FACULTY PERCEPTIONS OF, AND EXPERIENCES WITH, AFRICAN AMERICAN MALE STUDENTS AT A COMMUNITY COLLEGE

by

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ABSTRACT

SHANTELLE K. JENKINS. Faculty perceptions of, and experiences with, African American male students at a community college. (Under the direction of DR. JAMES E. LYONS)

Many studies involving African American male students have focused on achievement gaps and student retention models of those attending four-year institutions. However, there are limited investigations of African American male students at the community college and very few that focus on faculty perceptions. This study employed a mixed Delphi methodology to investigate faculty perceptions of African American male students at a community college. A series of questionnaires and structured focus groups helped answer questions about faculty perceptions, classroom challenges and strategies for addressing those challenges. The study also examined strengths and contributions unique to African American males. Factors perceived to affect the success of African American males are based on V.C. Mason's (1994, 1998) Conceptual model of African American male persistence in the community college. These variables may have a negative or positive impact on student academic success and faculty perceptions. Some of the challenges identified by the participants included both environmental factors and academic preparedness for college level work. More than 50 percent of the study participants noted other concerns such as: attendance, passivity, resistance to ask for help, financial constraints and barriers to trust and openness. This research focuses on faculty perceptions in the academic pipeline. KEYWORDS: African American male students, Black male students, faculty perceptions, community college, Delphi method.

DEDICATION

Dedicated to Kian Josiah. Tia loves you.

Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.

~Philippians 1:6

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AACC: American Association of Community Colleges

AA: African American

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AtD: Achieving the Dream

IPEDS: Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System

IRB: Institutional Review Board

NAEP: National Assessment of Educational Progress

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Academic achievement among African American students, particularly males, has

been a topic of concern in higher education for many years. The postsecondary

challenges for African American males are well documented (Cuyjet, 2006; Harper 2004;

and Perrakis, 2008). Their experiences are characterized by under preparedness for

collegiate-level coursework, low retention and poor degree attainment (Luke, 2010). In

2004, Orfield, Losen, Wald and Swanson found that African American male students had

the lowest high school graduation rate of any racial or gender demographic in the United

States. Findings showed that only 42.8 percent of African American ninth grade male

students earned a diploma by the end of the 12th grade year.

Although there has been an increase in accessibility to higher education, Black

males have been losing ground for over 40 years compared to their female counterparts.

Nationally there is a two to one ratio of female to male students in higher education.

According to a 2007 article, "Black Student College Graduation Rates," 44 percent of

Black students earn degrees compared to 63 percent of white students (Journal of Blacks

in Higher Education, 2007). Cross and Slater (2000) project that if the downward trend

continues, by the year 2070, Black men will disappear from higher education.

Academic success rates at the community college are also poor. For example,

using the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Easters and Mosby

(2007) found that Black male students have the lowest graduation rates among all males

in every racial/ethnic category, and that only 16 percent of Black male students in
community college graduate in three years. Moreover, dismal retention and poor degree
attainment are characteristics of this student population (Allen, 1992 & Cuyjet, 2006).
African American male students often overcome a variety of environmental and
academic challenges, which impact academic and psychological outcomes, including
retention and persistence, where both academic and social factors have a direct effect on
academic success and intent to leave as identified in Figure 1 below. The research
questions in this study are linked to Mason's (1994, 1998) Conceptual model of African
American male persistence in the community college.
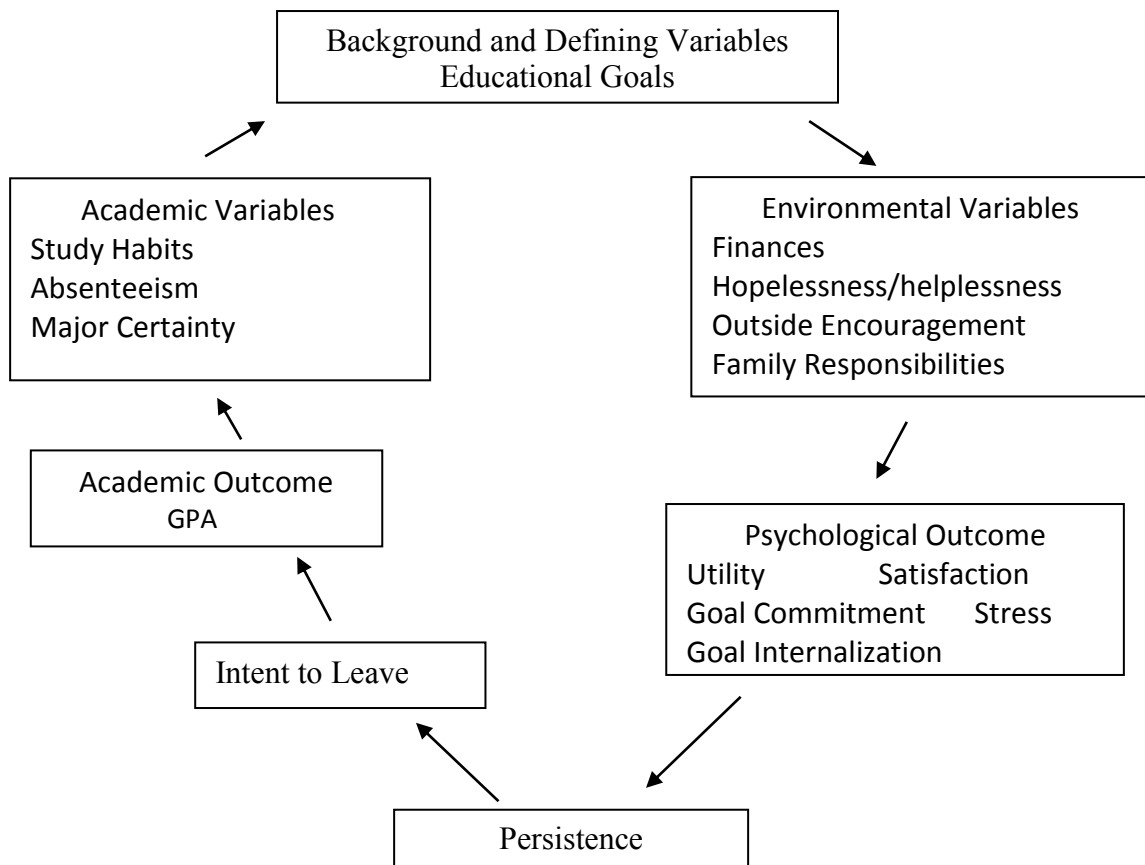
FIGURE 1: Conceptual model of African American male persistence in the community
college. Source: V.C. Mason (1994, 1998)

African American males have experienced greater losses than any other racial or gender group in higher education. According to Shaun Harper, ". . . more than two-thirds of all African American males who begin college never finish" (2005, pp. 8). Despite the continuation of well documented patterns, there is a relative lack of published literature examining the academic success of Black males in the community college (Luke, 2010), and even fewer studies of faculty perceptions of them. Studying black males from a faculty point of view makes this research significant. There is a clear gap in the research. Although Ornelas and Armida (2004) completed a pilot study exploring community college faculty perceptions of student outcomes, and DeBate (2010) studied community college faculty perceptions and behaviors related to academic advising, this research focusing on faculty perceptions of African American male students has not been exercised until now. Bush and Bush argue that African American men are perceived to have greater dissatisfaction and do not engage with various segments of the college when compared to other groups.

This study sought to give evidence of faculty perceptions as faculty play a huge role in academic outcomes and student retention and faculty have strong predictive relations with the retention outcome of African American men. The researcher wanted to study African American males from a different perceptive by looking at different realities involving faculty perceptions. Nora and Cabrea (1996) document that there is no extensive review of theoretical studies focusing on African American male students, only of African American male perceptions but none of faculty. The study intends to give administrators actual evidence of faculty perceptions with regards to specific strengths,

challenges and contributions while hearing from the perspective of adjunct faculty - voices that are often unheard.

There are some black male students that behave against the negative stereotype which is often portrayed through media images and the research. Unfortunately, there have been low expectations set for African American males but many of these students exceed the expectations examined in the current literature. The researcher wanted to pull something different out of the work that has been previously done.

In the last 100 years, community colleges have grown tremendously in numbers and have changed with the times, (Phillippe & Patton, 2000). According to the Achieving the Dream National Database, community colleges served more than half of the nation's undergraduate students, including 6.3 million credit students in the fall of 2007. The comprehensive mission of community colleges makes these schools attractive to a broad range of people who seek particular programs or opportunities of special interest. Furthermore, minority college students tend to cluster more at community colleges and trade schools, which attract diverse groups of student learners as these institutions provide multiple options for academic, technical and career advancement.

Community colleges also serve as the gateway to postsecondary education for many minority, low income, and first-generation postsecondary education students. The American Council on Education's 24th Annual Status Report on Minorities in Higher Education (2011) indicated that 38 percent of Americans ages 25-34 earned at least an associate degree, while only 26 percent of African Americans ages 25-37 obtained a two-year degree.

While many studies of African American students in community college address themes such as student success and retention models, there are limited investigations of faculty perceptions of, and experiences with, the contributions and challenges of African American male students. Faculty members play a critical role in helping all students regardless of race, creed, color or gender to reach and achieve their academic goals, and so their perceptions of these students should be especially noteworthy. As it relates to this completed study, adjunct faculty members represent those that teach one to three courses per semester. They are often the unheard voices as most of them work on a semester-based contractual system and are not guaranteed class assignments or college benefits. Yet, at most two-year colleges, adjunct faculty teach more than half of the courses. A 2010 survey by the American Federation of Teachers estimates that about half of all faculty members, 70 percent at the community college, are part-time adjuncts.

According to an article published in The Chronicle Of Higher Education in 2010 entitled "*Adjuncts Build Strength in Numbers,*" about 70 percent of all instructional faculty at all colleges are off the tenure track with 85 percent of community college faculty being non-tenured. A 2010 Journal of Blacks in Higher Education article states that just over five percent of full-time faculty in the United States are Black. Moreover, the American Federation of Teachers notes that approximately 5.4 percent of all faculty members were African American in 2010; 4.5 percent were Hispanic and .04 percent were Native Americans, although these groups represented respectively represent 12, 14 and .8 percent of the United States population.

In this study, the researcher examined the perceptions of community college faculty toward African American male students enrolled in a mid-size community college

(enrollment of 27,000) in Pennsylvania. A demographic survey, two questionnaires, and focus group interviews helped answer questions about faculty perceptions of African American male students, challenges faced in the classroom, and strategies for addressing those challenges. The study also examined the strengths and contributions that are unique to African American males in the community college context.

Identifying these factors can help create a faculty model designed to enhance African American male student success and to document the strengths, contributions, and challenges of these students as experienced by faculty members. The results of this study will be shared with college administrators, faculty, and staff to serve and support African American male students through the academic process and to improve faculty preparation for those who instruct African American males. The findings of this research study will be presented in seminars, conferences and offered for journal publication to help raise awareness of the unique needs of African American male students who attend community colleges.

This study will be among a small group of studies (Strayhorn, 2011; Strayhorn & Saddler, 2008) that have examined faculty perceptions of African American male students. This study will be unique in that it examines faculty perceptions in a community college context. There is limited attention on pipeline issues such as academic preparation as it relates to Black male college students (Patitu, 2000). As community college enrollment continues to increase, there will be an even greater need to examine the faculty members who teach students, particularly minority males. Thus, this research focuses on faculty perceptions in the academic pipeline.

The perception of community college faculty who teach African American male students is important for the following reasons.

1. Many students who transfer to a four year college or university are products of the community college system. The community college can serve as a cost effective starting point for students to jumpstart their careers; flexibility in relation to course offerings and degree programs is also of great interest to students.

2. Faculty members at the community college level are often adjunct faculty members who do not have tenured positions at the institution. To that end, faculty members may not be as knowledgeable of campus resources for students—such as tutoring, writing centers, mentoring programs and other services provided by the school to assist students in their academic success.

The following operational definitions will be used in this study for the purpose of clarity and consistency.

1. Adjunct Faculty – Part-time, non-tenured instructional faculty members who teach and train students generally in a collegial setting.

2. African American Male Students (AA) – Male students who are of black African descent. The terms African American male and Black male will be used interchangeably.

3. Community Colleges – Regionally accredited two-year public institutions providing diplomas, certificates and associate degrees.

4. Environmental Variables – Factors related to the environment or culture that effect retention of students.

5. Faculty - Academic staff members who teach and train students generally in a collegial setting. For the purpose of this dissertation, the terms faculty and instructor will be used interchangeably.

6. Perception – Recognizing sensory information. Cognitive high order thinking functionalities such as memorization, problem solving and analytical thought processes.

7. Retention – Retaining students in order to successfully complete necessary credits or transfers.

8. Values – Shared assumptions, usually viewed as useful. Standard protocols that are held in high regard.

The researcher facilitated the research question design by reading publications by Shaun Hunter (2004; 2005; 2009) whose works include topics surrounding Black male college access and achievement; College environments, student outcomes, and engagement. The following research questions will be addressed:

1. How do faculty perceive of African American male students with respect to academic preparation, educational goals and classroom performance at a Pennsylvania community college?

2. What instructional problems do faculty members experience when teaching African American male students at a Pennsylvania community college?

3. What strategies, if any, do faculty members use to help African American male students deal with challenges at a Pennsylvania community college?

4. What contributions do African American male students make to their classroom and institutions at a Pennsylvania community college?

5. What influence does African American male student engagement have on faculty and classmates at a Pennsylvania community college?

For this study, a Delphi qualitative research methodology was used based on one demographic survey, two rounds of Delphi questionnaires and four focus groups from one community college located on a single campus. The aim of employing a Delphi technique is to achieve consensus through a process of iteration (Hanafin, 2004). The researcher's purpose of the methodology is to achieve consensus through group interaction (Stewart, 2001) in keeping with an imperative paradigm.

The study was completed at a mid-size community college in the northeast corridor of the United States serving over 27,000 students, including over 9,000 non-credit students (2009-2010 academic year). Questionnaires asked for faculty perceptions of African American male students, including instructional problems and challenges, solutions and strategies to classroom problems, and strengths and contributions of African American male students. The four focus groups provided additional results addressing faculty perceptions (see Chapter 4).

The following limitations surfaced through further investigation:

1. Data were collected from a community college in southeastern Pennsylvania. Findings are most applicable to the research site from which derived. The findings reflect data collected from the community college involved and may not reflect data from other colleges or universities. In this case, the findings may not be generalizable to other community colleges.

2. Only faculty who teach or have taught two to three academic courses with at least two to five African American male students enrolled in their class(es) were

eligible to participate as the target faculty population for this study. Thus the model may not have fully explored faculty perceptions.

3. Data for this study were collected in the fall of 2012, and reflect only that time period.

4. The study was primarily of faculty perceptions thus limiting input from other knowledgeable sources at the college such as: students, support staff, administrators, advisors, counselors, and other stakeholders.

5. The faculty members participating in the survey, questionnaires, and focus groups may not been completely honest in their responses.

6. The researcher's race/ethnicity and gender was another possible limitation. As an African American researcher and administrator, faculty members may not have been open to sharing their experiences with the researcher, and the researcher may not have been more able to fully understand their perceptions.

The following delimitations were established:

1. This study was restricted to a single community college in southeastern Pennsylvania.

2. The study population was delimited to faculty who teach African American male students in this single specific geographical location.

3. Intentionally, this study did not include faculty perceptions of African American female students at the community college.

4. Adjunct faculty members were selected.

5. Full time tenured faculty members were not selected to participate in the study.

Chapter 1 outlines the preliminary themes of the study, highlighting the background information, research purpose and significance, operational definitions, research questions, methodology, limitations and delimitations.

Chapter 2 provides a review of the relevant literature pertaining to African American males at the community college and to community college faculty interactions with those students. While there are a number of studies that focus on African American male students in American colleges and universities, there is little known research on faculty perceptions of African American males attending community college.

Chapter 3, the methodology section, details the research design, description of the participants, participant selection process, and the procedures used to execute the study. Data collection and procedures used to avoid research bias are also described.

Chapter 4 presents the results of the study. This is necessary to create an understanding of the collective experiences of the instructors who teach African American male students at the community college. Data collected from the demographic web survey, the Delphi round 1 and Delphi round 2 questionnaires, and the four focus group sessions are detailed. The participants, emerging themes and processes used to ensure reliability are discussed and described.

Chapter 5, the culminating chapter, summarizes the findings, interprets the data, and draws conclusions in answer to the research questions. Recommendations for further research, study limitations and final remarks are provided.

As community college enrollment continues to increase, there will be an even greater need to examine the faculty members that teach students, particularly minority males since there is limited research that addresses faculty perceptions of African American

males that attend community colleges. African American male students face both academic and non-academic challenges that affect their retention and matriculation. By focusing specifically on faculty perceptions, the study can lead to effective innovations and educational policies that address the dismal attrition rates of minority male students, particularly African American male students.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this study was to explore faculty perceptions of African American male students at a community college. This chapter presents an overview of the related literature in the areas of research that contribute to understanding faculty perceptions of African American male students in higher education. Emphasis in this study is given to community colleges. The first section describes overall characteristics of the African American male student population in higher education as well as issues related to student retention, teaching and learning. The second section addresses the special case of the community college. The third section reviews the literature on the Delphi method. The chapter concludes with a summary of the literature review findings.

2.1   African American Male Students in Higher Education

Although there has been an increase in accessibility to higher education, Black males have been losing ground for over 40 years when compared to their female counterparts. Cross and Slater (2000) project that if the trend of downward enrollment continues, by the year 2070 Black men will disappear from higher education. African American males have experienced greater losses than any other racial or gender group in higher education. According to Shaun Harper, "more than two-thirds of all African American males who begin college never finish" (2005, pp. 8). Despite the continuation of these well-documented patterns, there is a relative lack of published literature examining the academic success of Black males in the community college (Luke, 2010).

A review of the literature shows that Black men who start college do not graduate within six years, making this statistic the worst college completion rate among both sexes and all racial/ethnic groups in higher education (Harper, 2009). Furthermore, Harper finds that African American males comprised only 4.3 percent of all students enrolled at American institutions of higher education in 2003, the exact same percentage as in 1976. According to the US Department of Education (2006), of the approximate 15 million undergraduate students in the United States, fewer than five percent are Black men.

A recent National Black Male College Achievement Study documented that Black men at top-tier institutions had graduation rates of 36 percent, compared to 46 percent and 60 percent for Hispanic and White males respectively. Moreover, educational disparities are most prevalent among African American males who lag behind White and Asian male students on the National Assessment of Educational Progress and college entrance exams (Strayhorn, 2008). Bonner and Bailey (2006) conclude that operating frameworks used by schools to interface with African American males is often constructed based on a list of perceived problems, using an approach that identifies pathologies instead of promoting promise. Further, Strayhorn (2004) investigates supportive relationships and success in college. In his study, he found that supportive relationships are associated with higher levels of satisfaction but not academic achievement as measured by grades. This argument by Strayhorn supports the idea that students respond positively when their sense of belonging is nurtured and they feel supported in the academic learning environment.

While retention of minority students continues to be a prominent strategic goal for many institutions of higher education, academic disparities are prevalent for African American males. Academic success rates at the community college provide evidence of African American males having the lowest graduation rates. Using the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Easters and Mosby (2007) find that Black male students have the lowest graduation rates among all males in every racial/ethnic category, and that only 16 percent of those students graduate in three years from a community college.

2.2   Stereotype Threat

Dominant images of African American men in the media often convey stereotypical portrayals of the Black male as comedic, musically inclined, athletic, excessively religious, aggressive and angry. These stereotypes may reinforce negative perceptions that educators have about Black men (Bailey and Moore, 2004). Researchers suggest that negative portrayals of males in the media carry over to their treatment in the classroom. Moreover, studies show that males experience more negative events in school than their female counterparts. Often these constructed images are not reflective of the dominate culture and social class.

African American males in the community college, a group whose experiences in education are shaped by both historical and contemporary perceptions of their race/ethnicity and gender (Cuyjet, 2006) should be part of more frequent discussions. The concept of stereotype threat has been reported to impact how African American males perceive their environments. Steele (2000) reported that stereotype threat among college students could lead to the same "academic disidentification" articulated for high school

students, yet the stakes are often higher for the collegian specifically personal, academic and professional aspirations. Although racial stereotypes of Black males are often based on false assumptions, stereotypes and prejudices are built on the assumption of within-group sameness. Celious and Oyserman's (2001) Heterogeneous Race Model suggests that similar to other social categorization theories, there is constancy in the experience of being a group member, with-in group and out-group comparisons.

2.3   African American Male Student Challenges

Nationally, there is a two-to-one ratio of male to female students in higher education. According to a 2007 article, "Black Student College Graduation Rates," 44 percent of Black students earn degrees compared to a 63 percent completion rate for white students, (Journal of Blacks in Higher Education, 2007). The article further suggested significant gaps as they relate to Black student completion rates, explaining these gaps as the result of: (a) minimal retention programs; (b) absence of a family college tradition; (c) inadequate academic credentials, ambition, and study habits. Bonner and Bailey (2006) suggest that, unlike the postsecondary experiences shared among their nonminority peers, for most African American students there is the added burden of establishing a sense of agency within a milieu that differs quite markedly from their ethnic, cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds. Tinto and Pusser's (2010) study on institutional access notes that a greater proportion of low-income students enter community colleges rather than four-year schools, thus reducing their opportunities of earning a four-year degree. They also note that only one third of high income students enroll in community colleges.

Economic barriers, high school preparation and poor success rates are all attributed to African American success or lack thereof in college. Luke (2010) describes economic concerns facing African American males as "monumental hurdles" that have placed them in danger of becoming extinct as productive citizens. According to Editorial Projects in Education Research Center's annual Diplomas Count report (2011), only 68 percent of male students graduated on time in 2008, compared with 75 percent of female students. "Over the long term, only about one half of male students from minority backgrounds graduate on time" (Education Week, 2011).

African American males are also described in the literature as having lower employment rates with limited employment options (Hampton, 2001; 2002). Despite progress, the Black unemployment rate is more than two times that of White Americans, and Black families earn only 58% as much as white families (Strayhorn, 2008). Black college students are also more likely to come from single family homes and to report being the first in their family to attend college (Strayhorn, 2006). Research suggests that parents of African American students often lack a college education or the knowledge to understand their role in supporting their children through the college process (Harabowski, 1998). In 1999, V.C. Polite studied 115 Black male students who enrolled at a metropolitan high school and found that teachers and counselors alike often failed to direct Black male students to college preparatory opportunities and advanced placement options. As a result no more than one out of 15 Black male students in his study were prepared for college level work, thus validating Harabowski's (1998) study of educational attainment of some African American parents.

Researchers have also raised concerns regarding poor academic preparation for college level work, noting that poor success rates in college directly correlate with limited college preparation in high school. Bates (2007) notes that poor, pre-collegiate math scores correlate to higher placements in remedial math courses at the college level. Moreover, a low entry placement into college courses intensifies academic issues such as student retention. Freeman (2003) suggests that policies that focus on regular support of African American males can lead to improved status at the community college.

Further review of the literature reveals information on the causes of the gap and an historical perspective of African American male students in education. Most studies have concentrated on racial and gender inequities and achievement gaps in education. Suazo-Garcia (2005) explains the Black gender gap as a consequence of 1) academic problems that often begin before Black students enter high school, 2) a lack of support from parents and schools, 3) oppositional culture that leads to academic disengagement, or 4) future expectations and plans that diminish the role of education as a source for economic mobility. Empirical findings from this research study may provide information to help build academically and socially inclusive campus communities that properly support Black male students academically, promote retention, enhance student success and emphasize a worldview philosophy of higher learning.

African American males also adapt differently than their female counterparts to classroom environments particularly in postsecondary settings. Moreover, African American students, particularly males are overrepresented in special education classes and underrepresented in gifted classes (Belgrave & Allison, 2006). According to Allen and Boykin (1992), much of the school failure of African Americans today is due to the

incongruence between the cultural themes at home and the learning environments in the educational system. Teachers of Black males may frame their instruction with the social and cultural experience of the Black community while teaching critical skills.

Similar studies have involved social status as it relates to academic achievement. Research suggest that when teachers of color are missing from classrooms, minority students get assigned more frequently to special education classes, have higher absentee rates, and participate less often in extracurricular activities (National Education Association, 2002). When people of color are not in positions of authority in schools, myths of racial and ethnic minority inferiority may set in the minds of white students and students of color alike (Mercer & Mercer, 1986). While teachers of color are necessary to serve as role models for all students and to promote positive cultural understanding, they can serve as "cultural brokers" mediating between experiences inside and outside of the classroom.

According to Kambon (1999), the questions of culture with regard to any racial or cultural group, are rooted firmly in worldview of perception. Some cultural values and beliefs are often ignored or misunderstood by faculty who lack understanding of cultural differences. The African worldview is characterized by communalism, spirituality and cooperation, while the dominant European worldview in western society is characterized by individuality, materialism, and competition for resources. "When others lack knowledge of African American culture and history, they risk misinterpreting it as deviance or as a disability". Madhere (1999) asserts that when the culture of the learner is rejected, students cannot find a place in the school and may suffer from damaged self-esteem, self-rejection, and a loss of self-efficacy.

A review of literature also reveals that Black male students often feel isolated, marginalized and invisible in collegial settings. Tinto's (1993) model of institutional departure suggests that student leave school because of a failure to negotiate the rites of passage. Because of their inability to separate themselves from their high school and family to engage in a system of values of other students and faculty, they will not be able to commit to the values and behaviors of the system.

TABLE 1: African American male degree attainment (Source: US Census Bureau)

	Delaware County, PA	Montgomery County, PA	Philadelphia, PA	PA	United States
African-American males	26,871	20,681	171,857	381,288	10,930,075
Less than 9th grade	4%	02%	4%	4%	5%
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	9%	09%	17%	14%	14%
Regular high school diploma	38%	29%	37%	33%	29%
GED or alternative credential	5%	05%	6%	10%	6%
Some college, no degree	19%	25%	21%	21%	24%
Associate degree	9%	4%	4%	6%	6%
Bachelor degree	11%	17%	7%	8%	11%
Graduate degree	6%	9%	3%	4%	5%

According to the US Department of Education, more than two-thirds of all African American males who enter college depart before earning their college degree. According to the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Black males have the lowest graduation rates among every racial/ethnic category with only 16 percent graduating in a three year time period. Data further indicates (Wood & Turner 2010) that Black males have the lowest mean grade point average among male students in the community college system.

For the first time in history, the current generation of college-age students will be less educated than their parents' generation, yet high level work skills are required to uphold an educated citizenry, which means the conditions for more low-income students and students of color to attain post-secondary credentials is paramount (Achieving the Dream, Inc., 2011). Education influences social mobility which is becoming more important in a global economy with 80 percent of the fastest growing jobs requiring post-secondary education (Spelling, 2005). However, the marginalization of the Black male applicant pool disproportionately limits opportunities for global competiveness in the workforce. Other countries are outperforming the U.S. in critical areas: (a) high school completion; (b) educational preparedness for STEM; (c) the number of young people accessing and completing post-secondary educational and (d) production of scientist and engineers (Palmer, Davis, Moore, Hilton 2010). The United States must ensure that African American males as well as other under-represented minorities have every opportunity to succeed in post-secondary education. In today's knowledge-based, global economy, countries must use their human capital to invest in higher education (Palmer, Davis, et.al 2010). High rates of unemployment, illiteracy and lack of academic

preparedness are some of the educational disengagements of African American males that are found which lead to low participation in the global economy.

Previous works on African American males (Jackson & Moore, 2006) have primarily examined student challenges from a myopic point of view. Much of the research treats African American students as if they represent the same homogeneous group (Strayhorn & Staddler, 2008) in which experiences are more similar than different. However, Cuyjet (2006) argues that African American men and women experience college differently. Hooks (2000) suggests that African American women are "double minorities" in that they experience the challenges of racism and sexism in society (p. 5).

2.4   African American Male Students and the Community College Experience

Since community colleges provide access to higher education to some that may not otherwise have an opportunity to attend, faculty members that teach these students play a pivotal role in student success and retention. Male students of color, particularly African American, students continue to struggle in the classroom. It's this dilemma that spurred Lumina Foundation to launch the Achieving the Dream initiative in 2003 as a bold national effort to improve student outcomes and reduce achievement gaps at community colleges (Crooks, Collado, et al., 2010).

Community colleges provide open access to post-secondary education preparing students for transfer opportunities to four-year schools, workforce development skills and trainings and English as a Second Language programs. It is also one of the fastest growing segments in adult and higher education in the country The community college system has opened the door for many returning adults and first year college students to earn degrees and have a new outlook on life. There are 1,132 community colleges in the

United States with a total enrollment (credit and non-credit) of roughly 13 million in

2011.Community colleges are an attractive and affordable option in terms of cost when

compared to four-year institutions. According to George Boggs, former president and

CEO of the American Association of Community Colleges, these are the top ten reasons

to select a community college:

1. Affordability – Traditional commuter school; students can live at home and save; annual tuition fees are significantly less than four-year schools

2. Convenience – Multiple options for class times and various locations; convenient schedules to work around family obligations and work responsibilities

3. Open Access – Free from admission standards such as GPA and standardized testing; anyone with a high school diploma or GED can enroll

4. Teaching Quality – Courses taught by instructors and not teaching assistants; teaching and learning institutions focused on teaching and not research

5. Class Size – Usually fewer than 35 students; more opportunities to interact with the instructor

6. Support Services – Variety of advising, counseling and student activity programming services

7. Choices – Vocational and academic programs; offer transfer courses

8. Diversity – Students differ by age, ethnicity, degree or disability and social class

9. Access to modern technology – Cutting edge equipment and technology lending programs

10. Good Company – Number of notable men and women began their academic careers at the community college.

As the two-year college enrollment continues to increase, there will be a great need to study faculty perceptions, the experiences of African American male students in community college settings and the most prevalent needs – effective teaching, instructional tools, mentoring and learning community models. Research pertaining to faculty perceptions is limited. What is known about faculty perceptions:

- All students are not alike

- Quality of the interactions impacts the student/faculty relationship

- Communication apprehension

Several scholars note that teaching practices used in the community college negate content which connects to the social-cultural experiences of African American males (Wood and Turner, 2010). Bates (2007) and Beckles (2008) argue that community college faculty should employ culturally relevant pedagogical practices to socially engage and connect with their students. Ihekwaba (2001) believes that representation of Black faculty and implementation of Afrocentric curriculum will assist in the development of self-esteem, academic persistence and success of African American male students. He further argues that policies should evaluate the representation of Black faculty for the purpose of implementing a multicultural curriculum and address the inadequacies of culturally sensitive advising and counseling for Black male students.

This research study identifies, categorizes, and ranks the strengths, contributions and challenges faced by African American male students from the perspective of the faculty member in a community college setting. Poole (2006) argues that extensive and ongoing professional development should be mandatory for all new faculty and administrators, and Ihekwaba (2001) states that professional development should focus

on methods that inspire and aid African American students. Figure 2 offers descriptive survey of adjunct faculty that teach at colleges across the United States. Fifty-seven percent of the faculty surveyed choose to teach as an adjunct faculty member because they enjoy the work and do not consider compensation as a major factor in their choice of career.
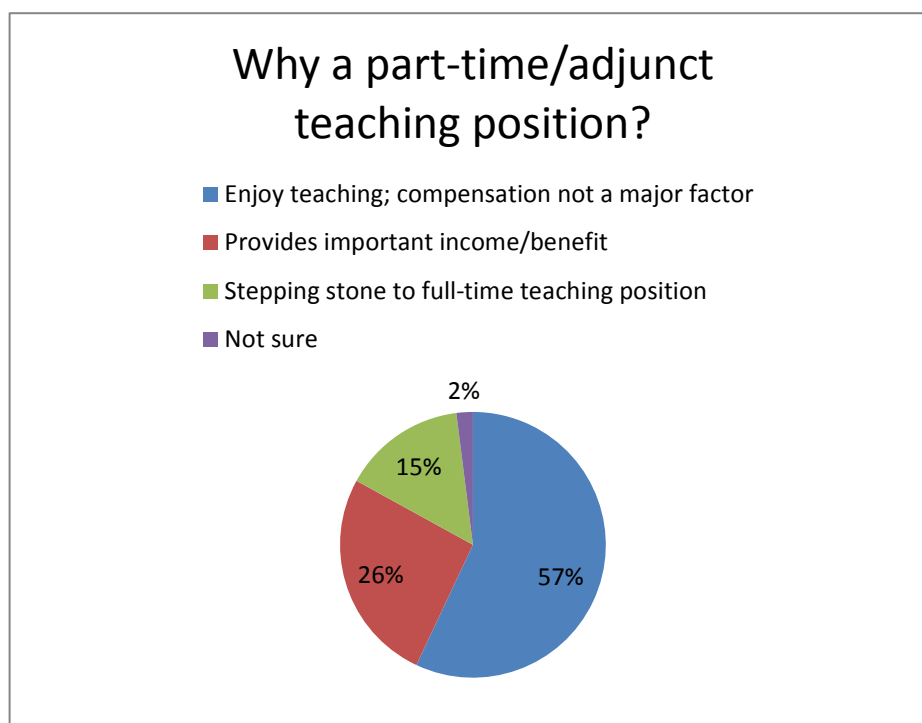
FIGURE 2: Why a part-time/adjunct teaching position?
Source: American Federation of Teachers 2010

2.5   Summary

This research study concentrates on faculty perceptions of African American male students. The literature explored the complexities of African American male student success and personal and academic achievement at the community college. Institutions of higher education must begin to address faculty perceptions of African American male students. Despite many successful educational reform efforts, there are still education

gaps. To this end, the body of knowledge examining Black male students is limited, often misrepresented in literature and little has been published. By focusing on an innovative systematic solution such as faculty perception of African American male students at a community college, this research provides awareness to faculty and administrators.

The literature focuses on the negative, much of the work dealing with the achievement gap and African American male underperformance. Most of it surrounds themes about why African American males do so poorly and why they are so disengaged instead of focusing on the underlying causes or the complexities of what allows them to do well and be successful. There is a need to expand the literature on African American males to account for factors which are unique to the community college. The researcher could find very little in the literature that specifically spoke to the goals of this study. Most of the research focuses on topics such as the achievement gap, student retention, and student engagement, while very few studies focused on African American males in the community college or faculty perceptions of African American male students. The literature also generalizes the African American student experience.

This research sought to study African American males from a different perspective by focusing on faculty perceptions of those students in a community college setting. Unfortunately, the literature to support this project is sparse.

CHAPTER 3: METHOD

In this chapter, the research questions and the purpose of the study are restated. The research procedures used to examine faculty perceptions of African American male students at a community college are presented. Furthermore, the research site, participant selection, data collection and analysis are detailed. A mixed methods qualitative and Delphi data collection protocol including a survey, two questionnaires, and focus group interviews were used to analyze perceptions of faculty members who teach African American male students that attend an urban Pennsylvania community college.

After review of the literature, limited information is available to address African American male students at the community college level from the perspective of a faculty member. Most studies address social and academic adjustment issues at the undergraduate and graduate levels with minimal references to community colleges or faculty perceptions. The researcher investigated faculty perceptions of African American male students in a two-year community college. The following research questions guided this inquiry:

1. How do faculty perceive African American male students with respect to academic preparation, educational goals and classroom performance at a Pennsylvania community college?

2. What instructional problems do faculty members experience when teaching African American male students at a Pennsylvania community college?

3. What strategies, if any, do faculty members use to help African American male students deal with challenges at a Pennsylvania community college?

4. What contributions do African American male students make to their classroom and institutions at a Pennsylvania community college?

5. What influence does African American male student engagement have on faculty and classmates at a Pennsylvania community college?

Background Information on Participants

To understand the composition of the college, the researcher ascertained demographics for faculty and faculty participants. Twenty-seven participants completed at least one survey or questionnaire while a total of twenty-two participated in in-depth focus group interviews. A total of 68 faculty members were invited to participate in the research study.

The consent form letter was distributed on July 20, 2012 to 68 faculty members. The months of July and August of 2012 were used to collect the signed consent forms. Out of the 68 selected participants, 39 faculty members returned the informed consent document at a return rate of 58.2 percent. The electronic demographic survey was sent to 39 participants on September 8, 2012 and 27 were returned by the deadline equating to a return rate of 69 percent.

The participants in the focus group interviews consisted of a total of 22 instructors. Although the original demographic survey was distributed to participants and 27 were collected for a return rate of 71percent. The participants for the study were randomly selected. Participant demographics are reported in the table below. Gender representation showed that a little over half of the participants were female (55.6

percent). The average teaching experience of participants was 11 years and the average number of African American male students taught was 25 students.

A detailed item analysis report was used to analyze the data collected in the demographic survey. Demographic characteristics such as age, gender, marital status and ethnicity were captured along with years of teaching experience.

Table 3 shows participants by gender female ("n" = 15) and male ("n" = 12). Fifty-six percent of the teaching faculty participating in the study were 41 years of age or over and 41 percent of the research participants recorded that they had over 11 years or more of teaching experience. There were 40.74 percent who specified their teaching division as Public Service and Social Science. There were 81.5 percent who had taught 11 or more African American male students during their tenure at Hawk Valley Community College.

TABLE 2: Demographic characteristics of study participants

Adjunct Faculty	
Male	12
Female	15
Academic Divisions	5
BUS/CIS	3
STEM	5
CAH	7
PSSS	11
AHESN	1
African American Male students taught	83% taught 11 or more AA male students

Note. n=27

3.1   Research Participants

The subjects consisted of adjunct faculty who taught at a mid-size multi-campus community college in southeastern Pennsylvania. Throughout the dissertation, the pseudonym Hawk Valley Community College will be used to identify the college.

Hawk Valley Community College (HVCC) is a multi-campus community college comprised of six branch campus locations across two counties and serves a population of 27,000 students. The college has a diverse student body. The student population at HVCC is 57 percent female, 43 percent male. While the population of HVCC is 27,000, including 9,000 non-credit students, of that total number only 5,369 are males enrolled at the college full time and 1,102 are African American. Like most community colleges, a majority of the students are part-timers. In fact, part-time students account for 62 percent of the total enrollment. A similar pattern is seen with faculty. Seventy-three percent of the adjunct faculty members serve the institution on a part-time base while 27 percent are full time faculty members. The adjunct faculty members are hired on a semester based contract only and can teach a maximum of nine credit hours per semester. The adjunct faculty members are not part of a unionized system. Other community colleges in the area have a comparable adjunct faculty pool and demographic.

Participants in this study included faculty from the following academic divisions: Allied Health, Nursing and Emergency Management; Communications Arts and Humanities; Business & Computer Information Systems; Public Services and Social Sciences, and Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics. Quality Delphi results rely heavily on the selection of participants (Isibor, 2008). All faculty participants were self-described as adjunct faculty members. In efforts to maintain anonymity, the

participants are identified in this study by participant number, i.e. participant 8. The numerical order has no relevancy to the order of the data collection. The guidelines for the faculty to participate in the study necessitated specific selection criteria. The criterion included:

a. Community college located in the southeastern region of Pennsylvania as determined by the researcher.

b. The faculty member must have taught at least two African American male students during his or her tenure at the community college.

c. Participants must be 18 years old or older as required by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the researcher's degree granting institution and Hawk Valley Community College.

d. Faculty member must have taught a minimum of three consecutive semesters at the college not including summer sessions.

e. Faculty members must have two years or more teaching at the community college level.

The participants included faculty members from five academic divisions: Allied Health & Emergency Management; Business & Computer Information Systems; Communications, Arts and Humanities; Public Service and Social Science; and Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics. Participants identified to participate in the study had previous teaching experience at Hawk Valley Community College and taught African American male students at the community college. To maintain anonymity, all electronic questionnaires and surveys were anonymous, and participants were identified by participant number and not by name during the focus group sessions.

TABLE 3: Participant demographic survey

Gender	Percent among all	Academic Division	Total # of faculty
Male *n*=12	44.44	CAH	7
Female *n*=15	55.56	BUS/CIS	3
		Public Service Social Science	11
		STEM	5
		Allied Health, Nursing and Emergency Management	1

The researcher contacted 68 adjunct faculty members and invited them to participate in the study. For validity purposes, the instruments (demographic survey and Delphi questionnaires) were reviewed by research experts to establish validity. Instruments were reviewed by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness at the researcher's study site. The researcher used a survey and questionnaire data collection measurement to investigate faculty perceptions of instructors at a community college. As recommended by (Creswell, 1994), the purpose of multiple surveys and questionnaires is to improve the questions, format and scales used in the study.

A brief demographic survey (see Appendix E) was used to gather information about the faculty. The information was used to breakdown the respondents demographics. The researcher wanted to gather a consensus of the response pull rather that attempt to draw conclusions about the faculty that participated in the study.

In this demographic survey, to be completed by adjunct faculty only, respondents were asked to identify their gender, age (18-29, 30-40, or 41 and older), marital status, ethnicity, citizen status, years teaching at HVCC, total number of years teaching, teaching division, and number of African American male students taught during tenure at HVCC. The researcher later used an open-ended, five question questionnaire as a second method for data collection. The Delphi questionnaires were designed to elicit and develop individual responses and allow the participants to refine their views as the study progressed. Since the process involves structured collection and synthesis of expertise and opinion from groups by means of questionnaires (Adler & Ziglio, 1996), the survey and questionnaires were delivered through electronic webmail.

3.2   Delphi Method

The Delphi Method was named after an ancient oracle (Hanafin, 2004) who offered visions for those who wanted advice. (Gupta and Clarke, 2006) have identified health, education and business as the most popular areas for Delphi applications and research studies. Linstone and Turoff describe the Delphi method as "a method for structuring group communication process so that the process is effective in allowing a group of individuals, as a whole, to deal with a complex problem" (1975, pg. 3).

The Delphi method is a popular way of engaging opinion from people with expertise, although the technique and purpose have been modified over the years (Hanafin, 2004). A series of questionnaires are designed to develop individual responses to the questions posed and to enable the participant expert to refine their own views. It is also a process of individual feedback about group opinion, with opportunities for the respondents to change their positions on the basis of feedback, to provide a close fit with

the use of environmental inputs, and to build internal representation (Hanafin, 2004). The classical Delphi technique was used in this study.

The classical Delphi is categorized by five features: "Antimony, iteration, controlled feedback, statistical group response and stability and responses among those with expertise on a specific issue. Participants in this type of Delphi have expertise and give opinions to arrive at stability in responses on a specific issue" (Hanafin, 2004, p. 5).

The most obvious advantage of anonymity in responding to questions is that it is likely to encourage opinions that are free of influence from others and therefore more likely to be 'true' (Snyder-Halpern, 2002). Another advantage is that the questionnaires have the capability of capturing a wide range of inner-related variables and multi-dimensional variables (Gupta and Clarke, 1996), thus allowing a group of experts to provide their understanding. Two or more rounds of Delphi techniques are usually conducted (Isibor, 2008).

Three key elements, outlined by Gordon & Helmer (1964), are needed for a successful Delphi process: (a) structuring of information flow, (b) feedback, and (c) anonymity for the participants.

3.3   Delphi Method Instrumentation

Two rounds of Delphi questionnaires were electronically disseminated and collected as part of the data collection process. Delphi round 1 questions were distributed to the 39 volunteer participants. The researcher identified open-ended questions to allow participants to respond freely. There were 16 questionnaires returned by the deadline. The participants had ten days to complete and electronically return the questionnaire.

The results from the first Delphi round assisted the researcher in answering questions as they related to strengths, contributions and challenges of African American male students at Hawk Valley Community College. There were two rounds of Delphi questionnaires in this process. The Delphi round 1 questionnaire consisted of five questions, (see Appendix G). The first set of themes emerged from the round 1 questionnaire and delineated the faculty perceived strengths, contributions and challenges addressed in the first round.

Question 1 addressed strengths and contributions of African American male students in the classroom. Questions 2 and 3 involved observed challenges, and instructors were asked to specifically outline and detail the challenges. Question 4 helped identify the strategies used to address those challenges experienced in the classroom. Question 5, the final question, provided an opportunity for participants to share any information they felt was important and relevant to the study as it pertained to perceptions of African American male students in their classrooms.

3.4   Procedure

The demographic round 1 survey questionnaire (Appendix A) was based on initial data that helped identify the 22 focus group faculty participants. Demographic survey questions were written to include indicators of: 1) gender, 2) age, 3) marital status, 4) ethnicity, 5) citizenship, 6) faculty employment status, 7) college courses taught, 8) academic division, and 9) number of African American male students in the classroom. A total of nine items were identified to which the participants responded. The survey was designed to measure variables.

The information gathered from the survey questionnaire helped the researcher design the following:

1. Round one Delphi questionnaire designed to develop individualized faculty responses.

2. Round two Delphi questionnaire developed after the initial iterations from Delphi round 1 were examined.

3. The final step was to develop focus group interview questions.

Figure 3 illustrates how the Delphi iterations were examined.
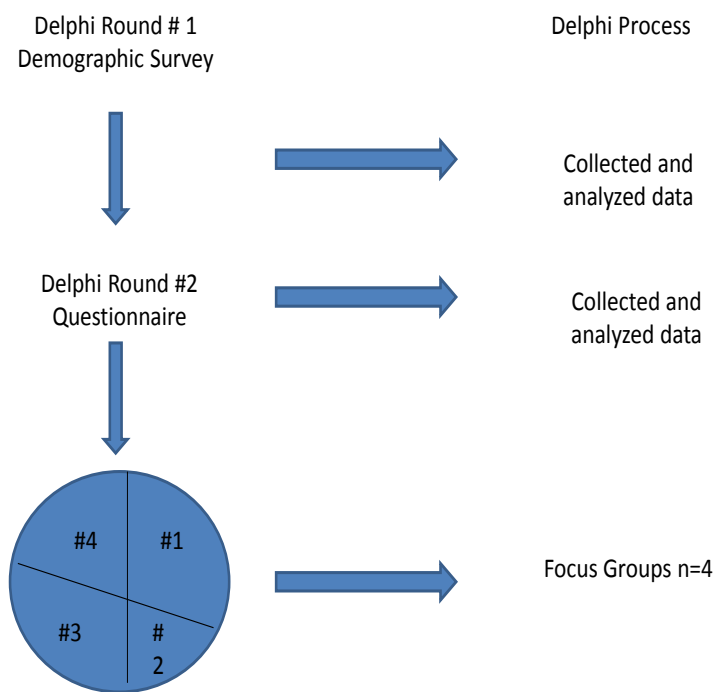
FIGURE 3: Delphi procedure

Figure 4 is a visual replica of the design instrument used as the Delphi process for this research study. The data collection measurements were used to investigate faculty perceptions. As recommended by (Creswell, 2007), the purpose of survey and questionnaire review is to improve the questions, format and scales used in the study.

1. Deliver one survey and two questionnaires through electronic webmail and then facilitate organized focus group interviews sessions with the participants.

2. The demographic survey will be used to gather information about the faculty.

3. The Delphi questionnaires were used to structure the collection and syntheses of expertise opinion from a group through the process of iteration.

4. The open ended Delphi round 1 questionnaire captured and developed individual responses.

5. The second Delphi round will helped participants refine their views of their own expert opinion as the study progresses.

6. The focus groups were administered to create a shared voice.
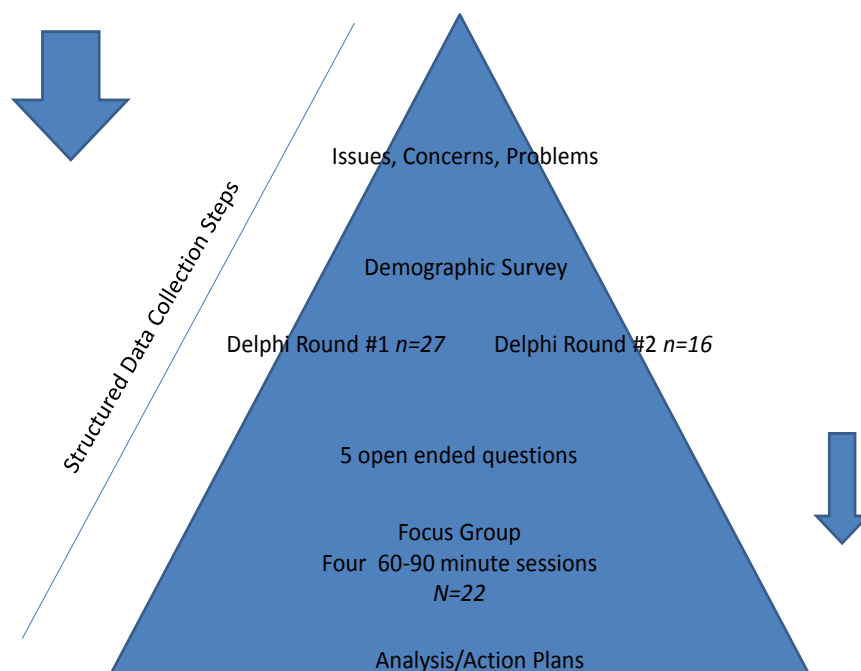
FIGURE 4: Design used to implement the Delphi process for this research study
Source: Based on Fowles (1978) steps for the Delphi method.

The researcher used studies to guide the development of the Delphi round 1

research questions, especially Vincent Tinto's (1993) student retention theory which

focuses on student departures, including: academic difficulties, the inability of

individuals to resolve their educational and occupational goals, and their failure to

become or remain incorporated in the intellectual and social life of the institution.

Further, Tinto's "Model of Institutional Departure" suggests that to persist, students need

integration into formal (academic performance) and informal (faculty/staff interactions)

academic systems and formal (extracurricular activities) and informal (peer-group

interactions) social systems.

The round 1 Delphi questionnaire was provided to participants.

1. Please list any strengths and contributions that you believe African American male students bring to your classroom and your college.

2. Please list the problems you have experienced when you taught African American male students in your course(s).

3. Please list the challenges you have observed that African American male students in your classroom or course(s) encounter.

4. What strategies do you use to deal with the challenges you identified above?

5. Please list anything else that you would like the researcher to know about your experiences and perceptions of African American male students in your classroom.

The answers to the round 1 Delphi questions were analyzed and examined by the researcher before administering the second round of ranked questions. The round 1 questions were distributed via electronic webmail after the consent form letters and demographic survey was returned. In the second round of Delphi questions, respondents were asked to identify their academic division.

<div align="center">Likert Scale Instrumentation</div>

Respondents were also asked to identify the number of African American male students they were currently teaching in fall semester 2012 as: 0-5, 6-10, 11-15, 16 or more. In efforts to address the research questions, using a Likert scale of 1-5, with 1 representing "do not agree at all" and 5 representing "completely agree," respondents were asked for their level of agreement with the following items regarding the strengths that African American male students bring to the classroom and the college: high level of

determination; real life experiences; confidence; contributions to class discussions; peer-friendly community; self-motivated.

Using the same Likert scale, respondents were then asked for their level of agreement with the following items with regard to the contributions that African American male students bring to the classroom and the college: life experiences; overcome obstacles and barriers; leadership; candor of ideas and discussions based on world perspectives; balance and diversity to the classroom; advocates for education.

Next, respondents were asked for their level of agreement with the following items regarding the challenges respondents have *observed* African American male students encountering in the classroom: late assignments; passive-aggressive behavior(s); poor attendance practices; lack of commitment to academic coursework; limited foundational skills; reluctance to ask for help.

Next, respondents were asked for their level of agreement with the following items regarding the challenges respondents have *experienced* when teaching African American male students in their courses: motivating students to stay focused on course content material; less engaged; barriers of trust and openness; literacy challenges; willingness to contribute in class; narcotic abuse.

Next, respondents were asked for their level of agreement with the following strategies respondents have used to deal with the challenges that African American male students in their classrooms: praise in public; make referrals to campus professionals; encourage classroom participation; provide real-time feedback; offer safe environment for sharing; personal conferences.

Finally, respondents were asked for their level of agreement with the following statements about African American male students: African American male students need support groups; a credit course should be designed to allow men to connect; African American male students struggle with research writing; all encounters with African American male students have been different; enjoy working with African American male students that wish to improve their quality of life; contributions in class increase diversity of discussion; complete very little work.

3.5   Focus Group Instrumentation

The primary qualitative method of data collection used in this study was the focus groups from the 22 faculty participants. This study employed a structured focus group approach. The researcher developed in advance for the focus group sessions a focus group protocol (i.e., a list of carefully worded questions). This approach increased the comparability of data collected and minimized the researcher's influence on participant responses (Johnson and Christensen, 2004).

The researcher relied on her knowledge base from previous course work in research methods to conduct the focus group interviews. The researcher reviewed the protocol for facilitating focus groups by Eliot & Associates (2005) including a focus group checklist and sample focus group documents. Prior to the focus group sessions, informed consent was obtained and collected from participants (see Appendix J). On the onset of data collection, prior to the distribution of the demographic survey, each participant completed an approved human subjects form, and at the start of each focus group session, a second informed consent for audio recording was distributed. This procedure was approved by the University of North Carolina at Charlotte Institutional

Review Board (IRB). Second, prior to starting the focus group interview, oral approval from participants was also obtained. The confidentiality of all faculty participants was ensured and participants were assigned pseudonyms to protect their identity, and names were not included in audio recordings or the final focus group transcripts.

All interviews took place in person on the community college campus. Prior to the interview, each participant was given a scratch pad and pen to take notes and to conceptualize the factors of faculty perceptions. The faculty participants approached this in different ways. Some took notes and wrote aggressively while others chose to limit notes. Refreshments were provided during each session and the focus group questions were projected on a screen using PowerPoint. Each participant received a table tent which detailed their participant number.

The study utilized audio recordings of interviews with the focus group participants. Each interview employed two recorders. The recorders that were utilized were (a) the Sony digital recorder (b) Olympus digital recorder. At the end of each interview session, recordings were uploaded and converted to digital media files, which are being kept secure until destroyed in 2018. Each session was transcribed and coded by a professional transcriber and returned as four separate electronic documents to the researcher. Each interview transcript was coded using the software program provided by Mulberry Studios located in Cambridge, MA. All hard copies of literature reviews, articles, book chapters and all documents related to the proposal and later five chapter dissertation will be destroyed after five years.

Focus Group Questions

1. How would you describe your engagement and interactions with African American male students in your class(es)?

2. How do African American male students impact your college classroom?

3. What recommendations would you provide to enhance academic and student support efforts for African American male students that attend community college?

4. Describe the type of instructional environment you think African American male students respond best?

5. What do you want administrators to know about the challenges you have experienced teaching African American males?

6. How important is it to you that your college provide professional development opportunities addressing issues that are relevant to African American male students?

7. What are some emerging themes that you have encountered in your experience teaching African American male students?

8. Are there any final thoughts that you would like to share about your perceptions, experiences, challenges and contributions of African American male students at the community college?

Design and Data Analysis

The data were analyzed for the demographic survey, Delphi questionnaires and focus group sessions. A qualitative research methodology was to determine if there was a difference in faculty perceptions as they relate to African American male students at the community college.

The type of qualitative research that was employed in this study was grounded theory. Grounded theory focuses on building a theory about a phenomenon and is usually grounded in a real world experience. Some researchers consider grounded theory as "exploratory," and improving creditability of research results is based on comparing multiple groups. Grounded theory is also used when you want to identify concepts.

This theory guided the researcher into formulating a hypothesis toward the end of the study as opposed to at the beginning.

Hypothesis – Is there a significant difference in faculty perceptions of African American male students at a community college compared to other gender and ethnic groups?

The questions and responses were read and reread to identify emerging and reoccurring themes. Delphi round 1 and Delphi round 2 were summarized by the researcher, and further analyzed at the completion (iteration). This pattern was continued through both Delphi rounds and returned responses were summarized, categorized and used to help develop the eight focus group interview questions (see Appendix I). Based on the combined data collection method, qualitative and Delphi methods assisted in the systematic construction of theoretical models (Glaser, Barney & Straus, 1967).

3.6   Researcher Role

The researcher conducted the study in a community college setting where the researcher has a high level of access based on employment at the College. The researcher enlisted the help of several key stakeholders of the college such as: Dean of Branch Campus Operations, Director of First-Year Initiatives & Student Success, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness along with others who dealt directly with African American male students and the improvement and welfare of professional development for adjunct faculty.

3.7   Researcher Bias

The researcher's interest in this study centers on her experience working with African American male students and other underrepresented groups of color. This expertise in the field of higher education spans over the course of a 10 year period. In her past and current administrative roles, she has worked with students to support their transition from high school to college. She has also worked as the program Director for a Minority Male Mentoring Program at another community college in the state of Pennsylvania. To this end, many of the students she worked with were Black males who were in need of guidance on what to expect and how to succeed in high school, college and post matriculation. During this span of time, the researcher saw many students who enrolled in college, attended classes yet became disengaged, and for some, eventually dropped out. The researcher was convinced that there was more that institutions could have done to help this student population succeed. Therefore, the researcher hopes to provide information that is usable toward the success of Black males in the community college.

Data collection took place between September 2012 and December 2012. A letter of permission to conduct research was obtained by the community college and the researcher received IRB approval from HVCC and the degree granting institution to begin data collection. The researcher gathered data from one main source.

A demographic survey along with a series of participant questionnaires and in-depth focus group interviews were also part of the data collection process. The overarching design of the study was qualitative in nature. A qualitative research methodology was selected in order to better understand faculty perceptions. This method is descriptive and allows the researcher to find out how participants think and feel. The goal was to present the voices of adjunct faculty members often not heard. Focus group interviews were part of the data collection process to search for opinions and perceptions toward a similar topic. The decision to use Delphi methods of data collection was based on the researcher's understanding of triangulation (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003) and to add depth by examining various facets of the phenomena. The researcher used the process of triangulation to increase the credibility of results. The researchers hope was that multiple methods—in this case the Delphi iterations and the focus groups—would lead to the same results.

This study was conducted to elicit knowledge about faculty perceptions of African American male students at a community college. The study engaged qualitative methods in an effort to understand faculty perceptions of African American males. This method specifically gives voice to faculty (Flick, 2006) that in other cases may not be heard. Holloway (1997) suggests that a qualitative approach provides for an equal and

reciprocal relationship between the researcher and the participant, allowing participants to provide their knowledge, opinions and views as it relates to their individual expertise. The first phase of data collection consisted of a demographic web survey. The second phase consisted of two rounds of Delphi questionnaires. To establish reliability, a multiple mode of data collection was used in this study (Yin, 1994). Eisner (1991) and Patton (1990) state that the credibility of a qualitative research report weighs strongly on the confidence readers have in the researcher's ability to maintain ethical practices during data collection.

The third phase to examine faculty perceptions was the four in-depth focus group interviews. Focus groups involve the process of facilitating interviews on a particular topic. Glesne (2006) suggests that focus groups are most useful when participants can express multiple perspectives on a similar experience. This final method can best be used by administrators to concentrate their efforts on faculty development and additional academic and student support resources to support African American male students.

3.8   Summary

This chapter described the research methodology including the research questions, design of the study, instrument, data collection methods, data analysis methods and summary. The researcher gathered data from the faculty members to prepare for the focus group sessions. Qualitative responses addressing the perceptions, and experiences with African American male students were collected. This research study was designed to enlighten higher education partners to maximize the benefits in the area of minority student achievement particularly as it relates to African American male students.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

The researcher collected information using one demographic survey, two rounds of Delphi questionnaires, and four focus groups, all which helped describe faculty perceptions of African American males at a community college. A comprehensive illustration of the research questions, findings, themes, and summary are outlined in the following sections.

4.1   Delphi Round One Participant Responses

Faculty perceptions of African American male students at a community college are detailed through results identified in the Delphi round 1 questionnaire. To further illustrate the findings, the research questions are restated below to represent a link between the first round of Delphi questions and the research questions. For the purpose of illustration, research questions are coded as "RQ" and Delphi questions will be coded as "DQ".

RQ1: How do faculty perceive African American male students with respect to academic preparation, educational goals and classroom performance at a Pennsylvania community college?	DQ1-a: Please list any strengths and contributions that you believe African American male students bring to your classroom and your college.

Ninety percent of the faculty members responded that the African American students were determined, motivated and reliant. Faculty perceptions of African American male strengths and contributions are detailed by faculty members in various divisions.

Faculty Responses:

• Real life experiences • Confidence, stability, good listeners • They have initiative • Open-minded to new ideas provide minority worldview often • Very hard working and honest • Assertive, confident, reflective, and resilient • Academically driven; self-motivated eager • Insightful, survivalist, academically curious, willing to learn, able to learn	"African American male students advocate for assistance and understanding if clarity is needed. Likewise, these men contribute to class discussion. During literature discussions, many offer insight into character and provide text to self and text to world connections. In terms of the college community, I feel these men build a peer friendly community simply through a friendly greeting." "A willingness to be present and engage in the discussion at hand. An ability to be frank in discussions while being open to and tolerant of the viewpoints of others." "When they're in class, there's a positive attitude about being in school. They have a strong work-ethic as well, and are able to move at the same pace in class as everyone else." "African American male students' strengths include confidence in sharing, energetic, fair, modest, self-regulated, curious, creative, perseverance, humble and kind."

Research questions 2 and 3 with the corresponding Delphi round questions:

RQ2: What instructional problems do faculty members experience when teaching African American male students at a Pennsylvania community college?	DQ2: Please list any challenges you have observed that African American male students in your classroom encounter.
RQ3: What strategies, if any, do faculty members use to help African American male students deal with challenges at a Pennsylvania community college?	DQ3: Please list any challenges you have experienced when teaching African American male students in your classroom.
	DQ4: What strategies do you use to deal with the challenges you identified in DQ3.

Table 4 illustrates the emerging challenges and strategies faculty identified when working with African American male students. Table 4 also provides a link between research questions two and three and Delphi round 1 questions two, three and four.

TABLE 4: Challenges and strategies

Challenges	Strategies
Motivation	Praise in public and learn student names quickly encourage classroom participation in a non-threatening way; pulling students to the side to discuss progress
Absenteeism and class attendance	Assuring students that showing up and doing the work will guarantee a passing grade; remain firm, fair and consistent
Barriers of trust	Open communication; speaking with the individual; personal conferences; positive encounters; listen
Substance abuse	Recommend students to counseling services offered
Parenting and other environmental factors	Personal conferences; real life conversations; show concern
Literacy concerns	Encouraging group study and group projects; ; encourage study groups ; help student discover their own errors
Willingness to contribute to classroom discussion	Encourage participation; empowering students; use current events

Note. $n = 17$

Data collected from the round 1 analysis report allowed the researcher to identify

emerging themes to compile and develop round 2 questions. By categorizing the

emerging themes, the researcher asked the faculty participants to rank the strengths,

contributions and challenges experienced based on the data collection results from the

round 1 questionnaire. In order to maintain consistency, the Delphi questionnaire round 2

was distributed electronically to the same 39 participants that signed consent forms. In

the second round, the participants were asked to rank the responses and emerging themes

provided by participants from the Delphi round 1 (see Table 4). Further, in this round, a

follow-up email was sent to participants reminding them of the questionnaire closing

date.

A total of 17 participants completed the Delphi round 2 questionnaire; the rating

sheet appears in Appendix G. The Delphi questionnaire consisted of five categories,

designed to let participants rank the importance of each item using a rating scale of 1 to 5,

with 1 being "do not agree at all" and 5 being "completely agree." The results of the most

common emerging themes are detailed in Table 5.

TABLE 5: Delphi round 1 emergent themes and clusters

First Set of Themes	Secondary Themes
Strengths	• High level of determination • Real life experiences • Confidence • Contributions to class discussion • Peer friendly community • Self-motivation
Contributions	• Life experiences • Overcoming obstacles/barriers • Leadership /role model • Candor of ideas and discussions based on world perspectives • Balance to the classroom • Advocate for education • Diversity
Challenges Observed	• Assignment completion in a timely fashion • Passive behaviors • Classroom attendance • Lack of commitment to academic coursework • Foundational skills • Resistance to help
Challenges Experienced	• Lack of motivation • Engagement • Willingness to contribute to classroom discussion • Absence rate • Late assignments • Barrier to trust and openness
Relevant Information Pertaining to Study	• Support groups • Provide value to class experience • Credit course to allow male students to connect • Struggle with research writing

Research question four and the corresponding Delphi round one question:

RQ4: What contributions do African American male students make to their classrooms and institution at a Pennsylvania Community College?	DQ1-b: Please list any contributions observed that African American male students in your classroom or course(s) encounter.

Ninety percent of the respondents agreed that African American male students bring diversity and real world experiences to their classrooms. The following faculty statements reflect these findings:

- Diversity - Experiences from the workplace into the classroom - Real life experiences - Can serve as role models - Written work offers rich outlook on topics discussed in class	"African American male students bring a wealth of information including, but not limited to, an experience specific to a population that is known to live their lives navigating stereotypes, resource challenges (financial, emotional, educational, housing, employment, etc.), non-traditional ways they have overcome potential barriers, and perspectives on American society that is no often heard" "I believe AAM students bring a special human perspective that most people cannot begin to understand in terms of surviving an uphill socioeconomic battle and a racial profile of not being able to achieve academically. The AAM students are unique because they are able to join in on our discussions based on their world perspective and life experiences. This allows all the other students to understand that the stereotypes that are portrayed in the media are not true. The AAM students bring a sense of balance to the classroom as representatives of the racial makeup and gender"

Research question 2 and the corresponding Delphi round one question:

RQ2: What instructional problems do faculty members experience when teaching African American male students at a Pennsylvania community college?	DQ3: Please list any challenges you have experienced when teaching African American male students in your classroom.

Three respondents stated that they have not experienced any challenges when teaching African American male students. There was, however, an overall consensus that study skills, attendance, late assignments and passivity were challenges that faculty members experienced in the classroom:

- Study habits - Maintaining a job while being in school/schedule conflicts - Some problems with absences or lateness - Personal problems like child care - Carrying full time class and full time job - Lack good class attendance - Late homework - Financial Aid problems - Lack of commitment - Aiming at a low passing (D, or C) grade instead of A grades	"Some have barriers or other challenges that affect their ability to complete assignment in a timely manner or require their withdrawal. There have been others whose preparation has not made them as college ready, so more direction is sometimes necessary" "The only challenge that has been their inability to contribute to class. Often, they are listening attentively but their responses are not well received. Their responses are not well received because they either do not share publicly or are too aggressive in their delivery" "Occasionally, I have had a student who may have been a reluctant writer and may not realize that he only need to ask or be open to receive assistance" "On an occasion, some have home or work responsibilities that take from study time. Some also lack the academic training in basic skills. This seems to go hand-in-hand with the first challenge" "Higher absence rate. Tend not to hand in assignments on time. When given extra time, they still do not hand in assignments"

Research question three and the corresponding Delphi round one question:

RQ3: What strategies, if any, do faculty members use to help African American male students deal with challenges at a Pennsylvania community college?	DQ4: What strategies do you use to deal with the challenges you identified in Delphi question 3.

The respondents identified the following strategies listed below. Over 50% of the faculty agreed that encouragement, motivation and student engagement are best practices to deal with challenges while teaching African American male students.

Faculty Responses:

- Motivating students to study and stay focused - Encourage tutoring - Encouraging study group and group projects - Engagement	"I try to engage them by using current events and situations they may relate to as a prompt for discussion. I have invited African American male professionals to speak to the class as a means to engage them. I also speak with them individually to ascertain feedback for the class as well as ways to fully engage them in the class" I help African American male students understand how unique they are in terms of their learning styles both in and out of the educational environment. I help them see the value in how and why they think the way they do and use those special survival techniques to gain knowledge in the educational arena so that they can later use the knowledge and skills to succeed in the world of work and in their everyday lives"

Research question one and the corresponding Delphi round one question:

RQ1: How do faculty perceive African American male students with respect to academic preparation, educational goals and classroom performance at a Pennsylvania community college?	DQ5: Please list anything else that you would like the researcher to know about your perceptions experiences and challenges of African American male students in your classroom.

All respondents offered additional thoughts on their experiences teaching African American male students:

- They need a support group - All African American male students are different	"Many of the African American males I have taught are the first in their family to attend college. For this reason, it may be hard to find that motivation and drive if they don't have support at home. On the other hand, this serves as motivation for some students who want to achieve something and make their families proud" "I believe if the AAM student is going to be academically, socially, psychologically strong, he must be given the opportunity to show his skills using his strongest learning style in an environment that is not constricting! He must be able to move to allow kinesthetic learning, visually see how things should work and listen to information in chunks! I believe all AAM students should undergo psychological counseling to help learn why they think the way they think and to prioritize their decisions that will yield the best possible outcomes based on their available choices"

4.2   Delphi Round Two Participant Responses

During the second round of Delphi questionnaires, the following frequencies

emerged from the categories: strengths; contributions; observed challenges; experienced

challenges. These frequencies are represented in Table 6 below.

TABLE 6: Delphi round 2 faculty consensus

Items ranked in order from 1-Do not agree at all through 5-Completely agree

Categories	Frequency/Ranking
Strengths of African American Male Students	
1. High level of determination	29.4% slightly agree
2. Real life Experiences	41.18% completely agree
3. Confidence	47.06% somewhat agree
4. Contributions to classroom discussion	41.18% mostly agree
5. Peer friendly community	41.18% mostly agree
6. Self-motivated	41.18% somewhat agree
Categories	Frequency/Ranking
Contributions of African American Male Students	
1. Life experiences	35.29% completely agree
2. Overcome obstacles and barriers	41.18% mostly agree
3. Leadership	41.18% somewhat agree
4. Candor of ideas based on world perspective	35.29 % somewhat agree
5. Balance and diversity to the classroom	41.18% completely agree
6. Advocates for education	29.41% completely agree
Categories	Frequency/Ranking
Challenges observed	
1. Late Assignments	35.29% do not agree at all
2. Passive aggressive behavior	41.18% do not agree at all
3. Poor attendance practices	17.65% mostly agree
4. Lack of commitment to academic coursework	29.41% mostly agree
5. Limited foundational skills	41.18% mostly agree
6. Reluctance to ask for help	23.53% mostly agree
Categories	Frequency/Ranking
Challenges experienced	
1. Motivating students to stay focused on course content material	35.29% do not agree
2. Less engaged	41.18% slightly agree
3. Barriers of trust and openness	23.53% mostly agree

TABLE 6 continued: Delphi round 2 faculty consensus

4. Literacy challenges	29.41% mostly agree
5. Willingness to contribute in class	29.41% somewhat agree
6. Narcotic abuse	82.35% do not agree at all
Categories	
Strategies to deal with challenges	Frequency/Ranking
1. Praise in public	41.18% completely agree
2. Make referrals to campus professional	29.41% completely agree
3. Encourage classroom participation	52.94% completely agree
4. Provide real-time feedback	76.47% completely agree
5. Offer safe environment for sharing	70.59% completely agree
6. Personal conference	47.06% completely agree
Categories	
Other	Frequency/Ranking
1. AA male students need support groups	47.06% completely agree
2. Credit course designed to allow men to connect	47.06% completely agree
3. AA male students struggle with research writing	41.18% completely agree
4. All encounters with AA males has been different	52.94% completely agree
5. Enjoy working with AA male students	100% completely agree
6. Contributions in class increase diversity of discussion	82.35% completely agree

Note. $n = 17$

4.3   Focus Group Results

        A total of four focus group sessions were scheduled to accommodate faculty

teaching schedules. All focus group sessions were conducted by the researcher and a

trained research assistant/current doctoral student from an accredited institution. Six

participants attended session 1; six participants attended session 2; two participants

attended session 3 and eight participants attended session 4. Twenty-two participants out

of the original 39 participants that returned the consent form letter participated in the

cumulating activity associated with the data collection. Two digital recorders were used

during all four focus group sessions. The participants consented to the audio recordings.

The eight focus group questions derived from a thorough examination of the responses

collected from rounds 1 and 2 of the Delphi questionnaire.

4.3.1   Focus Group Setting

        Prior to the recordings, the researcher provided light refreshments to all

participants. Pre-work was also completed in the first 15 minutes of each session. Pre-

work items included a sign-in sheet; digital recording consent form; survey; and handout

detailing the purpose of focus groups (see Appendix L). The research assistant collected

and placed all items in sealed envelopes and tested the digital recorders. The researcher

introduced herself and the research assistant to the participants. The faculty participants

then introduced themselves to each other. All of the pre-activities took place before the

recording began.

4.3.2   Focus Groups Interview Questions and Responses

Research question five was examined through responses delivered in the first

focus group question. Research questions will be coded as "RQ" and focus group

questions will be coded as "FGQ".

RQ5: What influence does African American male student engagement have on faculty and classmates at a Pennsylvania community college?	FGQ1: How would you describe your engagement and interactions with African American male students in your classes?

When asked the first question, the participants in two out of the four focus groups

hesitated before responding. Many of the faculty members chose to write down the

question on the scratch pads that were provided to each participant by the researcher.

Shortly thereafter, participants began to respond to question 1 and engaged each other

through the dialog referring to each participant, including themselves by participant

number.

Focus group question 1 responses:

> "I feel like I almost have to act as a motherly figure in terms of getting them to
> focus, to comply, to address some behavioral issues. And then typically it gets
> better as the semester progresses"

> "I feel that I have to develop a relationship early and often. I feel that I need to do
> that for encouragement and to support them to engage in social interaction more
> often"

> "My experience so far has been very pleasant here. I always try to compare it with
> the classes I've had in Alaska. There were no African Americans in my class.
> They were all Eskimos and Philippines and Caucasians all of the time. I actually
> began teaching there. But here I have African Americans in my class and they are
> quite different from what I would have thought for them to be"

> "So my experience has been both good and-- That is the good. The bad side about
> it is the laxness in their engagement and in doing assignments which is very--
> Assignments has been one of the big, big issues that I've seen in African
> American males. There is always an excuse. Somebody could have killed his
> uncle twice in my class"

"The students tend to be more serious, because they have tasted life and know that there is no other shortcut than to fight hard to succeed"

"Having an understanding about their socioeconomic background, their educational development is important to understand how they will participate in the class and how you have to engage those students. And I have found that African American male students are willing to engage if they can feel that they can trust what you're going to actually engage them with"

"They're very vocal, very passionate, and I don't want to say aggressive about knowledge but are more vocal. So there is no middle ground for my African American male students. They're either invisible or have to be seen, as of right now for the students that I have encountered"

"I also have spent half of my time teaching at nighttime, and so those students are very engaged and in their performance in class because they either already have a reasonable paying job that they're just trying to advance in or they are hoping to improve their job opportunity in the sciences"

"I find I have a good rapport. I use humor in my class and I think that is a good way to connect, especially with young more adolescent African American males"

"I use it as an opportunity to engage them to interact by using current issues or other areas that may be relevant to them to get them to sort of participate or talk. And sometimes I'll have some that are assertive, as participant five said, that are outspoken and kind of speak and really engage the class, and the others I may have that just kind of sit back and just want to get done with the work"

There were a number of different responses to the second focus group question.

During session 1, the focus group moderator redirected the participants to focus on

answering the question as opposed to debating views and personal perceptions.

RQ4: What contributions do African American male students make to their classrooms and institution at a Pennsylvania Community College?	FGQ2: How do African American male students impact your classroom?

The respondents made the following comments:

"I hate singling them out, but I mean they just have some spectacular personalities, and I don't know whether it's because they are black students or just black males, but it's because they're individuals. They bring wonderful, wonderful character and depth to the class"

"I think that the African American male adds so much to the class because, one, there are typically not many of them"

"My experiences is that they're pretty intelligent guys. They just haven't had it seems to be a lot of support, people saying that it's okay to be smart, it's cool to be smart"

"I think that there are some overarching issues when it comes to supporting them to engage. And one of them of course is race. I mean it's something that we can't overlook. Most often it's obvious. Sometimes you can have some biased attitude about it because skin tone, hair texture, all of that can somewhat define race, but it's not written in stone"

"When I'm looking at the African American male I'm curious about who were their role models. What role models did they have in their own personal life and in their own communities that give them some indication on how to socially engage and how to interact?"

"The black male student is much less confident, but he brings a wondrous naivety that gets conversation going, because they think one way until you introduce new information and it bumps up against something that they had not considered"

"I have had the opportunity to engage a lot of African American male students in my classroom. They bring in their sense of humor. When they are ready to be part of the class they participate, especially when you want to mix classes with some kind of social activities to get them to be engaged"

"The African American male students I've had in my class this semester have really brought a leadership in the class and they've been able to--They sit in the back, and these are adults actually who are family men and have been together in my class, and they actually control the flow of the course, they control the flow of the discussion, and they have led group discussions and been able to facilitate it in a very, in a way I never would even have done myself"

"I have found that the students are received by their peers and even celebrated because so many times African American male students are misunderstood"

"I encourage their conversation a lot because it gives a new perspective to the conversations that we're having in the classroom, especially in a field that is mainly dominated by women"

"An advantage I have is half of our class time is in a lab so it's a more informal, not informal because I'm really strict in there, but it's a casual setting where there is an opportunity for them to interact with their lab partner, with other groups, and with me. And I have to say some of them are definitely doers"

"I would also say that just knowing the social rise of an African American male and in many cases they are always taught, "You have to be better than the next person. You have to be two steps ahead. You have to put forth-- If someone is giving 100% you have to do 200""

"I find that African American male students will often be extremely honest and forthright in their opinions about things and it will keep the discussion grounded and keep others honest"

"I think at least in math sometimes African American males in my classes may at times be intimidated as far as asking questions with respect to the content, because they don't want to appear as if they don't know. But once they understand that you're there to help them and not to put them down or anything like that I think they really respond well and then they open up"

"One thing I notice about African American male students that impacts the classroom is the inconsistency. They show enthusiasm for the subject matter, but to be consistently coming to class every day, consistently doing your work, I find that lacking in most of the students that I have taught that will come to community college"

When asked for recommendations to enhance student support, the participants

answered positively and nodded their heads in agreement with the participants. Some of

the recommendations shared were recommendations for the entire community college

populations and they did not generalize to the African American male student population.

In all focus groups, the concern about high school preparation surfaced as part of the

discussion.

RQ2: What instructional problems do faculty members experience when teaching African American male students at a Pennsylvania community college? RQ3: What strategies, if any, do faculty members use to help African American male students deal with challenges at a Pennsylvania community college?	FGQ3: What recommendations would you provide to enhance academic and student support efforts for African American male students that attend community college?

Some of the recommendations shared by faculty are outlined below.

Focus group question 3 responses:

> "I'm thinking given that there are so few African American students, the way to engage those that go on this journey to higher education is to engage them earlier before the college experience, say their junior high school year, bringing them on campus for two weeks in the summer and taking courses that are more around these social things, more campus life, more seminar type things where it's more free-flowing so that they can talk about some of their fears, some of their challenges, some of their barriers outside of the school that might impact them here, what things they bring, what would they like to get out of coming to this school"

> "Permit African American male, professional African American males outside of the campus to come in to provide some type of workshops or sessions or motivational speaking which gives the African American male an image of a successful African American male"

> "Mentoring with the possibilities of long-term from the time a student comes in to the time when they leave"

> "Having an image of a professional African American male who is successful and also allowing students to be the mentor. Putting a student in a position as a mentor, as the leader is also building up competencies and skills in that student that is already identified as having potential I think that is very powerful. And each one will teach one. I think we have probably heard of that cliché before"

> "I think peer mentoring is a great idea and especially more so I think the African American male mentoring is so important because sometimes you're dealing with an African American male who has never had an African American teacher, male teacher throughout his entire elementary, junior high, high school year, and then the males that if there are any present in the household, they may not be the best role model. And then in the community they may not have many positive male role models to look up to"

> "And I think it's just so important to have males, older males to come and mentor the younger ones to let them know that it is possible"

Faculty participants used this question to share best practices from their respective classrooms. Some shared specific stories detailing how their preferred instructional methods have worked in the past along with strategies that they have used in past teaching experiences. All faculty members were concerned about African American male

student retention and attrition. Almost half agreed that their instructional environment

played a significant role in the overall success of the student.

RQ1: How do faculty perceive African American male students with respect to academic preparation, educational goals and classroom performance at a Pennsylvania community college?	FGQ4: Describe the type of instructional environment you think African American male students respond best?

Focus group question 4 responses:

> "I bring into the classroom the world. That is YouTube videos that are relevant, that is articles that are relevant, that is current events that are relevant so they can identify with and engage in an intelligent conversation wherein they're more likely to share their personal experiences"

> "Multisensory. I mean from nuts to soups, every type imaginable technique that you can come up with. Getting them involved verbally, physically, mentally, I do it all. I bring in my tap shoes. That's what I do"

> "I think more often I've gotten positive responses when I come off that way that I'm interested in you as a person, not just as a student. And another thing about the environment is I'll set the expectations from the very beginning.

> "I find creating an environment of collaboration, teaming opportunities for them to come together and have conversation, whether it's with the instructor or without, just amongst their peers is one approach.

> "I think African American male students just buy into that! What we're talking about is not easy; it's rigorous. We're not going to substitute the rigor for fun, but the excitement that comes along with it. And bringing in stories, and past experiences, it just captures them. And I don't know if that's a spinoff of sitting in church or whatever, but I know the stories sell. Those experiences, pulling out some of those and deliberately doing it"

> "I believe my African American male students learn best when the environment is very diverse, I think the learning environment, the instructional environment really challenges the instructor when you're trying to diversify your instruction. However, it is probably the best environment for African American males"

> "In my class I tell a lot of stories about myself. I tell them about myself and how I got there, an icebreaker every time in the morning in the class. They want to know, because religion is not so much attractive to people to start to study. You have to make it interesting for them to know. And especially knowing that I come from an obscure place, Alaska-- what is a black guy doing in Alaska"

"Once you engage them you find their true, their god given intelligence will come out, but if you leave them and let them stay at the corner or at the very back of the classroom you're not helping them"

"I find that African American male students respond the best to a discussion situation where they feel they can share honestly and, as I said before, where the classroom can feel less like a place where you're being given information and more like a place where you are creating a voice for yourself"

" I think at least in my experience that in general African American males, if they're struggling with some particular concepts that they are very comfortable when they are placed into, again, small groups. I hate to keep saying that, but they relate to their peers and they feel more, they may feel more comfortable sharing the fact that, "Well I don't understand this" and somebody else might not understand something else as far-- And instead of the traditional asking of questions in front of the whole class"

"I think, in a language class, but what I found was that my, all of my students but in particular I'm thinking of an African American student who he just wanted to connect everything. Everything had to connect, and it was hard; it's hard to do sometimes in language. But he wanted to make sure that what he was learning was relevant, that he could use it, and so every lesson that I, even if it was a grammar lesson, I would give examples of ways that he can use this in the real world"

Responses varied when the fifth focus group question was presented to the participants.

RQ2: What instructional problems do faculty members experience when teaching African American male students at a Pennsylvania community college?	FGQ5: What do you want administrators to know about the challenges you have experienced teaching African American males?

One participant stated that he didn't experience any challenges teaching African American male students. Some of the body language from one of the larger focus groups suggested that the faculty participants were reluctant to be as candid and forthright as they were in the previous questions. A few of the faculty members looked around at their colleagues and at times provided vague responses.

One instructor stated:

"Is there anybody who monitors the connection between refund checks and dropout rates? That sort of thing…"

Other faculty openly shared what they would like administrators to know about the

challenges they have experienced teaching African American males.

Focus group question 5 responses:

"There are far too few African American students in the social sciences courses for which I do a more engaging class for there to be a contribution or a perspective from them. It's kind of lopsided in a diversity class when there is little diversity. So that is the one thing I would say--there needs to be more diversity and representation from them"

"Clearly there is a need for sensitivity training for instructors as well as our students in how we engage one another, but what I've often found with seminars for students to be developed as well as for faculty to be developed, it's not often offered at times that is convenient for either"

"My biggest challenge is having African American male students not have their textbook until week five or six because they're waiting for a refund check to come in"

"I think the other thing is the environmental issues. I find a lot of my students feeling really hopeless I would like the administrators to know that the students do face, the African American male students in particular face tremendous environmental issues and also the financial issues that they face I think has a huge impact"

"I'm going to go back and say again, they need to understand that all the students coming into this college are not coming from the same academic or economic background. And with economic I mean social background. And you have a wide variety and all of them need to come in and they need to find the appropriate course work to make them successful"

When Question 6 was stated by the researcher, there was discussion around the

current professional development sessions offered at Hawk Valley Community College.

RQ3: What strategies, if any, do faculty members use to help African American male students deal with challenges at a Pennsylvania community college?	FGQ6: How important is it to you that the college provide professional development opportunities addressing issues that are relevant to African American male students?

Some faculty discussed the redundancy in professional development sessions and their

rationales for not attending. When the researcher re-directed the participants to the

question posed, they responded in this way:

> "I think it's extremely important, and not just to put it out there to say it's available but to make it mandatory, because sometimes you will find, and regardless, even African American teachers themselves should attend the professional development as well that address those issues, because no one is sort of exempt from learning, in my opinion"

> "I'm always a little bit leery about professional developments that have to deal with one particular group, particularly African American males in general. It's always been disturbing to me when people try to do a professional development on a particular group because what it tends to do, in my opinion, is create generalizations about the group"

> "This is a focus group for this purpose. I think we should actually have a focus group among ourselves here to talk about what we are seeing, because it's actually more focused than the meetings that we do. This gives us room to say what we're seeing and as well as what the concrete terms that needs to be addressed so that we will benefit and that in time our students, and African American students as well would benefit from such professional development training"

> "I know it is good to have the counselors come in and speak with the students, but that's just not enough. They need more"

> "Any opportunity to better understand my students I would appreciate, because I find community college teaching more rewarding than teaching at larger institutions where the student body is not so diverse both in terms of race and class, economic situation, etc. so I would love more opportunities. And also maybe opportunities addressing peer groups in the classroom"

"I think it's very important, especially for African American male students, only because in some venues, especially in your community colleges, unfortunately they seem to be a rarity so it's very seldom that instructors know how or encounter how to deal with those students. I mean I also think that it's important to have information on every student that you're dealing with"

"I don't know that it's that important to me, because I find that usually where-- I me in my graduate work, but professional developments has not been as helpful,

"I think that specific in-service professional development on certain topics would specifically help African American male students to succeed"

In all four focus group sessions, the faculty members took long pauses before responding. Many of the faculty members were observed referring to notes they have jotted down during the course of the session. Consistent with all four focus groups, faculty participants became quite comfortable with the focus group format and transitioned through the dialog format very little difficulty.

RQ1: How do faculty perceive African American male students with respect to academic preparation, educational goals and classroom performance at a Pennsylvania community college?	FGQ7: What are some emerging themes that you have encountered in your experiences teaching African American male students?

Focus group question 7 responses:

"Often when I get the relevance of the material that I'm teaching I find that the antennas go up a little bit more with some gentlemen in my class, a few gentlemen in my class that are African American male. They are a little bit more-- They just buy in a little bit more when they see that there is real life application here and there to some of the stuff that we're going over"

"African American males have a real desire to be aware of the world and have intellectual growth, become kind of literate, not in the sense of just the skill of literacy and reading but well-read members of society"

"African American male students that I had were very determined. They were nontraditional students, but they were very determined. My experience has been very positive. I have noticed that with the African American males, regardless of their age group, as long as you gave them the direction of what you were expecting they were willing to go above and beyond in order to make sure that they were a success.

"I have some serious concerns about what is going on in high school, how a student could graduate from high school and end up in my class and not know how to spell certain words and not know how to put a paragraph together, where oftentimes I feel like I'm teaching how to write versus teaching content"

"For a few of mine it's been kind of a nonchalant behavior, kind of a laissez a faire, "I'll get to it. It'll get done. I have time" kind of attitude. And then I've noticed that they have always been stressing on the back end like, "Oh I should have done it when you gave me the opportunity." So, I don't know if I want to say that that is a confidence that says, "I can get it done" or just a lack of drive or the inexperience of education"

"One of the themes I notice is one that was brought up earlier about having class material that relates to and engages the students. I especially saw this again when I taught literature. And that made me wish I had a little more freedom, I guess, with the course materials to choose a novel or choose a book that was more contemporary, because I found the choices in there kind of limiting"

When the researchers asked the final focus group question, the consensus was that the faculty members enjoyed teaching African American male students. This consensus was validated by nodding of heads and gentle smiles to each other.

RQ5: What influence does African American male student engagement have on faculty and classmates at a Pennsylvania community college?	FGQ8: Are there any final thoughts that you would like to share about your perceptions, experiences, challenges, and contributions of African American male students at the community college?

A number of the emerging themes from question 7 resurfaced in question 8. There were also a number of references to the environmental factors that African American male students encounter. Respondents made the following comments:

"I'm going to take out of this more of an awareness as far as African American male students. Maybe I'm missing something that there has to be a need for such a focus on that particular group, because maybe I'm missing that in my own classroom"

"My brother was the first to go to college. He never finished. He wanted to work. So I think that if that's the way your family, if that's the way you're brought up then education is not valued, and that's why we don't see a lot of African American students in our classes, even at the community college level"

"Maybe my perceptions of African American male students have been jaded by the fact of the type of student who takes my class versus all of the African American male students that are on our campus and are actually doing different things"

"Teaching opened my eyes up because I had the perception that maybe they would not be prepared"

"They have made me want to come into class and teach them. So I'm going to end with that compliment. They really have made me a better person. They have made me see that all of the statistics have the opposite side of the coin"

"I would say I think our society in general right now is failing young boys and their natural skills and talents and dispositions. There is not so much a place for that anymore. I guess specifically with African American males, they tend to be either really bright, really engaged students that come in that way and all I have to do is step back and let them talk or students who are withdrawn, disaffected, and I either do or don't succeed in pulling them out of their shells"

At the conclusion of the focus group sessions, the researcher thanked all the participants for their time and participation. Each participant received a gift card for their participation in the study and few of the instructors ask the researcher about the timeline for study completion. The researcher agreed to inform the participants when the study was completed in its entirety.

4.4   Summary

This chapter provides a summary of faculty perceptions of African American male students at a community college. The following areas were addressed: collection of faculty demographic information and a collection of data that extracted emerging themes. The themes that emerged related to: (a) strengths, (b) contributions, (c) observed challenges, (d) experienced challenges, and (e) strategies used to deal with challenges.

The faculty participants shared contributions they used to help African American male students overcome the challenges. They included: (a) the need for support groups (b) credit courses specifically designed for males only to allow students to connect (c)

opportunities to increase diversity of discussion in the classroom (d) safe environment for

sharing (e) personal conferences, (f) engagement and frequent praise of students in

public. The faculty recommended that Hawk Valley Community College create an active

peer mentoring program and assign students to academic advisors. Chapter 5 will present

a summary, conclusion, discussion and recommendation for the study.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

The focus of this study was to explore faculty perceptions of African American male students that attend a community college. The study also examined the perceived strengths, contributions, and challenges as well as to identify the strategies they used to work with their students. This research opens dialogue and discussion that can have a monumental impact leading the way to future research on faculty perceptions.

As stated in chapter 2, community college enrollment will continue to increase and there will be a greater need to study faculty perceptions and the experiences of African American male students in community college settings.

5.1   Discussion

The faculty members that participated in the research study all expressed an invested interest in teaching African American male students and acknowledged the contributions that this population adds to the community college. In fact, 100% of the participants reported that they have a positive attitude about teaching African American male students. They agreed that African American male students in their classrooms have a strong work ethic, bring real work perspectives to classroom discussion, and are open and tolerant of to the viewpoints of others.

A significant component of the socialization process for undergraduate students involves the interaction with faculty members (Strayhorn & Saddler, 2009). To this end, a positive faculty interaction with African American male students creates for a safe

learning environment. Beckles (2008) states that students who talk with faculty members outside of class and have ongoing interactions and seek assistance are more likely to be academically successful than those who do not.

With regards to the strengths and contributions of African American male community college students, the faculty members indicated that the students have a positive impact on their classroom instruction. For example, 41.8 percent of the faculty participants completely agreed that African American male students bring real life experiences to the classroom. Bush (2004) and Jordan (2008) agree that faculty-student interactions should be marked with a clear desire for faculty to affirm their student voices and experiences. The faculty members completely agreed, at a rate of 82.35 percent, that African American male student contributions' in class increase diversity in discussion.

Challenges and strategies adjunct faculty used to assist African American male students were also captured in the data collection process. Some of the challenges included: motivation, class attendance, literacy concerns, and environmental factors. The strategies that faculty used to counter the challenges varied. 82.36 percent of the faculty participants either mostly or completely agreed that they praise in public; learn student names quickly; encourage students to work in groups; encourage classroom participation; are fair, firm and consistent; and show genuine concern for student success, while 70.59 percent of the stated that they would refer students to counseling services if needed.

5.2   Findings

As stated in chapters 1 and 2, dismal retention and poor degree attainment are characteristics of this student population (Allen, 1992 & Cuyjet, 2006) and most of the research involves a decrease in retention and completion rates, but very few

investigations of faculty perceptions of African American male students that attend two-year institutions or African American male students at the community college.

Evidence from the questionnaires helped guide and develop the focus group interview questions (see chapter 4). The emergent themes and clusters were also presented in chapter 4. Some of the secondary emerging themes included issues of: environmental factors, academic preparedness, financial constraints and barriers of trust. Themes presented in the conceptual model of African American male academic success as outlined by Mason (1994; 1998) surfaced in both the Delphi rounds and the focus group sessions.

Mason's conceptual model identified variables such as: (a) background (e.g., high school preparedness; family; college placement testing; financial support); (b) academic variables (e.g., absenteeism; unit load; tutoring; advising; confidence); (c) academic outcomes (e.g., retention; degree completion); (d) environmental variables (e.g., family responsibilities; employment; finances; campus climate; outside encouragement); (e) social variables (e.g,. relationships with faculty; mentoring; campus friendships) and (f) psychological outcome (e.g,. stress; sense of belonging; self-efficacy; stereotype threat). These variables can have a negative or positive impact on African American male student academic success and faculty perception.

Some of the challenges identified by the faculty participants included environmental factors and academic preparedness for college level work. More than 50% of the participants noted other concerns such as: attendance, resistance to ask for help, assignment completion, barriers to trust and openness, financial barriers, and passive behaviors.

5.3 Recommendations for Improvement of Practice

Based on the findings from the focus group interviews, the following suggestions were discussed by multiple participants: (a) counseling services, (b) community outreach/engagement, (c) motivational speakers and workshops, (d) mentoring, (e) orientation programs, (d) instructional design, (e) surveys, (f) diversity training.

1. Counseling services: "It is good to have counselors come in and speak with the students, but that is just not enough. They need more". They expressed a need for information on how to address issues that come up in the African American community dealing with your African American males and issues that they may pose because if you don't have some type of training on how to discern the information, you have difficulty working with them.

2. Community outreach/engagement: The participants agreed that as a community college faculty, they have a responsibility to constantly help students transition as a community, and not only at the community college, but to reach back to the high schools, middle schools, to actually help African American males understand the type of student that is needed to participate at the college level and beyond. The faculty acknowledged that they want to become a community outside the walls of the community college.

3. Motivational speakers/workshops: Permit African American professional males to come on the campus and provide some type of workshop or sessions or motivational speaking which gives the African American male image of a successful Black male. To have more of that perhaps will tap into areas of motivation, self-esteem and just the willingness that someday this can be me.

4. Mentoring: Long-term mentoring. A mentor that is well-trained and shares experiences. Peer mentoring is also a great idea.

5. Orientation programs: Specifically for African American male students. To develop relationships, learn how to register for classes, identify campus resources, and learn how to navigate the college system.

6. Instructional design: African American male students learn best in an environment that is very diverse, when you can do a lot of things other than some lecture, when there is some small group, and there is opportunity to share out loud. The learning environment really challenges the faculty member when you are trying to diversify your instruction.

7. Surveys: Administration needs to survey the African American male student body and find out the perspective of young people. They also need to be made aware of the tremendous environmental factors and financial issues that African American male students face.

8. Diversity training: There is a need for sensitivity training for instructors as well as students to learn how to engage with one another.
    The need for support groups and credit courses specially designed for African American male students also surfaced through the data collection process.

5.4   Policy Recommendations

Faculty should be required to participate in orientation programs that orient them to the college community as each college culture and climate is different. This effort will help them assist students and help faculty navigate the appropriate college resources. Faculty should also receive advising training so they have the knowledge base to advise students on the appropriate coursework to take in any given semester.

During the interview process, administrators should spend more time asking potential faculty members questions about their commitment to academic success and diverse campus climates. Faculty members should be required to advise a student club, provide tutorial services or assist students in some way outside of the classroom.

Also noted by faculty participants, faculty should have more access to professional development. They should be offered during off peak times so that all faculty have the opportunity to participate. Attention to the consensus of the faculty focus groups and questionnaires could encourage a different approach to instructional design, the delivery of information as it relates to both academic and campus resources, mentoring, professional developments and support from administrators.

5.5   Limitations of the Study

It is important to make known any potential or hidden weaknesses to the design of the study since the findings are most applicable to the research site from which they derived. In this case, the findings may not be generalizable to other community colleges across the country. The findings reflect data collected from a community college in Southeastern Pennsylvania and may not reflect data from other colleges or universities. Only faculty who teach or have taught two to three academic courses with at least two to

five African American male students enrolled in their class(es) were eligible to serve as the target faculty population for this study. Thus the model may not have fully exploited faculty perceptions. Further, the recommendations offered by the faculty members had little to do with actual faculty perceptions of African American male students yet instead provided policy implementation for improvement of practice.

The study was not longitudinal in nature. Data comparisons for this study were collected during the 2012/2013 academic year, and only reflected that time period. The study was primarily qualitative in nature and this focused study limited the input of other sources of knowledge at the college such as staff members, administrators, advisors, counselors and other stakeholders. The faculty members participating in the survey, questionnaires and focus group may not be completely honest when addressing their own perceptions, challenges and strengths. The researcher's race/ethnicity and gender is another possible limitation. As an African American researcher and administrator, there are benefits and hurdles associated with personal knowledge and experiences as a faculty member may have been more open to sharing their experiences with the researcher and that she was able to more fully understand some of their perceptions.

5.6   Recommendation for Further Research

In response to these limitations, the following research priorities are recommended by the researcher:

1. Research with African American male students that attend community colleges. This study only investigated faculty perceptions of African American male students at a community college. The research did not solicit any input from African American male students or examine the challenges that they face or the

strategies they employ to overcome those challenges; only documents relating to

African American male students were used. An extension to this study would be

to carry out a similar study with African American male students at the same

community college to confirm faculty perceptions and also to examine their

perceptions of faculty members.

2. Research with African American female students that attend community colleges.

   Research with female students, particularly at the community college, may lead to

   a unique set of variables that did not emerge during the investigation of African

   American males. This student population might also provide another view on the

   issues at hand.

3. Research with both African American male students and faculty. This research

   could address both students and faculty perceptions of each other as part of a

   longitudinal study.

4. Research with tenured track full-time faculty members should be conducted and

   the focus groups can be replaced with one-on-one interviews to stimulate more

   authentic responses.

5. Researchers can consider institutions of various sizes, settings and geographical

   regions.

There were a number of significant findings. The researcher discovered a number

of shortcomings from the study. First, the researcher considered the participant bias. The

participants seldom referred back to the students based on conditions of race. To this end,

the researcher concludes that the participants shared faculty perceptions that might be

perceived as politically correct participating as part of a controlled focus group interview.

Second, community colleges have the responsibility to prepare students to live and work in global settings and an educated workforce is the gateway to career opportunities and financial stability. Yet western culture has marginalized the treatment of Black males who have affected all aspects of our society including the global, political and economic realm. The researcher is interested in the correlation between African American male student employment post-associate degrees as it relates to faculty perceptions. Figure 5 provides a chart detailing the median earnings by educational attainment for individuals with an associate's degree.

Median Earnings by Educational Attainment, for Associate Degree

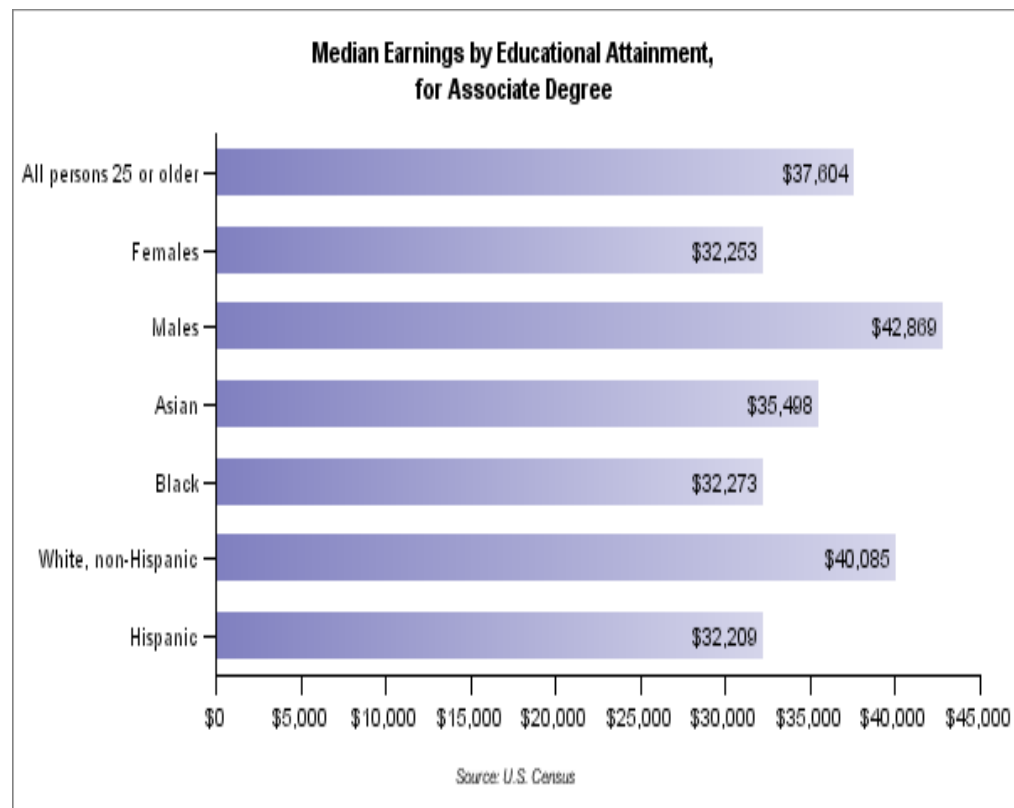|	Median Earnings
All persons 25 or older	$37,604
Females	$32,253
Males	$42,869
Asian	$35,498
Black	$32,273
White, non-Hispanic	$40,085
Hispanic	$32,209

Source: U.S. Census

FIGURE 5: Median earnings by educational attainment.

Further, the researcher also questioned the participants' academic discipline and age of the faculty member compared to the average age of the community college student, which are two worthwhile investigations for future study. Is there a correlation of faculty perceptions of students that are closer in age with the faculty member? Are faculty perceptions different for faculty who teach mathematics compared to instructors who teach in the social sciences? The researcher is also interested in the faculty members that identified for the study but elected not to participate. Would the results have been different? Finally, the researcher originally intended to pull out faculty perceptions unique to the African American male; however, a majority of the coded results are generalizable to all students.

5.7   Summary

There are various aspects of the African American male student experience that faculty members directly and indirectly influence, and perceptions of the student plays a significant role in the experience of the student. The results of this study are intended to contribute to the existing body of research in efforts to increase knowledge of the needs and concerns of African American male students from the perspectives of a faculty member. Faculty members can become more self-aware of their own perceptions and how they identify with African American male students in their classrooms. The study examined faculty perceptions of community college faculty that teach or have taught African American male students, their perceived challenges, strategies used to deal with problems and the contributions that African American male students bring to the classroom and college community. The true question that needs to be answered in future

research studies is the effects of the long-term impact that faculty perceptions have on the

academic success and outcomes of African American male students.

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APPENDIX A: PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

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College of Education
704-687-4717
FAX: 704-687-3493

Project Title and Purpose: Faculty Perception, Experiences, Contributions and Challenges of African American male students at a Community College

Investigator:

This study is being conducted by: Shantelle K. Jenkins (Under the direction of Dr. James Lyons)

Eligibility:

You are a participant of this study if you are at least 18 years old, teach at Delaware County Community College, and have at least 2-5 African American male students in your class.

Overall Description of Participating:

This research project is part of a case study intended to discover faculty perceptions, experiences, contributions and challenges they encounter when teaching African American male students at a Community College. The researcher will deliver the demographic questionnaire to Delaware County Community College and it will be distributed to the respective instructors electronically. The demographic survey will take participants approximately 5-8 minutes to complete. Each questionnaire round will take approximately 30 minutes to complete – A total of 90 minutes for three questionnaire rounds. The focus group interview will take approximately two hours to complete during one campus visit. The focus group interview will be conducted on the campus of Delaware County Community College. Data analysis should be completed within two months after data collection. The duration of the entire study will be five months.

Length of Participation:

Participation will begin in July 2012 and continue through September 2012.

Risk and Benefits to Participation:

There is no foreseeable emotional distress for participants because all questions pertain to perceptions, experiences, contributions and challenges of education professionals. There is also no foreseeable economic harm to the participants who volunteer only their time to respond to the

questions on the instruments and participate in the focus group study. There is no risk of legal harm. No medications or physical activities, that may carry risk, side effects, pain or injury, are used in this study. The participants will only be volunteering their time to complete a demographic survey and/or rounds of Delphi questionnaires and one focus group interview. The researcher holds no administrative reference over participants.

- Psychologically, participants may feel good that they are contributing to an area that has not been widely studied.

- Participants may benefit indirectly from improvements that occur as a result of the study.

- Increased knowledge of the needs and concerns specific to African American males students contribute to improving teaching and learning as well as to student advising. This may affect curricular and instructional design in community college education in being more inclusive for diversified populations.

- African American male students may receive more attention, appreciation, and assistance with regards to academic needs.

Possible Injury Statement:

There is no known risk of injury.

Volunteer Statement:

The decision to participate in this study is completely voluntary. If you consent to be a volunteer in this research project, you are nonetheless free to withdraw your consent and discontinue participation at anytime without prejudice to you. You will not be treated differently if you decide not to participate in the study or if you stop once you have started.

Confidentiality Statement:

Any information about your participation, including your identity, is completely confidential. The following steps will be taken to ensure this confidentiality: All participation will be kept anonymous. Names will not be included in the reporting of data. The data from focus group interviews will be reported as group data and all responses to the questionnaires will be kept confidential. All names will be removed before analysis and there will be no identifiable information about the participants in the research final report. Participants will be informed of the anonymous nature of the study. All data will be stored in a secure place locked in a cabinet and will be destroyed (shredded) by the researcher (Shantelle K. Jenkins) after five years. No one other than the researcher and her transcriber will have access to the data.

Statement of Fair Treatment and Respect:

Delaware County Community College wants to make sure that you are treated in a fair and respectful manner. Contact the College's Office of Institutional Effectiveness (610-359-5138) if you have questions about how you are treated as a study participant. If you have any questions

about the actual project or study, please contact Shantelle K. Jenkins (610-957-5707), sjenkins2@dccc.edu OR Dr. James Lyons (704-687-8869), jelyons@uncc.edu

Approval Date:

This form was approved for use on February 29, 2012.

Participant Consent

Participant Consent

I have read the information in this consent form. I have had the chance to ask questions about this study, and those questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I am at least 18 years of age, and I agree to participate in this research project. I understand that I will receive a copy of this form after it has been signed by me and the principal investigator of this research study.

_____
Participant Name (PRINT)   DATE

_____
Participant Signature

_____
Investigator Signature   DATE

APPENDIX B: IRB AUTHORIZATION AGREEMENT

Version Date: 01/06

Institutional Review Board (IRB) Authorization Agreement

Name of Institution or Organization Providing IRB Review (Institution A):

Delaware County Community College
OHRP Federalwide Assurance (FWA) #: _00018439_

Name of Institution Relying on the Designated IRB (Institution B):

UNC Charlotte
Federalwide Assurance (FWA)#: _00000649_   IRB Registration #: _00001466_

The Officials signing below agree that **UNC Charlotte** may rely on **Delaware County Community College's** designated IRB for review and continuing oversight of its human subject research described below: *(check one)*

(_____) This agreement applies to all human subjects research covered by Institution B's FWA:

(_X_) This agreement is limited to the following specific protocol(s):

    Name of Research Project: **Faculty Perception of African American Male Students that Attend Two-Year Institutions**

    File Number#:   2011-02
    UNC Charlotte Protocol #:   12-01-51

    Name of Principal Investigator: **Shantelle K. Jenkins**
                                UNC Charlotte

    Name of Co-Investigator:

    Sponsor or Funding Agency: Award Number, if any:

> The review performed by the designated IRB will meet the human subject protection requirements of Institution B's OHRP-approved FWA. The IRB at Institution/Organization A will follow written procedures for reporting its findings and actions to appropriate officials at Institution B. Relevant minutes of IRB meetings will be made available to Institution B upon request. Institution B remains responsible for ensuring compliance with the IRB's determinations and with the Terms of its OHRP-approved FWA. This document must be kept on file by both parties and provided to OHRP upon request.

Signature of Signatory Official Providing IRB Review:

C. L. Tokpah   Date: 2-9-12

Chris Tokpah, Ph.D., Associate Vice Provost for Institutional Effectiveness

Signature of Signatory Official Relying on Designated IRB:

[signature]   Date: 2/14/12

Robert G. Wilhelm, Ph.D.
Vice Chancellor for Research and Economic Development, UNC Charlotte 9201 University City Blvd., Charlotte, NC 28223-0001; PH: 704-687-2291

APPENDIX C: IRB FOR RESEARCH WITH HUMAN SUBJECTS

UNC CHARLOTTE

Office of Research Compliance

9201 University City Boulevard, Charlotte, NC 28223-0001
t/ 704.687.3311 f/ 704.687.2292 www.research.uncc.edu/comp/complian.cfm

Institutional Review Board (IRB) for Research with Human Subjects
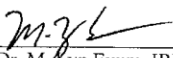*Acknowledgement of IRB Authorization Agreement*

Protocol #:	**12-01-51**
Title:	**Faculty Perception of African American Male Students that Attend Two-Year Institutions**
Designated IRB:	**Delaware County Community College**
FWA #:	**00018439**
Date:	**2/14/2012**
Investigator:	**Ms. Shantelle Jenkins** **Educational Leadership**
Responsible Faculty:	**Dr. James Lyons** **Educational Leadership**

UNC Charlotte's has obtained sufficient supporting documentation regarding this study to rely on the review and continuing oversight performed by the Designated IRB. UNC Charlotte is assured that the review provided by the Designated IRB meets the human subjects protection requirements of an OHRP-approved FWA.

The Designated IRB will follow OHRP-required procedures for reporting its findings and actions to appropriate officials at UNC Charlotte. The Designated IRB remains responsible for ensuring compliance with its determinations and with the terms of its OHRP-approved Assurance for activities under its purview.

This document must be kept on file at both institutions and provided to OHRP upon request.

Please note that it is the investigator's responsibility to promptly inform the IRB committees of any changes in the proposed research, as well as any unanticipated problems that may arise involving risks to subjects. UNC Charlotte's Amendment and Event Reporting guidelines and forms are available on our web site: http://research.uncc.edu/compliance-ethics/human-subjects

Dr. M. Lyn Exum, IRB Chair   2/24/12   Date

APPENDIX D: DEMOGRAPHIC SURVEY

Demographic Survey
Demographic Survey-Personal Information Form

Instructions: *Please select the correct responses for each item.*
TO BE COMPLETED BY ADJUNCT FACULTY MEMBER

Gender: Male   Female

Please specify your age choosing from the following categories:
18-29
30-40
41 or older

Marital Status: Single   Married   Divorced   Separated   Widowed/Widower

Ethnicity: AsianBlack/African American   Indian   Native American
                White   Hispanic   Other

American Born Citizen?   Yes   No

Year(s) at Delaware County Community College
Less than one year
1-3
4-7
8-10
11+years

Total number of years of teaching experience
Less than one year
1-3
4-7
8-10
11 + years

Specify your division
AHM
BUS/CIS
CAH
PUBLIC SERVICE/SOCIAL SCIENCE
STEM

Approximately how many African American male students have you taught during your tenure at DCCC?
Less than 10
11-25
26-40
41+

Thank you for your time!

APPENDIX E: DELPHI ROUND 1 QUESTIONAIRE

Instructions: *Please respond to each of the following questions by filing in the relevant information on the space provided.*

TO BE COMPLETED BY INSTRUCTOR/TEACHING STAFF ONLY

Delphi Round one

1. Please list any strengths and contributions that you believe African American male students bring to your classroom and your college.

- Please list the strengths

- Please list the contributions

2. Please list the problems you have experienced when you taught African American male students in your course(s).

3. Please list the challenges you have observed that African American male students in your classroom or course(s) encounter.

4. What strategies do you use to deal with the challenges you identified above?

5. Please list anything else that you would like the researcher to know about your experiences and perceptions of African American male students in your classroom.

Thank you for your time!

APPENDIX F: DELPHI ROUND 2 QUESTIONAIRE

Delphi Round Two Questionnaire

Instructions: *Please respond to each of the following questions by filing in the relevant information on the space provided.*

TO BE COMPLETED BY INSTRUCTOR/TEACHING STAFF ONLY
Delphi Round two

Select your academic division:
AHESN
BUS/CIS
CAH
PSSS
STEM

How many African American male students are you currently teaching Fall semester 2012?
0 - 5
6-10
11-15
16 or more

Please use the response scale below to respond to the following:
1 Do not agree at all
2 Slightly agree
3 Somewhat agree
4 Mostly agree
5 Completely agree

<u>Strengths that African American male students bring to your classroom and your college:</u>

- High level of determination _____
1 Do not agree at all
2 Slightly agree
3 Somewhat agree
4 Mostly agree
5 Completely agree

- Real life experiences   _____
1 Do not agree at all
2 Slightly agree
3 Somewhat agree
4 Mostly agree
5 Completely agree

- Confidence   _____
1 Do not agree at all
2 Slightly agree
3 Somewhat agree
4 Mostly agree
5 Completely agree

- Contributions to class discussions   _____
1 Do not agree at all
2 Slightly agree
3 Somewhat agree
4 Mostly agree
5 Completely agree

- Peer friendly community   _____
1 Do not agree at all
2 Slightly agree
3 Somewhat agree
4 Mostly agree
5 Completely agree

- Self-motivated _____
1 Do not agree at all
2 Slightly agree
3 Somewhat agree
4 Mostly agree
5 Completely agree

Contributions that African American male students bring to your classroom and your college:
- Life experiences   _____
1 Do not agree at all
2 Slightly agree
3 Somewhat agree
4 Mostly agree
5 Completely agree

- Overcome obstacles and barriers   _____
1 Do not agree at all
2 Slightly agree
3 Somewhat agree
4 Mostly agree
5 Completely agree

- Leadership   _____
1 Do not agree at all
2 Slightly agree
3 Somewhat agree
4 Mostly agree
5 Completely agree

- Candor of ideas and discussions based on world perspectives   _____
1 Do not agree at all
2 Slightly agree
3 Somewhat agree
4 Mostly agree
5 Completely agree

- Balance and diversity to the classroom   _____
1 Do not agree at all
2 Slightly agree
3 Somewhat agree
4 Mostly agree
5 Completely agree

- Advocates for education _____
1 Do not agree at all
2 Slightly agree
3 Somewhat agree
4 Mostly agree
5 Completely agree

Challenges you have observed that African American male students in your classroom encounter:

- Late assignments _____
1 Do not agree at all
2 Slightly agree
3 Somewhat agree
4 Mostly agree
5 Completely agree

- Passive aggressive behavior(s)   _____
1 Do not agree at all
2 Slightly agree
3 Somewhat agree
4 Mostly agree
5 Completely agree

- Poor attendance practices _____
1 Do not agree at all
2 Slightly agree
3 Somewhat agree
4 Mostly agree
5 Completely agree

- Lack of commitment to academic coursework   _____
1 Do not agree at all
2 Slightly agree
3 Somewhat agree
4 Mostly agree
5 Completely agree

- Limited foundational skills   _____
1 Do not agree at all
2 Slightly agree
3 Somewhat agree
4 Mostly agree
5 Completely agree

- Reluctance to ask for help _____
1 Do not agree at all
2 Slightly agree
3 Somewhat agree
4 Mostly agree
5 Completely agree

Challenges you have experienced when teaching African American male students in your courses:

- Motivating students to stay focused on course content material _____
1 Do not agree at all
2 Slightly agree
3 Somewhat agree
4 Mostly agree
5 Completely agree

- Less engaged   _____
1 Do not agree at all
2 Slightly agree
3 Somewhat agree
4 Mostly agree
5 Completely agree

- Barriers of trust and openness   _____
1 Do not agree at all
2 Slightly agree
3 Somewhat agree
4 Mostly agree
5 Completely agree

- Literacy challenges   _____
1 Do not agree at all
2 Slightly agree
3 Somewhat agree
4 Mostly agree
5 Completely agree

- Willingness to contribute in class   _____
1 Do not agree at all
2 Slightly agree
3 Somewhat agree
4 Mostly agree
5 Completely agree

- Narcotic abuse   _____
1 Do not agree at all
2 Slightly agree
3 Somewhat agree
4 Mostly agree
5 Completely agree

Strategies used to deal with the challenges that African American male students in your classroom encounter:

- Praise in public   _____
1 Do not agree at all
2 Slightly agree
3 Somewhat agree
4 Mostly agree
5 Completely agree

- Make referrals to campus professionals _____

1 Do not agree at all
2 Slightly agree
3 Somewhat agree
4 Mostly agree
5 Completely agree

- Encourage classroom participation _____

1 Do not agree at all
2 Slightly agree
3 Somewhat agree
4 Mostly agree
5 Completely agree

- Provide real-time feedback _____

1 Do not agree at all
2 Slightly agree
3 Somewhat agree
4 Mostly agree
5 Completely agree

- Offer safe environment for sharing _____

1 Do not agree at all
2 Slightly agree
3 Somewhat agree
4 Mostly agree
5 Completely agree

- Personal conferences _____

1 Do not agree at all
2 Slightly agree
3 Somewhat agree
4 Mostly agree
5 Completely agree

Other:
- African American male students need support groups _____

1 Do not agree at all
2 Slightly agree
3 Somewhat agree
4 Mostly agree
5 Completely agree

- A credit course should be designed to allow men to connect _____

1 Do not agree at all
2 Slightly agree
3 Somewhat agree
4 Mostly agree
5 Completely agree

- African American male students struggle with research writing _____

1 Do not agree at all
2 Slightly agree
3 Somewhat agree
4 Mostly agree
5 Completely agree

- All encounters with African American male students have been different _____

1 Do not agree at all
2 Slightly agree
3 Somewhat agree
4 Mostly agree
5 Completely agree

- Enjoy working with African American male students that wish to improve their quality of life_____

1 Do not agree at all
2 Slightly agree
3 Somewhat agree
4 Mostly agree
5 Completely agree

- Contributions in class increase diversity of discussion_____

1 Do not agree at all
2 Slightly agree
3 Somewhat agree
(continued)
4 Mostly agree
5 Completely agree

- Complete very little work _____

1 Do not agree at all
2 Slightly agree
3 Somewhat agree
4 Mostly agree
5 Completely agree

I am available to participate in 80-90 minute focus group on the following date(s):
*You may select more than one date

Thursday, November 29, 2012   5:00pm-6:30pm
Friday, November 30, 2012   1:00pm-2:30pm
Monday, December 3, 2012   5:00pm-6:30pm
Tuesday, December 4, 2012   11:00am-12:30pm

Thank you!

APPENDIX G: FOCUS GROUP LETTER OF INVITATION

The University of North Carolina at Charlotte
9201 University City Blvd, Charlotte, NC 28223-0001

Department of Educational Leadership
College of Education
704-687-4717
FAX: 704-687-3493

Dear Faculty Member:

Please find the dates, times and location for the focus group below. The focus group sessions will start and end on time. The same set of eight questions will be asked to each group. Each session will be limited to 10 participants to generate a rich discussion.

In appreciation of your participation, refreshments and a gift card incentive will be provided to each participant. Please RSVP to sjenkins2@dccc.edu by Monday, December 3, 2012 with the focus group date that works best to accommodate your schedule.

Place - Delaware County Community College, Southeast Center
Room - 121

Dates/Times:
Thursday, December 6th 5-630
Friday, December 7th noon-130
Monday, December 10th 11-1230
Monday, December 10th 5-630

Your participation is voluntary and confidential. There are no known risks to participating and you have the right to stop participating at any point.

Shantelle K. Jenkins
Doctoral Candidate
University of North Carolina at Charlotte

APPENDIX H: FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS
The following eight questions were used to guide the focus group sessions.

How would you describe your engagement and interactions with African American male students in your class(es)?

How do African American male students impact your college classroom?

What recommendations would you provide to enhance academic and student support efforts for African American male students that attend community college?

Describe the type of instructional environment you think African American male students respond best?

What do you want administrators to know about the challenges you have experiences teaching African American males?

How important is it to you that your college provide professional development opportunities addressing issues that are relevant to African American male students?

What are some emerging themes that you have encountered in your experience teaching African American male students?

Are there any final thoughts that you would like to share about your perceptions, experiences, challenges and contributions of African American male students at the community college?

APPENDIX I: FOCUS GROUP CONSENT FORM LETTER

UNCCHARLOTTE

Project Title and Purpose: Faculty Perception, Experiences, Contributions and Challenges of African American male students at a Community College

Investigator:

This study is being conducted by: Shantelle K. Jenkins (Under the direction of Dr. James Lyons)

Eligibility:

You are a participant of this study if you are at least 18 years old, teach at Delaware County Community College, and have at least 2-5 African American male students in your class.

Thank you for your participation in the focus group. The information learned during this focus group will be used as part of a data collection process. The title of the study is Faculty Perception, Experiences, Contributions and Challenges of African American Male Students at a Community College.

You can choose whether or not to participate in the focus group and stop at any time. Although the focus group will be tape recorded, your responses will remain anonymous and no names will be mentioned in the report.

There are no right or wrong answers to the focus group questions. It is important to hear many different viewpoints and would like to hear from everyone. Be honest even when your responses may not be in agreement with the rest of the group. In respect for each other, we ask that only one individual speak at a time in the group and that responses made by all participants be kept confidential.

Statement of Fair Treatment and Respect:

Delaware County Community College wants to make sure that you are treated in a fair and respectful manner. Contact the College's Office of Institutional Effectiveness (610-359-5138) if you have questions about how you are treated as a study participant. If you have any questions about the actual project or study, please contact Shantelle K. Jenkins (610-957-5707), sjenkins2@dccc.edu OR Dr. James Lyons (704-687-8869), jelyons@uncc.edu

I understand this information and agree to participate fully under the conditions stated above:

Print name: _____ Signed name: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX J: FOCUS GROUP DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION FORM

Focus Group

Participant Demographic Information Form

Instructions: *Please select the correct responses for each item.* (Please circle)

Date: December 6, 2012   December 7, 2012   December 10, 2012

Gender: Male   Female

Please specify your age choosing from the following categories:

18-29

30-40

41 or older

Marital Status: Single   Married   Divorced   Separated   Widowed/Widower

Ethnicity: Asian   Black/African American   Indian   Native American

White   Hispanic   Other

American Born Citizen?   Yes   No

Year(s) at Delaware County Community College

Less than one year

1-3

4-7

8-10

11+years

Total number of years of teaching experience

Less than one year

1-3

4-7

8-10

11 + years

Two sided document   Please turn over   Two sided document

Specify your division

AHM

BUS/CIS

CAH

PUBLIC SERVICE/SOCIAL SCIENCE

STEM

Approximately how many African American male students have you taught during your tenure at DCCC?

Less than 10

11-25

26-40

41+

I completed (check all that apply)

Demographic Survey

Delphi Round One Questionnaire

Delphi Round Two Questionnaire

All of the above

None of the above

Is this your first time participating in a focus group?

Yes

No

Thank you for your time!

Two sided document   Please turn over   Two sided document

APPENDIX K: ABOUT FOCUS GROUPS

About Focus Groups

Focus groups can reveal a wealth of detailed information and deep insight. When well executed, a focus group creates an accepting environment that puts participants at ease allowing them to thoughtfully answer questions in their own words and add meaning to their answers. Surveys are good for collecting information about people's attributes and attitudes but if you need to understand things at a deeper level, a focus group model is used.

The ideal amount of time to set aside for a focus group is anywhere from 45 to 90 minutes Beyond that, most groups are not productive and it becomes and imposition on participant time.

A focus group is a small group of people led through an open discussion by a moderator. The group needs to be large enough to generate a rich discussion but not so large that some participants are left   out.

It takes more than one focus group on any one topic to produce valid results.

Focus groups are structured around a set of carefully predetermined questions – usually no more than 10 – but the discussion is free-flowing. Ideally, participant comments will stimulate and influence the thinking and sharing of others. Some people even find themselves changing their thoughts and opinion during the group.

A focus group is not:

- A debate
- Group therapy
- A conflict resolution session
- A problem solving session
- An opportunity to collaborate
- A promotional opportunity
- An educational session