lodged in their social, cultural, and historical context so that social changes and maturation are taken into consideration” (p. 47).

Confirmability is the fourth factor to establish trustworthiness identified by Lincoln and Guba (1985), which they claim “is established when credibility, transferability, and dependability are achieved” (p. 327). Bowen (2009) explains the respective relationship of dependability to confirmability as “the stability of the findings over time” to “the internal coherence of the data in relation to the findings, interpretations, and recommendations” (p. 306). In response to the notion of objectivity in quantitative research—which addresses the degree of independence or bias in a research study’s instrumentation—confirmability entails the documentation of the thought and decision-making processes that generated the interpretations and conclusions of the inquiry for corroboration; this criterion is of particular consequence as the researcher(s) is/are the primary instrument(s) in qualitative research. Along with Lincoln and Guba’s (1985) explanation that the inspection of objectivity belongs “on the data themselves [because] [t]he issue is no longer the investigator’s characteristics but the characteristics of the data (p. 300), Borman, LeCompte, and Goetz (1986) call attention to the significance of personal discipline to avoid “excessive subjectivity. Personal discipline requires recognizing explicitly that observers are also research instruments. Thus qualitative researchers develop awareness, not always shared in other paradigms, which instrumentation cannot be relied on to expunge bias” (p. 43).

In all, the data management and analytical activities that operationalize credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability—four factors heralded by Lincoln and Guba (1985) to establish trustworthiness in qualitative research—have multiple and cooperative functions. Rich, thick description, triangulation, inclusion of disconfirming evidence (negative
case analysis), researcher’s perspective (role and reflexivity), supervisory debriefing, and the development of a physical audit trail comprise the range of activities conducted for this collective case study to institute trustworthiness. Embedded within and across each of these activities is the provision of precise, detailed reporting to accurately assess this research study’s findings as harmonious to reality (valid) and replicable within reason (reliable) from an ethnographic perspective.

As a demonstration of translatability, the use of rich, thick description of data captures the reader’s attention to the situation and invokes a resolution of the extent of collective experience (Creswell, 2003; Creswell & Miller, 2000; Glesne, 2006; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1995, 1998). The generation of rich, thick description occurred through concentrated examination of the data (transcripts from research participant interviews) to develop an intimate understanding and closeness with the data. This intimacy with the data allows the researcher to carefully organize and present the findings with details that accurately reflect the sentiments of research participants’ accounts. Along with transferability as an associated measure of qualitative validity, the investigation and inclusion of disconfirming or negative evidence beyond the detection of initial themes and categories (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Miles & Huberman, 1994) was documented in this research study to establish credibility. Lincoln and Guba (1985) refer to this process of “negative case analysis” as “a process of revising hypotheses with hindsight” (p. 309). Negative case analysis attributes to credibility due to the challenge of the researcher to search for contrary evidence, particularly in qualitative data due to the constructivist notion that reality is “multiple and complex” (Creswell & Miller, 2000, p. 127).

Supervisory debriefings, researcher reflexivity, and triangulation demonstrate credibility, dependability, and confirmability because of their individual and collective charge to substantiate
the cognitive and material structures that generated this research study’s raw data, interpretations, and conclusions. Deriving from the act of peer review/debriefing, described as an external individual’s (interested or otherwise) review of a study’s data and research process to assess the probabilities of emerging ideas and the recognition of the researcher’s acknowledged but unexplored notions (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1995), this researcher engaged in similar debriefings with dissertation committee members throughout the development, implementation, and conclusion of this inquiry through occasional consultations. This researcher’s general beliefs, assumptions, values, and biases, along with perspectives about life and race in American society were disclosed at the onset of this qualitative research study (See “Role of the Researcher” section later in this chapter). This reflexivity is valuable to the qualitative paradigm to enhance credibility, to alleviate challenges of partiality, and to provide insight about the interpretive derivations of the findings (Creswell, 2003; Creswell & Miller, 2000; Borman, LeCompte, and Goetz, 1986). Finally, the fundamental purpose of triangulation contributes to the credibility, dependability, and confirmability of this research study through the usage of a variety of resources (people, methods, researchers, or theories to verify data (Creswell, 2003; Creswell & Miller, 2000; LeCompte & Goetz, 1986; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1995). This convergence of systematically sorting through multiple and different data sources facilitates corroborating evidence to identify common themes or categories (Creswell & Miller, 2000) and “formalizes the meanings which participants attribute to phenomena” (LeCompte & Goetz, 1986, p. 53). In this research study, triangulation occurred with the use of multiple sources—research participants’ accounts for cross-case analysis. As previously noted, cases were reviewed repeatedly to ascertain the variety of perceptions, encounters, and responses to shared and individual experiences in relation to the phenomenon under investigation.
According to Stake (2006), triangulation has been used to clarify meaning by means of multiple perceptions. “The qualitative researcher is interested in diversity of perception, even the multiple realities within which people live. Triangulation helps to identify these different realities” (Stake, 2006, p. 38).

Finally, an audit trail is a useful tool to detail the theoretical, methodological, and analytic choices of an inquiry (Akkerman et al., 2008; Koch, 2006). Lincoln and Guba’s (1982, 1985) recommendation of the audit as a qualitative approach (informed by Halpern’s 1983 dissertation) to conventional forms of validity and reliability is consistently referenced in the research literature (Akkerman et al., 2008; Bowman, 2009; Creswell, 2003; Creswell & Miller, 2000; Cutcliffe & McKenna, 2004; Koch, 2006; Lietz, Langer, & Furman, 2006; Lincoln & Guba, 1982, 1985; Merriam, 1995). The audit, described by Lincoln and Guba (1985) as possibly “the single most trustworthiness technique available to the naturalist” (p. 283), is a procedure in which an external individual or entity (auditor) conducts a quality assessment on a research inquiry; this process has been compared to that of a fiscal audit in which an auditor is charged with reviewing and validating the financial records of a business (Akkerman et al., 2008; Creswell & Miller, 2000; Lincoln & Guba, 1982, 1985). Similar to the fiscal audit, the systematic review of records facilitates the examination of both the process (dependability) and the product (confirmability) of the research project (Akkerman, Admirral, Brekelmans, & Oost, 2008; Lincoln & Guba, 1982, 1985). Consequently, as Lincoln and Guba (1985) advise that an audit cannot occur “without a residue of record stemming from the inquiry” (p. 319), the audit trail—the collection of a series of documents that explicitly reflect the steps that occurred to initiate, execute, and close the inquiry—is necessary to determine the sufficiency of the information to conduct the audit and then to use the documentation to complete the audit. This
preparatory activity is known as establishing the “auditability” of the inquiry (Akkerman et al., 2008; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). For this research study, a physical audit trail was developed, denoting this inquiry’s major methodological stages (See Appendix I; Carcary, 2009). The raw data and other proprietary documents are not included with the audit trail to protect the identities of research participants.

**Role of the Researcher**

Along with rich, thick description and triangulation to address believability, credibility, and confirmability of the data, the role of the researcher is a significant to the trustworthiness of a research study’s data. Per Merriam (1998), the goal to comprehend, expound, and find meaning of social phenomena from the individual’s perspective with little interruption as possible characterizes qualitative research. Because a significant function of the researcher’s role is as the direct data-gathering instrument, it is necessary for the researcher to willingly identify and disclose personal assumptions, biases, and values (Bogdan & Bilken, 2007; Creswell, 2003; Merriam, 1998). As cultural beings, every person—including researchers and research participants—are positioned, or comprised of an array of such characteristics as race, gender, and nationality that are fixed or culturally attributed (Bogdan & Bilken, 2007; Chiseri-Strater, 1996). “Given this position, it is impossible to conduct culturally neutral qualitative research. Thus, all strategies are developed to identify, articulate, and manage subjectivity rather than to eliminate it” (Choudhuri, 2005, p. 272). The very ownership and disclosure of inherent subjectivity celebrated by the qualitative research paradigm contributes to the formation of the researcher’s personal, academic, and professional assumptions, choices, experiences, and aspirations.

For this study’s researcher, the personal saliency and societal significance of race in America has been an enduring assumption, perceived by the existence of obvious and subtle
racial hostilities that work to impair the exchange of teaching and learning. Similar to the conditions of the print and broadcast newsroom (which was this researcher’s initial career aspiration as a television news broadcaster), so it seems in the academy: the struggle of African Americans to gain access and inclusion into the scholarship as well as the classrooms, conference rooms, and boardrooms of the nation’s colleges and universities. In the recognition that these viewpoints shape this researcher’s approaches and options to collect, view, and understand the data generated from this study, a number of strategies were applied to ensure fairness, trustworthiness, and credibility. These approaches included a strong and sincere commitment to adhere to the criteria that defines the systematic set of procedures to collect, analyze, and interpret data, demonstrated by completing researcher memos to document thoughts and concerns for the duration of the study, consultation and in-depth conversations with members of the dissertation committee to discuss ideas and concerns, and frequent review of and dedicated contemplation about the data to strengthen knowledge and understanding of spoken and unspoken sentiments and overt and implied messages from both individual (within-case) and collective (across-case) perspectives.

As the sole instrument of data collection and interpretation for this study, this researcher recognized the necessity to balance the activities of data gathering and interpreting without the undue influence of personal subjectivity. Qualitative researchers readily and insightfully acknowledge its unapologetic presence in every aspect of life and scientific study, yet are mindful to ensure that these subjectivities, as Choudhuri (2005) noted, are positioned, and managed appropriately. For example, along with the strategies for managing self-reflection, this researcher has chosen to present the content of this chapter in the voice of third person to reflect the desire to be a complementary, facilitative instrument for readers of this research study to see,
understand, and relate to the research participants highlighted in this study with as little interference as possible.

The commitment and responsibility to honor the voices of research participants are supported with this researcher’s interviewing and listening skills and abilities learned as a journalism major in undergraduate school. In addition, this researcher’s inquisitive nature guides the process of inquiry and prompts active engagement and listening. These attributes were confirmed through research participants’ remarks during the interviews. Lots of friendly banter and cross-talk occurred during several interviews, indicating rapport and increasing comfort as time progressed during the interviews. A number of research participants remarked that this researcher asked “good questions” as an indication of a sense of trust that the sensitive information that they would share would be handled with professionalism and discretion. At the same time, issues pertaining to methodology and process surfaced, but did not seem to overshadow the overarching procedures of data collection and analysis.

**Methodological Observations and Concerns**

Several methodological issues raised both intrigue and concern in this research study, often simultaneously. After initial apprehension about the possibility of locating the proposed number of 20 research participants, this researcher was pleasantly surprised and thankful to encounter research participants who were enthusiastic to discuss their faculty role experiences, possibly because 1) they had not been asked to do so previously and, 2) as academics, they recognize the significance of the scholarly interest. This was evidenced by their willingness to make themselves available for interviews during off-semesters, especially when many were not teaching spring and summer courses. Furthermore, while most interviews took place in research
participants’ offices on campus and local or campus libraries, four of the 19 research participants (all female) chose to be interviewed in their homes.

The choice of interview location is symbolically suggestive of research participants’ introductory perceptions and speculations about their involvement in this research study, especially considering the subject matter of racial tension and stress in their faculty roles. In addition to the likely concerns about interacting with this researcher for the first time to discuss vulnerable and possibly painful issues, they also had to negotiate any perceived risk to avoid jeopardizing their employment. In other words, expressing criticism about their working conditions might generate unwanted attention and scrutiny. For example, some research participants chose to communicate with the researcher via personal emails as opposed to work emails where they were initially contacted. Again, these preferences most likely reflect the strategy to avoid being linked to an investigation, albeit a scholarly one, about race-related issues. These claims may explain the actual reasons for the one research participant’s withdrawal from the study, although the voicemail message from the research participant’s secretary or student assistant mentioned “professional and ethical reasons.” This researcher’s several attempts to reach the research participant to discover the basis of the withdrawal were unanswered.

Among other observations, this researcher noticed that, possibly as another protective strategy to minimize risk or vulnerability or to gauge appropriate levels of disclosure to the researcher, some research participants carefully monitored their words and used coded language, referring to White counterparts as “they” or “them,” for instance. One research participant refused to disclose certain details about a specific situation “because it’s going to be on tape” adding that he was “glad” that he signed the “confidentiality waiver” (Informed Consent Document). In contrast, other research participants showed no hesitancy to share racialized
experiences and encounters, even in response to the opening question. These varying degrees of disclosure are reflective of the different perspectives of research participants.

The relationship of this researcher to study participants was heightened by this study’s race-related topic of exploration. Extant literature has delved into the racialized dynamics between researchers and research participants of the same race, examining the expectation of shared experience, especially in inquiries that investigate racial stress or trauma (Mizock et al., 2011). Relying on previous interviewing training experience which calls for a non-reactionary appearance, this researcher sought to avoid articulating anything that might suggest affirmation of their experiences (even if undeniably relatable), although it is likely that some non-verbal messaging occurred conveyed through facial expressions of shock, amusement, and bewilderment along with some irrepressible interjections of “Wow” or “Hmmm” in response to research participants’ accounts.

These methodological observations and concerns illustrate the intimacy and tension that existed in the investigative process along with the necessity this researcher to be cognizant of the boundaries that preserve inquiry while cultivating an environment of safety and trust for research participants. In view of race as the central focus of this research study, in which research participants were conscious of the hostile conditions that exist for African Americans in academia and the desire to see this researcher—an African-American female—successfully complete this study for both academic, personal, and professional benefit for all involved, initial responses from a small number of research participants were sprinkled with concerns about the sufficiency of their answers. To address these inquiries, research participants were repeatedly reminded that their natural, uninhibited, authentic accounts were of utmost importance to the integrity of this research study. This is indicative of the researcher’s commitment to qualitative
research and the fundamental mandate to honor the voices of the research participants, do no harm, and to report the realities of the phenomenon under study, regardless of their alignment with the researcher’s initial speculations.

**Delimitations and Limitations**

Extant literature emphasizes the incompatibility of conventional measures of applicability and generalizability to qualitative research (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1998; Schofield, 1990). Instead, the notion of transferability has emerged to demonstrate rigor and scholarly association within existing inquiry (Borman, LeCompte, & Goetz, 1986; Bowen, 2009; Imel, Kerka, & Wonacott, 2002; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; See the section “Trustworthiness (Validity and Reliability)” in this chapter.). Per this directive, the findings of this research study are subject to other interpretations, explanations, and themes and are not generalizable to all full-time, male, and female African-American faculty at public two-year colleges or other Black faculty members at other like institutions. This inquiry is delimited to interviewing full-time, male and female Black faculty at public community colleges, an under researched part of academe in general and their race-related experiences in particular.

Conclusions and implications are informed by the research participants’ perspectives without intent to make broad inferences. The intent of this research study was to explore and gain insight into the incidence of racialized encounters and stressors experienced by Black public community college faculty, articulated by the purposively sampled set of research participants. The research participants, along with the researcher, were vulnerable to issues of content and association. Research participants’ accounts were self-reported, influenced by a variety of factors, including personal experience and standpoint about the subject matter (i.e., racism and race relations in America), motives for participation, and degree of comfort for authentic
disclosure, due in part to the researcher’s presence for the purpose of data collection. In turn, the researcher’s approach to analysis and interpretation, with sole reliance on research participants’ narratives, was similarly affected in the generation of the findings. These partialities could have been mitigated by the researcher’s inclusion of other data sources and methods, such as documents, medical records, and/or observations of and prolonged engagement with research participants. Overall, the perspectives of the research participants are valuable and contributable to the understanding of the existence, occurrences, and effects of racial stress for African-American faculty at public community colleges.

The proceeding chapters attend to the findings, conclusions, implications, and recommendations arising from this research study. Chapters Four and Five will outline major findings and themes. This arrangement of the chapters complements the presentation of findings, organized around certain aspects of the conceptual framework. The expressions conveyed in the research participants’ accounts have been preserved in their raw form; no grammatical corrections have been made to quotes. This choice was deliberate to invite the reader to “hear” the voices of the research participants and to honor the intimacy of the conversation between the researcher and research participant. While some of the language may appear to typify negative stereotypes about African Americans and so-called “proper” forms of speech, the fundamental aim of this research study was to amplify the voices of the research participants. In addition, the code-switching, or the concurrent usage of both Standard English and African-American English Vernacular (or “Ebonics”) is not an unconventional occurrence in particular settings (DeBose, 1992) and is a likely indicator of these college-educated research participants’ increased sense of rapport, trust, and confidence in this researcher. Every research participant did not engage in such relaxed forms of conversation; the code-switching varied primarily by age—older research
participants generally used Standard English compared to younger participants who code-switched more often. Chapter Six will attend to major conclusions, implications, and recommendations resulting from this research study.
CHAPTER FOUR:

Representation, Naming Reality and Managing Reactions, Resilience

The three themes and sub-themes highlighted in this chapter encapsulate the reflections, impressions, and consequences of the Black public community college faculty role articulated in the descriptions shared by the participants in this research study. In particular, these three themes characterize the range of voluntary and involuntary aspects of research participants’ experiences, encounters, and responses in their respective faculty roles as surrounded and influenced by a racialized academic, institutional, and societal environment. This racialized environment is framed by the explanatory tenets of Critical Race Theory and made tangible through the interconnected models of racial microaggressions and Racial Battle Fatigue. Critical Race Theory offers a structure and context with which to articulate the dynamics of an atmosphere embedded with elusive yet potent notions of contempt, relegation, and exclusion according to race. Instances of racial microaggressions and the Racial Battle Fatigue framework actualize the conditions, actions, and consequences that exist in a racially hostile environment.

Theme: Representation

“I have to put things in the context of time. I think when I first hired in at [name of public community college], because I was the first or one of the first, that was a huge weight that was placed on me because if I failed, you kind of felt that the race had failed. It wasn’t just I as an individual had failed, but that I was letting the whole race down if I failed. Or even that I was letting women down if I failed. So it was a very, very, heavy load that I carried.—Gloria, 30-year Math Instructor

The theme of Representation attends to the notion of the African-American public community college faculty member as an actual (active) and/or figurative (passive) symbol of
racial diversity on the public community college campus. While intent cannot be easily discerned, the accounts from research study participants illuminate their comprehension of the differentiation between their explicit willingness and the implicit yet anticipated obligation to serve as a positive African-American symbol on campus. Instances of the theme of Representation are depicted through these situations: firsts (research study participants who integrated their either their departments or institutions altogether); hiring committees; role models; racial stereotypes: political ideologies, appearance (size, dress), and gender-based generalities (Black male sexuality and Black female forms of expression).

**Voluntary Examples**

*The First of a Few.* A number of participants in this research study either completely integrated their public community colleges and/or academic departments, being among the first African-American faculty members hired as recently as the late 1980s to the early 1990s, or happened to be one’s first exposure to a Black instructor at a public community college. For example, Albert was the first African-American male hired into a full-time faculty role at his public community college in 1989. His background in public administration and civil rights shaped his perspective about the context of his employment, the significance of his new full-time role, and the lack of diversity at the college, especially at that time.

And I found out two months after I was hired from one of the adjuncts, part timers, that he [another African-American male] had been offered a position back in the ‘60s, but he had his own practice as a psychologist, and so he wouldn’t give that up to come here. So I found that interesting because out of all the departments, all the disciplines—I didn’t know that coming in. See, I found out afterwards. And by training, I have a habit of
looking around the room—I worked at civil rights for 10 years. And so the very first training we had was that whenever you enter a setting, you make sure you have a full view of who’s there, and that’s by race and gender. That was the first thing I learned in 1970. And so I always do that. So I’m conscious of who’s there, gender, ethnic—all that I see. And my very first day here, the meeting here, I just looked. We had our organizational meeting, the whole school, I said, “my God.” We did have one Black administrator then, though. That was [name of African-American administrator] that they got rid of. They find a way of getting rid of people if they—but that’s about how I started.

Similar to Albert, Bill was the first African American altogether to be hired into a full-time faculty position in his academic department in the early 1990s. Bill’s competitor for the position was a White male with a doctorate compared to his master’s degree and length of adjunct instruction.

…I had my master’s and had been teaching part-time in [name of city] since ‘74. I was still teaching there. All those things were attractive and when I interviewed, the interview team and especially my department chair, she and the dean, they liked me right away so—they had a couple of more people…he had a Ph.D. or something but they were—and I came at the right time, too [because] they were looking for some diversity because—and you know we were equal. I don’t know if that guy taught. He might have taught part time, I don’t know for how long but even though he had a Ph.D., we were both equal other than the educational level and they needed the diversity because our dean, she was telling me that they never had a Black person teaching Criminal Justice over at the
academy and they wanted to attract minority applicants in an all-White faculty and so that was part of the reason plus they felt I was qualified.

Gloria was the first full-time African-American female hired into her academic department and the second African-American woman hired at the campus location of her multi-site public community college system in the late 1980s. She shares her concerns about the broader ramifications if she were deemed as unsuccessful in her new faculty role.

I have to put things in the context of time. I think when I first hired in at [name of public community college], because I was the first or one of the first, that was a huge weight that was placed on me because if I failed, you kind of felt that the race had failed. It wasn’t just I as an individual had failed, but that I was letting the whole race down if I failed. Or even that I was letting women down if I failed. Therefore, I carried a very, very, heavy load.

Gloria expounds on the pressures of representation as an undue burden on the Black faculty member in comparison to White faculty members. That sense of duty is multiplied by the gratitude for being chosen for the scarcely available position of a full-time faculty member at a public community college.

And I don’t think White faculty really would have all those issues or would have felt the weight of the world on their shoulders because if they failed, it was just an individual failing. If I failed, it wasn’t just an individual that failed. It was a stigma that would be attached. Well, see, we gave an African American a chance and see, she couldn’t cut it or she wasn’t qualified or she wasn’t this or that or whatever, you know. That was very, I
think, was very different for me than it would be for a White colleague. I don’t even think they give things like that a second thought. I think also that a lot of them feel very entitled. You know, they feel “Oh well, I’m supposed to be here, you know. I have my degree. I’m supposed to be here. African Americans are very aware that you’re not entitled. So I don’t think that we feel a sense of entitlement when we get hired. I think we feel a sense of gratefulness because it’s so few of us. Unless you’re working in an inner city, it’s so few of us that are in the community college system outside of an inner city, so you don’t feel entitled. You feel grateful or lucky, you know, that you got the position. So I think those are some of the different pressures that you feel.

Revolving Door of Black Faculty. Shortly after he began his full-time faculty position at his public community college in the early 1990s, Bill noticed a reduction of Black male faculty through the joint process of retirements and the avoidance of new Black faculty hires.

Well, one thing that bothered me when I first came and still does, I guess….When I first came here, our faculty, this faculty had a whole bunch of Black males on it. And as they retired, they were not replaced with other Black males. They were replaced with White males. Now it’s hard to find a Black male on this campus and that’s one of my concerns. What happened? Well I know what happened but why did it happen? I think it was by design. It wasn’t by accident because them brothers had some power. Didn’t nobody mess with them. When I came in ’91, those brothers were leaving. It was some bad brothers, too. They’d been here since the ‘60s and the late ‘60s, some of them when the place started. And they weren’t…they didn’t bother anybody, it’s just nobody bothered them. Didn’t nobody come at them with BS.
Although it was several years later, Mark observed a similar absence of Black males in his department when he was hired into his full-time position at his public community college. And we had not had any African-American males full-time for a while. I certainly wasn’t a record breaker, we’d had full-time employment with Black men, but it had been a while…. I don’t think there’s as much of a pipeline for Blacks in the two-year world as there is for the four-year world…. I would like to see more faculty of color, younger faculty of color.

April observed a similar pattern of low numbers of full-time African-American faculty at her public community college campus, along with multiple reports from other Black colleagues about their difficult journeys toward achieving tenure.

I just find it really amazing that every African-American person I’ve talked to at this college, not just on this campus, but all campuses, has had a problem getting tenure at this school. There aren’t that many African-American professors here. There’s diversity, but there aren’t that many African-American instructors. We have African instructors, we have Chinese instructors, we have people from the Middle East, and we have lots and lots of diversity. And if you look at our part-time instructor pool there’s even more, and we do have lots of African-American instructors. But the full timers, that is where I see a great lack of representation and I think that that is, it’s a deficiency. I don’t know, just doesn’t seem right. I guess I’ll say it that way.
Annette speculates about the reasons why there fewer African-American faculty members at her public community college, starting with the notion that individuals and institutions hire and employ those who resemble them and avoid those candidates of higher quality of performance as a form of job security.

And of the Blacks, there were not very many that were at faculty level, and you can forget about administrative. And I also think that—and I don’t know how it works with other community colleges, but I think that sometimes at this community college, we hire people that are not as good as ourselves sometimes. I’m not saying in all cases. Meaning that, if I hired somebody that was really, really good, then I might have competition. And when I hire somebody that is—and I sometimes think this—not in every instance, but I sometimes think—and not just in this institution…they would hire Black people that wouldn’t necessarily be qualified in their position so when they didn’t work out, then they could point to “Well, see, we hired somebody that was Black and they didn’t work out and they did all these horrible things.”

Shannon extends Annette’s idea about the exclusivity of a network as a cause for the scarcity of African-American faculty in the classroom.

Well, if we’re looking at race, why aren’t there more of us in the classroom? Is it the good old boy system of hiring that keeps us out? Because people hire their friends. And I know when I was hired, you know, people in my department—I was in the academic skills department first because my master’s is in reading and language arts—people were mad because it was a small department and we had a lot of part-timers that have been teaching there for years and when the slot opened up, oh, they wanted the slot. Then here
I come with my little Black butt who never taught there, it was kind of like, “Humph!” People were mad about that, but I say it’s because of the board’s commitment to wanting diversity. They didn’t want to hire from within. They wanted to bring in new blood. They wanted to have different people. They didn’t want people hiring their friends.

Gloria echoes Shannon’s observation for the need of an institutional commitment to diversity to cultivate higher numbers of Black faculty on campus.

There may be attrition because of some of the other issues that are attached to race, especially at some of the other colleges and maybe even some of the other campuses here at [name of public community college] who doesn’t have an administration that looks like mine and who doesn’t have an administration at another campus that may be committed to diversity to the extent that this campus is. We have a campus that’s very, that is comfortable with working with African Americans. [Our] boss is an African American. It’s a whole different dynamic. I sat on the interview committee for the last dean that we hired. I was the only African American—no, there was one other African American on the committee. Everyone else on that committee was White. All of the White folks on this committee wanted this dean. That was the top choice. So that’s what I’m saying, you know, this campus is kind of unique. I think we could be a role model for other institutions for not only how to diversify, but also to see the fruits of your labor. Not just that you hired this diverse group of people but to see how it impacts the whole campus climate. To see how it makes for a better, more enjoyable workplace.
Gloria explains that for her, joining hiring committees alleviated the societal and self-imposed pressures of representation because that participation provided the means for her to release and shift diversity efforts from sole (or individual) to shared responsibility across the public community college campus. Also, it was a strategic opportunity for Gloria to introduce “new life into the institution” by appealing for selection criteria beyond mere competence to considering candidates according to “…other dynamics in terms of their perspective, in terms of their globalism, in terms of diversity, in terms of just expansion and growth, just even in the content area as well.” Mark’s participation on faculty hiring committees has highlighted the possible pattern in which comparable levels of faculty of color may not be able to be maintained.

I think has emerged because I’ve sat on a lot of search committees here and at a prior school. With respect to [name of his current institution], I don’t see as many minority faculty coming through the pipeline to, in essence, replace someone who, regardless of what their color, retires. I think with our new hires, we do need more people of color.

Although Bill’s involvement on hiring committees included a begrudging function—his presence would serve to attract people of color to an all-White faculty—he eventually embraced the opportunity, similar to Gloria and Mark, to participate in the process to increase faculty diversity on his public community college campus.

There were mandates in public employment every place, affirmative action. But that’s been done away with now. But at that time, my dean, at that time, took it upon herself because she felt and so did my department chair, they both felt like there needed to be some diversity in this department, not because it hadn’t been because this was a great opportunity, they felt like I was qualified and that’s why [I] was here. I think that I’ve
been on maybe three, four, three, or four interview teams for new employees in various areas, well even in this area…. I was looking for somebody with [a] minority background but they said, HR said, well, they are not supposed to look on application[s] by ethnic[ity]…nobody applied. I think I was picked to be on those interview teams to give it a minority flavor.

**Role Models.** Once the Black faculty member is hired and becomes a part of the campus community, particularly when there are so few in number overall, there is a noticeable reaction, especially from African-American students. The Black faculty member understands the source of the students’ reaction, acknowledges the students’ need to see an African American in position of authority, and embraces the role to serve as an example. For Annette, the favorable feedback about her teaching from students across racial/ethnic groups has an added benefit of showing African Americans in a positive light.

So on one hand, they were pleased that—they would say in class, “Oh, my God, you [taught] us how to do it. Oh, my God, we know how to do it, Oh, my God,” you know. And it was just continued and that I had an answer and then they would come and they [would] ask me questions. It was like, “Thank you for saving me. You have an answer. Thank you,” you know. So on the positive end—and not that I set out be a role model or anything like that ‘cause that wasn’t in my mind. I love what I do—some days. But on the positive end, they saw from my African-American standpoint, they saw a positive. And when you see a positive, as an African American being displayed as positive, and then other races perceived it as positive too, that this—it just makes you—it warms your heart.
Albert has humbly observed reactions of astonishment and delight as an African American when attending various campus events, from student gatherings to graduation ceremonies. For Black males in particular, Albert’s presence (along with other Black male teachers and administrators) has been an example and a source of encouragement to demonstrate the viability of an African-American male to advance his postsecondary education.

…I was invited to attend a Black male student meeting, and one of the students actually told the others, the instructor advised me, the instructor told him that he didn’t see—it was good seeing us because we were both Black, but he didn’t see that as a possibility. But more students are seeing that as a possibility. They don’t believe there’s any value in terms of payment. So you have it as a role model, they see that. Especially at commencement. The parents and all that are there. You’re going by, they smile, they’re nodding, and they’re waving. Therefore, it’s all of those—even students have even come up and said it’s so good to see you in class. Or they’ll come in class, and I’ll walk in, it’s the first day, and they gasp. It’s a positive gasp. So I see that as being—and I’ve done things with the President of the administration knowing full well it’s being done because I’m Black, a Black male. I know that. Just like I said, commencement. Sometimes, I’m the only one there. And I always had a very active role as one of the readers. I’d read the names. So here, you got one Black male. He’s reading the names.

CG’s combination of race, gender, and degree attainment is a unique symbol of success and encouragement for students. As an African-American male with a Ph.D. in the biological
sciences, CG is mindful of his conduct with students in and out of the classroom, especially when there are so few male students.

…Black males are even fewer because I teach science and the ones that come into my class, most of them, they’re good students. They always tell me, “I want to be like you.” And I said, “Well I hope you do better than me.” Most of them, they’re interesting because they know what they’re coming to when they come to my class. That’s interesting how they feel. The students around here are an interesting bunch. They’re like your brothers and sisters—like I always tell my students: we don’t go to lunch, we don’t go to [get] ice cream, we don’t cheer, don’t call me talking about your kids, your dog and all that. We don’t have that type of relationship as long as you’re my student. If you go on, we can come back and be friends, but while you’re here, I have a role, you have a role. Let’s not blur that line. Because I work in a micro lab, I always tell my young ladies, “It’s hot in here, you know how your cousins are, they will come to school with everything hanging here, everything up to here. Not in my class. I tell them on the first day. Button up. Cover up. Come prepared. Don’t nobody want to be trying to look at the book and you got all your stuff hanging on the desk. I tell them.

**Involuntary Examples**

*Racial Stereotypes.* In consideration of research participants’ awareness and willingness to commit and engage in the virtuous aspects of African-American representation, e.g., integrating departments and/or institutions, serving as role models, etc., the corresponding sensibility relating to the existence of racial stereotypes and subsequent concern to either dismantle or at least avoid their perpetuation influences how they chose to conduct themselves in their faculty roles. “Once a person has an impression of you it’s hard to reverse that impression,
change that impression,” April explains. With that notion in mind, the English instructor monitors her actions, ranging from avoiding slang, using “good English, proper English,” and lowering the volume of her music in her car during the latter part of her commute to campus. “So I don’t ride up to school with my music blaring...as soon as I get close to campus I’ll turn my music down. So that’s an example of when I really try to be conscious of.” In contrast to the actions, April willingly takes to minimize criticism that she perceives to be (negatively) associated with her race, some of her physical and cultural features, namely her complexion and manner of speech, provoke assumptions about her persona.

I think people expect me to be able to identify with my African-American students more and I don’t think that we have common backgrounds often enough for me to make that connection with them that I think perhaps people are subconsciously expecting me to make. So that’s something. And I know a lot of students are put off by me in certain ways—and faculty too—because oh, she talks like a White person. Now I think it has a lot to do with where I was born, in [name of city on the West Coast], for the reason, for the way that I talk and my whole body language and my exposure to ideas. So I don’t know, I find that people expect me to be different than how I am because of my skin color, generally speaking.

While CG understands and welcomes the opportunity to encourage and motivate students toward success, he confesses it can be burdensome when people presume that by his race alone, his perspectives and actions are exclusively oriented according to race, and is applicable to all African Americans.
To me it’s quite taxing that people look at you by your race rather than your content. They don’t know anything about you but they stereotype you. Many times, I represent the whole Black community. You speak—you don’t speak for yourself. You speak for everyone. Many times, that has occurred.

With no apparent basis for inquiry other than the notion of the prevalence of criminalized portrayals of African-American males in the news and entertainment media, White colleagues have approached Khallid with inquiries insinuating an illicit upbringing couched within offers to advance a presumed scholarly interest. Even the simple gesture of a handshake—a ritual with unique cultural mannerisms among African-American males—might be used to inform rumors of presumed gang affiliation.

I think, it’s interesting, colleagues come to me with interesting questions as well that they believe I can answer or should be able to answer. And for me it’s predicated purely on race. You know things happen. Someone once, when I first came they brought me in all this gang literature and they said, “I thought you would be interested in this because I’m sure this is your area and focus.” I said, “Well, why would you assume that?” They said, “Well you were in a gang, weren’t you, before you got to college?” The answer’s no. No. I’m with you. And so the answer is no, I was not in a gang before I got to college. I recall once I gave some brothers a handshake, just a general handshake, part of our culture, part of culture, gave the brothers a handshake. One of the White colleagues went into the faculty office and said I was out in the hall giving gang handshakes. Now, this is a handshake that I would give my father. I would give my own brother. Black men do this. You go to the barbershop, brothers do this, that’s it. And I just thought that was
so profound, I thought it was just profound. No one else would have to worry about what handshake they give.

Related instances involving White colleagues’ invasive questions and assumptions about Khallid’s family, background, and experiences, income, and spending habits further emphasize the nature of the probes based on Black racial stereotypes.

Anyone else can wear what they want. I had a colleague once say, “Wow, we must be paying you too much money. Look at those shoes. You people sure do wear fancy shoes.” You people. Did he mean sociologists? (Laugh) Did he mean people who wear glasses? No, nobody else has to hear that. Nobody else has to hear that. I’ve had people ask me what I spend my money on. It was funny. My brother attended [name of university]. Someone said, “Oh you must be teaching all these classes because your poor family in [name of city] can’t support (Laugh) your brother at [name of university]. My brother said, “I have an academic scholarship.” He said, “Yeah, my brother bought me some shoes and clothes, but that’s just so we can go out.” But nobody else deals with this. There are no other assumptions that somebody’s family is poor or they can’t do things. Nobody else deals with it. No. No. Nobody else has to deal with this stuff except for Black faculty members on this campus. What’s wrong?

**Political Ideologies.** Khallid’s frustrated responses of “no one else would have to worry about what handshake they give” or “I just can’t help but think they’re not asking other folks these types of questions” or “nobody else has to deal with this stuff except for Black faculty members on this campus” to his White colleagues’ interrogations exemplify his strong aversion
to accept and conform to expectations about issues pertaining to African Americans, including racial stereotypes and efforts to integrate and diversify organizations, such as college campuses. Also, his indignation about these racially hostile conditions reflects his alignment with Black Nationalism, the social and political movement that calls for the establishment of a self-governing entity for Black Americans within the United States yet separate from the country’s dominant, or White mainstream culture.

My ideologies however are supposed to still fit into this whole assimilationist piece. So it’s ok for me to be Black and on campus and if they have a dinner or something, well they historically wanted me to go. I’m a nationalist and I don’t make any, I’m not going to hide it so there are just certain things I’m not going to say, certain things I’m not going to do. I will not put on tap shoes. I will not put on Black face and I think some folks were upset about that. So having a Black face on campus was cool. It was in, it was a fad. Well, it still is. There’s still a couple folks around who do put on Black face, but that’s another story. So I think for my colleagues, they expected Black face and they did not get it, they do not get it. And I think it’s caused some, I’ll be honest it’s caused me hell here on this campus because I refuse to do certain things.

For Khallid, the inquiries about gang literature, casual handshakes, and his clothing choices perpetuate the constant exposure to racially hostile conditions and invokes intense anger, particularly when juxtaposed with his sociopolitical perspective which, he says, “has developed over time…from working here” (at his public community college), thus diminishing the possibility that his Black nationalist perspective may be unwarranted. He had once questioned that “maybe this integrationist thing is ok, if at one time, maybe we all can be fine,” but he
eventually concluded that “you know it won’t work, you know it cannot work.” Further, Khallid characterizes those colleagues and the environment that provokes such racially antagonistic manifestations as evil personified. “...it just reaffirmed that I’m dealing with the devil and so the question becomes if you’re dealing with devils, what else do you expect but devilish things to happen....”

Assumptions about one’s political or social leanings can be offensive. While Mark appreciated the feedback from a White female student who said that she valued her experience in his class, he said he was “a little hurt, maybe a little disappointed” at the presumption that he, as a Black male, would be liberal.

She said, “Well, as soon as you came in the class, as soon as you hit the door, I was like, Oh, my goodness, I don’t know if I can handle this. He’s a Black male. He’s going to be a liberal.” So she pretty much saw me and summed me up. This was a staunch conservative, admittedly, from her point of view. I just kind of looked at her, and I smiled because it’s just, how could you think that? I understand that based upon her experiences yeah, she probably did have some fear. She was just thanking me for feeling as though her experiences were taught from a neutral perspective, that I did not demand that she think or feel or act a certain way because of my race or my beliefs. Frankly, she felt, in many ways that she was not as conservative any more based upon a lot of what was revealed in the class. So I’m happy that she had a good experience, and I’m happy that in some ways, maybe I even converted her to some new perspective. But it bothered me that she thought, oh my goodness, or just had immediately this kind of negative reaction just based upon skin color, or something that she saw oppositional from me.
**Appearance**

**Clothing Choices.** Some of the African-American public community college faculty participants in this research study noted that clothing choices and physique (body weight, size, stature, etc.) contributed to how others perceive and choose to interact with them along with the strategies they employed to harmoniously mitigate devaluation and build or maintain legitimacy in their public two-year faculty role. This complex interplay of personal identity (age, race, gender) and preferences of self-expression with individual, corporate, and societal perceptions of professionalism was (and remains) a rarely satiated circumstance of the Black public community college faculty role. For example, in the early years of her teaching career, Shannon explains her clothing choices and alterations to her appearance to appear credible, motivated by her combination of race, age, and youthful look.

Because I appear more youthful than I am, so that’s another concern, trying to look older. When I first started, I was really like, “Oh,” my hair, I pulled it back in a bun and I’d put—I would never wear my contacts. I’d put my glasses on so I could look very serious, and very serious suits, and all these things. And I think it’s like—it’s a lot to go through just to get credibility that some people can get wearing a pair of jeans and a T-shirt and they just stroll in the classroom, which, in fact, a lot of my colleagues do. And maybe that’s another issue, too, because I feel very compelled to be professional. I think it’s really important that I am dressed appropriately, that I speak appropriately, and that I am on time, and all those other things. But I don’t know that it comes from outside or a sense within myself that because I’m Black, people might perceive me negatively. So I keep trying to head that off at the pass.
Labeled as “Black Barbie” by a student who questioned her instructional capability, Shannon admitted that such scrutiny can be “difficult because like—as I’ve said, I mean, I’m feeling like I need to do these particular things to be taken seriously….” Since that time, Shannon has decided to relinquish the struggle of apparel appeasement. “I don’t know. I’ve given up. I’m like, ‘Hey, I’m gonna do me. You guys do what you do with it because I’m kinda just tired.” Similar to Shannon, Winifred makes conscientious decisions about her clothing options.

I dress differently. I know they look at me like—and there’s a way I’m not willing to dress that some of my colleagues are willing to dress like. I’m not doing it. Okay. And one, because I don’t think it’s as professional as maybe it could be and two, I need to be taken seriously. And sometimes you just have, as a person of color, you just have to be doing that.

For April, along with the obvious expectation and delivery of appropriate conduct, she determines her work outfits based on the day of the week or her whereabouts on campus: the classroom or her office.

I think people expect me to behave in a professional manner, so I try not to wear jeans unless it’s a Friday or a day that I’m not teaching up in front of the class. And so I feel as though I have to hold myself to a higher standard than maybe other people might have to hold themselves because it’s so easy to fall into the stereotype and not be able to get out of it.
Gloria observed that, in comparison to high-performing students who may not have encountered an African-American teacher their schooling experiences, students in her developmental courses, clothing attire—along with other aspects of presentable behavior—are initially reluctant to engage because of a sense of unfamiliarity with the reality of Black public community college instructor.

So the other challenge you get with the developmental is that you get students, if you speak good English, if your attire, if you dress a certain way, you don’t have your pants down below your behind, or you don’t have all of your body hanging out and exposed but you come dressed in a professional manner and you speak good English, they have an issue with that. It’s like I don’t see me in you. I really don’t identify with that. So it takes a while to get over that. I’ve been doing it for a while so we get over it after about the first week or so.

At a previous adjunct teaching job at a historically White public community college, CG witnessed the different styles of dress among faculty. A department chair’s mandate affirmed his reasoning for his choice of style and practice of dress he deemed necessary for the faculty role.

I was working at [name of historically White public community college]. I was always taught when you go places you dress appropriately. I would come to school every day, tie on, dress shirt, dress slacks. I would be dressed, even a suit on. But my co-workers, they always looked like they were going to a farm. After being there for a couple years, the chairman of the department thought it was more appropriate to dress the part and a memo was sent out in relationship to looking professional. Instead of coming to work like you’re going to farm, you come to work looking like you’re a professor and everyone
said that’s because CG always dresses. But that’s what I was taught. And everybody started dressing much better. And students look up to that. The persona that you present is what they respect. If you carry yourself loose and uncaring, that’s how they treat you.

**Size.** Along with clothing choices, body size is another aspect of appearance that research participants recognize as an influential gauge of professional conduct. However, the careful attention given to one’s apparel did not eliminate the scrutiny and pressure that the African-American public community college faculty member endures to be considered credible in the faculty role. Khallid believes that his build has deterred troubling interactions with others without any effort of his own.

It’s interesting. I think my size is this notion of intimidation and people being afraid of you. I think my size has contributed to that a little bit. (Laugh) I think, you know, my size and my age. You know, God, he’s a big guy and he’s how old? You know, maybe we shouldn’t say these things anymore. I think that has overall, yes, contributed to some things, sure, that whole intimidation thing.

CG reasons that, along with his height, his voice can sound inadvertently threatening. …but being a Black and a male on top of that, it’s, I’ve been told, this is what I’ve been told, you’re six-feet tall, you speak with a commanding voice, most people won’t challenge you. But I don’t feel like I’m that tall. I don’t feel like I speak with that type of voice.
In contrast to the issue of body size from the male perspective, which appears to indicate a sense of authority mixed with fear, Annette reasons that because of her physique, she has to perform her role at an optimal level to be acknowledged.

And so, I’ve been the one and always—I’d better be able to deliver ‘cause I’m not a size three, you know what I mean? Not that I was this big as I am now, but I’m not a size three. Never was. Maybe when I was three. But the point of where I’m going is, is that that they [people] align themselves accordingly to their counterparts.

**Black Male Stereotypes**

**Sexuality.** As the only African-American male in his Ph.D. program that he completed at a historically White research-intensive university, CG constantly dealt with the pressure of combating stereotypes associated with African-American males, including questions about his sexuality.

It was something that I acknowledged that was there, it made me always be aware that I represented more than myself. So I remember once I was married at the time, but some of the young ladies always said you never attempted to fool around with anybody. They asked me, they said, “You gay?” I said, “No, why?” “Because you never….” I said, “Well you know I’m not here for that and any time something comes up I represent all Black men.” And I really, it put me on guard a lot. So as I carry myself I always remember that. I always remember that. And it kind of made you remember it.

Similar to CG, questions about Khallid’s sexuality have been raised, even as he is mindful concerning his interactions with African-American female students in particular. Khallid acknowledges that he has experienced “a level of respect” from Black female students, whom he
refers to as the “sisters.” On the other hand, he has observed, with trepidation, instances where “…there is…how do I say, desires, on their part—make sure I say that right—[for] some type of personal involvement and I don’t know if it’s the notion that, you know, all men are accessible in a sense….” One example includes an African-American female student’s gifting of an item to Khallid that is a desired staple of his wardrobe: a hat.

And I’ll be honest: this is a hat that I had wanted myself, but this hat was $125, ok? Now there’s no way a student’s supposed to buy me, (Laugh) you know—normally somebody may give me a card [saying], “Oh, you were excellent professor” (Laugh) or something like this. I’ve even had some students who come back years later once they’ve gotten their jobs and maybe, you know…bought [a] book…. [A] $125 hat is not what you’re supposed to buy your professor. She sat there and cried. I had to go get campus safety because she would not leave. And she says, “But when you teach, it’s like you’re talking to me.” I said, “There are 30 other folks in the classroom.” She said, “But one day you were looking at me.” I said, “But there are 30 other folks in that classroom.” And I’ve had a number, I’ll be honest, a number of those particular incidents. In fact, I’ve had a couple of sisters who—it’s like they were almost hurt: “What do you mean? But you’re a man.” Then, of course, “Oh [he] must be homosexual (Laugh)…. 

Along with having to fend off unwanted attention from (Black female) students based on unjustified expectations, stereotypes about Khallid’s presumed natural ability and desire to dance fueled a White female colleague’s persistent advances during a weekend social event.

There was a woman here, a White woman here, we were at a union thing. I will be honest, I went to, before I was tenured, I went to a couple things, you understand. I don’t
think I have to go further with that. Boy oh boy, before I was tenured I went. I did not put on Black face though. I did not put on tap shoes, I just showed my face, and then I left and went on and partied with the real people, right on? The woman there was, it was interesting…. “Khallid, are you going to show us how to dance? Are you going to teach us how to dance?” and all this stuff. So I always said, “I do not dance, I do not dance, I do not dance.” So this White woman comes to me, “Come on let’s dance.” “I don’t dance.” “Oh no, dance, dance.”

The initial exchange between Khallid and the White female colleague at the weekend event extended into the workplace in the following workweek and multiplied his pre-existing discomfort with this particular co-worker. Her advances escalated enough for him to report the workplace incident.

Before that, she’d already been doing some interesting things. I was in a small office. She’d come to the office with little low-cut stuff and try to do this, rub my knee and all this good stuff. So I said, “No, I don’t dance.” So I’m at the copy machine the Monday afterwards with two students. She says, “I want to dance.” [Khallid says], “I don’t dance.” She said, “All you people dance.” Then she proceeded to dance in a manner such that I had back away from her. She’s coming closer, you know, and I’ll be honest, in a sexually provocative manner. So I start to back away from her. I couldn’t back up any further because there’s the copy machine. In front of two students. So I reported. The students go in, “Yeah he didn’t do anything.”
During the subsequent administrative investigation of the sexual harassment claim, Khallid’s conduct was scrutinized intensely and his sexuality came into question yet again, in part because he refused to respond to innuendos.

One of the students was a brother. He came back. He said, “You know,” he said, “Brother, it seemed like they’re out to get you.” I said, “What are you talking about?” He said, “Man, I told this woman 20 times that we were just [at] the copy machine asking you some questions and you didn’t do anything.” He said the HR woman asked him, “Are you sure he didn’t touch her?” Now… I don’t understand why I would touch somebody…. [The HR woman asked], “Well are you sure? Did he say any language to her?” He said, “Look, Professor Khallid just said, ‘I don’t dance.’” So on and so forth. So after that, of course, then, of course, because she—a lot of folks on campus I guess found her to be attractive (Laugh) I’m sorry. I guess they found her—I don’t find any of them to be attractive…. But anyway, so then, of course, I really must be homosexual because of how fine she was. (Laugh) I said, “My God”… and so then it was this big thing, “Oh well he’s a homosexual, that’s what going on. He’s a homosexual.” Then I think it was profound, it was profound, because I never came out to defend…. Well then, of course, it just grew. Well, obviously he must be because he’s not coming out to say that he’s not. So I think that was very profound.

Khallid’s refusal to address rumors about his sexual orientation reflects his personal preferences about discussing certain topics in the workplace and, more importantly, his resistance to avoid engaging in any discourse that perpetuates negative stereotypical images of African-American males.
In terms of my colleagues: what do they expect? They expected, they still expect me to fit the stereotype of the Black male, but their stereotype, of course, has been informed in many cases by the pimp, the aggressive person. So I had some very interesting situations when I first came here to the campus. It was interesting how people would try to engage me to talk about sexual liaisons and when I wouldn’t, these are not things to be discussed at work, when I wouldn’t discuss these things of course then later I must have been homosexual. (Laugh) All this other—it was really amazing. There were some serious leaps made you know because I won’t discuss certain things. Obviously, you know Black men, that’s what we do, right? We just go, we just engage you know and have a lot of kids, you know all this good stuff. So I think early on there were issues because I didn’t fit into some of those boxes. But then who I was or who I am is also a problem as well.

Black Female Stereotypes

_Aggressive Forms of Expression._ Theresa explains how she seeks to control her behavior to avoid the classification and the perpetuation of the stereotype of the African-American female as belligerent and confrontational. Here, Theresa describes her reaction to a White male student’s threat to approach her dean about remarks she made during a lecture that were falsely interpreted.

I was very angry, but again, knowing me, being a Black woman, I can’t go off because if I go off then I’m in the wrong. So I find myself having to contain my frustration a lot when I know it’s race. But I know that they’re not worth me losing my job, because I love my job. So a lot of things I let go when if I didn’t have this job and if it was a different setting, I probably wouldn’t let it go. But at the same time I know that I’m in a position where my actions are supposed to be examples of teaching, teaching aids, what
have you, so it’s been a true exercise on how to hold your tongue when someone is just like coming at you, just coming at you and you can’t go off on them because again for one you could lose your job, for two it reinforces this sassy Black sister stereotype.

Even in an ordinary conversation or classroom interaction, a straightforward manner of speaking may appear to have a forceful tone. Winifred considers the feedback she has received about the abrupt nature of her communication and the different reactions from students.

Sometimes it’s just delivery. I mean, I even had some comments on delivery. “Aren’t—you came off a little strong or whatever?” And sometimes I have to sit there and say, “Okay, how to I process that” And then knowing that if the older colleagues that don’t look like me are saying [it], then the younger people may—that’s just they—they just not used to that type of delivery. My minority students, “You remind me of my teacher in—“Okay, so I am connecting with somebody. I’m not connecting with others, so how do you find the middle ground? I don't know. I can only be myself. That doesn’t mean I don’t have to change. It just means I can be myself. I’ve been self-evaluating myself for the last five years, and I ask myself, “Should I be a little bit more warm fuzzy?” I tend to be no nonsense by nature. I tend to be no nonsense. I’m there, and what you see is what you get. I can be straightforward. Like one of my students say, “Straight up, no chaser.” And I think sometimes students need chasers. And I am [one of the] chasers. When we finally—[they] get to finally know me and we’re sitting in student conferences…we’re all chummed.
In a similar fashion, Sharon, a speech communication instructor, is careful about her articulation as a model for her students. Her tone has often been described as angry in the midst of the effort to demonstrate the subjective nature of speech and delivery was said and heard by others.

In terms of my voice, I tend to be loud and I do that because one reason I don’t like students to mumble to me so I make sure that my voice is loud and clear, and I’m generally direct and to the point. And some of the students tend to think that my voice is loud and I thought, “Ok.” Or she’s just direct and to the point. When you ask me a question, I try to give you a direct answer. I don’t try to beat around the bush. I want you to be direct. I often ask them how many of you have ever said something that didn’t come out exactly as you anticipated. And they raise their hands and I say I have the same problem. So there are occasions when I say something that doesn’t come out the way that you anticipate, you can always ask me. The way that you said it, it sounded as if you were angry. [But] I’m not because you’ve not done anything to me. But it doesn’t always work that way.

In this exploration of the theme of Representation, which featured the literal and figurative notion of the African-American faculty member as a symbol of social, academic, and institutional commitment to racial diversity on the public community college campus, research participants’ descriptions illuminated mental and emotional reactions to encounters they experienced in their faculty roles. The nature and extent of these effects were contingent upon research participants’ willingness to partake or contribute to the activity or cause relevant and
meaningful to their professional and personal principles or such societal, institutional, or individual demands served as underlying catalysts of subjugation.

**Theme: Naming Reality and Managing Reactions**

“I tell you the truth: I didn’t even realize that that was an insult until the next day. I just kind of went over the conversation in my mind and I said for him to say a Black person that has this position is luck is an insult, really. ‘Cause he talks about where Black people typically work and it wasn’t this role, you know. I don’t think he meant it as—maybe he did mean it as racist. I think he was talking statistics. I think he was trying to talk statistics.” —**Samuel, 30-year**

**Performing Arts Instructor/Department Head**

The theme of Naming Reality and Managing Reactions highlights a series of mental, emotional, and behavioral reactions described by research participants during or after an encounter with a student, colleague, or other individual on campus. Research participants’ accounts illustrate a deliberate cognitive process to rationalize and manage the conflict to sustain personal capacity to perform the tasks and responsibilities of their respective faculty roles. This sequence typifies the responses identified in Feagin (1991), Feagin, and Sikes’ (1994) work detailing strategies that middle-class African Americans, specifically, employ in reaction to mundane mistreatment, prejudice, and discrimination. Initiating from careful assessment, subsequent responses range from withdrawal (avoidance) and resigned acceptance to verbal and/or physical confrontation, or legal action (Feagin, 1991; Feagin & Sikes, 1994). Along with careful assessment, responses identified from research participants’ narratives were withdrawal, resigned acceptance, and verbal confrontation. Descriptions of each response will be offered in the following sections.
Careful Assessment

The evaluation of a situation to determine racial bias is the characteristic initial reaction prior to taking further action. Considering the inquisitive nature of the college and university professoriate, the process of justifying, explaining, or at least contemplating the nuances of a matter is a predictable action of a two-year college instructor. “This careful evaluation (real or vicarious), not only prevents jumping to conclusions, but also reflects the hope that white behavior is not based on race, because an act not based on race is easier to endure” (Feagin, 1991, p. 103). Sharon’s innocent errand of delivering a form to a campus office resembles an incident of racial profiling—the targeted use of race or ethnicity by law enforcement entities as a determinant to engage in interrogative practices.

I’ve had previous experiences where I was probably one of the more visible people on campus, one of the most visible African Americans on campus because I was a full-time faculty member. Therefore, I’m taking this form to the appropriate office and a lady stops me and says, “Students can’t go here.” I continued to walk. She says, “Excuse me. Students can’t come in this area.” I turned to her and said, “I am not a student.” “Well, who are you?” And I told them who I was. And I guess they had never seen me before so it was a shock to them. So I’ve had those incidents where you kind of feel that there’s some racial tension but you can’t put your finger on it.”

Sharon has been a faculty member at her public two-year college for nearly three decades. As one of the few African-American faculty at her institution, her visibility is more pronounced. Her assessment about the exchange with the campus office worker includes the
attempt to identify the essence of the racialized intent, as with similarly isolating situations on campus.

It’s strange. I don’t know how to explain to you but other than it’s been strange. My experience at [name of public community college] has been strange in terms of colleagues and I don’t know if it has to do with race. I don’t know if it has to do with gender or personality. Let’s say that we have a faculty meeting, I’m there, and I will come early because I don’t want that “CP Time.” I come early and I’ll sit at a table and my first few years there, all the tables around me would fill up before anybody would sit at the table with me. So I thought that was strange. And when there are people sitting at the table with me, occasionally someone from the same department will come and say, “Hello” to them and they will ask them, “Do you want to go to lunch? Do you want to go lunch?” But they never ask me to go to lunch. So I’ve been used to eating lunch alone. And I’m not sure if it’s (pause) I don’t know why that is.

The abbreviation, “CP Time” refers to an African-American colloquialism known as “Colored People’s Time,” a label for the stereotypical notion that African Americans are always late or unable to be punctual. Despite Sharon’s decision to arrive early to faculty meetings, as one effort to show herself friendly or non-threatening to her White colleagues has been ineffective, noting that she has become accustomed to “eating lunch alone.” Like Sharon, April ponders the intentions of a colleague’s criticism of her reply to a casual greeting as racially condescending; her answer to the salutation includes a reminder of her vocation as an instructor of English, well aware of appropriate linguistic guidelines.
If I make a grammatical mistake, like someone said, “Oh how are you doing today?” “Oh I’m doing fine.” “Oh you should say you’re doing well.” No, I said good and someone said, “No, that’s incorrect.” And I’m an English teacher. “Oh you need to say well or fine and good is completely unacceptable.” So people feel more comfortable, I think, correcting me on things because I’m African American, but I can’t say that that is, I can’t verify it.

Mark’s repeated rejections to notices calling for his attendance to an administrative subcommittee meeting, which he describes as a “sort of minority-oriented group,” he wonders if the solicitations continued because of his race (and gender).

I don’t know if they—I mean, did they just put me on it because I’m Black? Because I’m a Black male? I don’t know. But I was like, I’m not gonna call anybody because if I call people, I’m just gonna end up getting more work…. And it was over—from what I could tell—their foci was over some of the atmospheric aspects of campus. So I think at one point they were doing a survey about issues for people of color, particularly students of color.

Along with the committee’s survey targeting people of color at his public community college campus—in which Mark’s presence might have been solicited to attract survey participants, Mark speculates that other reasons for the persistent requests for his participation on the subcommittee might have been to bring in new perspectives to the committee or simply due to his amicable disposition.
I think some of it might be because I’m a nice Black guy. But I think some of it might also be because for a while, [name of public community college] had not had any new faculty, and particularly faculty who were obviously different, younger, and they may have seen it as a way to justify some of the things that they wanted to get accomplished.

Shannon contemplates the racialized aspects of the rejection of her sabbatical request within her historically White public community college’s aversion to acknowledge the pursuit or attainment of terminal degrees. “… I’m pursuing a Ph.D. where a lot of them just have master’s [degrees] so they see it as ‘you think you’re better’, Shannon explains. “At our school, it’s kind of, it’s like hush-hush. You don’t say if you have a Ph.D.… They might slap it up outside your door. But nobody is walking around calling each other Doctor so and so.” Also, Shannon considers that other factors such as sentiments of elitism pertaining to educational attainment as well as the committee’s lack of understanding of the scope of her project might have contributed to the denial of her sabbatical application.

And I go, “I don’t get where you get that. You don’t even know anything about my project because I haven’t talked to you about it. If you had asked, then I could have shown you what my dissertation was about, you could have compared it to this project, and you would have known it wasn’t the same. It’s similarly related but it had nothing to do…” And I felt slighted by that. It’s kind of like I felt ostracized because I’m interested in something other than what I’m doing in my classroom, and I don’t know that it was racial. I think it was more of the class, classist elitist-type thing and we want to make sure that you just don’t get too-big-for-your-britches kind of thing.
Shifting from individual exchanges to the multifaceted dynamics of the classroom environment where the exchange of teaching and learning accentuates the complexities of the student-teacher relationship, a public community college instructor must consider and navigate the unique and complex conditions to maximize instructional efficacy and classroom management. Mark appraises the potential reasons for student complaints at the beginning of his teaching career at his public two-year college.

I think in my first couple [of] years, I got more complaints from students, either directly or indirectly. I don’t know if I could attribute some of that to race, or just the fact that obviously I was new. It probably was mostly that I was new, is what I’m thinking. People probably were not used to me and maybe my style. But I did wonder every now and then, I wondered. I think maybe, even I asked at one point, was some of this racial?

Similar to Mark’s suppositions about the role of race and its influence in the exchange of teaching and learning, Winifred evaluates the impact of her race and veiled manifestations of racial prejudice could hinder her instructional effectiveness and rapport with students.

In the classroom, I think I sometimes, and maybe it’s my own – because I’ve been soul searching here for a while, maybe it’s my own insecurity about what it means, what it is to be a person of color in a classroom in which there’s gonna be so many levels of resentment, and one of them very well could be race.

Winifred reflects on her experience with a majority-White group of students in one course, describing them as “a good group of kids intelligently and competently”; however, she labeled the classroom climate as “toxic” and “draining” because of the students’ attempts to
intimidate her through student papers, excessive glares during lectures, and other forms of defiance. She suspects that the students experienced culture shock because of her race.

Boy oh boy. I think they were giving me the blues because I was who I was, and I was giving them the blues because they were who they were. It was this ridiculous dance going on. What I could say about this group, this was a good group of kids intelligently and competently. And all I could see—and they just all looked at me like—you could just see the level of resistance. You could just see it, except with two or three of the young ladies. The men, they just looking at me. Just look[ing] at them looking at me.

Winifred admits that the students’ behavior impacted her instructional style. Ultimately, teaching not only felt uncharacteristically burdensome to Winifred, but also affected her mental, emotional, and physical well-being. “I just felt like, this is no fun. This is no fun. When I have apathetic students, it’s no fun,” Winifred explains. She adds that while she did not feel like her heart was “palpitating and things” during the experience with that particular class, she articulated her mood as, “mentally, you’re just drained.” However, before the semester concluded, both Winifred and the class of students achieved mutual understanding to the benefit of all involved after Winifred had a deliberate conversation with some of the students about the difficult classroom climate.

And I finally sat down and talk[ed] to a lot of them. And I think what I got out of the conversations is on one hand, yeah, I think being a teacher of color in the classroom was just like—that just was a culture shock I think they just couldn’t handle. I think in the other part too, I think they brought—there were a lot of different things., their resistance created my resistance, it just ended up being this—, and I think we just all got caught up
in the stupidity when we could finally back off towards the end of the semester. And I think that I became a better teacher, and they became better students. And they started performing like they really wanted to pass now, and I started teaching like I really—I’ve always wanted you to pass, but come on now. Let’s try to get it going. And I think it kinda went that way. So that was it.

In competition with race, Shannon wonders if age or socioeconomic status may be among the factors for a student’s choice to change instructors.

One time I had a student who left my class because I was Black, but he never said anything to me. He made statements to the other students in the class and students—most of these students like me. I mean, I’m personable with students, so there were students who came back and told me what had been said, but this person never said anything to me directly. And basically, it was just like that I was one of those “uppity Niggers” that, you know, he couldn’t have that. I’ve had once in a while an Islamic man who just—I mean, like they’re there at the first day and [then] they’re not there anymore, and just kind of you feel a strange vibe but they don’t say anything, particularly if they just switch out and get a new teacher. And so I think that—but like I said, in one sense, I’m never quite sure if it’s race or age.

While Shannon carefully assesses the matter of a student’s departure from her class due to her race, Albert initially declares that race has been the persistent reason that students withdraw from his course on the first day of class because he noticed that this pattern occurred
only with White students. However, he later considers that his reputation as a rigorous instructor could be a factor as well.

Sometimes you—the very first day you go into the class and before you even write your name on the board, people get up and leave. And that, to me says race. I have not had a Black person do that. It’s always been a White because I didn’t put my name on the board yet. So one of two things is happening: they’re not going to sit and listen to a Black man, or they’ve heard that I’m tough or whatever.

When Carolyn gauged an exchange in which a colleague questioned her financial motivations for authoring a textbook, she considered the inquiries were not only inaccurate but biased.

I wrote the book with lots of feedback from other faculty who taught that particular class and then brought it back to the faculty and it was unanimously approved. And then one of the questions—very inappropriate—one of the questions was “well, are you going to make any money off of this? What are you going to do with the money?” [Carolyn said] “Well, I’m not going to get wealthy off my community college, I can tell you that. Yeah, I’ll make a little bit, it’s not going to, not from my community college. But what an inappropriate question and I don’t believe that if I were anyone other than myself, the question would ever have been asked. I don’t believe it.

Withdrawal (Avoidance)

According to Feagin and Sikes (1994), the internal process of careful evaluation of an act to discern and eventually classify an act of mistreatment as racially hostile or discriminatory can be healthy for Blacks because “once a problem is named, it is often easier to solve” (p. 276). One
response is to avoid or to remove oneself from the site or context of the prejudice instead of confronting or making a scene (Feagin, 1991) which, according to Feagin and Sikes (1994), “helps only in certain situations, since being middle class almost by definition means venturing daily into a white-dominated world” (p. 275). To note, of the six public community colleges in which research participants emerged for this inquiry, five institutions would be classified as historically/predominantly White based on (past and present) student demographics. The institution would be considered as a predominantly Black college. From Carolyn’s experiences, the overarching relational environment of a college campus is largely determined by the institution’s leadership, inclusive of personality and organizational structure. Considering the distinctively different experiences Carolyn has had under various leadership regimes at her public community college, she wonders about the role of race as a motivating factor to devalue her contributions and she avoids such settings that seem to challenge her analytical approach.

So I find that I don’t go to certain meetings where I know questionable issues are going to be raised because I know that I will ask questions because it’s the way that I think and I also know that that’s in the current environment. See, all of that stuff changes depending on who the leadership is because I can tell you there was a time when if I wasn’t there with my questions, then people were like “We can’t go. We can’t get started yet” because they’re designed—my questions are designed to bring light to a subject, and really clarity. But that’s not the environment we’re currently in. I don’t know that that has much to do with race as it has to do, I don’t know, I don’t know how much race has to do with that.
Contemplating lack of support or reprisals from her dean at her historically White community college, Michelle eventually chose to discontinue chastising two students who continually disrupted her class.

I had a situation this semester where two students who sat in the class all semester and did their math homework and they would be as loud as me and you are talking right now while I’m lecturing. And a couple of times I asked them “Hey guys, come on” whatever and after a while it got to a point that I ignored them only because they looked like they were troublemakers and I didn’t want to get called to the dean’s office because of who said, she said, she was rude to me, she embarrassed me.

In another example, Michelle decided to discontinue a progressively intensifying email exchange with an online student to avoid provoking the student, particularly in relation to the communicative limitations of the online environment.

The student emailed me back: “The web link doesn’t work exclamation point!” I emailed her back: “Let me double-check it. Why are you screaming?” She emailed me back: “I am not screaming” [and a] long paragraph about [how] I offended her, I shouldn’t talk to her like that. I emailed her back again, “An exclamation does mean yelling.” She emailed me back, “No, it doesn’t” and this went back and forth to the point where all I could do was say “I’m sorry” but I had to watch my tone. She didn’t. Because again, you don’t know who you’re dealing with. It’s a really odd situation, especially with emails because students get brave over emails.
An unsolicited greeting of “Hello, sunshine” by a White male colleague, which eventually stopped as a result of a fellow White faculty member’s reprimand, influenced Melanie’s response to avoid or minimize her interaction with colleagues to maintain her sanity, composure, and image as an African-American professional.

…it’s stuff like that that I’m like these people are ignorant. It’s just stuff like that that you pull back and don’t interact and I don’t have the mental fortitude because I think that in any situation, whether you’re in business, education, any job, I think a Black professional knows that there are things they’re gonna have to deal with and you have to look at the larger goal of learning how to deal with these people and not reacting in such a way where it compromises your role as a Black professional. I don’t know. Sometimes I know I don’t handle that well. I know I don’t handle that well.

Resigned Acceptance

Described as “ignor[ing] the discrimination and continu[ing] with the interaction,” resigned acceptance is suggested as “the only realistic response” in a given situation (Feagin, 1991, p. 103). During a brief encounter with a White female student who commented on his articulation in his class, Albert chose to censor himself after assessing the racial bias of the matter and concluding that a verbal response might have been hazardous for the student.

And I had one lady who lives here in [name of city] she was like 50. She was younger than I was, but she actually came up to me after the third week and said, “You know, I didn’t believe Black men could talk like you.” And I just looked at her. I didn’t say anything-- I just looked at her. I wondered. What I wanted to say to her, she probably would have had a stroke, but I didn’t say anything. But she had never heard a Black man speak—give a full sentence, and I just found that interesting.
Reflecting on an experience when she was invited to join her institution’s accreditation committee, which included her increased visibility in both on- and off-campus activities, Annette recalls the campus executive’s reasoning for her involvement: “…he says, “You know, I really want you to do that ‘cause you have a lot of information….the thing that I like about you is that you’re not gonna have a narrow focus. You’re gonna have a broad perspective.” Upon careful consideration of the matter and concluding that race was a direct reason for her committee involvement, Annette chose to avoid confronting her colleague about her speculation.

One of the things that I do have is a broad perspective. Even to my weakness, I have a broad perspective. So he said he’d put me on the committee. And I was on the committee and so there was a host of people. I think part of—I think his answer of what he gave me was correct. I think also it was getting me out and exposed to the community because of my race. I think it was a double whammy. And the beautiful thing about the former president—what a beautiful thing by any relationship that I have with people, good or bad, is that I tell the truth and sometimes I bring up the uncomfortable to say this. And I didn’t bring it up in that situation. I just went with the flow.

In reflection of a tense exchange with a White colleague who challenged his educational credentials and their institution’s motivations for his (Samuel’s) appointment as department chair, Samuel carefully assessed the prejudiced aspects of his White colleague’s comments:

I tell you the truth: I didn’t even realize that that was an insult until the next day. I just kind of went over the conversation in my mind and I said for him to say a Black person that has this position is luck is an insult, really. ‘Cause he talks about where Black people
typically work and it wasn’t this role, you know. I don’t think he meant it as—maybe he
did mean it as racist. I think he was talking statistics. I think he was trying to talk
statistics.

Samuel choose to restrain himself and chose to make the best of a tense situation with the
colleague who, according to Samuel, “was bitter because he [the White male colleague] couldn’t
make it [serving as the department chair] work and I did so he’ll never be happy.”

I held back certain things. I hold back because I figure I can choose my—I learn to
choose my battles. Certain things are not worth fighting for because everybody is happy
with my job…the work that I do, from the president, vice president, all the way down, the
Board of Trustees, everybody, just happy. And so for one person not to be happy, so be it,
especially considering the source.

As Samuel considers the source of the disparaging comments, weighing the variety of
options to deal with the hostile colleague, the strategic option of resigned acceptance allows him
to remain focused in his role.

He can’t stand me now, to this very day. He can’t stand me. It’s been seven years. I come
to work, his office used to be right across the hall right there, we come into this door, I’d
speak, and he couldn’t speak. He’d just [made grunting sound] grunt, mad, just couldn’t
take it and I’d just smile. I use it as fuel to keep me going, you know what I mean? I
knew he just hated the fact that I was successful. He just knew I was going to come in
here and fall on my face because in his opinion I’m not qualified to teach because he
thinks you can only learn one way and that’s going to college and learn. I did it by living it. I mean by living it.

**Verbal Confrontation**

Albert’s, Annette’s, and Samuel’s responses of resigned acceptance to their respective situations may have been appropriate considering that they each wrestled with determining the professional and personal consequences of a particular response. Feagin and Sikes (1994) explain the existence of a “struggle to keep some kind of balance and to contain one’s frustrations in searching for the best response. In one situation, resigned acceptance is preferred; in another, active confrontation” (p. 279). Confrontation as a response to discrimination is a common strategy; such responses to “white actions include verbal reprimands and sarcasm, physical counterattacks, and filing lawsuits” (Feagin, 1991, p. 301). In some instances, verbal confrontation is delivered with wit or sarcasm (Feagin & Sikes, 1994). During a class discussion about study habits, Theresa’s qualifications to teach at the college level were brought into question. She responded by listing her educational achievements and returning to the original topic.

There was a younger White guy in my class a couple years ago and we were talking about in school and I was saying, “Well yeah, you have to have study habits because da, da, da, da, da.” And I said, “So that’s why I’m expecting a lot from you all.” And he said, raised his hand in class, he says, “Well why, so when you finish your degree you’ll have your master’s degree, then you’ll be able to be an instructor?” Something like that. And I said, “Well no. I’ve had my master’s since ’97. I’m working on my Ph.D., but what does that have to do with you not turning in your homework assignment? So you kind of see
them kind of trying to check my legitimacy when oftentimes they’re trying to look for an edge to get away with something.

Theresa’s mention of “them kind of trying to check my legitimacy” illustrates her assessment of the student’s inquiry about her academic credentials and resolved that a verbal response would not only answer the question but allow her to return to the original purpose of the class discussion. Verbal confrontation appears to be a consistent pattern for Theresa, particularly with White male students. In an encounter with different White male student who challenged her academic qualifications, Theresa emphatically challenged the assertion that she was a merely a racial hire. She justifies her choice to respond along with the accompanying tone of her verbal response:

I’m not yelling. I’m very contained and I’m very specific in what I’m saying. But it’s only because I’m trying not to go off on this person because to me, when a White male in particular comes to me in that way, he’s saying in so many words, you’re not qualified to be here. The only reason why you’re here is because you’re Black. And I know all I’ve gone through to get where I am to be damned [if] someone reduces it to me being Black. And in fact in one altercation I guess you could say, we were talking about affirmative action, a student who had been trying to get me to go off said, “Well, you know the only reason why you probably got this job is because you were a Black woman. How do you feel about a qualified White male not being hired?” And I said, “I have to correct you. I got this job because I am qualified and I happen to be Black. There’s a difference.”
During another exchange with a White male student who alleged that affirmative action was the primary reason for her employment, Theresa explains the basis of her anger laced in her verbal responses.

My anger [is] about this White man trying to tell me, basically, like, “Who are you to teach me anything? You’re a Black woman.” And I’m just like, “No.” And it brings up a lot of anger. It brought up a lot of hurt because like I said, I went to Tuskegee. That’s my undergrad, in Alabama, not too far from Waverly where you didn’t drive through after 5:00 where they have the Daughters of the Confederate parties. And I mean, so even though I wasn’t raised in Alabama, being in Alabama I understand the impact of race. So all that stuff I had to go through, all the things I went through when I was a social worker, judges trying to talk to you any kind of way because they think you’re unqualified. I mean so it’s like I’ve been fighting all this way to get here to have someone, and this may sound elitist, but someone beneath me questioning me, I was very angry. Very angry.

Interestingly, in an instance with a White female student, Theresa initially chose to restrain herself (resigned acceptance) from reprimanding the student for the sake of maintaining civility and professionalism.

I had a woman in my class this semester and she was just very rude. And she was very challenging, she was an older woman, she’s maybe 45, a little bit older than me. And she was just very rude. And she was just going on and on and on and I was just like, “Ok, fine.” So I just let it go and some of my students after class were like, “you’re just going to let her talk to you that way?” I’m like, I said, “No, No.” I said, “I’m just going to teach.” I said, “Let her show her behind because if I had jumped on her the first day, the
second day, that would have created an adversarial relationship between us and then my other White students would have felt like, oh, she’s getting on the White girl.”

However, as the semester progressed, Theresa’s capacity to restrain herself due to the constant interruptions from the White female student had depleted and resulted in an in-class verbal confrontation, which left Theresa concerned about her employment. But then after a while she kept saying these things that were out of pocket, you know, she’s just really being annoying. And one day I just snapped. And I said, “I apologize to the class for having said this to you,” I said, “But I don’t appreciate you coming in here saying I haven’t told you when assignments are due. It’s on the schedule.” I said, “You’re asking a student when you should be asking me.” We kind of went back and forth and I said, “and after class we need to talk. I’m tired of you coming in here undermining everything I’m doing. If you don’t want to take the class, don’t take the class, but you’re not going to come here and run my class.” And after that I was concerned because of course after you snap you’re thinking, “Oh, what about my job?”

Similar to Theresa’s verbal responses to her White male students with regard to her qualifications as a public community college professor, CG receives and delivers vastly different reactions in his adjunct teaching role at a historically White university in comparison to his full-time teaching job at his predominantly Black public community college. He offers a satirical response that emphasizes his academic pedigree:

Because when I teach at [name of historically White university], this is quite interesting, the contrast. I walk into a classroom here [at name of predominantly Black public
community college] and everyone’s proud. They see a Black man, especially 10 years ago when I was much younger, and I’d walk in and they’d say, “You’re a Ph.D.?” “Yes and I have three science degrees” and they would feel much more, they would feel proud. I’d walk in [name of historically White university] and they would question my credentials, openly. You know, they would question my knowledge. And I’ve had times at [name of historically White university] where I have to tell them that you don’t have the authority to question my credentials and because of that if [name of historically White university] didn’t think I was qualified, I wouldn’t be here. But you’re here to learn, not to wonder what I’ve done, you know? So it’s a difference.

When a White male faculty member walked in to Melanie’s classroom to obtain an item from a storage closet without seeking permission or at least acknowledging her, she initially chose to avoid a confrontational response. “He went to the storage room, went around, picked up some papers, did [t]hat basically at his leisure…. Once he found what he was looking for…[he] walked out of the classroom and didn’t say a single word to me.” Melanie noted that restrained herself from saying or doing something that might cause her to, in her words, act “like a fool” during the confrontation.

And I’m like you know what? I spend so much time trying to keep control of my classroom and you don’t say anything, not even an “excuse me”? So I had a confrontation with him in the hallway and it just so happened that I was at my mailbox and I saw him and I’m like, “I don’t appreciate you interrupting my classroom.” I almost acted a fool but I told him “I don’t know who you think you are” and I said that to him right in front
of the faculty mailboxes and other faculty members are like, “Oh my God! Oh my God! Oh my God!”

Melanie’s anger multiplied when her associate dean denied the absurdity of the unacknowledged and unapologetic intrusion to her classroom, thereby defending the White colleague’s behavior and mocking Melanie’s reaction to the incident. …I knew that one, I was going to feel bad about it, and I knew it was going to be a frustrating experience trying to deal with that situation. It’s always—the initial response in those situations is always just anger…. [The situation where] I just went off on that guy, I felt yeah, I could have been a little bit nicer about it and things like that. And then I had to sit in front of the dean [who said], “Well, he is sorry. He just felt—” but he never apologized to me and things like that. But I’m like I have to sit here and listen to the dean make me the bad guy and it seemed like such a small thing. It made me feel like why am I even getting upset over this issue? And that’s because you’re always aware of having to constantly defend your position as a Black faculty member. That the little things like a White male faculty member walking through your classroom as if you weren’t even teaching, that just bothers you. So it was always anger and frustration, I think.

Melanie’s account illuminates the mental, emotional, and physical consequences of dealing with racially prejudiced and discriminatory acts, including despair and regret for the conflict and the subsequent search for culpability—which is usually charged to the African-American faculty member deemed as an overreaction to an incident that Melanie suspects her dean would refer to as “such a small thing.” Feagin and Sikes (1994) discuss “the psychological
toll” that occurs when at assessment, confrontation, and resolution of a racially hostile situation (p. 277). Further, Melanie mentions two critical malfunctions to her physical and mental health resulting from this situation that could have had both an immediate and lasting impact on her ability to fulfill her faculty role.

I do know that my blood pressure probably went up. Lack of focus because obviously I was thinking about it immediately. And I think the next thing you think about that makes it so incredibly frustrating is how I am going to deal with this situation so that I can like walking into work the next day. ‘Cause there’s some things that I don’t think you can let slide. I think that if you let things like that pile up, then it would just make you utterly depressed… So it’s always anger and frustration and then just a sense of hopelessness when you realize that even [though] it is resolved, it’s not gonna be resolved in the way that’s gonna make you feel good. It’s just gonna be something where you’re just going to have to smile and just say, “Yeah, yeah, ok. I went off on him but try to understand this” and then people say, “Ok, I hope we’ve resolved this” blah blah blah blah blah and then you just try to go back and forget about it but you will still be seen as a faculty member that’s confrontational and that can be frustrating.

These accounts from research participants that exhibit response patterns to racial discrimination— careful assessment, withdrawal, resigned acceptance, verbal or physical confrontation, and legal action — articulated by Feagin (1991); Feagin and Sikes (1994) illuminate the endurance to contend with the racially hostile conditions of the public community college campus. “In addition to strategies for countering specific instances of white discrimination, middle-class black Americans have developed broader personal philosophies,
coping styles, and protective defenses for dealing with the accumulating impact of racism on their psyches and lives” (Feagin & Sikes, 1994, p. 293).

**Theme: Resilience**

“...understanding a little bit better about the role of community colleges, the role that they’ve played in our society as kind of a bridge for people who needed a second chance, I found it to be even more rewarding and a place I wanted to stay.... I think based on my personal experience and just some uniqueness of my background as a minority, as a first-generation college student, I think I have a lot to offer those type[s] of students. It’s frustrating just because of the students you’re getting, but it’s very, very rewarding because you get more students who really need to be there, than you may get, I feel like, at a university or four-year college.” —

*Michelle, nine-year Business Instructor*

The theme of Resilience explores research participants’ abilities and tactics to rebound and recover from racially hostile interactions and to adapt to the equally antagonistic conditions of their academic workplaces—the public two-year college campus—to function effectively in their faculty roles. These circumstances occur as both contained incidents and from prolonged exposure to an environment that is antipathetic or, at minimum, inhospitable to African Americans, particularly in such notable positions as faculty members at a college of university. The accounts shared by this research study’s participants—male and female, full-time, African-American public community college faculty members—reflect the dynamic and multifaceted interruptive encounters and situations that they contend with and manage to fulfill the tasks and responsibilities of their faculty roles. The narratives featured in this theme include research participants’ descriptions of formidable scenarios where personal and professional safety and welfare were implicitly or explicitly threatened. Other accounts delve into the presence of the N-
word in research participants’ experiences as one materializing instance of the racialized environment along with the strategies of survival and longevity in their faculty roles.

**The Lesson of the Serenity Prayer**

During the pre-tenure years in her faculty role, Gloria vehemently opposed a departmental decision to reject efforts to sustain a partnering campus that served a large racially diverse (i.e., African American) student population. She recalls that her colleagues “immediately got very angry with me” and “undertook a campaign to try to get me declared as being an incompetent teacher and get me fired” in response to her persistence about the issue. The situation, which spanned between four and five years and “was all down racial lines,” took quite a toll on Gloria.

Oh, it was grueling. It was grueling. Mentally and emotionally. There were times, I think—I had higher absenteeism. And I almost have perfect attendance. My attendance is perfect. I just didn’t want to get up and come to work. It affected me in the classroom. My stomach would be in knots when I drove up to the campus and I had to get out of the car and come to work. I hated going to a department meeting. I did not want to go to a department meeting. I was dreading going to a meeting and after the meeting, it usually took me a few days just to calm back down. It was just grueling.

Gloria offered and fulfilled several options to her colleagues to resolve the issue, including writing a letter documenting the department’s agreed-upon strategies to mentor new faculty and relocating to the other campus for a time. However, she suffered many professional and personal repercussions.
But what happened was I got to a point and this was something my husband helped me with. My husband had some real bad experiences being the only African American that worked in his job environment and having lasted as long as he did. He just asked me some questions and one of the questions, he said “Do you believe that the environment is going to change anytime soon?” And I said “No”…. So my husband said, “Well, why don’t you change?” And I had never thought about that because I always thought this is so unfair what is happening to me and what is happening to me is outside of me…. If you’ve decided that you’re not going to leave, that you’re going to stay and you can’t change out here. Then the change has to take place here [points to self]. And I had to flip perspective.

After that enlightening conversation with her husband, interlaced with questions influenced by Reinhold Niebuhr’s Serenity Prayer—“God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change; courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference”—Gloria made deliberate changes, including a return to her primary campus and, she says, “…life just got so sweet.”

**Language, Lynching, Longevity**

Khallid’s candid yet controversial comments during a campus event a couple of years ago generated some visceral reactions. During the panel discussion following a lecture on a celebrated historical figure, Khallid’s remarks incited two calls for his termination: charges for his dismissal from his faculty position and wishes for his murder, established by the presence of a racist graphic image at his campus office.
So I’m up on the panel and I didn’t think I had said anything so profound. I just started my statement and I just said, “Only in a country as wicked as the United States could you all honor pedophiles, rapists, slave-holding terrorists or murderers.” The whole audience looks crazy. Several people went to the president to demand I be fired. Now this is where I think it was profound: someone slid a picture of a lynching under my door. A picture. Now of course I don’t know—we have to take the meaning for ourselves but it wasn’t some flowers. It was [a picture of] a lynching. Several folks called, left bad, you know, naughty messages on the phone. And after that I think it really, really came out, you know, he doesn’t fit in. He’s not like the rest of the Black folk on campus. He’s not one of us.

The aftermath of Khallid’s outspoken yet sincere counterpoints at the panel discussion consisted of explicit insolent words and acts to discourage his future participation in campus events, silence his challenging rhetoric to the mainstream discourse about the well-known historical figure and ultimately, to remove his very presence from the institution. Interestingly, in contrast to the racially-intimidating messages and a photograph of a lynching—a form of punishment and death by hanging of Blacks by White slave owners during chattel slavery in North America—his received in response to his remarks, those who sought to kindly counsel him noted that he was the source of fear and anxiety on campus.

I even had a couple people who came to me, “Look I’m just coming as your friend. I want to let you know you have people on campus nervous. (Laugh) You know people are afraid of you.” And I said I’ve never fought anyone, I’ve never jumped up in the middle of a meeting and threatened anyone. I said, in fact I ought to be nervous about all y’all.
Look at your history, right? And there’s no history of us lynching anybody, putting on White sheets and raiding any towns. I should be nervous every day I walk on this campus.

“You’re Nothing But a… N-Word…Let’s Begin Class”

While the racially targeted affronts sent to Khallid were anonymous, a racial epithet that is delivered in person, attached with a face, a name, escalates the intensity of the impact to the instructor, the classroom, and the process to recovery, as Sharon experienced. Ongoing tension with a White female student during one semester peaked with the student’s use of a racial slur that Sharon claims she has never been called in her 50 years of life, plus having lived in the South for a while.

The only thing I can tell you is the student used to come to class late. And of course, on my first-day handout if you come late you can’t take the quizzes if the quizzes are being offered on that day or being given on that day. And she came to class a few minutes late. She didn’t finish the quizzes because she came in late. Again, that’s not my issue so the day that I was passing back—I usually pass back the quizzes and that changed the whole procedure for me, another procedure I’ve changed—I would pass back the quizzes to them in the beginning of the next class. The one day she snatched the quiz from me and I said, “You didn’t snatch that from me, did you?” And she rolled her eyes and I said, “Please don’t snatch anything from me.” So the next day she came in late again and I’m passing back the quizzes from the previous day and she snatched it and I said, “I asked you not to snatch the quiz from me” and she said, “You’re nothing but a fucking nigger!” and I thought, “Please leave my classroom.”
In the aftermath of the outburst, Sharon describes her struggle to restrain herself from a physical confrontation (per Feagin, 1991) and Feagin and Sikes’ (1994) work detailing physical confrontation as one response to a racist attitude or action), regain her composure, and continue with her class.

At first, I was shocked that it was happening and then I kept saying ‘Sharon, you’re in front of students. Sharon, you’re in front of students. Sharon, you’re in front of students.’ So I said could you please leave my class? And then I became angry. (Laugh) I can’t believe that somebody did that or said that to me. So I just asked her to leave the class, she was walking out the door, and I said, “Please leave my class.” I really wanted to physically assault her but I knew that I couldn’t do that. And I just closed the door after she left and I tried to compose myself.

After the student left the classroom, Sharon continued to distribute the quizzes to the students in the midst of her own astonishment, anxiety, anger, and subsequent struggle to regain self-control to face her students and continue with the class meeting. In the aftermath of the student’s disruptive racial slur, Sharon said that she could not recall if she made any visible movements. “I don’t know…if I made any large gestures or was doing anything with my face…but inside I know I was steaming. I was angry as I could be because it never happened to me before…I was just perplexed.” A few moments into starting a lecture, the students’ disengagement prompted Sharon to talk about the student’s disruptive and offensive outburst with the class.

So I say, “Look, let’s continue with the discussion.” I started talking for maybe two minutes, and I said, “Let’s stop. I need to stop and address the issue here. And what I’d
like for you all to do is write down what you thought happened. I want your account of what happened and I’m going to collect it and if you don’t want to put your names on it, that’s fine but I need to collect that. And I said “What would you do?” and one of the students said, “I’d beat her down!” I said, I certainly couldn’t beat her down in the classroom and in front of you all so I can’t do that. I did ask her to leave.” And the other students said, “Well, I don’t get that. I don’t know why she said that.” So they were all perplexed and so was I, thinking, and “Ok.”

Sharon noted that she advised the students, who were visibly distressed because of the incident, to notify the associate dean about what they witnessed. Also, Sharon kept the students’ written accounts and later submitted copies as part of an investigation initiated after she reported the incident to campus safety, whose slow response time concerned Sharon. Legal action is among the response strategies to a racially discriminatory act, per Feagin (1991) and Feagin and Sikes (1994).

So I made a report to Public Safety, thinking, “I don’t know what the student’s going to do….” Public Safety said something about I [should] consider that a racial crime. I thought ok. But Public Safety didn’t come to me right away. They didn’t come until the next day. It’s like, ok. So when I get to class, I’m concerned because I want to make a formal report and the vice provost came and [said], “I’m sorry [about] what happened to you” and I said, “Ok.” And I’m thinking, “Ok. I’m still going to class. I’m still a little bit—not intimidated but nervous because now I don’t know….”
In addition to the initial shock of the racial slur, her consequent concern for her safety in the classroom in the following time after the incident, Sharon was very dissatisfied with the faculty union and the administration’s investigation and final decision, which she deemed as insufficient. Along with the ruling that the student could never take another class with Sharon, the college required that the student take a cultural sensitivity class online and that the student make an apology (by letter) to Sharon. However, Sharon insisted that the apology take place publicly (to the classmates in the classroom), equivalent to the racist outburst. In response to the reasoning that the student was fearful of Sharon’s actions, Sharon said, “if I didn’t do anything to her that day, I’m not going to do anything to her on this day.” Sharon agreed to remain in her office until after the student made the apology to the class, expecting to have about 10 minutes and “a chance to sit down and drink some water or something. Two minutes later, they came and got me and I said, ‘it’s over?’ And they said, ‘Yes’ and I said, ‘Ok. Let’s begin class.’”

**The Presence of the N-Word**

Winifred’s, Khallid’s, and Sharon’s stories are incontrovertible examples of resilience in their respective racially hostile interactions, mainly through a series of successive instances of resistance to and recovery from traumatic circumstances within the overarching situations. Considering the range of racially charged incidents highlighted here, including the look of daggers from one of Winifred’s White male students, the picture of a lynching under Khallid’s door to his campus office, and a student calling Sharon a “fucking nigger” in front of her class, participants ultimately gauged their perception of their respective public community college’s racial climate according to their experience with the N-word. For example, as noted earlier, Sharon, an African-American female in her 50s who had lived in the South (which has its unique context with regard to race relations compared to other regions of the United States) had not ever
been called the N-word, yet she says that “I knew that it was going to happen sooner or later because of my feelings about [name of county]” where her public community college is located: a racially polarized community that is unreceptive to people of color, having experienced this first-hand since she first started working there as an instructor in the early 1990s.

Theresa has heard the N-word directed to her both off and on campus. In fact, compared to the absence of “racial tension or aggression” during her upbringing in the Midwest and later years living in the South, she has been called the N-word three times in three different social settings, including once at a karaoke bar where a woman walked by Theresa’s table and screamed “Nigger.... And I started to jack her up, but I didn’t want to go to jail. And honestly I didn’t want to let my students down because I’d just talked to them about stuff like this.” While Theresa wanted to retaliate against the woman at the bar, she avoided a confrontation with a Black colleague who referred to her as “nothing but a house nigger” in response to a disagreement (documented in the next chapter). Michelle and Martin both report that they have never been called the N-word, with Martin clarifying that no one has directed such racial epithets toward him because, “you know, people have more sense than to do anything like that, not to mention nowadays you can get in so much legal trouble.”

Shannon and CG offer a different perspective regarding the existence and use of the N-word in their personal and professional experiences. They both disclose that the term is part of their respective vocabularies, yet they acknowledge that context is a determining factor in the appropriateness of its usage. Shannon’s viewpoint is two-fold: as an English professor, she gets several inquiries from students who want to explore the N-word in a writing assignment. She speculates that the reasons for the questions are racially motivated. “…they wouldn’t ask me that if I was White. They wouldn’t ask me that,” Shannon says. “…[I]f you’re gonna discuss the
connotations of that word, what does it have to do with me or my feelings or my opinion just because I’m Black? It’s still a word that’s in our English vocabulary, so do your project.”

Balancing her instructional duties to her interpersonal interactions with students, Shannon enjoys her affability with students, especially the African-American students. She recalls one incident involving her jovial yet careless use of the N-word directed toward a Black male student in class that could have been detrimental to her teaching career.

So one day, man, it was a spring class. It was hot. We’re all tired, whatever. I think maybe it was my second-class ‘cause I teach like three-hour classes, one after the other. He came in. He was in there just clowning. You know how I said the Black students, they like—they got little comments. They got something to say. I’m trying to start the class and he kept picking with me and he had had me for another class, so we were very friendly. But I—he said something. I was like, “Nigger, if you don’t quit”—and I looked around. The whole class was there. I looked around and I said—and one of the other Black girls, she said, “Yeah, you said it. You said it.” I was like, “I apologize. That was inappropriate.” And for years—now, this was years ago, I said to myself, “If I was White and I said that, oh, it would have—the school would have shut down. It would have been like—oh, it would have been in the papers. The students would have walked—stormed out. They might have gone to the dean or whatever.” He was my friend. I’m Black, he’s Black, so I could do that, and I thought, “How unfair is that,” you know, because that’s so inappropriate. And it just came out and I couldn’t even believe [it] ‘cause, you know, you think that in your head but you don’t let it out, and I couldn’t believe it. I was like, “He made my Black come out.” So I think that’s really the only time that I have—and I keep trying to remember that in my head so that I won’t ever do it again because, I mean,
that’s a bad, scary thing that could happen. You know what I mean? I mean, it really—
that could have been bad. And now, I think in my second year there, it could have been bad. It could have been bad.

Shannon clearly recognizes the consequences she could have faced from that situation, well aware of the sensitivities surrounding the racial epithet. For CG, who teaches at a predominantly Black public community college, he is also cognizant of the racial climate noting that some of the things that come out of our students’ mouths shock non-Black people, but we [Black people] are accustomed to it.” In fact, for CG, the N-word was a part of his everyday vernacular during his upbringing, but for his counterparts, “it’s a derogatory, offensive statement. And I try to explain to them that it depends on the conversation. (Laugh) But they don’t see it like that.”

Lessons from Childhood

The practice of resilience is exercised through experience and is framed by one’s principles, often established by lessons learned during childhood. Briefly continuing the exploration of the N-word as an indicator of racial hostility, one’s exposure to this loaded term can be a critical influence to one’s perspective of race and race relations. For example, CG’s acquaintance with the N-word occurred within a mutually accepting context. For others, their initial exposed to the racial epithet under contemptible circumstances. Although Bill has been an adult for several decades, he still remembers his father’s words after he wanted to fight another youngster who called him the N-word.

…I went home and told my dad and he said, “What are you getting upset for?” “He called me a nigger” “Is that your name?” “I said, “No. He knows my name. My name is Bill.”
Then why are you responding to anything other than your name? Your name ain’t nigger.

We didn’t name you that. He might have been talking to someone in his family or a friend or something. He wasn’t talking to you. Don’t respond to that kind of stuff.” And first I thought, he must be crazy, but then as I got older I realized no, he’s right.

The words of wisdom from Bill’s father that he avoid responding to racist name-calling is a lesson that remains with Bill even in his faculty role where he reminds students to call him by his given name, especially recalling his father’s words that “you can’t beat up everybody who calls you something other than your name.” Sharon recalls her grandmother’s similar lesson that focused on education instead of race. “It was always about do[ing] the best that you can and you want to make sure you get an education…knowledge, no one else can take [that] away from you so get as much knowledge as you can…..” During her childhood, Carolyn learned that, being African American, she and her siblings would have to exceed conventional expectations, hold advanced qualifications, and function with superior capabilities in contrast to their White counterparts for even minimal consideration and respect. “…my mother used to tell me and my brothers that there was going to be a higher accountability for us and so we needed to make sure that we knew what we knew and that we knew it well.” Gloria’s life-defining lesson, delivered when she was “a young girl in elementary school” by her mother who “had very little education, but…was a very intelligent woman” consisted of a related message to refrain from trivial issues that can distract from concentrating on the most important matter: getting an education.

I came home one day and I threw my books down and I was just, “Oh I can’t stand Ms. [name of teacher]! I hate Ms. [name of teacher]!” And my mother listened for a while and she called me into the living room and she said… “Does Ms. [name of teacher] teach?”
And I said, “Yes, but I just can’t stand Ms. [name of teacher]!” My mother said, “Um hm. Does Ms. [name of teacher] answer any of your questions when you ask?” “Yes, but I just can’t stand Ms. [name of teacher]!” “Does she answer your questions differently from anyone else or does she answer it all about the same?” “It’s all about the—I can’t stand Ms. [name of teacher]!” My mother looked at me and she said, “Let me tell you one thing: I’m not sending you to school to love or like the teacher. I’m sending you to school to get an education… Get over it.” That tape has played in my head over and over and over again and it is the tape that played in my head that got me through grad school when I was the only African American and the only woman in some of my graduate classes. It was the tape. I don’t have to like this teacher. Is this teacher teaching? Will this teacher answer my questions? Can I go back and get help during office hours? I don’t have to like this teacher to learn. Same thing applies. I don’t have to like a colleague in order to work with them, long as that colleague is willing to work with me or we’re able to work together. You put aside all of that other crap. And so that has been my philosophy and I tell you it has made life so much easier having that sort of philosophy. I don’t have to like and love everyone to work with them.

From a Pragmatic Perspective

Gloria’s philosophy, cultivated from childhood, to prioritize and concentrate on the work—with civility as a minimum—appears to represent the sentiments of fellow research participants who, despite constant exposure to the rigors and hostilities of the racialized academic workplace, function in their faculty roles within a pragmatic perspective, cultivated by life experiences: maturation, personality, and jobs/careers in other industries/workplaces. For Carolyn, learning to endure through difficult circumstances has been one advantage of aging: “If
I were younger I would have been hurt and discouraged, but I’ve done so many things, I mean, there’s something to be said for getting older and having some seasoning, ok?” Martin explains that his relatively stress-free working environment in which he is one of few faculty of color is due to the lack of pressure from superiors and his choice to dismiss matters he deems as insignificant.

I mean you know I mean we’re around a lot of majority [White colleagues] maybe every now and then maybe somebody might…use something inadvertently where they may say something or phrase something a certain way that could be taken the wrong way but that’s if you're ready to take something the wrong way. So I’ve never, so there’s been nothing ever blatantly said before me that really got me upset…. I tend to let most little minor issues just roll off my back and it’s nothing really important and there’s been no major thing that’s been put before me that just caused an extreme amount of stress to me personally. I mean there have been little things that get on your nerves but it’s like well, they got on my nerves but I’m not losing sleep over it.

Along with longevity and personal temperament, employment in other workplaces and industries and significant life/family circumstances in which the stressors of the Black public two-year faculty role are minimal to non-existent for the following research participants. While Mark has held full-time corporate and academic positions, he describes the culture at his institution as “fairly open and accepting, certainly the most open I’ve worked as a full-time employee anywhere…. We’re pretty good about it here. That doesn’t mean that everything is great, but we’re pretty good about it.” For Albert, who was used to working long hours in the government sector jobs he held for several years, states that, “…to be very honest, there’s no
stress in this job [his faculty role].” Shortly after he obtained his full-time teaching position at his public community college more than 30 years ago, Albert wondered about the intensity of the work that comprises the faculty role.

I can’t believe they actually pay me to do this. And after—when I started, after I’d been here for two months, I asked a colleague “is this all we have to do?” And she said, “Yes.” I said “my God! I usually work 60, 70 hours a week, and it’s like popcorn…. Here at [name of public community college] I just do my work, just go lecture, go back to my office, sit, wait, they will come.

Shannon, Michelle, and Theresa note that life and family issues transcend workplace stressors, racialized and otherwise; however the nature of and their satisfaction in their public two-year faculty roles facilitates the management of faculty role strain. Like Albert, the multiplicity of hours and workloads in business and industry has influenced Michelle’s perspective about the intensity of the faculty role.

I come from industry so I’m accustomed to doing a lot of work and compared to how much work I did in industry, it’s easy for me to manage a lot of things at the community college…. It’s not a lot of administrative stress and I preface that with my background in industry probably makes me see it not be stressful. I know there are faculty members who believe it to be stressful. I guess I have not been out of industry long enough to forget what that stress was like so it’s not bad to work here. It’s just not. The requirements, you got to get your grades in. You got to be in your office five hours. At the end of the day, I got to be on campus 20 hours a week and I think for me personally because of the other stressors in my life, that I have three little kids, I know this is probably the only way. I am
constantly reminded that this is the only way I can do all these things. So I’m very appreciative of my job. Not everybody is that fair about what we’re required to do at school…. I don’t complain about it. It’s not a bad job. It’s not a bad gig…. I wish I knew about this a long time ago.

For Shannon, with her enthusiasm for work and family, sources of stress are not race-related, either from within or beyond her workplace.

I have a lot of energy, and I’ve just always been that way. I have a lot of ideas, lots of stuff I want to do. I’m always doing all these different projects and things like that. So I just think I’m in fairly good health. I mean, I’m young. I rarely get sick. I mean, I hardly miss work. If I miss work, it’s because I went to a conference or I was just playing hooky, not because I just couldn’t get out of bed that day. There hasn’t been, I mean, I just can’t say—I’ve had stressors in my life but they were never really—they weren’t related to race, you know what I mean? I’m divorced and I’ve got three kids, so the stress more comes from there than anything else, but not in terms of being in an environment where I feel like I’m being discriminated against or mistreated or things like that. I don’t have that experience.

During her previous career as a social worker, Theresa found solace as an adjunct sociology instructor. She found teaching enjoyable and appreciated the opportunities to incorporating aspects of her practical experience into her course content. “…my hair was falling out. I was turning into an alcoholic, just stress related to that job….” Since becoming a full-time instructor, she affectionately describes her work life as “butter…whipped butter. Just butter. I
love it.” The term “butter” or “whipped butter” characterizes Theresa’s viewpoint that the rigors of the public two-year faculty role are desirable compared to the demands of social work, so much so that Theresa is willing to endure the stress rather than return to the social work profession.

Ultimately, I’ve got to look out for my job. I cannot let one student jeopardize my employment. I’m not going back to the real world, I’m not. I’m not going. That’s all these racial, these accusations of being a racist, you’re not worth me going back to the real world…. [T]he world I’m in now, I set my own schedule. I’m only required to be on campus 20 hours a week. We only work, we’re only contracted to work August through May. We can pick up classes…which is above and beyond pay. And if I want to, I can teach my online class like I was last year and I was overseas. So I don’t know another job [like this] and I’m not trying to look for another one.

**Fulfillment in the Community College Faculty Role**

Considering the components of the public community college faculty role, emphasized by the focus on teaching and working with students, research participants in this inquiry noted that understanding the mission and role of the public two-year college and engaging with curriculum and course development in a dynamic and stimulating environment explain their enjoyment and commitment to the public community college faculty role. For example, Michelle had planned to work at a university after completing her graduate degrees in marketing and business but when she started teaching at her public community college seven years ago, she has changed her long-term goals.

…but I, really, understanding a little bit better about the role of community colleges, the role that they’ve played in our society as kind of a bridge for people who needed a second
chance, I found it to be even more rewarding and a place I wanted to stay. So although I am working on my doctorate degree, I think that [the] community college might probably be my long-range goal. I enjoy it a lot. I think based on my personal experience and just some uniqueness of my background as a minority, as a first-generation college student, I think I have a lot to offer those type[s] of students. It’s frustrating just because of the students you’re getting, but it’s very, very rewarding because you get more students who really need to be there, than you may get, I feel like, at a university or four-year college.

Melanie, also a doctoral student in her teaching discipline, intentionally transitioned after a decade from a teaching position at a university to her public community college, despite criticism from colleagues who characterized the move as a downgrade.

Professionally I have friends and colleagues all over the country who are tenured and they have Ph.D.’s at four-year universities. And so they say, “You’re leaving a four-year research institution to go to [a] community college? There does seem to be a stigma there, but I love it because it gets me closer to teaching. I love teaching and I didn’t get a chance to do a lot of that at [name of four-year institution]. There’s not a lot of emphasis to focus on publications. It’s something that it is appreciated, you still do the things you would at a four-year institution where you publish and serve on committees and go to conferences. But teaching and being able to teach to diverse populations was important to me and I think professionally, I am very happy with that. I get a chance to teach online.

Community colleges have definitely given my professional life more room to grow, more diversity, versus [name of university], I think there wouldn’t be a lot of room to grow as a teacher, as an instructor. I’m very happy where I’m at.
Based on her instructional experiences at both two- and four-year institutions, Bettye finds fulfillment in working with all students, including students from racially underrepresented populations.

Working at [name of historically White university], I think in the six years that I worked at [name of historically White university], I had maybe six minority students. And these were students who had to be in our particular program, they have to have a three-something to be admitted. And so there was not the, not the need I think of the students…. So I’m servicing more students who don’t have that, don’t have the opportunities, don’t have the background a lot of times to even be in college, helping them to be successful. And what I mean when I say giving back, that I’m helping my own. And not that I’m [not] helping all my students. I don’t care. They’re my students whether Black, White, I would say pink, yellow, whatever nationality, culture, ethnicity. I’m helping all my students.

Similar to Melanie, Khallid appreciates the opportunities to teach and interact with students. He says that seeing students advance their education beyond the community college is “very rewarding.

I enjoy teaching, I love teaching. It has historically been very rewarding in terms of seeing students’ progress all the time, whether it be from the beginning of the semester to the middle to the end. And then of course students who take one course with you then they come back for a second course or something of this nature that’s very rewarding. And then of course it’s been rewarding to see students from when I first began and to
have them come back and now they have their master’s or they have their Ph.D.,
something of this nature. It’s rewarding. At the same time, it lets me know I’m getting
old as well though (Laugh) so that’s always an interesting paradox. But it’s rewarding, I
think that’s the best thing I can say.

Independence in the classroom, interactions with students, and involvement in
policymaking are the highlights of Carolyn’s participation at her public community college,
where she has both teaching and counseling duties.

There’s a lot of autonomy that is part of being a faculty member. You really manage your
classroom and your students and your work. You also as a counselor manage my
interactions with my students. So that part I really, really love. One of the other tradeoffs
is that you also have a requirement to serve on various committees, faculty committees,
that often are politicized and depending upon who’s there your effectiveness may be
great or it may be absolutely minimal. So what’s it like? I mean I love being a faculty
member, I love my job, I love what I do, I love my interactions with students and I like
having something to say about policies through the various committees.

Shannon explains how the overarching diversity of her public community college
environment, from the students who vary by age, race, educational ability, academic and career
goals, to the engaging in the pursuit and discovery of equally different approaches to maximize
teaching and learning, makes her job interesting and loveable.

I love it. It’s a great job, but it’s very challenging. What I love about it is the flexibility
that I have in choosing the courses I teach or the content, how I’m gonna package that
and present that. The fact that I have such diverse types of students in the class, I love that. But that diversity poses a challenge because in any given class, I could have students ranging from age 18 to 60. And so they have very different life experiences, very different goals, very different perceptions of education, different approaches to that process, different maturity levels. So it makes it challenging for me, as an instructor, to meet all those varying needs. And then we also have varying aptitudes, so students that say they’re dually enrolled…[to] now where they’re planning to transfer, so they’re very high-functioning students as opposed to a student who [is], well, not very sure what they wanna do with themselves and maybe weren’t [an] A student in a K-12 environment. So I think the thing that baffles me the most is that challenge, like how to meet those varying needs. And I guess what—the other aspect of it is the fact that I’m able to pursue various interests, to do things in the community, to do research if I want, but there’s not pressure to do that so I can focus on my teaching, which is the most important thing to me. So I think it’s probably the reason why I like to stay there and I don’t really plan to move into the four-year arena because I like that focus….

With nearly 20 years in his full-time public community college teaching role, Bill dismisses questions suggesting an impending full retirement because he still finds the work enjoyable. In fact, as Bill is more than 65 years old, age is an irrelevant factor in his choice to continue in his faculty role. If Bill has his way, he would never leave.

Well, some people say, “Well, you’re old. Why don’t you retire?” Well because I don’t…I haven’t retired completely because I don’t have hobbies…unless working is my hobby, but I just enjoy what I’m doing. So as long as I enjoy what I’m doing I’m gonna
keep doing it until they kick me out or come here and find me in the chair with my mouth open, eyes rolled back, and nothing happening…I’ll be here.

The theme of Resilience explored instances in which research participants endured and enacted tactics to survive and recover from intense racially hostile encounters to function in their public community college faculty roles. Research participants’ accounts consisted of descriptions of threatening circumstances to their personal and professional safety and welfare, the existence and usage of the N-word, and strategies that they continue to rely on to sustain their resilience and longevity in their respective faculty roles.

This chapter identified and described three of the five themes that emerged from the lived experiences and perspectives shared by the 19 male and female, full-time, African-American public two-year college faculty members participated in this research study. The three themes presented in this chapter, inclusive of associated sub-themes were: Representation, Naming Reality and Managing Reactions, and Resilience. The theme of Representation attended to the notion of the African-American public community college faculty member as an observable example of racial diversity and inclusion on campus, emphasized by instances in which research participants integrated departments, divisions, campus locations, or institutions overall, involvement on hiring committees, serving as role models, avoiding the perpetuation or imposition of racial stereotypes in such areas as political ideologies, clothing choices, proper forms of speech, and gender-based generalities, e.g., Black male sexuality and Black female forms of expression. The theme of Naming Reality and Managing Reactions delved into the range of responses of research participants’ to racially hostile or discriminatory acts. The theme of Resilience explored research participants’ encounters, strategies, and motivations for their
endurance and commitment to the public community college faculty role, informed by research participants’ accounts of recovery from confrontations, their exposure to the N-word on campus, messages learned during childhood, practical perspectives relating to stressors in the academic work environment, and fulfillment in the public two-year faculty role. These themes exemplify the nature and extent of racially hostile conditions, differentiated by autonomous and obligatory instances of expectations and functions that research participants encountered in their faculty roles. The remaining two themes, Responsibility and Rigor, will be discussed in the proceeding chapter.
CHAPTER FIVE:

Responsibility and Rigor

The two major themes and related sub-themes explored in this chapter: Responsibility and Rigor, attends to the multilayered dimensions that comprise the African-American public community college faculty role. The content that informs these two themes—research participants’ descriptions of their experiences and encounters with students, fellow faculty members, administrators, community members, and others who populate and interact with the public community college campus—exposes the intricate landscape of voluntary and involuntary tasks, duties, and expectations demanded from multiple sources that research participants have to negotiate to effectively perform in their faculty roles. Within the concept of Role Theory, which seeks to explicate the functions and interactions among individuals in various social positions within groups, organizations, and societies, role strain (or role stress)—defined as “the perceived or felt difficulty in meeting role obligations” (Goode, 1960, p. 483)—offers a framework to investigate the additional and unique demands expected of the Black public community college faculty member, exacerbated by a racially hostile environment of the public community college campus.

Theme: Responsibility

“...I do think that I have a responsibility to speak up because I’m a woman, because I’m an African American, because I’m not afraid, and I don’t know why I’m not afraid. You’d have to put me on the couch or something. But I’m not afraid and they can’t hurt me. I don’t know what that means. So my mouth has to stay open. And I have to speak for people who are scared
to speak. So that’s part of what I think my role is—but that’s not a stressful thing, that’s kind of fun. I don’t think of that as horrible.” —Alice, 30-year English Instructor/Administrator

The African-American public community college faculty member’s willing or forced consent to perform race-related assignments or duties delineates the theme of Responsibility. Descriptions from research participants illustrate the differentiation between their personal preference and desire to develop or engage in race-related tasks or activities compared to an implicit or explicit expectation or charge to take part in such responsibilities of a racialized nature. Instances involving African-American students highlighted the theme of Responsibility in these aspects: advising and mentoring African-American students, advocating for Black students on academic committees, supporting Black student enrollments, and assumptions of favoritism for Black students, along with administrative committee assignments. The exploration of this theme begins with voluntary examples of responsibility willingly claimed by research participants and continues with attention to descriptions of obligatory instances of racialized expectations.

Voluntary Examples

Mentoring and Advising African-American/Students of Color

Without compromising commitment, attention, and service to all students, research study participants expressed a deliberate readiness to mentor and advise Black students. Albert considers mentoring African-American students an essential part of his faculty role.

I usually have several [students I mentor] on campus. There is one faculty member on campus, as well, that I mentor for. He’s in his doctoral program. I have another adjunct that’s in his doctoral program that was a former student of mine…he’s writing his dissertation now. He’s a non-traditional student, he’s 39. So I see my role there as being a
mentor for students. Well, students and faculty and administrators because there’s one lady now…[s]he was administrator here. I’ve been mentoring her. She’s in a doctoral program now.

The writing assignments and discussions in Melanie’s English classes have been the catalysts for the African-American female students in particular to initiate extended, in-depth conversations to talk about sensitive issues. Melanie willingly engages with her Black female students in this regard, something that she suspects her White counterparts might not do.

…and I find that with a lot of Black female students, that they come to me for personal—just to share what’s going on. They might have problems with their writing but it always ends up they’re in my office telling me about a boyfriend, kids, things like that ‘cause in my classroom, I open that avenue. I had a topic where we talked about sexism and [a student] says, “Yeah, I feel my boyfriend is sexist. I’m carrying his baby. He says if I get fat, he’s gonna leave me” and things and I’m like, “Wow.” So seeing some of their writing—that affects me a lot more than I think it would for the White faculty members where they just grade it and things like that. I think it’s a more interpersonal relationship with the students and I see my role as an English teacher not just located to teaching writing.

Melanie’s readiness to accommodate her Black female students is due in part to her observation that students are also vulnerable to “an invisible undercurrent” that she—which also overlaps with her “being a woman…being a double minority”—and her fellow African-American faculty members experience: “...a higher institutional structure that we’re always
going to be fighting against.” Advancing from one-on-one attention to African-American students, Gloria and Khallid formed programs at their respective public two-year colleges to expand academic and social support to targeted groups of students. Gloria’s program was designed to prepare students of color and those from underrepresented populations to enter college engineering programs.

And as a matter of fact, my fourth year that I was here I had started an engineering program called [name of program]. It was a program that was targeted for underrepresented populations in the field of engineering. It was called [name of program] because we went into the high schools and we worked with the students beginning in the 10th grade to start building up their math and science skills so those students could be successful when they went to college. Those students who were in that program got a full one-hundred percent scholarship ride, books and tuition paid for. They would come to [name of historically White public community college] for the first two years, take all of their calculus, physics, and their science classes here. Then they would matriculate to [name of university] and [name of university] picked up the cost, gave them a scholarship for their last two and half years at [name of university].

Gloria established the program of her own volition, explaining that certain racial factors—her race along with the race of the program’s target group—contributed to the multiplicity of pressures she felt for the program’s success.

I found that I just felt so pressured that everything had to be, all of the Is had to be dotted, Ts crossed because first of all, all eyes were on me because I was African American. It was so few us here. Secondly, how did I pull off getting such a program that was targeted
for underrepresented populations, [a] large African-American population, and they got scholarships. So it was kinds of pressures that I felt. I felt the weight of the world on my shoulders. And I didn’t have tenure yet too when I got that program started.

In addition to the general responsibilities of his faculty role, Khallid describes a longtime pet project—he formed similar groups at his undergraduate and graduate institutions—where he heads a mentoring group for the African-American male students on his public community college campus.

Informally, I also have what’s called a Black male focus group that I work with as well. And so it gets extremely busy. It’s an academic and social—a support network on campus. I wish I could say that we work most with academics, but a lot of times, it’s more or less the social support that a lot of the young brothers need. So I’m doing some of everything in terms of just being a listening ear, trying to get them to study [and] other issues, of course. Dealing with, you know, pregnancies and things of this nature. So I do a lot of referring to the counseling office (Laugh)—things that I’m not competent in terms of actually dealing with, and so it’s basically a type of mentoring, a type of program that I’ve put together with many of the brothers on campus. So it gets extremely busy. And so, and these are not just for my students. I mean literally being one of the few Black faculty members on the campus, I have practically every Black student who has any problem, any issues coming to knock on my door and I’m going to try to deal with them as if they were my students so nobody gets turned away.

While this reciprocal instance of resistance involved a contained group—instructor and students in a classroom, Khallid’s example of resistance to conformity extends to the legitimacy
of his Black male focus group. When asked to provide statistics about the focus group, he flatly refused to participate in any institutional documentation or conduct any events or activities dictated by others outside of the group.

And one of them called me: “Well how many people show up?” I said, “That’s none of your business.” “Well what days are you meeting?” “None of your business?” I wouldn’t give them any information. See the thing, what was profound, all yearlong they’re mad about the focus group because the types of things that we were putting on. I’ll never forget they were excited at first because I said my students in the focus group have a reading list. Somebody got a hold of one of the reading lists and all of a sudden, it was a problem. “You shouldn’t have them reading this type of stuff. You’re going to make everybody radical.” That’s what I want.” So they had someone who tried to start something but he’s not as popular as me, so there’s no way, I mean nobody wanted to hear the garbage he was talking about. And so the students still came here.

Khallid clarifies that the idea and implementation of his Black male focus group reflects his personal philosophy and commitment to Black empowerment, especially in those places and spaces that have been or are presently unreceptive to African Americans. “…the whole notion of Kujichagulia…building and creating things for ourselves,” Khallid explains, referring to the Swahili word that means “self-determination.” “So if we have to be in these types of institutions, we need to have things that are still, we can maintain our own separate identity within. So yes, I did create this thing, predicated on race.”
**Responsible Representation.** Despite attempts to control and counteract the influence of Khallid’s group, including the failed implementation of a similar group by another Black faculty member and criticism about the group’s reading content, his Black male focus group remains informal—free of administrative oversight—and preferred by the students. While Khallid willingly goes beyond the stipulations of his job description to implement his personal mandate to help African-American males, he recalls that other expectations existed beyond those documented responsibilities. “I think the idea was I was supposed to come on campus and be the great peacemaker, right? So I was the one that would—and this happened—a lot of folks were sending Black students to me,” Khallid explains. “‘Any Black student get caught talking on his cell phone? I want you to see Professor Khallid…. He can talk to you and save you.’ So I was supposed to be this great savior, you know?” Khallid’s experience with the network that provides academic and social support for African-American males at his public community college illustrates the dichotomous nature of responsibility for the African-American public community college faculty member. In one aspect, the willingness to support African-American students motivates them to implement their efforts with specific motives and outcomes. Juxtaposed with her commitment to students of color at her public community college is the institutional expectation of Black faculty to serve as a racialized representative, which Alice acknowledges and clarifies here:

First of all, the institution needs me, and perhaps more than if I was White. And I’m just being frank about that. The institution, well, they just did the affirmative [action] report on hiring. The institution needs good teachers. The institution needs talented whatever. We need a diversity of talent, but we also need people of color in front of our student body. So I appreciate that and I’m glad to be here to do that.
Alice’s personal identity and outspoken nature reflect her unapologetic boldness to serve, protect, and to speak in defense and support of the powerless, undaunted by potential or actual repercussions.

…I do think that I have a responsibility to speak up because I’m a woman, because I’m an African American, because I’m not afraid and I don’t know why I’m not afraid. You’d have to put me on the couch or something. But I’m not afraid and they can’t hurt me. I don’t know what that means. So my mouth has to stay open. And I have to speak for people who are scared to speak. So that’s part of what I think my role [is]—but that’s not a stressful thing. That’s kind of fun. I don’t think of that as horrible.

**Counseling Students.** Khallid, Alice, Carolyn, Mark, and Bettye express a readiness to serve all students, yet recognizing the inexplicable circumstances that they have to navigate in consideration of balancing their noble efforts toward students of color versus becoming characterized and relegated to specific or limited duties with minimal variety or opportunity for advancement. Carolyn, whose has counseling duties along with her teaching responsibilities, is both aware about and freely consents to fulfilling the expectation that she is in place “for ethnic minority students in particular. Yeah. And that’s ok, I’m ok with that. I tend to see any student, but I do see a lot of ethnic minority, not just African-American” students. International students are among the populations that Carolyn says “tend to feel very comfortable coming and talking” to her, partly because she had been the designated international student official at her public community college. Similar to international students, Carolyn explains that students from diverse populations experience “a sense of relief” when they interact with herself or another person or
counselor of color, although an instinctive connection should not be assumed or expected based on a perception of shared race and/or ethnicity.

…I think that it would be a mistake to think that because a person is of color that they are automatically responsive to issues that may be unique to people of color. I think that would be a mistake. And I’m saying that not just in terms of a counselor but in terms of any faculty. I think that would be a true statement. Or in any area.

Mark observes similar patterns that Carolyn explains about the sense of comfort that all students, but students of color in particular, have in engaging with Black faculty.

I think in some ways you have more expectations maybe from the students. I think, culturally, they may feel more comfortable if they’re of color, divulging certain things. I think even some of the students who are majority students, who are White, may divulge things and share things more. They may see you as either more capable with some of the emotional aspects of obviously any type of profession where you, at some level, help people, or some people may just assume that that’s just a rightful place…. But I have had students of color kind of reveal things and say, “Well, this issue we’re talking about means something to me,” or “I’m so happy that you’re on faculty because of x, y, and z reasons.”

Bettye greatly appreciates her faculty role at her predominantly Black community college because, she says, “it’s a way of me giving back to my people…. I tell everybody if we can help just one student make a difference in their life, then I have succeeded in my goal.” She describes the distinctions in the type of student needs and expectations at her public two-year college in
comparison to her previous faculty role at a historically White university where, as an African-American woman, a stereotypically maternal tone was the assumed nature of her faculty role.

Looking at, knowing the plight of Blacks in America, I can help…. So a lot of times being Black, if you’re in a White university or college, they expect you to be the example, to be the role model, to be the, I thought with my students up there [at the historically White university], to be the nanny, you know. (Laugh) You know, they could come to me with any of their problems like the nanny, you know, because at [name of historically White university] I had White students and that was it. So they felt comfortable coming to me as the nanny, you know. But being, you have to stand up for your profession and…so you have to speak and I had it out with somebody about that up at [name of historically White university], that, you know, you don’t treat me any different, number one and [that] should not be your expectations of me because I’m Black.

**Teaching Race-Related Courses.** Shannon’s and Theresa’s examples further emphasize Bettye’s point about avoiding the imposition of certain tasks and responsibilities upon an African-American faculty member based solely on race. Their accounts provide insight into the implicit and explicit expectations to teach certain courses, particularly those in which race is a central focus of the content. Shannon explains the rationale for her strong sense of responsibility and loyalty to teach a particular-race-related English course. “…I feel like I should teach it because I’m Black and I know about Blackness and well, I love the literature, but I don’t know. I feel more like it’s my duty,” says Shannon. While Shannon adds that she is not pressured at her institution to teach African American Literature or other courses with an exclusively African
American or related curriculum, she is somewhat frustrated by the contradictory standard that measures instructional quality and authenticity with race for African-American faculty.

And I’ve had students say, “Yeah, we’re glad you’re Black.” The Black students say, “We’re glad you’re Black and you’re teaching this class.” And I’d go, “So what are you saying? Like if I was White, I couldn’t teach African-American Lit?” I mean, it’s literature. I could definitely read it and I could definitely talk about it no matter what race I am because that’s, to me, just the same as saying, “I couldn’t teach Shakespeare because I’m not British and I’m not White,” so I couldn’t possibly understand Shakespeare. And in fact, I had that said to me, but not at this institution. It was previously. Someone else said that, “We don’t have a good African-American Lit course. Why don’t you teach that?” Because I wanted to teach Shakespeare and she said, “Why don’t you teach that [African-American Literature]?” And I’d go, “I have a degree in English. I don’t have a degree in African-American literature. I have a degree in English, which means I can teach any course.”

Theresa’s observation that the majority of the African-American faculty at her institution were assigned to courses with exclusively Black content in the curriculum within their respective disciplines illustrate the complexity of the relationship between a Black faculty member and the public community college in managing the ownership, burden, and designation to teach race-related courses. Although Theresa wanted to teach a particular race-intensive course in her discipline, she has made efforts to avoid being confined to these types of courses.

…most of the people of color were concentrated in color-specific disciplines, like [name of Black colleague] is African-American history, [name of Black colleague], for example
was tapped on the shoulder to teach [a] Black psychology class. Of course, Race and Ethnicity for me. So on the one hand I can see the school wanting to have someone of color teach some of these courses, but it’s sort of as Arturo Madrid talks about you’re locked in these side pockets where this is no upward mobility in terms of the job because we’re so specialize and that’s why I try not to get pigeonholed into Race and Ethnicity and I try to venture out every now and then.

One reason that Theresa seeks to occasionally get some distance and expand her teaching horizons from the Race and Ethnicity course is to gain some unbiased instructional perspective: “to really remove my emotion from the topic to be able to teach it,” she explains. In her reflection of her African-American colleagues’ assignments to the exclusively Black courses, e.g., African-American History, Black psychology, etc., Theresa shares that this pattern of teaching duties is “kind of interesting because you don’t see like the White instructors teach—well, I guess American history is White, so never mind. But you know, it’s not the same. It still is kind of interesting.”

**Administrative Committee Participation.** Theresa’s candid remark that “American history is White” reflects her perspective about the hegemonic content present in most school and college curricula—thereby resulting in the development of race-specific courses to placate existing or anticipated dissention—and the disparate perceptions and expectations of teaching responsibilities between Black and White public community college faculty. Annette shares Theresa’s candor in raising concerns and calling attention to sensitive and dubious issues. With administrative duties embedded in her faculty role, Annette is often solicited to participate on projects and to serve on various committees. In light of the honest relationship she had with one
executive at her public community college, along with her standard to “tell the truth and…sometimes bring up the uncomfortable” with anyone, she expressed concern to this senior colleague that her appointment to a particular assignment might be difficult for others to handle, adding her willingness to yield to a diminished role for the sake of the project’s success. In that moment of truth, Annette acknowledges that there have been occasions where she felt as if she were “being put up at the front and—for good and bad…put up to the front to be the scapegoat and sometimes put up at the front to try to transition to the next step.” In other words, as “the scapegoat,” Annette is the designated target to blame for the failure of a project; as the one “to transition to the next step,” she is the star and symbol of innovation and progress. Because Annette’s high value for personal and professional success supersedes incentives or ulterior motives imposed by others, she calls attention to obscure issues during her participation in a highly competitive and politicized assignment as one strategy to direct her success while protecting her professional and personal interests.

And during the course of the discussion…the president was pointing out some concerns and I said, “You know what?” I said, “You know, you’re not in the position to really hire somebody to get to where you wanna go as quickly as you need to. I already have the skills and abilities. I can get you to where you wanna go. But realize, there are gonna be some of the people that might be upset about that and for lots of reasons” and I brought up race…. I said, “I will do this, but I need to be here, in the thick of things”…. There are some times when you have to be—if you really wanna be successful, you have to pull yourself back sometimes and say, “Okay, in order for me to get there, I need to have these things happen.” Now, if my getting upfront is gonna get in the way of success, then that means I will fail because people start throwing all kinds of obstacles [at] you. So
sometimes the best success is, “Okay, leave me here. I can accomplish this lot faster, quicker than having to always throw me up at the front.” Now, in doing that, and I am successful, everybody knows it, not just one person. And I don’t have to scream it out.

Albert explains his perspective of the embedded purpose for his inclusion of his public community college’s planning committee of a notable conference:

…there are four of us, two White men, one White lady, and myself. And we do that through the president’s office. We have all the politicians statewide; national politicians are invited to participate, from the mayor all the way up to the U.S. senators and secretaries of state and all that kind of thing. So the role I play, I’m the only one there. I don’t think it’s—it’s not intentional on my part, but I know that that role is there. I’m the only one there. And so when some of the representatives, especially the Black representatives that we have…I think they were just pleased to see that I was there.

Involuntary Examples

Partiality for African American/Students of Color

Carolyn’s, Bettye’s, Shannon’s, Theresa’s, and Annette’s accounts, inclusive of both instructional and administrative scenarios, exemplify the internal and external discord that research study participants detailed in their experiences in which they willingly embrace a duty to take action on behalf of African-American issues or they resist against discernibly unethical charges to make concessions to benefit African Americans. For example, CG ensures that he attends to the academic success of every student, yet his consideration of the presence and absence of African-American students in his classrooms have been misinterpreted as preferential treatment by other students.
…if you’re nice to a Black person you’re playing favoritism. If you take interest in any student more than another, and I guess that has happened here once or twice where students feel as though you’re favoritism towards certain students. Rarely do I have any males in my class and the males, I guess I look at them and give them more attention because you don’t get many Blacks period and I want them to be successful, but I don’t give them no more attention. I may call on them but they don’t get more attention. I call [on] everybody in my class, that’s the bottom line.

A White student accused Sharon of favoring a student of color with regard to delivering speeches and the course policy on tardiness, which indicates that students who arrive to class one hour after the three-hour class begins, speech assignments may not be completed.

So I had a student who came to class an hour, more than an hour late and she wanted to do her speech. I said, “I’m sorry. The first-day handout tells you that you can’t do your speech…. [S]he came in late and I said that you cannot give your speech. The first-day handout says you can’t give your speech and her remark was, “You would do it if I was a minority. And I said, “Explain what you mean.” And she said, “You allowed a student last week to do his speech over…. You didn’t know that he was dark?” [Sharon said], I didn’t notice that he was Filipino…. I didn’t see that difference. [The student said], “You didn’t see how dark he was?” I’m thinking no, I didn’t. And it led to her getting really loud and slamming the door and I’m thinking ok.
April expounds on her participation on an academic committee where the responsibility to defend the grammatical expressions of African-American students felt demanding to her but necessary to do.

...a series of classes I used to teach involved the committee making a decision about whether the student could move on to the next class, the next higher class. And when we would all come together as a committee to look at the portfolios, which is a collection of all the students’ writing and papers and all that, students would be writing in dialect, not in Standard English. And the non-African-American instructors could not understand what the student was saying or writing about and they thought that the student couldn’t communicate. Well, the student was communicating just fine. It’s just that they weren’t communicating to that audience. And so I find myself kind of being this sort of intermediary, interpreter, for my non-African-American colleagues, not all the time but often. I found that that was my role, to draw attention to these things for people who didn’t understand it. And I can’t say that this is a widespread problem, but it is something that I find myself consistently doing. I found it to be quite a burden. I can’t say it’s burdensome, it just seems, I guess it’s not a burden. I guess it’s more, it just seems like if the situation were to have involved an ESL student—English as Second Language student—there would have been more leeway given to that student than to an African-American student. And so I see the injustice and it’s a burden that I’m happy to bear.
Expectations of Leniency from Black Students

Research participants also described attitudes and expectations of leniency from African-American students upon the students’ discovery of a Black instructor. Martin explains that, regardless of race, hard work is an expectation for all students.

I mean, maybe some minority students in the class might expect—I might somehow go easy on them because, you know—but it ain’t about going easy. No matter who you are in the class, you got to learn the stuff. So Black, White, Asian, Hispanic, I mean, race doesn’t matter. You got to get [in] there and grind out the work and there’s no grading you easier because you’re having a tough time. That just goes with the program. You got to get through it.

While Shannon admits to cultivating a friendly atmosphere with students, she notices that Black students in particular will interpret that cordiality as a signal to expect preferential treatment.

…like they come into class and they all are like, “Oh, it’s the sister.” And they wanna like—they wanna get a hook up. I mean, I’ve talked to other colleagues about this and it’s frustrating because it’s kind of like, “You’re not gonna pass just because we’re both Black and, you know, that’s not gonna happen.” Or, they’re more familiar with you, like the way they talk to you is different. So I think it comes more from students than it comes from other faculty. Students will think, “Oh, I’m more of a friend because we’re both Black.” And I don’t know that I mind it because I’m pretty—I’m that way with all the students. I don’t have this, “Oooooh, I am the teacher and I am better than you,” kind of thing. But sometimes, I think they cross the line; the ways they talk and things they’ll say
and how they try to push the envelope. And when I talked with other colleagues, we kind of concurred that it’s the same across the board, that they’ve had the similar type of experience. And sometimes, I think students—or I’ve had experiences where I felt like students felt I was less knowledgeable or less qualified because I’m Black.

Theresa describes the resistance she encounters with some Black students who expect to receive special latitude in her course due to the assumption of shared racial identity.

I love my people. Black students for the most part come in at a severe disadvantage as opposed to their White counterparts. However, you have a lot of White students that have the same problems. But they tend to see me and think, “Oh yeah, I got it made in this class. I can tell her anything.” And my position is I know you don’t have the skills that you need and it’s my job to make sure you have those skills when you leave my class. So I have my standard up here for all my students and I’m trying to pull my Black students up here. My Black students see that as a betrayal. I’m Black, you’re Black, and you’re supposed to hook me up. And I’ve had some of them come to me incorrectly where I did have to shut my door and we had to have a one-on-one conversation. Like they’ll come to class sometimes drunk. I had one that came to class drunk. Of course, I had some White kids that came to class high. But to me I guess with me being a Black instructor, them being a Black student I would just assume that they would do everything in their power to do well in the class. I guess not in the sense to make me look good but to, I don’t know how to say it any other way, but it’s sort of like if I’m in this class and my instructor’s Black, I’m going to do everything I can to do very well in that class because I don’t want
that person to be gone. But what I’ve had, some of my Black students that will go to a dean a lot quicker than a White student.

Irrespective of her passion to help Black students succeed in college, Theresa refuses to adjust her academic standards, not only out of personal or professional integrity, but also for job security.

They expect me to give them a pass and I’m not because I told them if I give you a pass on my class, they audit my grades, I lose my job, you’re at [name of university], you’re fine. So it’s like, how dare you even ask me to put myself in that position. So I think there’s an expectation. But then on the other hand I’ve had Black students, because I am Black do well in my class and As, and just… And so there’s, you know, two ends of the spectrum, but the Black students that are really struggling, for example I had one Black student who dropped my class because she said, “if I’d known this was going to be a writing class and I had to write a paper I wouldn’t have signed up for your class. I thought it was just going to be a sociology class.” I said, “But you have to write in all your classes.” “I know, but you actually want to take off for grammar.” And I said, “Well if that’s what you feel you need to do that’s fine, but that’s a shame.” And so it’s like that kind of aggression that I get from some of the Black students.

Michelle reiterates Theresa’s reflection about the disengagement and apathy of Black students, in spite of the presence of a Black instructor.

A funny thing is last semester or this last year, one of the things—the students themselves stressed me out and a minority student stressed me out and almost made me cry. And
other Black faculty I’ve talked to—I mean, it’s funny because we’ll be places like meetings or whatever and one of them would walk up and be like, “You have a problem with Black students?” It’s almost so sad. It’s really sad because it’s not, you know, they didn’t come in my class with anybody being prejudiced toward them and to choose the route they choose, it almost, it makes you wonder: is there some internal circuit that’s loose? And I know that there are non-Black students who are just as equally lazy but I know what it’s like to never have a Black teacher and to come in my class and treat me probably worse and take advantage of that, and just not, you just don’t care, they’re so lackadaisical. It’s not even just lazy, it’s so unengaged. They’re so unengaged. And even if they think they are engaged, they’re so inconsistent in regards to getting stuff done.

The frustration and concern for a group of African-American students whom she had to fail in a recent course generated anxiety for Michelle.

I think this last semester I gave out a nice chunk of Fs to Black students who were still coming to class at the end of the semester. So they got Fs not because they slacked. They came and got Fs and so a couple, probably halfway through the semester, I literally—one weekend couldn’t sleep because I told my husband I had a class where there were a lot of Black students and this was rare, maybe seven of them in one class and the class would be half empty because they never hardly ever came to class. And I eventually had—just because I couldn’t take it anymore—I pulled them aside and was like “Look, what is going on? Why would you choose to be a statistic? Why?” and they just don’t get it. Because they made a decision to come to college, so you gotta think, ok. You kind of think, you know, kind of something, some of them, you talk to them, they talk in class,
they’re not from dysfunctional homes, and it’s not that. It’s a choice to be ignorant. It’s really, really sad. It’s really sad. And I know a couple of other faculty members, we joke, not joke but talk about it and it’s bad. And then when you hear statistics on TV and things that people think are solutions, they’re really way off base. Somebody needs to raise the expectation and I think that’s the only thing that need to be done, giving them more opportunities and hand-outs—you have to see the attitudes first-hand to know that that’s kind of not the problem. It’s really something else. I don’t know what it is but it’s really so sad.

The disappointment about the African-American students’ apathetic attitudes echoed by several research participants in their accounts is coupled with their frustration in managing their personal desire and sense of responsibility to cultivate Black student achievement—within the obvious and amenable expectation to support academic achievement for all students. Within this theme of Responsibility, examples of voluntary or involuntary race-related responsibilities (tasks and duties) focused on African-American students through advising and mentoring efforts, counseling, course content, and advocacy for Black students on academic committees, participation on administrative committees, presumptions of favoritism and expectations of leniency for Black students. Such aggregated demands and expectations of responsibility to unsolicited assignments or causes, particularly of a racialized nature, intensify the faculty role for the African-American public community college instructor.

**Theme: Rigor**

“I took a group of students to the library once…. A woman over there wanted to see the assignment they that were using…she got upset because the students didn’t need any assistance
because I had already given them everything that they needed. She said, ‘I want to see the assignment’…. I said, ‘Ok fine’. I show her the assignment. So she looked in the book: ‘You know, this is right….’ I said, ‘What makes it right all of a sudden? [She said], ‘Well the author of the book couldn’t have it wrong.’ The problem is that I was the author.’”—Khallid, 10-year Sociology Instructor

Similar to yet amplifying the theme of Responsibility with regard to the charge to attend to racialized tasks and duties surpassing the scope or volition of the Black public community college faculty member, the theme of Rigor delves into the stated or implied mandate for higher standards of accountability and performance—either willingly embraced by oneself or demanded by others. Such requirements that research participants determined for themselves include maintaining stringent measures of instructional quality in their faculty roles. Requirements imposed by others include strict scrutiny of and challenges to research participants’ educational and professional qualifications and instructional proficiency along with comparisons to White faculty. In addition, experiences described by research participants revealed patronizing expectations of racial loyalty and conformity from Black colleagues. The exploration of this theme begins with research participants’ clarifications of their personal and professional motivations to have and to hold high standards in their faculty roles and continues with an exploration into the expectations and challenges to academic qualifications and professional expertise, tenure process, student evaluations, course content, comparisons to White faculty, and within-race scrutiny.

Voluntary Examples

Work Ethic

Winifred devotes a significant amount of her faculty role to curriculum development and
course preparation to uphold her standards of quality instruction and sustain her interests in the course content.

Sometimes I think—my colleagues laugh at me but I don’t care because I’m hard on myself. I’m always trying to figure out, “Now how can I best—I’m always looking for best practices. So I’m the one who’s always changing the textbook or trying something new or adopting this new idea. So I probably could spend less time and sit there and say, “Why don’t I just consistently do this and just get happy with what I’m doing?” But then I’m thinking, “Oh, God, I did that topic [for the last] two semesters. God, I’m bored or I need something else.” So for me, I’m always working on my teaching, how to be a better teacher, how to be a better instructor, how to keep my standards high when sometimes you’re kind of forced to maybe kind of lower those standards.

The rigorous standards of excellence that Winifred requires of herself in her faculty role, in her opinion, greatly surpass the scrutiny that college faculty experience in general and the intensive forms of inspection that faculty of color endure.

Now if you’re—if it comes down to, “Do I always believe I gotta do 17 times better than my colleagues?” No. I do what I’m supposed to do. Because I know I hold myself up to a high standard, I don’t have to worry about doing it 17 times better. I just do what I’m going to do, and it ends up being—if I do what I’m supposed to do, then it gets done. I never have to think, “Oh, I got a do it 17 times better.” No.

CG describes his practice of managing the time and the large volumes of information generated from his multiple duties as a faculty member and department head.
Non-stop work. I’m a workaholic. That’s what it is. I like to stay busy as you can see, walking around. And this is a typical day. I’ll answer the phone, I’ll talk to people, I’ll write stuff down. I’ll even be on the computer and hold a conversation. My phone will ring constantly throughout the day—publishers, administrators from [the] district, faculty, campus administrators. And it’s, I just navigate through it. And then I sit down at the end of the day and write a note of everything I’ve done. To tell you the truth, my mind is, I remember a lot of things and a lot of things [are] in my mind, but as [it] become more and more complicated, I find myself having more and more notes. Like notes. I have many notes. Piles and piles of notes. I don’t throw out anything. So I have notes from meetings six, seven years ago and when people ask, ‘Did you save, did you do,’” and I’m going to tell them no, I have minutes, I have notes. I try to keep all my notes at least seven years, all of them. I’ve got boxes and boxes of stuff.

Like Winifred and CG, constant time and attention to core tasks and duties define Samuel’s work ethic in his dual role as a faculty member and department chair. The influence of his mentor, the responsibility to maintain the legacy of excellence established by his mentor and expected by administration, and the scrutiny of critics encourages Samuel’s approach to fulfilling his role.

I just look at [name of mentor], [who] did a wonderful job. He worked so hard and for me to carry the baton the rest of the way, or for the next, or as long as I’m here is an honor to follow in his footsteps. So I work hard. I work. I work probably about five times, maybe seven times harder than the average person that works at this school, in this position, or teaching position. And it’s only because, like I said, I had to support myself so I was used
to hard work. And that’s just a way of life for me. I’m used to it. And then, the tradition, the legacy that he left. And then people who hired me, like the President of the college who hired me: he took a risk on me, you know what I mean? So he took a risk so I figured I don’t want anybody to be able to go to him and say, “Man I told you shouldn’t have hired Samuel. He doesn’t have any, no degree…”

A hostile encounter or the potential or actuality of critical feedback can energize one’s work performance. Annette’s inverse reaction to adjusting to a new work environment and a troubling situation with her new secretary exemplifies the strength of her work ethic. It didn’t affect my work in terms of…performance. No. When people around me think that I can’t do it, I dig in. There were nights when I would stay here ‘til 12 o’clock at night to make sure it worked. And I didn’t really—and I knew I was by myself and I needed to do it to make it work. And to this day, I still am like that. I don’t let—just because you don’t wanna do it—stop me. So in that respect, it did—that’s just the nature of my personality and so the misconception was as I had blockers and obstacles, that is—the assumption in their mind was that they were stopping me. The assumption in my mind is that I can always come up—as an out-of-the-box thinker—I’ll come up with a plan to work around you, and it’s gonna work.

**Involuntary Examples**

**Challenges to Professional Qualifications**

**Hiring**

In contrast to voluntary instances in which research participants outlined their personal choices to adhere to a rigorous set of standards in their respective faculty roles, instances of
intense scrutiny and involuntary measures of quality that exceeded practical standards occurred. These examples included challenges to qualifications for employment, difficulties during the tenure process, and measures of quality of instruction and course development, and comparisons to participants’ White counterparts. Challenges to instruction were conveyed through suspicion and inspection of course content with White faculty and feedback from student evaluations.

Shannon recalls that “people were mad” at her selection for a full-time position at her public community college because those “people”—longtime part-time faculty members of the college—had expectations to fill the full-time faculty slots that rarely become available. “And then here I come with my little Black but who never taught there, it was kind of like ‘Hmph!’” Shannon explains. She attributes her hiring to an institutional commitment to diversity. “They didn’t want to hire from within. They wanted to bring in new blood. They wanted to have different people. They didn’t want people hiring their friends.” Shannon understands the inclination to maintain relationships among the familiar, yet this sentiment can generate an environment that is exclusionary to outsiders. Shannon says she doesn’t know “if that’s necessarily racist” because

…it’s just those are the people you hang around [with] so you hire people you know. Not necessarily on purpose to keep people out, but I think that perpetuates itself over time so nobody can get a foot in the door because you don’t look their way. But I also do think that I had to be twice as good. I mean, I would say none of those people had Ph.D.s. I was three years into my [doctoral] program so I think that made me a more credible candidate. Like if they had hired a Black person that had the same level of education, those people would have been even more upset.
Shannon’s speculation that, as an African American, she had to be “twice as good” in comparison to White candidates to be hired into her full-time faculty role—indicated by her notation of her doctoral program participation. Meanwhile, Martin recalls the criticism he heard in response to his hiring into a full-time teaching role at his historically White public community college nearly 20 years ago during a targeted campaign to racially diversify the institution’s faculty ranks.

There was only, I think for years, there was only one Black person that was a faculty in the math area, and I think there was no Black person in physics or chemistry or biology. So I think in 1990 there was a little bit of a push, they were trying to, on all areas around campus, and they wanted other minorities. Of the people that were being hired, they wanted to take a special look at qualified minorities. So now I don’t know, I may have still gotten a job, I didn’t, I wasn't so much a “minority hire” but I was a person hired in when they were looking for well-qualified minorities and [I] came well-qualified from [name of university].

Martin’s qualifications were criticized by rivals as deficient and, therefore, special consideration by race was needed to justify his selection for the full-time faculty position. But you know whenever you have any kind of push like that, for “minority hires,” then there’s always a certain number of majority people who were thinking something special is going on—that whole affirmative action nonsense—and you know you were somehow hired on with less of something, less academic standing, you know less qualified in some kind of manner. So I don’t know, that year that I was hired in I think there were a couple people, I think, some part-time people who had, because some people had heard that
there was a push to get some minority applicants; there might have been some people initially who wanted, who wanted to try to think about—well, I didn’t get the job because you know you got in but I said, “Well yes, I got in but it certainly ain’t because I’m less qualified than you. If anything, I’m more qualified than you.” So that wasn’t an issue, but I mean it wasn’t an issue with me but I think there were a couple of people who in their mind, they wanted to initially make it an issue but after that first year, that just kind of died away because me and one other person that was hired.

While taking a walk across the campus of her public two-year college, Annette’s random encounter with another faculty member may have been suggestive of the prejudiced viewpoint about her alignment with the qualifications for her new faculty/administrative role.

…and one of the things that happened to me—I think it was my second day here on this campus—is I had a full-time tenured faculty member see me walk across campus, and I had on a business suit and everything, and he stopped me and he asked—and he wasn’t African-American—and he asked me, he said, “Well, who are you?” And I told him who I was, and he said, “Well, clearly because you’re wearing a suit, I knew that you weren’t a student here.” And he says, “So…” and he says, you know, he asked me what my position was, and I told him. And he said, “Well, what was my—” and he asked me what my qualification was for the job. And I told him. And he said, “Well, it sounds to me like you’re overqualified for this job. And that’s probably because you’re Black. And you would have to be overqualified for this job in order to have it.”

Theresa entered her full-time faculty position as part of one of the biggest full-time hiring
cohorts that her public community college had ever assembled. Along with being the most racially diverse hiring group to date, this group was required to complete a semester-long new faculty member orientation. The length of Theresa’s new faculty orientation exceeded the average length of such new faculty orientations, especially for faculty members who have prior teaching experience.

Well, when I first was hired on at [name of public community college]...it was in 2002 and it was the largest new faculty hire that they’ve had in years. I think there were like 23 of us. This is also the most racially diverse group that they’ve had, ever. So of that I would say there are 23 of us, at least 18 of us were people of color, mainly Black, a lot of Black females. So that was truly unique. But during that time, we had to take a new faculty members’ orientation class, which ran the entire semester. So in that class we had informal conversations about what to do when there’s a problem in the classroom, how to go about doing your lesson plans, and your syllabi.

Despite the constant probing about his knowledge of his academic discipline and his appointment to his full-time teaching position, Khallid’s relief from those interrogations comes from his perspective of how the world works with regard to race and his disregard of such critics.

I think again, just going back to the whole notion of I don’t know what I’m supposed to know. I’m here because of a quota. Somebody just driving down the street one day, I need to find somebody Black and I just happened to be coming out of the store that I had just been in robbing and they came and said, “Come on and teach sociology.” (Laugh) At times, especially when I was younger, that was stressful. When I was younger, this whole notion of I’ve studied so hard, I’ve studied so hard, I do know, I know Marx, I know
Durkheim, I know Weber and all this other good stuff. Then before long, I realized it doesn’t matter. It doesn’t matter whether I know Marx or not. Marx could come back and tell them, “Look, he knows Marx [more] than everybody else.” It doesn’t matter. I’m still Black and so as I begin to understand this in terms of operating here, that began to alleviate some of that stress.

Carolyn shares her perspective about the custom of differing (read: above average) qualifications for African Americans juxtaposed with a tendencies of entitlement that overshadow the deficiencies of Whites. She refers to these inequitable circumstances as “a burden that we experience…always that whatever it is that you do has to still be better than anybody else’s and so that means that you’re working harder all the time than anybody else is.” In her faculty role, Carolyn says that she hears her White colleagues discuss professional shortcomings, seemingly without concern, but

... if those things were true of me, I would never say. I would never say. And nobody looks at them any differently. They talk about the gaps and the weaknesses and even some of the things that they did to get through school. I would never tell anyone any of those things, if they were true and I didn’t do them, you know? People who paid for other folks to do their research, you know what I’m saying? I did all of my stuff myself, myself, you know? I would never tell. If I had, I would never tell it because I know it would change the way people viewed me and I know that.
Challenges to Academic Credentials

Shannon perceives that, because of her race, students have suspicions about her expertise to teach. In response to those reservations, she includes a description of her academic credentials on her course syllabi.

…I think students—or I’ve had experiences where I felt like students felt I was less knowledgeable or less qualified because I’m Black. I don’t know. I just—I have a sense of it. It’s not like they say it flat out, but you get, like, the questions. And so now, I mean, over the years, I just, on the first day—well, in fact, now, I just have my bio on my syllabus and just leave it at that. Because once they see that, well, then I have credibility because I have the degrees and I have the blah, blah, blah, and I’ve been doing this for years. But, I mean, it’s somewhat frustrating. You feel like you always have to prove yourself first. You’re not just taking that face value that you belong here because you have a Black face.

Theresa shares her frustration about the ongoing and unjustified scrutiny of her qualifications and lecture content and the aggressive tone of the inquiries.

Just the constant questioning about my credentials, challenging almost everything I say in class…and it tends to be argumentative, not all, but the vast majority it’s very confrontational. Like in sociology, we talk about general patterns. There are exceptions, exceptions cannot be used to prove or disprove…theory. And I tell them that. “Well, that’s not what happened to me.” [Theresa says], “We’re not talking about you.” [Students say], “Well where are you getting your information from? I just think this is bogus” and then they get all upset and then they completely shut off and it’s like I tell
them this class is not to reaffirm your beliefs. It’s to see how you beliefs were formed within the social structure of America and even though you never starved, does not mean people have not starved. And it’s sort of them not being able to see the sociological imagination because they’re so caught up in being, feeling like they’re being attacked when I’m not attacking you but whether you like it or not it’s a male, White-male dominated culture, period. You know and they don’t like that, because in my class I’m not going to sugarcoat it. This is not Kumbaya. And so that often times brings up a lot of hostility or aggression.

While Shannon’s and Theresa’s experiences concerning the legitimacy of their credentials and competencies as public community college teachers came from White students, it was a White male colleague who reacted angrily to Samuel’s appointment to the position of department chair as his replacement, regardless of a terminal degree.

Yeah, he’s still here, but he’s only teaching two classes, four sections of each. Yeah, he’s just faculty. That’s a story in itself. He has his Ph.D. and I don’t have nothing but a high school diploma and he just couldn’t bear it. He couldn’t live with himself. He came to work every day angry. Yeah, he felt like two things: one, he felt that the administration, how can I say it: didn’t support what he was trying to do, and I, so I come in and they supported everything I try to do…and so he’s mad at the administration because I guess he felt he was dealt with unjustly but the bottom line is if he was doing a good job they wouldn’t have called me in. And another thing is the fact [that] I don’t have a degree and for every success I have, every one of these plaques on the wall, it just shows his lack of productivity…. 
**Subject Matter Expertise**

Samuel’s many years of professional experience in his discipline appeared to equalize his eligibility for the administration at his public community college to appoint him to a departmental leadership role. Michelle, with several years’ experience in business and industry and now as a public community college instructor, did not expect a challenge about her proficiency to record lecture videos for a series of online courses, expressed as skepticism about her race, gender, and ability to complete the task. The remarks from a colleague that Michelle admired surprised her in light of her overall experience at her public community college.

So she was the one who I was dealing with in regards to laying out these four classes that need[ed] to be put online and [the message was that] the president doesn’t want the same face on them, right? So—and this is probably the, one of the only and most racial thing [that] has ever been said to me in my years there…she was like “Well let me know if you want to practice ‘cause this is a really big deal about you taping. I mean you’re gonna be a female representing the business department and you’re African American.” (Scoffs) And I tell you this: I remember that because—and I am very not negative about racial experiences at my job. But I remember being so irritated with myself for being shocked.

During a class visit to the campus library, a library worker scrutinized Khallid’s project under the unfounded presumption that he and his students needed help to complete the assignment.

I took a group of students to the library once, as a class. A woman over there wanted to see the assignment that they were using. Now nobody else is asked for their assignment.
Now the students—she got upset because the students didn’t need any assistance because I had already gave them everything that they needed. She said, ‘I want to see the assignment.’ I said, ‘There’s no need for you to see this assignment.’ ‘Well I want to see it to make sure they’re doing it right.’ This was profound. I said, ‘Ok fine’. I show her the assignment. So she looked in the book, ‘You know, this is right, Khallid.’ I said, ‘What makes it right all of a sudden?’ [She said], ‘Well the author of the book couldn’t have it wrong.’ The problem is that I was the author. My assumption is that she must have assumed that the author was some lofty White academician, but the author was me. So all of a sudden, I was right because it was in black and white, but I was wrong before that point, right on? And I thought it was profound, thought it was profound. She said the author of the book couldn’t be wrong, but I’m wrong. And then of course my argument is let’s pretend that I am wrong, the students are going to be tested on that wrong information so let them get their A so they can find out that it’s right later on. But I wasn’t wrong, I never am. Right on? (Laugh) So these are the types of things. Nobody else has to deal with this. Nobody else has to deal with this. Anybody else on this campus can go to the library when they want. I need traveling papers, right? Anybody else can [take] students to the library when they want.

Tenure Process

Episodes of inconsistent guidance, insufficient support, and pressuring impediments complicated timelines and paths toward tenure (or equivalent long-term/continuing contract) for research participants. April believes that race may have been a factor that delayed her from obtaining tenure because of ambiguous feedback.
When I was looking to receive tenure at this school, I believe that it was my race that kept me from getting tenure as quickly as I think I should have and after speaking to other African Americans at this college, they have had similar experiences. In fact, I haven’t run into a single other tenured faculty member that said, “Oh it was a very smooth process for me.” The department chair and his sort of his trainee I guess within the department, department member full time, they just didn’t seem to think well of the way that I approached my courses. So they made it very difficult after having evaluated me in my classroom and speaking to me about that evaluation I didn’t think that their comments were relevant, I guess. And now as a long-time faculty member, still I look back and say I don’t think that their comments were relevant and I think they could have offered better support to affect the change that they wanted to see in my teaching to get a continuing contract. You have to get tenure within three years, so it took me three years. It should have taken two but it took three.

Because of the stress of the tenure process, April experienced “lots of health issues,” including pneumonia and depression, and she “didn’t want to go to work anymore.” Either by coincidence or by design, the length of time to attain tenure doubled during the year that Gloria—the first and only African-American female member at the time—hired into her department’s full-time public community college faculty role. Ironically, four years later, the time length for tenure was returned to the two-year duration.

Well, you also have to understand that year that I hired in, that was the year that they changed the rules for getting tenure because prior to that year you could get tenure after two years of teaching here. That year they wrote in the Faculty Master Agreement, which
we call FMA, was changed to where you had to teach four years in order to get tenure.

My department chair happened to be on the bargaining team that year. It took four years before I could get tenure and everyone that hired in with me it was four years for them to get tenure and then after that they changed it back to just two years.

Committee participation, service activities, and collegiality, along with high quality teaching and grading, are typical expectations to earn tenure. Winifred described the tenure process as one that “consumes you” and she reflects on the difficulties on getting support through that time. “…I try to look for mentors to help me, especially when I was going through tenure, and I didn’t find the level of support there that I would have liked,” Winifred explains. In addition to the lack of support, a request to hold a prestigious academic committee role added pressure and contributed to Winifred’s necessity to manage her time and energies to fulfill the requirements for the committee and for tenure.

I was the most junior member, I think, in the history of our division to ever get that chair, and I got it after the first—not even, I didn’t even finish my first year of my tenure process, and I got what is considered a major curricula committee position from a telephone call that almost sound[ed] like that was an answer I couldn't refuse. And so yes, I’ve been in those situations. You just gotta be resourceful. You just gotta pull back on what you know and just be really resourceful. Yeah. You just gotta be resourceful.

In contrast to Winifred, who was invited to chair committees during her tenure process, marginalization from a committee of interest by her associate dean irritated Melanie and raised her concerns about the likelihood of a successful tenure process.
It seemed like he [the associate dean] was trying to pull me out of technology into some other committee…. I’m like, why is he doing that? Why is he trying to steer me away from certain things? And that was kind of frustrating…. And I think another thing that was frustrating was that as probationary instructors at the time, we were encouraged to participate and do as much as we could and I’m like, this is something that would sort of fulfill one of my obligations as probationary instructors, designing a classroom. But he was obviously giving those tasks to the White males to help them build up their probationary reports that they would look good. And then you could sort of see at that the point the associate dean that they were in, that they were gonna get tenure anyway but then I would find myself challenged on particular points for every single thing so it made me just pull back like this associate dean is only going to let me participate here and I can go no further.

Personnel changes added to Melanie’s frustration because, as she explains here, she learned how to navigate the tenure process with the first associate dean who steered her away from committee work of her interest. But the new associate dean’s desire for more casual interactions in which Melanie had no desire to cultivate generated distress about avoiding conflict to finish the tenure process.

I’m like, can we just stick to business here because I’m not interested in making you my friend…. [T]hat actually turned out to be the most stress…. [T]he stress came because she [was]this new person who came on board for the last year of my probation and I knew that getting tenured was going to be an obstacle course whereas with the White male faculty, with [name of dean], it was like, you know, you’re just a token Black
faculty member. I don’t care. Just do what you need to do. Stay in this role and you’re done. And I’m like, “Okay” I don’t like [it] but that’s the way it is and I’m fine with that. I’m still getting paid. But this one last year she kept pulling me into her office about this, that, and the other and making issues about certain things. I’m like I don’t have time to deal with this shit. She just got on my last nerve, last nerves. So that was the stressful because my performance was fine, the teaching was fine but it was sort of like she was going to make tenure that much difficult whereas the last year if [name] had remained associate dean for my last year it would have just been signed off and things like that. Thankfully, that’s over and done with.

*Student/Course Evaluations*

In conjunction with the tenure process, student evaluations are another source to channel intense inspection and criticism of the African-American public community college faculty member. Research participants shared their reactions and their options to entertain or avoid viewing the content on the assessments altogether. Michelle explains that the harsh tone of the comments from students prompts her to avoid reading the evaluations.

...a student said something in the student evaluation I thought was inappropriate and I shouldn’t have to read crap like that about me making a choice between being a mother or working. To me, that’s work abuse [or] whatever you want to call it. So I had stopped reading them. And like last week I got stressed out ‘cause for whatever reason I don’t know what I was smoking this day I opened them up and read them and this student who was going on and on about it’s my fault ‘cause she ain’t come [to class] or whatever and I just ripped it up and threw it in the trash. When I first started teaching I used to read them...
a lot ‘cause it was helpful. I was learning how to teach. But now, and socially, it’s almost like people forget that people are human.

Uninformed opinions and expectations from students inform Bill’s reasoning for ignoring student evaluations, noting his disdain for the rationale that such assessments help teachers improve their craft. “Now what does a student coming out of high school know about my teaching? He or she just got out of high school, they are in my class and they are going to rate me on how I teach,” Bill asks. “They don’t know about my subject matter, don’t know anything about me but they are going to rate me?” He adds that working for positive ratings on student evaluations are “a popularity contest”:

If you sing and dance and entertain them, they might like you. If you don’t sing and dance and entertain them, they dislike you. They dislike a lot of instructors because they’re hard but they don’t say they are hard. They’ll find something else to say. “They don’t make it clear.” Well yeah, it’s not clear if you don’t study it when you take the test and you flunk it. Of course, it’s not clear. And so that’s—and it’s really has cost a lot of instructors to give grades. They know somebody should flunk but rather than flunk they get a D, or C minus, maybe even give a C, but they deserve an F. So, but a lot of instructors are conscious of that…evaluation from the students. And so I just don’t look at them.

As Bill recognizes the influence of student evaluations as part of the comprehensive instructor evaluation, he facetiously alludes to the student/teacher balance of power in the classroom, suggesting that negative comments on the student evaluations could result in
unfavorable grading outcomes, despite the possibility of retaliation or punishment for his conciliatory warnings.

I tell my students—I know I tell my students—I know we are not supposed to do this and I could probably get sued someday but [I] tell them, “Don’t be calling Sam, 1-800-CALL-SAM ‘cause I ain’t got nothing and you ain’t going to get nothing. I’ll end up on welfare and you all will be paying me in the long run. But I tell them you can put what you want on that paper. But remember, Bill has the last evaluation and that ain’t no threat. That’s a fact and it’s not a threat. It’s a fact. I do have the last evaluation and they try to tell me, “Yeah, but you don’t get it. You don’t know until afterward.” I say, “You don’t know that.” One day I’ll probably get fired or something [and] that day will probably be when I’m ready [to go].

While student evaluations conducted by a college or university are usually classified, comments on ratemyprofessor.com—a popular website where students can rate college professors and post comments—are open for anyone to view. Melanie shares her observations of the differing degrees of race- and gender-based scrutiny between Black and White college instructors, based on her experiences with White students in her classes.

…some of the White students were more apt to be confrontational about me—what I was teaching and question about whether I was teaching a real English class simply because of the same material that if a White male teacher I think was teaching it, they would never be challenged. There’s a site called ratemyprofessor[.com]. The White male teachers get, “Oh, they’re so cute” and I think it’s definitely, as a Black faculty member,
you have to defend your authority to teach English. And those are the only times where I think race was a direct factor. It would be in the classroom as a Black female teacher.

Winifred explains the significance of considering the sources with regard to deciphering critiques from both student and peer evaluations, implying that perceptions about race could impact the perspectives and, subsequently, the feedback from students and colleagues.

Students, they got those evaluations, so that helps. Although student evaluations to me are a double-edged sword, but they do it and then sometimes they give you feedback. And whether good or bad, you’re to figure out how you’re going to take it and, of course, on what grounds and what perspective it’s coming from. So students have a way of doing things too, especially when you’re an instructor of color and your student body may not be of color, how you maybe engage. And then even [with] your colleagues, in particular maybe your administrators, who are not of color, how they perceive your teaching or your delivery and other stuff.

Winifred clarifies her speculation about the circumstances that influence students’ comments pertaining to their experiences with different teachers by sharing an example about a White male colleague’s feedback from students.

And then I see another colleague of mine who is the jewel of the department, just chummy, chummy, chummy. Even got high ratings on ratemyprofessor.com, which I don’t go to because that’s just nothing but hate mail. But even—they just think he’s grand, great, and whatever. And a very good and close colleague of mine. We’re very good friends. But his background is so much like their background. He can connect in
ways I just can’t connect. I know it. And I can’t wake up and be a White, working-class individual tomorrow. I don’t even know what’s that like. Okay, I just don’t know what it’s like. I don’t know what it’s like to have all those anxieties and fears and stereotypes and dada dada and fears and anxieties of being White and male and looking up and you’re in a community college because the life you thought you were gonna live just isn’t working for you. And how do I get to you in ways that this particular colleague is grand and great at?

Sharon extends Winifred’s notion about the influence of the instructor’s race as reflected in student feedback, also mentioning ratemyprofessor.com. Her perspective about student evaluations arises from a conversation with an associate dean who noted that students complain about her because she is “Black and female.” Sharon speculates these comments about her are based solely on personal prejudices, biases, and hearsay instead of actual, real-life interactions. …I’ve heard students talk about how I’m rated on ratetheprofessor.com and I said I’ve never read it but I’ve heard them say that some horrible things about me [are posted] and I don’t really know what those are. But my thing is when I meet a person for the very first time, I have to rate them the way that I view them. I don’t—wouldn’t allow someone else’s view of them cloud my experience because everyone has a different experience…and the thing that I don’t like about the evaluations—I see the purpose of an evaluation but what I don’t seem to like about the evaluations particularly at [name of public community college]—is they will write something—I’ve heard some things, not just me, but some of the other colleagues that I’ve talked with about evaluations. Things like, “They need to get rid of them” or “She dresses very nice.” That’s not telling me
about the content of the class. Did I come to class prepared? Did I have everything that I
was supposed to discuss in that day? Did it get discussed? Were your questions
answered? And then sometimes they’ll say, “She seems to have an attitude.” Then I ask,
“What do you mean by attitude?” I mean I don’t ask that personally because I don’t know
who wrote it but I want to know [is] what’s an attitude?

Course/Lecture Content

From Khallid’s observations, White students at his public community college give the
impression that he is “not supposed to be here” within the sentiment that he “obviously is a
product of some quota system” without “the same level of degrees nor the same level of
intellect” as his White counterparts. Khallid’s experiences with White students are characterized
by their practice to substantiate his lecture content with White faculty members which, he
speculates, is due the students’ inability or refusal to receive or trust information from an
African-American instructor—an image that opposes “who has historically stood in front of their
classroom.”

It’s always interesting when I will say something in class and two or three days later
someone comes back and say[s], “You know, you were right the other day.” And of
course, I’m thinking I knew I was right. It wasn’t even up for a discussion. So at first,
when it first happened years ago, I got excited. I said, “Okay, great. I said something in
the class, they went to the library. They’ve done some research.” No. Instead, they went
down the hall to talk to Professor So and So or Doctor Such and Such. And it’s funny
because the person they go and talk to is always somebody White, but it’s always
somebody who other White folks think is a fool, too, and so it just always kills me that
(Laugh)“You talked to who? That person’s the biggest damn fool on the campus and all
of us know it and you talked to them?” You know at first I was excited. I said, “Oh wow, they went and studied Marx, I’m excited. They went and read some Malcolm.” They didn’t read anything. They went and talked to the biggest fool on the campus and even, and all the White folks even know that person’s a fool.

Mark’s unexpectedly different delivery of the curriculum in a particular course early in his new full-time teaching position at his public community college prompted students to divert and escalate their concerns to his dean. Mark considered that his being new and inexperienced with the course, students’ resistance to his teaching style, or his race might have motivated the complaints. Mark’s subsequent conversation with his dean about the students’ complaints concluded with the assumption that the students “did not have the experience that they thought they were going to get.”

I had a bunch of students at one point—the first time I taught Human Sexuality—they complained to the dean about how I was teaching. The class in the past had a history of being very salacious and I was teaching it very academically. I think that made them really upset that they were not having their carnival. But they didn’t come to me directly about that. They went to my boss. That bothered me. That was a hurtful experience. But I did wonder. I was like, well, gosh, would they have done this if I was White? Or if they perceived me in the majority maybe they would have or maybe not. I guess we’ll never know. I was like, gosh, I wonder what that’s about.

**Intersecting the “Isms” (Race/Gender/Age/Discipline)**

“Racism and sexism is alive and well in America and my community college is just a microcosm of America,” states Carolyn, articulating her observations accumulated during her
teaching career spanning more than 30 years. Accounts from Annette, Gloria, Theresa, and Melanie exemplify Carolyn’s contention and draw attention to the intersecting characteristics of race, gender, age, and academic discipline. When Annette entered her new joint faculty/administrative position in instructional technology, perceptions about her readiness accompanied her welcome.

But there’s an assumption—first of all, I think that women in general that go into technology, it is assumed that you don’t know what you’re doing and you’ve got to prove otherwise. I don’t care what level you’re in, women in general, because it’s a male-dominated field. So you know you’re gonna take your licks…. Now, in terms of Blacks, I think that the attitude was the same way that they were with their White counterparts, and [then] here’s a Black woman, she doesn’t know about technology.

Nearly 15 years later, Annette’s longevity has nullified presumptions about her expertise. “…I blew them out of the water…,” Annette quips. “…it’s because they were thinking like the culture. So there were expectations. The expectation was that I was going to fail. I’m still here.”

In Gloria’s experience as a longtime public community college math instructor, she has noticed that, even in recent years, students in upper-level math courses have not been taught by a Black instructor. According to Gloria, facing an African-American instructor for the first time, a woman in particular, compounded by the subject matter of math, can be “very unsettling” to some students.

I think that it is difficult for women teaching in math and science because I think students come with certain expectations that they have for a woman that they do not have for a male. I think you really encounter some of those difficulties overcoming those
expectations. A female really encounters a lot of challenges teaching the subject matter that I’m teaching. I think a lot of people struggle with seeing a woman who is very clear and concise and direct because that kind of goes against their image of what a woman should be. Some of the students struggle with that. Some of the males have a difficult time with a woman that’s very direct. Some of the males struggle with that. I’ve stood back and watched—there are certain things my male colleagues can say and there’s no question about it. It just feels natural and normal. A woman can say the same thing whether it’s me or another woman and there are all kinds of issues with it. So you do get into some interesting gender issues and you have to be very self-assured and clear about who you are and what your purpose is so that you don’t get caught up in the emotion and the craziness.

Theresa’s descriptions about her teaching experiences and encounters with White students in her classes illustrate her rationale for having to make pedagogical adjustments to her course curriculum as a consequence of her race, gender, and age. She believes that White faculty members (especially those who are male) are exempt from having to downplay such fundamental aspects of their identity in the classroom for the sake of the teaching and learning process and to maintain student rapport.

...I want to say I have three strikes against me, not including sociology. I look younger than I am so there’s an age issue, ageism issue. With me being a woman, again, that’s an obstacle, as well as being Black, that is an obstacle. There are times when, especially when I’m teaching [name of course] that I consciously, when we cover African Americans, I consciously do not say “we” or “us” or “we used to.” I say “they” or “they
would” or “their history” to remove myself because I know as a sociologist if I were to put myself in the conversation then it would make it difficult for some students to really say what they have to say. It doesn’t mean I always like what they say, but I’ve learned to remove myself from the conversation, which I don’t think White or male, White male instructors would ever think about doing. So we have to be very aware of our race, very aware of our gender when talking about certain subjects, absolutely.

An example of the additional attention to instructional detail that Theresa feels is necessary to do in the planning and execution of race-based course content, she recalls a confrontation with a White male student who threatened to approach her dean about a portion of her lecture where he claims Theresa said she “hated all White people.”

And I told him, “You do what you need to do.” Gave her [the dean’s] number, office number, office hours and I said—I just left it alone. But what I had said in class was I can understand how someone could hate White people because of their experiences, but we have to step away from that and say there’s something more—like I was talking about a Ku Klux Klan rally I had gone to and I said at that moment I could see myself hating all White people. Then I started thinking, I like my friend, she’s White, so ok. I hate all White people but her, you know, go on and on and then finally you realize you don’t hate all White people. These people are White. You don’t like what they’re saying. He of course didn’t hear all that part. He just picked the part that was going to help him in his case.
For Theresa, this encounter with the White male student who not only misinterpreted her lecture comments but also declared that he would report her (because he was genuinely offended and/or he simply wanted to cause trouble) iterates her need to “try to be careful” about facilitating discussions on race in her classes. Theresa’s motives for modifying her approach to delivering race-related lecture content includes more than just to engage with White students in a safe and supportive classroom environment. She shares that, above and beyond the predictable issues of classroom management, she contends with resistance from Black students for a different reason: compared to White students who seek to challenge Theresa’s authority as the instructor and therefore, the subject matter expert, Black students—expecting a sense of camaraderie—spurn Theresa’s strategy to depersonalize, or distance herself, from the racialized content. Along with the lower levels of accountability for White male faculty, Theresa is equally frustrated by the higher degrees of scrutiny from Black and White students in comparison to her Black male colleague.

I have to often time[s] tell them Black people weren’t the only ones that were discriminated against. You don’t hold the corner on that. We’ve got to talk about the Native Americans, stuff like that. So for them it’s like their time to be able to talk about it because it’s a Black teacher and she’s going to let me say whatever I want to say. “You know how it’s like to be Black.” I’m like, “Well yes, I’m familiar with the Black experience” and it’s like why can’t I say, “Yes, I understand?” I say, “No, I’ve experienced.” I have to remove myself and that’s frustrating at times. You can tell some of them look at me like, “You Oreo,” especially when they find out I date a White guy. They’re like, “Oh, you’re just an Oreo.” I’m like, ‘It had nothing to do with that.’ So it’s a balancing act that I have to do because I am Black that I know, again, my White
counterparts don’t have to…. [Name of Black male colleague] doesn’t even have to do and he’s a Black man. [Name of Black male colleague] can say things and it’s just law. But I can say the exact same thing and there’s a question or clarification.

Theresa’s frustration about these scrutinizing occurrences and accompanying threats are exacerbated by the downgraded expectation of accountability for White male faculty, particularly with regard to similar subject matter. One of her White male colleagues, who discusses slavery “as if it was just some fluke—it wasn’t that bad, people need to get over it,” has not generated such criticism. “Never had a comment about him, never had a complaint about him,” Theresa reports, adding, “but stuff like this with me, every now and then my dean will get a complaint….”

Almost parallel to Theresa’s experience with struggles from White male students challenging her legitimacy as an instructor based on her race, age, and gender, Melanie reports similar questioning from White male students. In response to her own inquires on the matter: “[W]ould they be challenging me if I were a White male professor or an older White male professor?,” Melanie says, “…I’m thinking no. No.” Melanie describes an incident from one of her English classes that landed her in her dean’s office in response to a White male student’s comment that she was “so political” with her use of a Martin Luther King essay to show students how to use their critical thinking skills. “…I was talking about it in such a way to where I was talking about, ‘Oh, all this ‘I have a dream’…sort of deconstructing the whole myth of Martin Luther King that’s perpetuated in the media where it’s ineffective….’” The greater offense to Melanie was in her dean’s lack of support about the student’s claims, which Melanie regards as an attack on her authority as an English teacher.
I’m like “What the F?!?” And that’s just one of the things that pissed me off. I’m like, we have assigned readings from a list of books that the department tells us we have to teach from and I was teaching from one of those books. And in one of those books, there was an essay by Martin Luther King. So why are you going to allow this White male student to challenge me of being too political because I’m talking about Martin Luther King….Why are you allowing this White male student to challenge me about what I’m teaching in my class? And you kind of find that as a Black faculty member, immediately there [are] students who say I don’t see Black people as an authority on English.

**Within-Race Scrutiny**

The theme of Rigor delves into notions of higher standards of accountability and performance in the faculty roles of the participants in this research study, either self-imposed by the participants themselves as a personal mandate of quality and success, or stipulated by others (students, administrators, colleagues, etc.) as forms of harassment and delegitimization. Participants encountered similar patterns of scrutiny and criticism with others of the same race, describing pressures of loyalty or, at minimum, conformity to the interests of an individual African-American faculty member (or administrator) or to the interests of a group of Black faculty, assembled as a Black faculty network, caucus, or formal organization.

**Individual Inspection and Isolation**

In light of the scarcity of Black full-time faculty on most public community college campuses, the idea of within-race scrutiny is contingent on the existence of at least two Black faculty members having the chance to interact on a regular basis. Whether the individuals are associated by department, division, campus location (if at a multi-site college), or even at the institutional level, disagreements based on personality clashes, differing values, or power
struggles can occur within their primary objective to build a sense of community between them. In some instances, participants reported instances slander and ostracism for abiding by their own beliefs and values. Michelle’s discordant working relationship with the only other African-American faculty member in her department reached a peak when the colleague lost her election to become department chair. Michelle explains her observations about the motives of her colleague’s behavior before and after the vote.

One issue that I did have started—there are two Blacks in my department: me and another lady…it didn’t work. I think a lot of it was generational and I think when I first started working there, I didn’t expect her to, [but] it would have been nice if she would have reached [out to me]. She didn’t. But then there was an issue where she wanted to be department chair, which I didn’t think she would have been a good department chair and she brought me not voting—’cause see it’s only five, six people in our department, so you know who didn’t vote for you. So I was the swing vote and she didn’t win. She made it…about us sticking up for each other, which I just didn’t even see it like that, do you know what I’m saying? And in the end—we get along a lot better now—but it was interesting because it was about that when you needed something….

Just as Michelle maintained her stance against her colleague’s gratuitous expectation of solidarity between Black female colleagues, Theresa flatly disagreed with a fellow Black colleague’s argument and subsequent directive to show support for Black students by lessening course requirements for them. “…she felt that because she was a Black instructor that she—[because] we may be the only Black instructor for these students—that we should give them an easy way out.” And I said, “You’re doing them a disservice….” Theresa reports that the
colleague bad-mouthed her to students, describing her as “very mean” and “very cold.” Theresa shares her perspective about her academic standards for all students and her response to her colleague’s defamatory words.

I’m not cold, but I have a job to do. You have a job to do as a student and I’m going to hold you accountable for that. And I would be doing you a disservice by letting you get by with less. And for many students, I would say for the majority of the Black students, once I’ve had that talk with them they do step up to the plate, but some of them don’t. Some of them don’t. I was pissed at her, I was angry at her because I told her, “How dare you say that to a student just because we have different teaching styles?” Now mind you, since then, she now sees what I’ve been talking about and she’s changed her ways because my whole thing is when you give people the easy way out, that’s what’s wrong with this generation.

Theresa’s relationship with another Black colleague is more complicated because, despite her brotherly affection for him, she sees his views about race as somewhat extremist, compared to other African-American faculty members at her public community college. “…he sees…race in everything…,” Theresa explains. “He really talks about race a lot. But as far as other faculty members, we don’t really trip on the race thing, we really don’t. But he is one person in particular who turns everything into a race issue.” Out of concern that the perception of a close association with this colleague could cause difficulties for her at work, Theresa limits her interactions with him on campus.

I love him. He’s like a brother to me, but we socialize out of class, off campus, not on campus, because I don’t want to be linked with him professionally. So when it comes to
work, no. I say hi to him, we might hug each other, but that’s about it. I don’t really attend any functions that he gives on campus because I don’t want to be labeled as a problem faculty member because he—yeah, he’s a problem. I feel so bad talking about that. But he’s someone that you have to watch.

This fellow faculty member is one who Theresa has scrutinized due to his zealous views about race, which Theresa believes, can obscure his perspective and his reaction to issues. One example consists of an incident in which he accused a White female colleague of physical assault.

Now this is a big guy and he said he fell all out and he wanted me to go and support his story and pretty much lie. And I refused to because for one, I wasn’t there. For two, there’s a camera and he took it upon—he went on this rampage about, “Well see, that’s what’s wrong with the Black faculty up here, you all let the White people just run all over you. You’re nothing but a house nigger and all this other good stuff.” I said, “Well I’m going to take my house nigger behind back up to my office. Peace.” And so he’s the kind of person where I intentionally love him, but I keep him at a distance at work because I can see how his, my relationship with him could taint my teaching and that’s just one extreme case of that.

Annette’s description of her African-American secretary offers insight into the dynamics of their combative relationship: “...she was like the voice of reason to the White faculty…the well-articulated Black, the go-to Black person on campus…and I’m saying, ‘No, we need to do it
this way’, and she’s saying, ‘No, I don’t report to you’. The hostility between them escalated to the extent that, Annette reports:

….she pulled the union card. She didn’t work with me. She would make up stories and she would get all the faculty all riled up about whatever—she would get them riled up and they would come race to me and it’s like—and attack me about, “Well, we’re not gonna do this. We heard that you want us to do this. We heard this and we heard that.” And one of the things that she—and she would hold almost like fireside chats. She would have lunch with different groups to stir up things.

The secretary eventually transferred to a different department; however, the rumors that Annette was unfriendly toward African Americans persisted for a time. This incident attests to Annette’s proclamation about the pervasiveness of racism pertaining to African Americans. …the assumption is that race is because it’s the White/Black racism. The one that you really need to be worried about is the Black/Black racism and that takes on a whole another ugly head….” Shortly after Khallid’s colleagues discovered his undeniably defiant attitude toward the conventional culture of his public community college campus—demonstrated by “some wild stuff” he says in classes that he claims he “can back it all up”—along with feedback from a White colleague who told him, “you just don’t fit in here,” Khallid received a telephone call from a fellow African-American faculty member who urged him to conform to assuage tension within the faculty.

You know, I had a brother here who they [the White colleagues] all liked. They go to him every time I make somebody upset. He called me once. He said, “You know brother, you would make it easier on us all if you would just assimilate, you know?” … I’ve overheard
conversations about me where (Laugh) people are in the office like this and they don’t know that you’ve come into the office and three, four people in the office [are] talking about it. I said, “Wow.” I’ve overheard conversations about me not being the team player. And the team player’s always dogged because I refuse to assimilate. It’s not that I’m not doing my job, but because I refuse to assimilate.

While a Black colleague contacted Khallid by telephone to admonish and advise him to adapt his philosophical perspectives, presumably at the request of other faculty members, Winifred was the only one of the three African-American colleagues who willingly initiated contact to the fourth Black faculty member in their department. She critiqued the colleague’s anti-social behavior as imprudent.

…but there were four of us. And I think they saw us do four different things, have four different ways of looking at things. And then no one could say, “The Black people feel like this.” No. Now were we collegial with one another? Three of us were. One of us was not. And the two of the three, the two of the three were just like, “I just don’t even understand her” and I was the only one who reached out to her. I didn’t care how she acted. “Okay, I’m gonna say “Hi” to you regardless. You can act a fool if you want to. Be foolish, whatever.” And I’ve noticed lately that she’s been very appreciative of that, and she’s gonna be who she is. But I don’t ever have to feel like that I have to do that.

Extending a proverbial olive branch to her fellow Black female faculty member, as Winifred did, helps to foster a friendlier working environment and expands the lines of interpersonal (as opposed to merely professional) communication among Black faculty. For
instance, Melanie’s extended discussion with a Black female colleague in her department revealed some eye-opening perceptions about some unknown intentions of their new employment at their public community college. To Melanie’s surprise, it appeared as if, based on her (Melanie’s) extensive list of credentials and professional experience, she had been designated as the frontrunner in an undeclared race for job survival. Melanie recalls the conversation:

…and she [the colleague] said, “Melanie, the expectations of you are so much higher and I was the one expected to just not meet expectations” and I’m like, “I don’t understand what you mean.” [The colleague said], “Well, everyone was impressed with your CV”—because I had published several articles. I’d won national awards. I had printed poetry and stuff like that and everyone was just like—and I says, “I don’t know why anyone would have [said] that” because it seemed like she was sharing with me that she felt expectations that she wasn’t going to be the performer out of the two Black women that were hired.

Whether this contrived competition was a fantasy or a sign of insecurity projected by Melanie’s colleague, or a result of the intangibly combative academic working conditions that produce distinctive consequences for African-American faculty, Melanie was oblivious to the suggestions disclosed by her Black female colleague: one, the very notion of such a contest, two, that she was considered the one to beat, and three, that this contest, in which she was the favorite, had pitted her against another Black woman.

I’m like, “that’s very, very interesting” because by the time I left [name of university], I had already done so much professional stuff. I had been on committees. I had chaired committees. I oversaw summer programs. I just did everything. I had a big 300-page
binder of everything so when I came to [name of public community college], I did wanna teach and I didn’t mind chairing on committees but I was never there to be the shooting star. But we’re just sharing, talking and she brought that up. I’m like I don’t understand why we would be compared as two female Black—I guess because they hired two Black females and they’re all saying let’s see which one performs better than the other. And I’m like I don’t know why that would be and I certainly didn’t know why she, out of all the other faculty members, would be the one who had felt pressured that I was supposed to be the Black female that succeeded more than her. I never saw it that way.

Although Melanie says that she has no interest in administrative work, she did have intentions to participate in some committee work that would not overshadow her “whole other realm” which, she states, is to “teach, get my Ph.D., write a novel, do some films, and things like that.” Melanie’s plans starkly contrasted her Black female colleague’s aspirations, which included chairing distinguished committees and administrative work that, as Melanie observed, “she was extremely happy about” doing. Melanie had already “been there, done that” with regard to those activities and told her colleague to “go for yours.” I shared with her we’re both getting what we want out of the experience.” Her genuine support for her fellow African-American female faculty member’s administrative ambitions coincided with her own dissatisfaction and confusion about the limitations of her committee participation, which might have been restricted by the dean in response to her angst-ridden remarks noting favoritism toward White male faculty members. Melanie continues to reflect on the conversation with her Black female colleague.

It just seemed like she felt pressured that because there was another Black female person, Black faculty member, that all of a sudden, we’re like, which one are we gonna choose?
Like there was sort of like a decision—who is going to perform, [one or] the other? I was just staring at her like what? I never saw that at all. It wasn’t like we were competing because we had always been collegial and friendly with each other. We always talked a lot about students and things like that. But it was just—she shared with me how I am pulled back from being the star on committees and being the go-getter and she was expected to pull and those expectations sort of reversed, I guess.

This scenario calls attention to the mechanics of comparative scrutiny in which African-American faculty members speculate about their colleagues’ abilities and intentions. For Melanie, the exchange with her Black female colleague emphasized the vast differences the priorities of their career trajectories and illustrates that Melanie is anything but the “political animal” that her colleague described herself to be. Also, this situation raised Melanie’s awareness about her perceptions about her present and future prospects about the rest of her public community college teaching career. “…I’m heading out to pasture here,” Melanie says. “I’m going to work my 20 years for retirement and just teach. I’m doing what I love to do.”

Beyond the personal and/or professional issues and conflicts that may arise with colleagues of the same race, Melanie does have a group of Black colleagues with whom she can connect, complain, commiserate, or simply chat. When such communal resources are virtually nonexistent, it is painfully noticeable, to which Sharon attests. She is the only full-time faculty member in her department at the campus location of a multi-site public community college. There are less than 10 full-time African-American faculty members overall at Sharon’s public two-year college. For a very short time, Sharon had discovered a source of safety and racial kinship with two African-American administrators in the college’s Counseling Department until
their departures, one through death and the other via retirement. “And I would go over to talk with them and sometimes about students but just to talk and they would say, ‘Black Caucus! Yes, let’s both meet…,” shares Sharon. “And we would just talk about things that are going on and it was really, really nice…. Well, that no longer exists for me,” she adds. The absence of a safe haven—a cadre of fellow Black faculty members at her public community college with whom she can socialize (at least professionally), is exacerbated for Sharon by a well-meaning White colleague’s incapability to understand or relate to her angst from a racialized perspective.

I do have one colleague who, every time that I have an incident, she says “Sharon”—and she’s European—“Sharon, I don’t get it. I do the same thing in my class and students don’t complain. What can I tell you?” Or there have been instances where we’ve had these faculty meetings and she would say “I’m going to leave early.” And I said, “Ok. You can leave early.” [The White colleague asks], “You’re not going to leave early?” I said, “Listen, all they have to [do is] turn around and look and say Sharon’s gone. And she said, “I don’t get it. I don’t get it.” And I thought, “Ok. Look at me. Look at you. Are they going to miss you in the group?” (Gasp!) “Sharon, I never thought about that!” I think about those things.

The void of being one of a handful of Black faculty at her public community college and, therefore, not having at least one other African-American faculty member to commiserate with about the routines, struggles, and triumphs of being an African-American public community college instructor causes Sharon to carefully monitor her conduct to escape criticism from her White colleagues. When one is part of a group, a source of safety and strength can be found within the assembly of those who share the same race. Bettye, a longtime instructor at a
predominantly Black public community college who previously taught at a historically White university that had a Black faculty organization, offers a rationale that compels African-American faculty to organize on a particular campus:

…if you are all equal, you shouldn’t have to have a Black faculty organization, but we had different, you know, needs. We had different things. So yes, there was a Black faculty organization where we could help each other and everything. At [name of historically White university], there might still be one. But I didn’t feel that [name of historically White university] was user-friendly for Black faculty or Black staff. And that’s another reason I left, you know…. At [name of predominantly Black public community college], we have a lot more minorities. We have White faculty [and] we have Black faculty, but we’re faculty. We don’t look at ourselves as White faculty or Black faculty or, you know, we’re comfortable as faculty. You know it was different at [name of historically White university]. It was like you had to prove something. If I have a problem with any faculty [at the predominantly Black public community college] or I want to know something, you know, I just go to the faculty, whoever’s there, you know, we don’t have those kind of problems.

Group Security and Scrutiny

In reflection of Bettye’s collaborative working environment at her institution with an almost equal ratio of Black-to-White faculty and Sharon’s isolated existence at her public community college, due in part to the scant amount of other African-American faculty who she can connect with regularly (or at all), the individual counts of Black faculty on campus become less significant in comparison to the persona and purpose of an independent body of African-American faculty, particularly on a two-year college campus. The community college, described
by one research participant in this research study as “an equal kind of place” without a focus on “differentiated staffing” within the professorial ranks, most likely did not anticipate that faculty needs and interests would differ according to race during its inception in the early part of the 20th century. As Bettye noted, a Black faculty organization (at any type of institution of higher education) might not be necessary “if you are all equal…but we [Black faculty members] had different…needs.” Depending on the racial climate of the community college campus, the assembly of African-American faculty can be a place of safety, support, and escape from racially hostile conditions on campus. Other benefits of the group include being a resource of information and guidance about practices and procedures. For example, Melanie compares the information informally shared with her by Black colleagues with the details given through the college administration’s formal meetings and orientation sessions regarding the tenure process at the time of her hire.

You know, you get the party line from the official personnel and deans. And then you have your group of colleagues who break it down and tell you what’s really expected of you. So what I do understand came from the mentors that I had when I was first hired, the people who helped me get hired there…. But what I got my understanding during those first years was definitely conveyed to me by my other Black faculty members and the low-down of what to do to make sure I got tenure…. [They] say, “So they don’t really give a damn about that stuff. Just don’t act a fool, you know?” because the probationary observations of my teaching and things were just little write-offs unless they saw something that was just really like “Oh my God, she’s not following the curriculum.” They told me just follow the curriculum and just do this because you’re basically hired as another Black person for diversity. That was the bottom line for me. They had to hire
some Black people and you know, so I was given the impression, my colleagues told me that they need to have Black faculty on board. And of course they want good Black faculty but I had nothing to worry about….

Access to the wealth of information, experience, and support provided by this group of Black faculty members helped Melanie earn tenure. At the same time, the benefits of this membership—access to a safe haven, a sense of community, privileged information, etc.—come with a price. The cost begins with adhering to the mandate to maintain a high standard of behavior and performance, evidenced by the message to Melanie from her Black colleagues to do well in her faculty role for the greater good of diversity and quality instruction; this helps to sustain a positive reputation—or at least to avoid an adverse opinion—for Black faculty as a whole. These expectations also come with instances of scrutiny and criticism, similar to what occurs at individual levels of within-race scrutiny, presumably with stronger pressures of loyalty and conformity to the interests of the group. During a planning committee meeting with Black faculty members for an annual event geared toward African-American students, Melanie saw the suspicious nature of inspection of one of the Black faculty members—her mentor, “the one who sort of flagged me to apply as a full-time faculty member” to determine those who would be most suitable to participate in the event.

…all of a sudden it was just sort of like she started listing the resources of which Black faculty members do we need to get involved in this activity—which ones are Black. And she actually said that, like, “Is he Black?” She says, “Well, he’s half-Black, his mother’s White” and all of a sudden, this racialized territory was sort of being marked out on which Black faculty members were ‘down’ and which ones were ‘ofay’. Oh, wow!
Melanie’s usage of the colloquial terms “down” (to be in support or agreement with a plan of action) and “ofay” (a derogatory term used by a Black person in reference to a White person) illustrates the opposing ends of the spectrum of loyalty to the Black faculty group’s agenda or activity, as presented by her mentor in the committee meeting. An African American’s referral of the label “ofay” to another African American could be interpreted an insult; the name-calling is one form of punishment not only for the perceived disloyalty to the cause of Black faculty in this case, but also the perceived alignment with the values and ideologies of the dominant, or White, campus culture. Melanie speculates that her mentor’s bold inquisition and demand for allegiance from the African-American faculty to this activity reflects the college administration’s disinterest in the event and exemplifies a racially hostile campus climate toward African Americans. “[The] [a]dministration was not supporting the symposium for African-American students. They just threw some money at them like, ‘here’s your budget to do this but don’t expect the VP to show up’,” Melanie explains, adding: “…I saw how the divide was working out at [name of public community college], that these Black faculty members were very much aware of—they had the history of how they had been marginalized.”

Along with supporting campus-wide events with an African American focus is the expectation to participate on notable committees and serve in influential positions to represent and advocate for the agenda of African-American faculty on campus. For instance, when Melanie followed her own curiosity and selected a committee other than the ones suggested by her mentor, she learned that she “broke an unspoken rule.” Melanie’s deviation was viewed as a betrayal, causing her mentor and other Black colleagues to question her commitment to the African American cause and in turn, Melanie describes feelings of inadequacy for her choices.
“It was an invisible stressor to where I kind of felt I let my Black faculty down because I was in technology and I wanted to do my own thing because it interests me…,” Melanie shares. Wanting to do her own thing is one of Melanie’s core characteristics. “I’ve always resisted just the groupthink and there is a certain expectation of groupthink with any group and especially with Black faculty,” says Melanie. However, the pressure to align with the “invisible responsibility” or “unspoken agenda” of the African-American faculty is so severe that any inkling of withdrawal or interference to the advancement of their agenda could threaten one’s social and professional survival. Melanie likens these dynamics of faculty relations by race on a college campus to that of a penal institution.

It’s a fact that in prison, it’s racially segregated. The Blacks hang out with the Blacks, the Whites and things and there are unspoken codes between the prison guards and stuff where you don’t even have a choice. You have to stay within the Black group to survive. And it was sort of like, you know, these prison gangs have a history—White versus Black versus Hispanic or whatever. And you know that you have to stay in that gang to survive so you have to figure out a way. Yes, I don’t like being in a gang, but I know that that gang came about because, in prison it’s just because they’re all in a gang, they’re all prisoners. We know that we’re marginalized as Black faculty members and you have to be aware of that. So it was sort of like you have to prove yourself as a Black faculty member because these are the roles and expectations we have of you.

The “we” Melanie refers to are the major stakeholders on the public community college campus, particularly fellow Black faculty members and White colleagues, to whom she would have to prove her loyalty and legitimacy, respectively. This issue of compounding
RACIAL FATIGUE STRAIN BLACK FACULTY 2-YR COLLEGES

responsibilities and expectations, capped by the rightly burdensome charge to join the cause for African Americans on campus, culminated into Melanie’s defining moment. Although she wanted to demonstrate her camaraderie (or, at minimum, counteract doubt about her loyalty) to the Black faculty agenda, which would allow her to maintain access to the safety and support that comes with the Black faculty group membership, Melanie struggled with the realization that she was “sort of being pigeonholed” by others’ expectations for her faculty role, “not only by White administrators but other Black faculty members. There was a game being played the minute I stepped in,” Melanie explains. “…and I always knew that there would be conflicts between Black faculty members and White faculty members and administration. I just didn’t realize what the game rules were at [name of public community college], whereas now I do.”

This new insight, coupled with the legitimacy and protection of tenure, Melanie has gained some confidence and ownership in keeping things in their proper perspective, from commiserating with fellow Black faculty members to participating in African American focused activities on campus. While she is very supportive of her Black colleagues, health issues and an aversion to conformity are among the reasons that Melanie either avoids or restricts her time and attention to those unspoken roles and expectations that she says would further complicate her professional life. “I know that there are issues that affect us but as a Black faculty member, I also want to get into productive discussions and not just get on this same—why the administration is always going to be racist,” explains Melanie. “I’m like, if it’s always gonna be this way, why keep discussing it, stuff like that. So that’s why my participation is limited, because I don’t need to vent about that as much, I guess.”

Considering Melanie’s angst-ridden effort to discover and establish a viable balance between her personal perspectives and goals and the aims of the Black faculty network at her
institution, Khallid’s relentless ideological stance as a Black nationalist—a sociopolitical
movement that advocates for an autonomous government exclusive to Black Americans, separate
from the dominant White, mainstream culture—is the antithesis to Melanie’s struggle. He
recognizes that his political perspectives—that he is very vocal and visual about—is not always
well received on campus, including some Black colleagues. He jokes about the remarks he hears
about the colorful flags and posters with profound statements that hang on the walls in his office
that reflect his views. “…every time, they’d walk past, they’d look, and you could tell like, ‘Oh,
he hasn’t taken that down yet, he really hasn’t changed…. (Laugh) They see this right here, they
know, it’s going to be up forever.”

Similar to Melanie’s mentor who sought to scrutinize Black faculty members to measure
their degrees of “blackness” based on their willingness to participate in an African American
organized campus event, Khallid derisively criticizes his African-American colleagues for their
cowardice when White colleagues make offensive remarks to them, speculating that their fear is
due to their misguided perceptions about race relations in the United States. “I think some of
those who are assimilated, they just take some of these comments, and they’re ok with it,” says
Khallid. “…they don’t have the knowledge base to realize the source of this stuff because they
think everybody is their friend, they think America’s great, and we’re all one big melting pot.” In
contrast to the notion of finding strength in numbers that can exist with even a small grouping of
Black faculty on a historically White community college campus for example, the Black
colleagues who seek Khallid for understanding and support—fully aware of his philosophical
underpinnings—may be unprepared to hear his lone yet scornful perspective. In an ironic twist,
Khallid reports that one of the colleagues who sought advice from him was
the same one who told me ‘you need to assimilate. You need to tone it down.’ Tone what

down?...But then they come at him and who do you think they all run to? Then they all

come to me. “What should we do?” (Laugh) “Well Khallid, nobody bothers you with this

stuff” Well, they did when I first came but nobody bothers me anymore…. [W]henever

the comments come to them, they come to me. “Guess what such and such said?” And I

say, “Well, what did you say?” [They say], Well, I just smiled about it.” I say, “Oh boy!”

[They say], Well, Khallid, how come no one ever says anything to you? I said, “because

they know I’m not just going to smile. I’m hurting feelings”....

Khallid later reconsiders his premise of his fellow Black faculty members’ naiveté,

noting that due to their sincere belief in the idealistic concept of a racially harmonious society,

they keep “working because they really think that one, we’re going to be judged by the content

of our character…(Laugh)…instead of the color of our skins….Instead, Khallid deems their

recurring angst—resulting from the White colleagues’ slights and instances of disrespect—as a

form of delusion for believing that such things will change.

I think that one day—they believe that old foolishness, that ‘I Have a Dream’ foolishness.

Fanon said that the oppressed man always gets his liberation between the hours of 10:00

p.m. and 6:00 a.m.—when he’s sleeping—nothing comes to a sleeper except for a dream.

And so let me take that back. I do think that they see it. Yes, you don’t have to be a

nationalist, they see it. But I think they’re so caught up in their dream that they believe if

I just work harder or if I just, if I change the way I dress, if I do this, the White folks will

accept me. And it’s just not going to happen.
The theme of Rigor explored the existence of higher standards of accountability and performance, either voluntarily or involuntarily determined for research participants. Instances of rigor pertained to one’s work ethic, challenges to research participants’ academic or professional qualifications, strict scrutiny relating to hiring, tenure, student/course evaluations, course/lecture content, and issues of race, gender, and age. Within-race scrutiny, a sub-theme of rigor, attends to research participants’ descriptions of individual and group inspection and criticism of one’s values, beliefs, and choices about teaching and learning and perspectives about African-American issues on campus. The theme of Responsibility attended to the expectation of research participants’ willful or forced engagement in race-related roles and tasks, including mentoring, advising, and managing academic and social support programs for African-American students, serving on administrative committees, teaching certain race-related courses, and inquiries of partiality for Black students.

This chapter identified and described the themes of Responsibility and Rigor, two of the five major themes that emerged from the lived experiences and perspectives of the 19 male and female, full-time, Black public two-year college faculty members. Chapter Four explored the following three themes: Representation, Naming Reality and Managing Reactions, and Resilience. The proceeding chapter will discuss major conclusions, implications, and recommendations resulting from this research study.
CHAPTER SIX:

Conclusions, Implications, Recommendations

This research study was developed and designed with the intention to explore the intriguing yet scarcely explored experiences and perspectives of African-American faculty at public community colleges. Specifically, this inquiry sought to discover the varieties and degrees of racialized encounters and stressors as derived from accounts articulated by the 19 full-time, male and female Black two-year college instructors who willingly participated in this research study, collectively conceptualized through Critical Race Theory, Racial Battle Fatigue (RBF), and Role Strain. The four guiding questions for this research study were: to what extent is RBF experienced by full-time, male and female, African-American faculty members at public community colleges? What racial microaggressions do African-American public community college faculty encounter in their faculty roles? What is the nature and extent of Role Strain experienced by African-American public community college faculty? How does Role Strain intersect with RBF? In other words, to what degree does RBF produce or exacerbate race-related Role Strain on African-American public community college faculty?

Insights that emerged beyond the scope of this inquiry’s principal queries refine the understanding of research participants’ multifaceted acts of response in reaction to racialized hostilities encountered in the public community college faculty role. The various approaches that research participants enacted to manage and minimize the impact of perceived and/or actual racist attitudes and actions—at least in the short-term—while continuing to function effectively in the faculty role characterize an enduring spirit, a comprehensive exemplification of resilience. Cora-Bramble, Zhang, and Castillo-Page (2010) describe resilience as “a strength- or asset-based
construct that is centered on protective or enabling factors such as competence, coping skills, and self-efficacy…[in which]…both internal factors and external resources help individuals avoid the negative effects of an adverse environment” (p. 1493). Constant adjustment and handling of professional activities coupled with personal life demands demonstrates resilience for African-American public community college faculty in general and for Black female faculty in particular (especially those who work at historically White institutions), these circumstances are aggravated by “having to deal with alienation, racism, and sexism. African-American women faculty members are continuously confronted with the challenge to prove that they do not have their job because of affirmative action, tokenism, or “opportunity hire” (Harley, 2008, p. 26). Overall, the findings of this research study are a testament to the function and consequence of response as portrayed through the lives and experiences of African-American faculty at public community colleges.

Delineated in Chapters Four and Five, five major themes emerged from this research study’s findings. The themes of Representation, Naming Reality and Managing Reactions, and Resilience were presented in Chapter Four, with issues and consequences of a racially assaultive environment arising as a predominant component of these themes. Chapter Five featured the themes of Responsibility and Rigor, which emphasized the complex nature of the African-American public two-year college faculty role, inclusive of multilayered pressures and demands exacerbated by race. Although the themes were not outlined in a particular order, their collective citation offers panoramic insight into the perspectives and lived experiences of research participants, codifying and illustrating a range of professional and interpersonal encounters in their roles as instructors at public two-year institutions of American higher education.
One noticeable characteristic exhibited across all five major themes consisted of the existence of voluntary and involuntary tasks and duties expected of and performed by research participants in the public community college faculty role. Research participants willingly engaged in being representative, responsible, rigorous, reactionary (or responsive), and resilient—corresponding to the five major themes—contextualized and strategized in relation to their specific personal and/or professional values and goals. Alternatively, research participants contended with student, colleague, administrative, and/or institutional expectations, tasks, and duties forced upon them (noted by certain instances of representation, responsibility, and rigor) and demonstrated particular responses to perceived and/or actual racially hostile incidents and defiant, uncompromising acts of resilience to overcome or, at minimum, withstand threatening circumstances enough to persevere in the public community college faculty role. In consideration of research participants’ volitional or obligatory involvement threaded throughout the five major themes, the instances of compulsory expectations, tasks, and responsibilities, along with interpersonal exchanges with racially adverse undertones, illustrate the facets of the conditions—aka racial microaggressions—that generate the symptoms indicative of RBF, and aggravate strain on the African-American public two-year college faculty role.

In alignment with the purpose and guiding research questions for this inquiry, the conceptual framework consisted of Critical Race Theory, Racial Battle Fatigue (RBF), and Role Strain. Critical Race Theory is an innovative and insightful framework to actualize the racialized environment demonstrated by inequitable and exclusionary policies and practices against people of color in the United States of America. Taylor (2009) noted that, with particular attention to educational policy, the lack of “an adequate vocabulary or theoretic framework” to discuss the intangible yet palpable effects of racism and marginalization had hindered the substantive and
gravely needed conversation about “what exactly is wrong about mainstream beliefs” and thereby making it “often arduous to argue against negative stereotyping and racist practices” (p. 9). Critical Race Theory offers both the conceptual and linguistic tools to identify and challenge racially oppressive policies and practices and set direction to facilitate change to these pervasive and deleterious conditions.

With the use of Critical Race Theory to frame the general society’s racialized environment, which is subsequently replicated in American institutions, including the public community college campus (Allen et al., 2002; Chang et al., 2003; Chesler, Lewis, & Crofoot, 2005; Smith, Yosso, & Solórzano, 2006; Thompson & Louque, 2005), these conditions affect the personal and professional existence of the Black public community college faculty member, provoking racial stress and compounding the existing strain on the faculty role. With the consequential relationship of Critical Race Theory to RBF in which the stress responses that comprise RBF illustrate the reactions to the racially prejudicial and discriminatory harms deciphered through Critical Race Theory’s tenets, it is necessary to explore the tangible instigators of RBF: racial microaggressions as indicated from research participants’ accounts.

Instances of racial microaggressions occurred across all five major themes—corresponding to the premise that the sources of both race-related and non-racialized stress materialize from involuntary or forced designation of tasks, duties, and loyalties expected of research participants. Racial microaggressions manifest at both individual and environmental levels. Noted in the theme of Representation, the calculated removal or the streamlined presence of (full-time) Black faculty was mentioned by a number of research participants. Within the theme of Rigor, several research participants described scenarios in which they experienced criticism and challenges to their hiring, academic qualifications, professional credentials,
teaching expertise, and tenure activities. Also, differing expectations and measures of accomplishment with regard to course/lecture content and overall instructional performance as indicated on student/course evaluations signify disparaging surroundings for research participants. These patterns of exclusion and relegation of African-American public community college faculty, excessive requirements, challenges, and inspections of faculty role performance, and implicit comparisons to White colleagues that imply inadequacy are indicative of racial microaggressions at the environmental or institutional level. These instances of environmental racial microaggressions, undermine and minimize the presence and performance of the African-American public community college faculty member and elucidate the resistant, hostile, vulnerable conditions that research participants endure in their public two-year college faculty roles.

One-on-one racialized encounters described by research participants consisted of a White student’s or colleague’s assumption about research participants’ political leanings because of race, the fortune of securing such an academic leadership position despite the perceived lack of qualification, the speculation of professional ability and expertise to competently record lecture videos, and the presumption of the inability to articulate in a professional manner. These racialized instances are suggestive of the general definition of racial microaggression because the research participant’s race is directly referenced by the seemingly unsuspecting agents or perpetrators of the affronts (the White student or colleague). With regard to the characteristic of the racial microaggression that grants advantage to the White offender, at both individual and social group levels, the essence of these offenses allude to a sense of superiority (or to mask a sense of inferiority when dealing with an African American in a position of authority), or to advance the veiled messaging that informs the environmental microaggression that African
Americans function at deficient levels of competence in their faculty roles in comparison to the standardized image of the public community college instructor: one who is White (and male).

Although race was overtly referenced in the noted examples, these instances would most likely not be considered macroaggressions because of the context and manner in which the slights were conveyed: via the perpetrator’s seemingly innocuous intent. In contrast to incidents in which race was explicitly identified, research participants questioned the notion of race as the underlying factor in other encounters because of the subtlety of any racialized context.

Highlighted in the major theme of Naming Reality and Managing Reactions, research participants described exchanges in which they contended with intense scrutiny about their whereabouts on campus, their instructional competence, and professional integrity; grappled with the dubious use of race as an exploitive incentive for inclusion on administrative committees; and dealt with disrespectful and dismissive acts from White students and colleagues, including in-class defiance from students, students withdrawing from a course upon the discovery of an African-American instructor, a White male colleague’s unacknowledged interruption to a classroom, and a White male colleague’s greeting with sexist undertones. Noted in the themes of Representation, Responsibility, and Rigor, research participants dealt with complaints, pressures, and threats from students and others about course/lecture content and class assignments along with acts of personal and professional disregard. In consideration of the indirect, unspoken racialized nature of these examples and the ensuing suggestion that such instances may not have intended to be racially assaultive, Sue, Lin, and Rivera (2009) identify the cognitive repercussions that research participants may have experienced to rationalize the racialized verbal assaults: “In many instances, the victims of racial microaggressions are placed in an unenviable position of attempting to interpret whether the act was racially motivated or simply an innocent
non-racial incident” (p. 159). This assertion corresponds to Feagin (1991) and Feagin and Sikes’ (1994) work regarding careful assessment to gauge the nature and extent of a hostile incident provoked by race. Along with the struggle to make sense of the situation, contemplation about the racialized verbal and non-verbal assault may include attempts by others to minimize or absolve the perpetrator. This is the exact sequence of events that one research participant experienced when she reacted strongly to a White male colleague’s retrieval of an item from a storage closet in her classroom during her class meeting without acknowledging her. Detailed in the sub-theme of verbal confrontation in the theme of Naming Reality and Managing Reactions, the research participant recalled the dean’s remarks to justify and defend the colleague’s actions and her anxiety in the face of the dean’s veiled reprimand: “But I’m like I have to sit here and listen to the dean make me the bad guy and it seemed like such a small thing.” Sue, Lin, and Rivera (2009) clarify this research participant’s conversation with her dean: “[T]hese biased comments or acts are often excused or explained away as being innocent or misinterpreted. The recipients, however, are often left to wonder whether microaggressions really occurred” (p. 159).

Research participants presented varied perspectives relating to the salience and impact of race in their personal and professional lives, from one Black female research participant who said, “I am very not negative about racial experiences at my job” to the Black male research participant who unapologetically ascribes to the principles of Black Nationalism, a movement that calls for African-American empowerment and mobilization for social and political independence. Along with the perpetrator’s obvious or obscure connotation of race in the context of an evasive exchange, the significance of race to the research participant’s life and exposure to racially hostile conditions inform the nature, extent, and impact of the racial microaggression.
In view of the definition and designation of an exchange as racially assaultive, two inquiries should be considered. First, should an antagonistic encounter between an African American and a White individual, especially if the racialized content is ambiguous, be instantly labeled a racial microaggression? Might the gist of the matter be one White person’s non-racialized power struggle or an insatiable pursuit of notoriety and status? What if a White student’s outburst in class is simply the result of an obnoxious, entitled attitude? What if a White colleague’s snub is grounded in an anti-social disposition as opposed to a bigoted perspective about African Americans?

Second, how should an assaultive encounter with racialized connotations involving a person of the same race is classified? Two themes, Responsibility and Rigor, included scenarios in which Black students and Black colleagues challenged research participants with expectations of favoritism and leniency and pressures to compromise principles and values for personal gain and group racial loyalty and uplift. For example, one research participant reported that Black students “will go to a dean a lot quicker than a White student” in response to her refusal to weaken her teaching standards. Another research participant noted that while African-American students are excited at the discovery of taking a college course with a Black instructor, they will sometimes “cross the line; the ways that they talk and things they’ll say and how they try to push the envelope” out of a sense of familiarity with that Black instructor. In the theme of Rigor, the sub-theme of within-race scrutiny detailed research participants’ professional and interpersonal conflicts with fellow Black faculty members pertaining to a department chair vote, a call to lower academic standards for Black students, a request for support in a case alleging that a White co-worker physically assaulted a Black colleague, an appeal for increased social interaction among same-race colleagues, and a plea for sociopolitical conformity to alleviate racial tension amongst
the faculty ranks. Overall, the cumulating effects of racial microaggressions and comparable conflicts with individuals of the same race can generate harmful mental, emotional, and physical consequences for the African-American public community college faculty member.

Racial Battle Fatigue

In brief, Racial Battle Fatigue (RBF) is defined as individual or multiple instances of psychological, physiological, and/or emotional/behavioral stress responses that people of color (including African Americans) undergo when constantly exposed to racism and racially hostile conditions, or even in anticipation of such harmful circumstances (Smith, 2004). Given the contextual relationship of racial microaggressions to RBF, the RBF model provides a structure to categorize and examine the nature, degree, and impact of a person of color’s mental, emotional, and physical state during and after a racially hostile occurrence.

Research participants’ accounts detailed in the five major themes either explicitly named or implicitly described several stress responses to individual and environmental microaggressions suggestive of RBF. Circumstances indicative of activating RBF stress responses were identified from research participants’ narratives explaining pressures to meet expectations and fulfill tasks and duties beyond their primary responsibilities or were conflicted with their personal values and beliefs, along with interpersonal clashes with colleagues or students, exacerbated by the ongoing exposure to the racially antagonistic conditions of the public community college campus.

Psychological RBF Stress Responses

Documented in the themes of Representation, Naming Reality and Managing Reactions, Responsibility, and Rigor, the narratives that research participants shared about their faculty role experiences and encounters suggestive of inciting psychological forms of RBF consisted of
apprehensions arising from integrating their institutions, the persistently minimal numbers of African-American two-year college faculty, contention with racial stereotypes, accusations of favoritism and leniency toward students of color, and challenges about academic qualifications, professional expertise, and comparisons to White faculty, consistent with the racially microaggressive nature of these scenarios. In describing their experiences, research participants used words or phrases that either articulated or alluded to their distressed mental and/or emotional state during or after a racially charged exchange or in reaction to the general atmosphere of their respective public two-year college campus. In several cases, research participants expressed thoughts and feelings symbolic of psychological RBF responses in tandem, such as anger coupled with frustration or irritation, shock with disbelief, or anxiety with worry.

The theme of Naming Reality and Managing Reactions, which detailed response patterns that research participants enacted during or after difficult exchanges with White students and colleagues (informed by Feagin (1991) and Feagin and Sikes (1994)), entails descriptions of several psychological RBF stress responses: anxiety, irritation, frustration, helplessness, disappointment, disbelief, worry, and defensiveness. The RBF stress response of defensiveness is a possible association with the reaction type of verbal confrontation due to its act of using words to repel, contradict, or correct a racially tinged affront. The psychological RBF stress responses of helplessness and disappointment, suggested by research participants’ descriptions in which they decided to avoid altogether or cease the continuation of encounters with White students and colleagues in anticipation of retaliation or lack of administrative support (noted as withdrawal per Feagin, 1991; Feagin and Sikes, 1994).
Research participants exhibited psychological RBF stress responses to environmental microaggressions pertaining to constant questioning of their academic and professional qualifications and capabilities, along with extensive demands of performance above those of their White counterparts in the public two-year college faculty role. Detailed in research participants’ descriptions outlined in the theme of Rigor, psychological RBF stress responses included anger, anxiety, irritation, frustration, disappointment, and shock. For example, one research participant said that she remembers “being so irritated with myself for being shocked” when her ability to tape lecture videos was questioned due to her race and gender. This research participant explicitly names irritation and shock in her account. Another research participant noted that student complaints made to his dean about his teaching during his first few semesters “bothered” him and that it “was a hurtful experience” that they bypassed him about their concerns, wondering if the students would have proceeded differently if he were White. This account is suggestive of the psychological RBF stress responses of frustration and disappointment.

Along with racially antagonizing encounters with White colleagues and students, other catalysts generating psychological RBF stress responses for research participants included disagreements with Black colleagues with regard to issues of a racialized context. For example, one research participant’s psychological RBF stress responses of anger, irritation, and frustration is demonstrated by her use of the words “pissed” and “angry” in describing her Black colleague’s attempt to discredit her through slanderous remarks because of her difference of opinion to the colleague’s suggestion that Black instructors should lower academic standards for Black students (to which the research participant vehemently disagreed). Due to peer pressure to conform and support the African-American agenda formulated by her Black colleagues at her
institution, one research participant described feelings of inadequacy, explaining that she felt as if she “let [her] Black faculty down” because she learned that she “broke an unspoken rule” about working on certain committees. These comments allude to the psychological RBF stress responses of anxiety, worry, and disappointment.

**Physiological RBF Stress Responses**

The theme of Naming Reality and Managing Reactions featured the research participants’ narratives suggestive of physiological RBF stress responses. Layered with psychological RBF stress responses of anxiety, irritation, mood changes, and defensiveness, one research participant’s account of her experience with a majority-White class of students who attempted to intimidate her includes her speculation that “they were giving me the blues because I was who I was, and I was giving them the blues because they were who they were.” She mentioned that the class was “no fun” that she was mentally drained but that she did not feel like her heart was “palpitating and things.” This research participant’s allusion to the physical impact to her body (e.g., heart palpitations) and mind (“mentally drained”) because of the regular exposure to this group of students, although vague, is suggestive of some sort of physiological stress resulting from the racialized hostility. While the aforementioned research participant did not mention a specific health issue or concern, another research participant directly indicated that her “blood pressure probably went up” along with a “lack of focus” in the aftermath of an incident in which a White male colleague interrupted her class without permission or acknowledgement to obtain an item from a storage closet located in the classroom. Along with the psychological RBF stress responses of anger, irritation, and frustration, it is possible that this research participant also experienced other physiological RBF stress responses related to high blood pressure. Another research participant noted that she “couldn’t sleep” due to frustration for having to fail a group of
Black students in her class whom she felt that their lack of performance resulted from negligence as opposed to academic ability or social support. This instance further advances the notion that uncomfortable matters of a racialized content can invoke stress even with issues or encounters involving parties of the same race.

*Emotional/Behavioral RBF Stress Responses*

Stereotype threat emerged from research participants’ accounts outlined in the theme of Representation relating to racial stereotypes. Briefly, stereotype threat is a framework developed by noted psychologist Claude Steele and colleagues to explain the process and consequences of contending with negative stereotypes pertaining to aspects of one’s social identity to avoid confirming, fulfilling, or perpetuating them and being judged by them for the sake of the individual and/or groups to which the negative stereotypes are associated (Steele & Aronson, 1995). One major effect of stereotype threat is that when the claims connected to the negative stereotype are widespread and significant, “this predicament may be self-threatening enough to have disruptive effects of its own” (Steele & Aronson, 1995, p. 797). In other words, the individual who is vulnerable to an environment in which one or more components of his or her social identity are persistently scrutinized, one’s performance could decline or fail altogether from the pressure to redefine the negative stereotype or at least to avoid its continuation.

For the research participants in this study, the stereotypes of note included appearance (size, clothing choices), sexuality, and manner of speech, indicative of negative stereotypes associated with African Americans. Inclusive of psychological and physiological RBF stress responses, particularly anger, anxiety, irritation, frustration, defensiveness, and worry, research participants’ descriptions indicated an awareness of their racialized physical presence and subsequent sensitivity to be mindful of their conduct on campus. Both male and female research
participants mentioned the need to dress appropriately (read: above expectations) to appear credible in their faculty roles, inclusive of avoiding jeans during teaching days and wearing conservative hairstyles and eyeglasses. Said one female research participant: “...it’s a lot to go through just to get credibility that some people can get wearing a pair of jeans and a T-shirt and they just stroll in the classroom...I feel very compelled to be professional.”

With regard to sexuality, two male research participants contended with assumptions and inquiries about their possible or actual homosexuality. Indicating his understanding of Black male stereotypes in particular, one male research participant who experienced racialized (and sexualized) aggression said “...they still expect me to fit the stereotype of the Black male, but their stereotype, of course, has been informed in many cases by the pimp, the aggressive person.”

In their narratives in which they reflected on their manner of speaking, female research participants alluded to their concerns about the ways in which they were perceived by others in light of the categorization of African-American women as domineering and boisterous. For instance, one female research participant noted that “it’s been a true exercise on how to hold your tongue when someone is just like coming at you...and you can’t go off on them because...it reinforces this sassy Black stereotype.” Other female research participants expressed a consciousness about their speaking delivery, self-described as “strong,” “loud,” and “straight forward.” Another female research participant’s experience juxtaposes this particular Black female stereotype yet with similarly judgmental consequences, clarified by her explanation: “…I know a lot of students are put off by me in certain ways...because...she talks like a White person...I find that people expect me to be different than how I am because of my skin color....”

This discussion of racial microaggressions and Racial Battle Fatigue illustrates the intertwined relationship of the two explanatory models as well as the lived experiences that
inform them. In the case of this inquiry, research participants’ accounts indicated multiple, concurrent and cumulative manifestations of RBF stress responses from either a single racial microaggression or a series of subtle and obvious racially assaultive encounters. These circumstances reflect the racially hostile environment that research participants endure in fulfilling the tasks and responsibilities of their respective faculty roles, thereby escalating the already existing role strain of the public community college faculty role.

**Role Strain**

Defined by Goode (1960) as the “felt [or perceived] difficulty in fulfilling role obligations” (p. 4), the inclusion of the Role Strain framework in this research study contributes to the exploration of the racialized aspects of role stress uniquely linked to the African-American public community college faculty member. Role Strain occurs when an individual believes or experiences tension or struggle in satisfying expected or actual attitudes and behaviors (tasks and responsibilities) in a particular role. For this research study, Role Strain is framed by three dimensions: role ambiguity, role conflict, and role overload. For the Black public community college faculty member, racialized role strain aggravates what extant literature has identified as the conventional stressors of the faculty role, i.e., time and resource constraints, substandard compensation and working conditions, lack of reward and recognition, unfulfilling or unrealistic career goals and expectations, and work/life imbalance (Dey, 1994, Gmelch, 1998, Larkin & Clagett, 1981; Seldin, 1987; Sorcinelli, 1992).

Consistent with the incidents and conditions that instigated racial microaggressions and subsequent RBF for research participants, instances of racialized role strain arose from perceived or actual tasks, duties, and expectations imposed upon them. As research participants recognized the significance of the African-American faculty presence in higher education, those who
willingly chose to do so engaged in various activities for the advancement of racial diversity on campus, such as serving as role models for students of color, joining hiring/search committees to advocate for racial diversity and cultural competency among candidates for faculty and administrative positions, advising and mentoring students of color, and developing programs to support African-American student matriculation and achievement. Yet conversely, race-related student, colleague, or institutional requests or demands directed toward research participants with or without conscious intent exacerbated their faculty role strain across the three specified dimensions, especially if the expectations were beyond the professional and personal scope of research participants’ primary responsibilities.

Role Overload. Detailed in the themes of Responsibility and Rigor, research participants’ descriptions illustrated the factors generative of role conflict and role overload. With regard to role overload, defined as those role expectations (or tasks and responsibilities) deemed excessive and therefore, unable to be completed within a specified time frame (Kahn et al., 1964), research participants did not indicate difficulty in completing the responsibilities of their respective faculty roles and, in their own volition, attended to duties and activities that corresponded to their personal and professional preferences. Nevertheless, the need to monitor and balance their time and attention appropriately to maintain optimal levels of performance was acknowledged.

Role Conflict. One research participant’s account of his experience with his informal Black male focus group illustrated multiple dimensions of Role Strain. The focus group is an extra-curricular activity that the research participant willingly initiated and cheerfully operates; therefore, it is not considered excessive and impossible to fulfill. However, the research participant contended with institutional inconsistencies and attempts
to restrict and neutralize his activities due to his disagreement with the administrative directive to formalize the group. That mandate clashed with his personal values and commitment to retain control of the content and direction of the group. This situation exemplifies Kahn et al.’s (1964) explanation of role conflict (the condition in which one set of attitudes and behaviors (role expectations) contrasts with another set of attitudes and behaviors within the same role).

Role Ambiguity. Role ambiguity, particularly task ambiguity, appeared to be a lesser manifested component of Role Strain for research participants. Their accounts demonstrate a strong sense of clarity about the public community college faculty role and their ability to distinguish between tasks and responsibilities that align with their professional and personal ambitions and other duties that may be unproductive or exploitive. One instance indicative of socioemotional ambiguity (defined as an individual’s concern about the ramifications of one’s choices and actions on the self and others) consisted of the angst that one research participant expressed in response to the suggestion (by a Black female colleague) that, unbeknownst to her, she was in a contest with said Black colleague to see who would survive the first year in their new faculty roles. In another example, this same research participant worried about the impact that her decision to join an academic committee different from what was expected of her would have on herself and the group status of her fellow Black faculty members: “It was an invisible stressor to where I kind of felt I let my Black faculty down because I was in technology and I wanted to do my own thing because it interests me…” This instance of socioemotional ambiguity is enhanced by the pressure to obtain and maintain acceptance by colleagues of the same race, especially in an environment that is racially hostile to African Americans and that the cohort of Black colleagues provides a place of relative sense of safety and support.
Intersection of Racial Microaggressions, Racial Battle Fatigue, and Role Strain

The stress of the African-American public two-year college faculty role is multifaceted, intensified by racialized elements that exacerbate the forms of strain associated with the faculty role. Racial microaggressions embody the racialized context, denoted by insidious, layered, accumulative words or acts conveyed by Whites toward people of color (including African Americans) with the likelihood to cause unprovoked harm. Even the suggestion or demand of race-related tasks or responsibilities imposed on African-American public community college faculty member compounds the strain on the Black community college faculty role, irrespective of the source of those expectations (another person of color as well as a White person); however, as indicated by this research study’s findings, racialized stress is intensified when incited by encounters involving Whites. The psychological, physiological, and emotional/behavioral stress responses that comprise Racial Battle Fatigue (RBF) are instigated by racial microaggressions. These interrelated components of racial stress, initiated by either a single instance or a series of racial microaggressions, can lead to multiple manifestations of RBF and Role Strain, affecting both the personal (mental, emotional, and physical health) and the professional (work performance) of the African-American public community college faculty member.

In spite of these treacherous conditions, research participants expressed respect and commitment to the mission of the public community college—to expand access to postsecondary education to those individuals and populations who would not otherwise have access—and described the fulfilling nature of the faculty role, which appears to overshadow negative experiences and circumstances. Featured in the theme of Resilience, research participants were professionally fulfilled in teaching and working with students. With a minimum of five to more
than 30 years as public community college instructors, research participants have discovered response strategies to navigate racially hostile working conditions.

The five major themes that emerged from research participants’ accounts correspond to the extant literature relating to isolation, perceptions of tokenism, typecasting as an ethnic specialist, race-related role expectations from students, colleagues, administration, nebulous information, minimal guidance, contradictory paths, and extended timelines to promotion, tenure, and reappointment, and expectations of above average performance for comparability with White counterparts. Also, narratives of research participants alluded to “chilly” (or racially hostile) campus climates, distinctions in campus climates between historically White and predominantly Black public community colleges (and universities), overt and covert forms of racial/ethnic bias in the academic workplace, e.g., structural and attitudinal barriers designed to exclude people of color (such as hiring), dealing with dismissive colleagues or make subtly racist or prejudiced comments, contending with challenging and confrontational encounters with students unaccustomed or uncomfortable with African-American faculty.

Revisiting the foundational framework of Critical Race Theory that outlined the racialized societal environment and the two propositions that informed this research study: racism is an ordinary, permanent fixture in American society and the use of narrative from people of color to counter the dominant voices of White, mainstream society, a third principle of Critical Race Theory, interest convergence—conceptualized by pioneering Critical Race Theory scholar Derrick Bell—emerged from this research study’s findings, specifically from the themes of Representation, Responsibility, and Rigor. Interest convergence attends to the notion that racial progress occurs when “the interests of blacks in achieving racial equality will be accommodated only when it converges with the interests of whites” (Bell, 1995, p. 20). In other
words, such racial progress is tolerated only when a byproduct of such advantage extended to people of color (including African Americans) also either advances the welfare of Whites or avoids loss of their group social power, position, or status. Milner’s (2007) ingenuous explanation of interest convergence is that “power and interests are connected” (p. 391).

Similar to the reasoning for the passage of civil rights legislation and school desegregation of the 1950s and 1960s in that “civil rights advances for Blacks always coincided with changing economic conditions and the self-interest of elite Whites” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p. 18), public community colleges (historically White institutions in particular) gained in many ways from the integration of African-American faculty: to attend to the needs and concerns of Black students who generated higher enrollments and tuition dollars from the new Black students, easing of tensions that incite racial unrest (and an improved public image), and a contingent of Black faculty members delegated to appease Black students with minimal interruption to the status quo. As Banks (1984) speculated that the historically White institutional response to recruit Black faculty during the 1960s and 1970s might have occurred due to “the moral force that accompanied much of the protest.” In actuality, it was more likely as Banks (1984) surmised: “perhaps simple political necessity was paramount” (p. 326). For these African-American public two-year faculty members—as symbols of racial diversity, these full-time appointments usually included additional race-related duties such as mentoring or advising students of color (Banks, 1984). As noted in the theme of Representation, three research participants in this inquiry diversified their departments, programs, or institutions with their full-time teaching appointment, most recently as the late 1980s and early 1990s. Other research participants became and remain one of a few Black faculty members of faculty of color altogether at their institutions.
Implications

The findings of this research study present interesting, informative, and useful implications for the stakeholders of American higher education and especially the public two-year college sector, i.e. educational administrators and executives, researchers, higher education institutions with educational administration and college teacher preparation programs. African-American faculty at public community colleges endures racially hostile conditions, distinctive race-related issues, and expectations in their faculty roles (Cooper & Stevens, 2002; Feagin, Vera, & Imani, 1996; Harvey, 1994; Johnson & Pichon, 2007; Laden & Hagedorn, 2000; Patitu et al., 2000; Somers et al., 1998; Sutherland, 1990; Turner & Myers, 2000; Turner, Myers, & Creswell, 1999). The findings reveal an intricate, multilayered continuum of response patterns that begins with contemplation and discernment of racialized intent and ends with avoidance, acceptance, or some form of confrontation for restitution. The consideration of mental, emotional, and behavioral responses as depicted by this inquiry’s research participants inform a unique sequence of responses that occur in particular stages or phases. For example, this research study’s five major themes—Representation, Naming Reality and Managing Reactions, Resilience, Responsibility, and Rigor—appear to indicate a particular response stage or phase that may be situational (an individual encounter), environmental (institutional), or longitudinal (over a period of time, e.g., career, or a particular institutional context), building on extant literature that have explored responses of people of color to racist and discriminatory acts, e.g., Feagin (1991), Feagin and Sikes (1994), and Smith (2004, 2006, 2007), etc.

In addition, the inquiry’s implications correspond to Hurtado et al.’s (1998, 1999) campus racial climate framework in relation to the institutional approaches to address policies and practices that mitigate racial conflict, specific to the psychological (attitudes and perceptions...
and institutional responses regarding interracial/ethnic relations and diversity issues) and behavioral (quality and exchange of social interaction between and among individuals) dimensions. Most of the research literature on campus racial climate to date has explored through the student perspective, inclusive of in- and out-of-class encounters between faculty and students across race with the bulk of scholarly interest attending to undergraduates at four-year historically White institutions (Harper & Hurtado, 2007; Hurtado, 1992; Hurtado et al., 1998, 1999; Hurtado, 2001; Milem et al., 2005). However, these works call attention to the importance of faculty diversity as part of a college or university’s comprehensive efforts toward student development and learning, diversification of the student body, and a commitment to the fulfillment of the community college mission. For educational leaders at public community colleges, especially deans and department/program chairs who work directly with faculty, these implications can inform strategies to address, alleviate, and resolve significant problems pertaining to racism, racial prejudice, and discrimination in the teaching and learning environment.

Theoretical implications from this research study include contributions to literature pertaining to Critical Race Theory, racial microaggressions, Racial Battle Fatigue, Role Strain, public community colleges, and faculty of color (African-American public community college faculty in particular). As African-American faculty in general, but especially at two-year colleges, are an under researched group in academe, it was a valuable endeavor to garner in-depth understanding of their perceptions and experiences with racialized interactions and stressors in the public community college faculty role, framed by the tenets of Critical Race Theory, the components of racial microaggressions, the three stress response types of Racial Battle Fatigue, and the three dimensions of Role Strain. The use of the Critical Race Theory
framework to articulate the racialized societal environment for this research study demonstrates its multidisciplinary capabilities.

Policy implications of this research study include findings that call attention to ways in which the campus climate may be improved for African American and other underrepresented faculty at public community colleges. Educational leaders can glean information from the findings to develop effective professional development opportunities and innovative programs tailored to the various groups of the public community college campus, e.g., faculty, administrators, staff, students, community partners, etc., that boldly emphasize and actualize a firm commitment to sustaining a racially diverse environment with safe and responsive working conditions. In addition, as this research study explored the lived experiences of African-American public community college faculty, their perspectives can inform procedures relating to the review and evaluation of grievances and resolution of racial conflicts and generate useful approaches toward advancing the recruitment, hiring, and retention of African-American public community college faculty (e.g., affirmative action policies, new faculty orientation, tenure/promotion process, and faculty mentorship opportunities). In spite of the significance of the faculty role in the implementation of teaching and learning, especially at public two-year college, faculty issues are nonexistent from at least three separate listings of key topics identified by community college leaders and decision makers (American Association of Community Colleges, 2011; Li, Friedel, & Katsinas, 2012, Mendoza et al., 2009). One major issue identified that was remotely suggestive of faculty consideration is noted as “human capital (unions): investing in human capital benefits the entire institution. It is the people who make the institution what it is…with proper investment in human capital, other expenses can be diminished, such as the cost of turnover” (Mendoza et al., 2009, p. 878). This topic appeared as the fourth of a six-
item list developed through a forum organized by the Community College Futures Assembly in which forum participants (board of trustee members, presidents, administrators, and faculty members) were charged with naming the current issues in the category of Planning, Governance, and Finance that community colleges face (Mendoza, 2009).

Practical implications of this research study offer insight into the circumstances that generate and perpetuate the racially hostile environment on campus and how these surroundings impact the teaching role and personal welfare for the Black public community college faculty member. For educational leaders at public community colleges, especially deans, and department/program chairs who work closely with all faculty members, these implications can inform strategies to address, alleviate, and resolve significant problems pertaining to racism, racial prejudice and discrimination in the teaching and learning environment. Specific steps include implementing swift, impartial, and thorough investigations of race-related conflicts with resolutions that emphasize an institutional intolerance for any words or actions that seek to or actually intimidate or cause harm to others due to race (or any other personal characteristics).

**Directions for Future Research**

While this research offers insight into the role experiences, racialized encounters and stressors of Black public community college faculty, additional empirical research is greatly needed. Significant gaps exist in the research literature pertaining to African-American faculty (and faculty of color overall), especially in relation to the two-year college context (Alexander-Show & Johnson, 1998; Bower, 2002; Brown, 1988; Corbin, 2001; Isaac & Boyer, 2007. Perna, 2003; Stanley, 2006; Sutherland, 1990; Thompson & Dey, 1998; Townsend & Twombly, 2007; Turner & Myers, 2000). Future studies should advance the exploration of race-related stress and the mental, emotional, and behavioral impact of subtle, racialized hostilities (racial
microaggressions) targeting African Americans in other realms of academia (including adjunct faculty, administrators and leaders, staff, students), especially as these circumstances remain under researched (Smith, 2004; Solórzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000). In addition, the findings of this research could potentially inform the literature in new ways with regard to examining Racial Battle Fatigue in relationship to Role Strain (Boardman & Bozeman, 2007; Smith & Witt, 1993) and the ways in which Black faculty cope, or consciously or unconsciously mitigate, these multifaceted stressors. Other lucrative research opportunities consist of expanding the examination of racialized stress in relation to other factors of salience to African-American faculty, e.g., gender, age, sexuality, religion, political ideology, teaching discipline, length of teaching career, etc. Collins’ (2000) framework of “intersecting oppressions” offers compelling ideas to consider the complexities of power and identity for African-American female faculty. Also, further exploration into distinctive types of racial stress, i.e. immediate acute trauma versus accumulative microaggressions over time, can be useful along with longitudinal studies to inform and clarify the psychological, physiological, and emotional/behavioral stress responses that characterize Racial Battle Fatigue.

In connection with the racially antagonistic environment of institutions in the general society attributable to the conditions experienced by Black faculty on the public community college campus, more research is needed in the areas of campus racial climate. Hurtado et al.’s (1998, 1999) framing of campus racial climate is inclusive of in- and out-of-class encounters between faculty and students across race, with the bulk of scholarly interest attending to undergraduates of color at four-year historically/predominantly White institutions (Harper & Hurtado, 2007; Hurtado, 1992). In consideration of the distinctively diverse populations that comprise public community college student enrollments and the reduced attention given to
policy- and practice-related issues of campus climate and race relations (Hurtado, 1992; Hurtado et al., 1998), empirical explorations of campus racial climate at two-year colleges, from both student and faculty perspectives, can illuminate and explain the origins, occurrences, and consequences of racialized interactions across populations on campus. For example, Bollen and Hoyle’s concept of perceived cohesion, which examines one’s cognitive and affective sense of belonging to a group is useful to partner with the campus racial climate and role strain frameworks to refine the exploration of individual-to-institutional compatibility.

**Final Thoughts**

In his Fall 1987 article, *Black Faculty in White Colleges: A Dream Deferred*, William Moore Jr. wrote, “In the academy, race is a difference that makes a difference” (p. 119). Nearly 25 years later, this prophetic sentiment not only still reverberates throughout the classrooms, halls, buildings, and campuses of America’s colleges and universities, but also the narratives of the 19 full-time, male and female African-American public community college faculty members who participated in this research study. Sadly, little progress has been made in increasing the numbers of full-time African-American faculty in the academy, especially at public community colleges. In fact, it appears that for the few African Americans who have gained privileged access to the college and university professoriate, the cost of such access takes a collective mental, emotional, and physical toll. Similar to the tenure of Barack Obama as the first multi-racial (and self-identified African American) president of the United States of America, race has made a difference in how African-American faculty are perceived, questioned, and rewarded in their faculty roles. Just as Black faculty counter the normalized image of the college professor as White and male, so does President Obama who is of a different racial identity than the 43 White men who preceded him, the first of a kind in this nation’s history. The subtle and obvious racial
hostilities that the first African-American chief executive has contended with even during his presidential run—marked by relentless demands for him to produce his birth certificate to verify his American citizenship—is reflective of the pervasive racial prejudice and an anti-Black sentiment in the general society and subsequently in institutions of higher education, one of this country’s many microcosms. As such passionate disrespect and reproach has been directed toward an African American who was elected to the highest office in the land, should there be amazement (or anger or aggravation) when Black faculty at public two-year colleges are similarly challenged to substantiate their credibility and competence, even after many years, decades even, of noble and productive service? One major start to addressing the issue of race relations in the United States is to acknowledge the problem of racism, racial prejudice, and discrimination, and the obvious and insidious acts that marginalize and oppress people of color (including African Americans). This courageous conversation must begin with the access and inclusion of the voices and perspectives of people of color in the development and implementation of scholarship, policy, and practice in academia.
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campus racial climate: The experiences of African American college students. *Journal of
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Appendix A:

Racial Demographics of Postsecondary Faculty

Table 1

Number of faculty in degree-granting institutions by race/ethnicity and control of institution (Fall 2009)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institutional Type</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
<th>Faculty of Color</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>American Indian/</td>
<td>Asian/</td>
<td>African American/</td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>#</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Alaskan Native</td>
<td>Pacific Islander</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public 4-Year</td>
<td>539,901</td>
<td>95,938</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>2,822</td>
<td>43,203</td>
<td>28,449</td>
<td>21,464</td>
<td>401,717</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private 4-Year</td>
<td>498,582</td>
<td>81,260</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>1,642</td>
<td>29,531</td>
<td>33,921</td>
<td>16,166</td>
<td>368,984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public 2-Year</td>
<td>373,778</td>
<td>62,389</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>2,414</td>
<td>12,570</td>
<td>29,235</td>
<td>18,170</td>
<td>289,642</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private 2-Year</td>
<td>26,883</td>
<td>6,701</td>
<td>24.9</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>1,004</td>
<td>3,490</td>
<td>2,011</td>
<td>18,049</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,439,144</td>
<td>246,288</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>7,074</td>
<td>86,308</td>
<td>95,095</td>
<td>57,811</td>
<td>1,078,392</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Faculty of color as a percentage of total faculty, excluding race/ethnicity unknown and non-resident alien. Total column reflects race/ethnicity unknown and non-resident alien.

National Center for Education Statistics Table 256 (August 2010)
Appendix B:

Email Solicitation for Research Participants

Eaglemail

tstevenso@emich.edu

RESEARCH STUDY REQUEST: Black Community College Faculty (Survey & Consent)

From: Tamara N. Stevenson <tstevenso@emich.edu>
Subject: RESEARCH STUDY REQUEST: Black Community College Faculty (Survey & Consent)
To: Stevenson <tstevenso@emich.edu>

Fri, Apr 24, 2009 06:43 PM

For Appendix
2 attachments

Reply To: tstevenso@emich.edu

Dear Professor:

Greetings.

My name is Tamara Stevenson. I am a doctoral candidate in good standing in the Educational Leadership program at Eastern Michigan University in Ypsilanti, Michigan. This email comes to you to per my interest to explore the perceptions and experiences of Black public community college faculty, concentrating on the faculty role expectations and stressors intensified by race.

As you may be interested and willing to participate, this email includes two attachments for your review and completion for the first portion of participation:
1. Brief demographic (one-page) summary
2. Informed consent document

The brief demographic summary is a basic fill-in form. Upon completion, please save and return to me via email attachment to tstevenso@emich.edu.

The Informed Consent document provides an overview and structure of my research study and to officially record your consent.

One or both documents may be given to me upon meeting for our initial interview, which I would like to schedule according to an upcoming time and location most convenient for you.

In advance, I thank you for your time and consideration to this request. Also, as you may know of other African American full-time faculty colleagues (particularly African American male faculty members), please let me know so that I may contact them as well. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me by email tstevenso@emich.edu or by telephone at

___________________________
Tamara N. Stevenson, Doctoral Candidate
Department of Leadership & Counseling
Eastern Michigan University
Ypsilanti, Michigan 48197

AA CC Faculty Participant Demographic Information.dot
43 KB

AA CC Faculty Study Informed Consent (TNS Dissertation).pdf
21 KB
Appendix C:

Participant Demographic Questionnaire

African American Public Community College Faculty Research Study
Participant Demographic Information

Dear Research Participant:

Thank you for taking the time to respond to this brief demographic survey as part of a dissertation research study focusing on African American public community college faculty. You identity and your responses will remain confidential. Please save your responses to this document and return via email attachment to Tamara Stevenson @ tstevenso@emich.edu. Thank you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>First Name</th>
<th>Last Name</th>
<th>Suffix</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender (Check one)</td>
<td>□ Male □ Female</td>
<td>Born in the United States? (Check one)</td>
<td>□ Yes □ No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age Range (Check one)</td>
<td>□ 21–34 □ 35–44 □ 45–54 □ 55–64 □ Over 65</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest Degree Attained (Check one)</td>
<td>□ M.A. □ Ed.D. □ Ph.D. □ Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree Major(s)</td>
<td>□ Minor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Current Community College

Which campus (if part of a multi-campus system)?

Academic Discipline/Department(s)

Academic Rank (Check one) | □ Instructor □ Asst. Professor □ Assoc. Professor □ Professor □ Other |

Tenure Status (Check one) | □ Non-tenured □ Tenure Track □ Tenured □ Long-term Contract □ Other |

Length of full-time faculty membership at current public community college?

Total (full- and part-time) number of years teaching at a community college?

Other roles/positions currently held (in addition to the full-time faculty role, e.g., administrative, departmental, committee work, service activities, etc.)

How would you describe your general health and well-being? (Check one)

□ Excellent □ Very Good □ Good □ Fair □ Poor

Per your description, what might be unique or unusual about your general health and well-being?

---END---
Appendix D:

Informed Consent Document

INFORMED CONSENT

I willingly give my consent to participate in one or more interviews as part of a dissertation research project conducted by Tamara N. Stevenson (researcher) and supervised by Dr. Eboni M. Zamani-Gallaher at Eastern Michigan University. I understand the components of this study and voluntary participation as noted below.

Purpose of the Research
This research study seeks to explore the perceptions and experiences of full-time, male and female African American faculty at public community colleges. Specifically, this research will focus on African American public community college faculty role expectations and stressors intensified by race.

Procedure
My participation involves an initial interview comprised of responding to questions about my perceptions and experiences as an African American faculty member at a public community college. The initial interview will last about 60 minutes; at least one 30-minute follow-up interview will be conducted as necessary to clarify responses from the initial interview. All interviews will be audio recorded. Resulting audio files will be transcribed. Audio and text files will be securely stored on the researcher's protected (by password and security software) laptop computer. Back-up copies of the audio files will be burned to compact discs and securely stored in a locked compartment owned and housed by the researcher.

Voluntary Participation
My participation in this research study is voluntary. I may withdraw or discontinue my participation at anytime without consequence. I have the right to decline to answer to any question and I am under no obligation to continue my participation in an interview. If I decide at any point after the interview that I do not wish to participate, my audio and text files and transcripts will be destroyed and no material from the interviews will be used and subsequently destroyed. I understand that my continued participation in the study is based on my willingness and that significant new findings developed during the course of research may change my willingness to continue participation. I understand that I will be notified of such new information if this occurs.

Confidentiality
My participation in this research study includes the designation of a pseudonym to protect my identity and other distinguishing features (e.g., age, gender, institutional affiliation, etc.) will remain confidential and will not be included in any reporting information. Pseudonyms/code names will be used in audiotapes and transcripts. Audio and text files will be securely stored by the researcher. Only the researcher will have access to the transcripts generated from the interviews. A separate list of corresponding pseudonyms to research participants will be filed and secured in a different locked compartment owned and housed by the researcher.

Expected Risks
My participation involves a less than minimal foreseeable risk. Should such reflection of my perceptions and experiences invoke any emotional or mental distress, referral information to the following mental health providers—EMU's Counseling Clinic and EMU's Psychological Services—is available to me (noted below):
Expected Benefits
While there may not be a direct benefit from completing interviews, my participation in this study may offer the opportunity to consider and articulate, without restriction, my experiences and perceptions. The personal reflections arising from the interviews can contribute to my development of meaningful insight about my experiences and others about the African American public community college faculty role.

Use of Research Results
Results from this exploratory study will be reported in the resulting dissertation (document), professional presentations, and other appropriate publications (e.g., journal articles). My personal identity, associated institution and other distinguishing features will not be included in any reports and publications.

I have read all of the above information, comprised of research procedures, potential risks, and likely benefits of participating in this study. I have received a copy of this consent form. I fully understand the content and meaning of the information provided. My questions to date have been answered.

Please check to confirm:

☐ I willingly agree and authorize to being audiotaped for this research study.

Printed Name of Research Participant

Signature of Research Participant Date
If you have any questions about this research study, please contact:

Tamara N. Stevenson  
Doctoral Candidate and Principal Researcher  
Educational Leadership and Counseling  
Eastern Michigan University  
John W. Porter Bldg., Suite 304  
Ypsilanti, Michigan 48197  
Telephone: (734) 487-0255  
Email: tstevenson@emich.edu

If you have any concerns or further questions about this study, please contact:

Dr. Eboni Zamani-Gallaher  
Supervising Professor  
Educational Leadership and Counseling  
Eastern Michigan University  
John W. Porter Bldg., Suite 304  
Ypsilanti, Michigan 48197  
Telephone: (734) 487-7120 ext. 2692  
Email: ezamani@emich.edu

This research protocol and informed consent document has been reviewed and approved by the Eastern Michigan University Human Subjects Review Committee for use from _____________ to ______________ (date). If you have questions about the approval process, please contact Dr. Deb de Laski-Smith (734.487.0042, Interim Dean of the Graduate School and Administrative Co-chair of UHSRC, human.subjects@emich.edu).
Appendix E:

Demographic Overview of Research Participants

### Table I
**Gender**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>12</td>
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<td>19</td>
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### Table II
**Age Range**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>21-34</th>
<th>35-44</th>
<th>45-54</th>
<th>55-64</th>
<th>Over 65</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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### Table III
**Highest Degree Attained**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree Attained</th>
<th>Master’s</th>
<th>Doctorate</th>
<th>Other</th>
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<td>Master’s</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctorate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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### Table IV
**Academic Rank**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Rank</th>
<th>Assistant Professor</th>
<th>Director</th>
<th>Instructor</th>
<th>Professor</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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### Table V
**Tenure Status**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tenure Status</th>
<th>Continuing Contract</th>
<th>Long-Term Contract</th>
<th>Tenured</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
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<tr>
<td>Females</td>
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### Table VI
**Master’s/Doctoral Degree Major**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major</th>
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<td>Biophysics</td>
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<td>American Literature</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Curriculum &amp; Instruction</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education/Educational Leadership</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>English (Language &amp; Literature, Linguistics, Reading &amp; Language Arts)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guidance &amp; Counseling</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Radiologic Sciences</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Reading/Language Arts</td>
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<td>19</td>
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### Table VII
### Teaching Discipline

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<tr>
<th>Discipline</th>
<th>Count</th>
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<td>Allied Health (Occupational Therapy)</td>
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<td>Counseling &amp; Student Development</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>English &amp; World Languages</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>English/Writing</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional Technology</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Microbiology</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performing Arts</td>
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<td>Public Career Services (Criminal Justice)</td>
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<td>Sociology</td>
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<td>Speech</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>19</strong></td>
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</table>

### Table VIII

**Length of Community College Teaching Career**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Count</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5-10 Years</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15 Years</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-20 Years</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-25 Years</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-30 Years</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31+ Years</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>19</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table IX

**Self-Reported General Health Status**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None Reported</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>19</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix F:

Interview Protocol

**African American Community College Faculty Research Study**

**Interview Questions**

- Review and obtain Informed Consent document from participant (sign 2, keep 1)
- Review Participant Demographic Information
- Turn on and position digital recorder
- Begin (Smile!)

---

**FACULTY ROLE**

*Tell me about what it is like to be a faculty member at a community college.*

*What does a typical day/week look like for you?*

**Role Expectations**

Describe your understanding of what is expected of you as a community college faculty member. How do you know this?

**Probes**

- Which tasks and/or responsibilities seem to get most of your attention?
- Which seem to get less or close to none of your attention?

**Role Strain**

Describe your faculty workload. How do you balance your faculty responsibilities?

*What about the faculty role is stressful to you?*

**Probes**

- Has there ever been a time or occasion where certain expectations or tasks are unclear?
- Has there ever been a time or occasion when certain expectations or responsibilities come in conflict with other tasks or responsibilities expected of you?
- Has there ever been a time or occasion when you did not have enough time to fulfill the tasks and responsibilities expected of you in a given day, week, month, semester?
- How did/do you deal with that?
BRIDGE

How do you think your faculty role differs from colleagues of different race/ethnicity?

What about any tasks or responsibilities expected of you because of race?

Can you describe any strains or stressors on your faculty role because of (your) race.

Racial Microaggressions

In your faculty role, if you have experienced a distressing encounter because of your race, would you mind sharing what happened in that situation?

Can you describe a specific incident where you felt uncomfortable by word and/or actions in your faculty role/at work that related to (your) race?

Probes

– Can you recall any mental, emotional, and/or physical reaction you may have experienced during or after that encounter?
– How did you feel when that situation was occurring? How did your body feel?
– What did you think about that situation?
– What did you do right after that encounter?
– How often do such encounters occur? Are such encounters more or less obvious to you?
– How often do you take personal/sick days (for you versus for some other reason, e.g., family issue/commitment)?

Racial Battle Fatigue

You described your general health status as __________________________. Do you think or feel that distancing racial encounters have an impact on a person's physical, mental, or emotional health? If so, how? Would you apply your description to yourself?

How does your work affect your health and well-being? How does your health and well-being affect your faculty role?

Why did you choose this location for our interview?
AA Community College Faculty

Interview Questions
Page 3 of 3

CLOSING QUESTIONS

--What are the important questions I should be asking about this topic?

--May I have the opportunity to talk with you again about some of the things we talked about today?

--As I review the information from our interview, I would like to share portions of my thoughts with you as a participant of this study (member checking). Would you be interested in offering feedback to me?

--Please indicate a pseudonym/code name that may be used in subsequent information generated from interviews conducted for this research study ____________________.

--Do you know of other colleagues I might contact for this study?

--Is there anything else you would like to add?
Appendix G:

Racial Battle Fatigue Model

**Psychological Stress Responses**

*EXAMPLES*: Frustration, defensiveness, apathy, irritability, sudden changes in mood, shock, anger, disappointment, resentment, anxiety, worry, disbelief, disappointment, helplessness, hopelessness, and fear.

**Physiological Stress Responses**

*EXAMPLES*: Headaches, grinding teeth, clenched jaws, chest pain, shortness of breath, pounding heart, high blood pressure, muscle aches, indigestion, gastric distress, constipation or diarrhea, increased perspiration, intestinal problems, hives, rashes, sleep disturbance, fatigue, insomnia, and frequent illness.

**Emotional/Behavioral Stress Responses**

*EXAMPLES*: Stereotype threat, "John Henryism" or prolonged, high-effort coping with difficult psychological stressors, increased commitment to spirituality, overeating or loss of appetite, impatience, quickness to argue, procrastination, increased use of alcohol or drugs, increased smoking, withdrawal or isolation from others, neglect of responsibility, poor school or job performance, and changes in close family relationships.

**Figure 1.** Cause and stress responses to racial battle fatigue.
Appendix H:

Conceptual Map

African American Community College Faculty Experience with Racial Battle Fatigue and Role Strain:
A Critical Race Theory Perspective
Appendix I

Physical Audit Trail

Identification of Research Problem
I contemplated several ideas pertaining to aspects of the African-American experience in higher education. Through an initial exploration of research literature, discourse and guided study with faculty, mentors, subject matter experts, and attendance to academic conferences, the consistent pattern of underrepresentation of African-American faculty in higher education in general and two-year institutions in particular, along with sporadic notation of their perceptions and experiences in the research literature, prompted the identification of this research study’s inquiry: exploring the nature and extent of racialized role stressors of African-American faculty in public community colleges, collectively conceptualized through the frameworks of Critical Race Theory, Racial Battle Fatigue, and Role Strain.

Approval of Research and Human Subjects Proposals
The contents of the resulting research proposal based on the identified research problem detailed the study’s guiding research questions, conceptual framework, purpose and significance of the inquiry, and a general description of the study’s methodological approach, e.g., targeted participants and strategies for data collection and analysis. The research proposal was approved in February 2009; The Human Subjects Proposal submitted and approved by the university’s Institutional Review Board in April 2009.

Review of the Research Literature
The review of literature for this research study consisted of detailed outlines of the two-year college context, the concepts of Racial Battle Fatigue, racial microaggressions, and Role Strain, along with issues of African-American faculty, faculty and occupational stress, and campus climate. Overall, each of these concepts—both individually and collectively—has received sporadic to negligible scholarly attention.

Designing Research Framework
A multiple (or collective) case study design was selected for this research study to support certain data-gathering and analytical techniques such as in-depth interviewing to concentrate, examine and interpret a particular event, activity, or phenomenon. Further, the case study method complements this research study’s selected theoretical frameworks that require and insist on the direct, willing engagement and prioritization of information (data) from the research participants.

Selection of Research Participants
The search for research participants was formally initiated in March 2009 through solicitations made via email (See Appendix B) and telephone calls to Black public two-year faculty members located through public community college web pages. Also, administrators and executives at public two-year colleges (e.g., faculty union officers, academic unit leaders, human resource departments, etc.) were notified and encouraged to share requests for participation with African-American faculty. The determining criteria for eligibility to participate in this investigation were: 1) to be a native-born citizen of the United States with ancestry from any of the groups of the continent of Africa enslaved in America (American citizenship was determined as self-reported by the research participant), and 2) to hold a full-time faculty position at a public community college. A demographic questionnaire (see Appendix C) was sent to potential research participants to complete to determine eligibility. Through purposive sampling, a total of 20 research participants were identified and interviewed. Each participant signed an Informed Consent Document (Appendix D). In consideration of the low numbers of (full-time) African-American faculty, research
participant selection continued until the point of data saturation. Research participant solicitation concluded through July 2009.

**Development of Interview Protocol and Interview Schedule**
The interview protocol (see Appendix F) for this research study consisted of a series of semi-structured, open-ended questions informed by the research literature, the conceptual framework, and the researcher’s curiosity. Initial interviews occurred from April to August 2009. Follow-up interviews took place between August and December 2009. Initial interviews took place in person; follow-up interviews took place in person and via email.

**Data Collection Procedure**
A total of 20 initial interviews were scheduled and conducted in person at times and locations determined by research participants, including participants’ faculty offices, personal residences, and libraries at participants’ respective institutions or local communities. The planned initial interview time length was established at 60 minutes; actual initial interview time lengths ranged from 30 minutes to more than three hours. Follow-up interviews took place with about one-half of the research participants, conducted either in person or via email. All initial interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed by the researcher and the use of professional transcription services. Research participant interviews were the sole source of data for this research study. One research participant withdrew from the research study several weeks after their initial interview, resulting in the use of 19 interviews for the inquiry.

**Managing and Analyzing Data**
Initial review of interview transcripts consisted of comparing the documentation of each transcript against the original (raw) audio for accuracy and making corrections to each transcript as needed. Through iterative interaction with the data, numerous ideas surfaced and were coded (selected, summarized, and organized) according to key concepts (drawn from the conceptual framework) and emerging patterns. Also, negative case analysis (search for disconfirming evidence) took place. Continued interaction and extensive reflection of the coded data (within and across the 19 cases) generated higher order categories and associated sub categories indicative of patterns and explanations exhibited in the raw data. NVivo, a qualitative data analysis software package, was used to facilitate accessibility and efficiency in organizing the data.

**Adoption of Narrative Approach**
The categories generated from the raw data, along with critical writing and review of reflective notations and case profiles contributed to the development of the collective case primary narrative. Rich, thick description and verbatim descriptions from research participants’ accounts undergirded the resulting central narrative. Five major themes were extrapolated from the deliberation of the primary narrative through the identified key concepts and critical patterns beyond the preliminary inquiries, which facilitated the selection of findings highlighted in this research study.

**Refinement of Key Findings**
A critical appraisal of the higher order categories, the related sub categories, and the primary narrative was conducted to explore the nature and extent of the relationship among the key findings and themes. Through this iterative process, suppositions relating to the notion of phases or stages of participant response and resolution to the racialized conditions present on the public two-year college campus were advanced. These findings seek to contribute to the extant body of knowledge pertaining to community colleges, faculty stress in general, African-American faculty experiences in particular, and issues of race and racialized conditions in academic settings.