

## Assessing Positive and Mixed Emotions Related to Racial Experiences on Campus

Christopher Pauyo, Grace Bowe, Marie Stephens, Kaelyn Ireland, Katherine White

As the climate of a university can impact the experiences and mental health of students, faculty, and staff (Budge et al., 2020), it is necessary to devote attention to race-related experiences that contribute to and perpetuate a university's racial climate. Past psychological research has focused on reducing negative emotional reactions to negative race-related experiences (Carter & Forsyth, 2020; Kim, 2016). Although this line of research is critical to improving the experiences of people of color, there is another avenue for improvement that is often neglected: increasing positive race-related experiences. Identifying positive and quasi-positive experiences among racial groups will help us understand how students, faculty, and staff perceive the on-campus racial climate at Kennesaw State University. Data was collected from KSU students, faculty, and staff who participated in focus groups, of 3-12 participants. During the interview, a facilitator invited participants to share their race-related experiences on-campus and in the community and emotional reactions. Another researcher took notes on participants' responses. Sessions were conducted virtually through Collaborate Ultra for an hour, and, at the end of each session, additional resources were offered for support and counseling if needed. This data will be analyzed using thematic analysis is in progress. Racial experiences will be coded as either positive, negative, or mixed. Participant emotions will also be coded, first for content, then for positivity or negativity. Faculty/staff and student responses will be compared with respect to types of positive and mixed experiences, and the emotional reactions to these experiences. The results will be presented to upper-level KSU administration to inform awareness of the present state of KSU's racial climate and future university-wide efforts to improve race relations. We also hope this research will both advance theoretical understanding of the relationship between

racial experiences and emotional reactions and encourage other universities to undertake similar projects.