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African American Women and Degree Completion at a Land-grant HBCU.

Samantha N. Friar

Submitted in partial fulfillment

of the requirements of

Doctor of Education

Higher Education Leadership

National College of Education

National Louis University

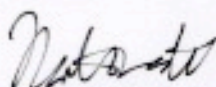
June 2021

AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN AND DEGREE COMPLETION AT A LAND-GRANT
HBCU

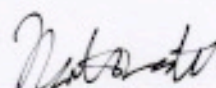
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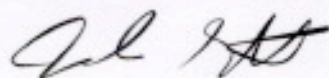
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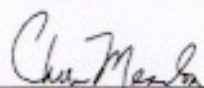
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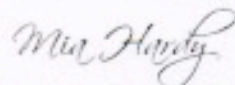


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Abstract

There is minimum research conducted on African American women degree completion who attend a land-grant HBCU. This study investigated key factors that assisted 9 African American women and promoted their degree attainment. My research utilized the ethnography framework to observe a specific culture group, language, behaviors beliefs and beliefs. The findings in this research identified 5 factors: culture environment, academic advising, student engagement, financial aid, and faculty mentoring. It was determined that culture environment is a leading factor among the African American participants of this research, as connecting with peers that shared the same culture beliefs as the participants do, and having faculty that looked like them was significant and contributed to the participants degree completion.

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God above all! My parents, who are tremendously supportive, Camren C, for sharing your mother with my own research. Mentors Dr. Roslind Blasingame Buford, Dr. Adrian C. Faulkner, and Dr. Ted Zervas for shepherding me through this amazing journey, I am because WE are! My amazing Dissertation Committee “The Dream Team” Dr. Nathaniel Cradit, Dr. Mia Hardy, Dr. Cherie Meador & Dr. Jamal Scott. I thank each of you for your guidance through this body of work, your outpouring of support continues to be tremendous. Sincerest thanks to National Louis University-Chicago, for allowing me to be a part of such an esteemed Higher Education Leadership program, which constantly champions for education equality. I begin my research in 2017, while managing the education department at BBF Family Services. Thank you to the amazing BBF team, for intellectually challenging me every step of the way. Crystal Cross, you are amazing thank you for your selfless support. Many thanks to Rufus Williams, the numerous education equity conversations we still have, that has now turned into my life work!

I was first introduced to HBCUs by my amazing cousin Angela Timmons Crowe, alumni of Prairie View A&M. Thank you Angie for ignited my fire for Historical Black Colleges & Universities. My tremendous village, Chadwick Williams, Yvonne Tomes Shermona Willingham, Ka-Santa Sanders, Shevone Simpson, Virginia Lofton, Erica Hughes, Brittany Friar, Diekiylah McGee and Dominique Steward and the lustrous alumni of Tuskegee University who served as my participants, it was you all that carried my research over the finish line. A special thank you to Tuskegee University Interim President Dr. Charlotte P. Morris for assisting me with my research. This work is dedicated to every African American woman that attends a land-grant HBCU, that is striving for degree completion or have completed their degree.

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Chapter 1: Research & Institutional Overview

This research explores 5 factors which are: Culture Environment, Academic Advising, Student Engagement, Financial Aid, and Faculty Mentoring, and how these factors support degree completion among African American women at the land-grant HBCU. This study will examine the academic and social experiences of the participants. Chapter 1 (Institutional Study) provides an overview of the history of the land-grant HBCU, student population, and the institutional framework. In chapter 2, the literature review analyzes existing scholarly research that connects to my study and support my research question, *what factors support degree completion for African American women students at a land-grant historically Black college university (HBCU)?* In chapter 3, the methodology section provides a roadmap of the study in selecting participants, interviewing, data collection, and the utilization of ethnography. In chapter 4, this chapter will map out the research data analysis and findings. In chapter 5, the study will reveal its discussion, provide recommendations for future research, and conclude the findings.

Origination of HBCUs

The collegiate colonies were formed between 1636-1789. According to (Cohen & Kisker, 2010) The nine colonial colleges were based on educational models that had been developed in Europe, predominately in England, over the course of the previous 500 years. Between the 16 and 17 centuries, the nine colonial colleges that existed were: Harvard, College of William and Mary, Yale University, University of Pennsylvania, Princeton University, Columbia University, Brown University, Rutgers, and Dartmouth College. During these years, only one in one thousand colonists had attended college (Cohen & Kisker, 2010). The history of education begins to transform during the discovery of Historical Black College Universities. Universities of the colonist were not flexible with the idea of educating minorities. Before the civil war, scarcely two dozen African Americans had graduated from colleges in the United States. The counted freedmen were close to one-quarter of a million in 1825, and nearly half a million by the time the Civil War started (Cohen & Kisker, 2010). During this era, it was difficult for African Americans to enroll in a University because of their ethnicity. In the 18-century, a small number of colleges located in the North and South would contemplate enrolling

Black students. The late 1800s launched the conception of Black-serving institutions, including Lincoln University, Wilberforce, and Howard University, which was created in 1867. Many HBCUs were founded and developed in an environment of post-slavery segregation when most post-secondary institutions were not open to young people of color. When the civil war ended, philanthropic organizations established funding for the creation of private schooling for children of freed slaves, (Cohen & Kisker,).

(Cohen & Kisker,2010) found that during the 1800s, over 50 private four-year HBCUs were organized. Through this design, the land -grant private HBCU and Fisk were prominent while others remain non-accredited through the middle of the twentieth century. According to (TU, 2019) in 1880, a bill that was inclusive of annual appropriation of \$2,000, passed through the Alabama State Legislature. This bill was originated to design a school to educate Blacks in Macon County. The facilitation of this bill was organized by Lewis Adams, a former slave and George W. Campbell, banker merchant and former slaveholder, the founders of the private land-grant HBCU. As remnants of a period in America's past that some would like to pretend did not exist, Black colleges have frequently been devalued and misconstrued. When affirmative action programs are continually questioned, these institutions continue to experience accusations of promoting segregation. According to the (Chronicle of Higher Education,2011) Historically White Institutions (HWI) were created to educate whites and keep African Americans out. However, those who make such claims do so in direct opposition to the history that led to the development of HBCUs (Brown, Danahoo, & Bertrand, 2001).

Establishment of Land-Grant Institutions

The second Morrill Act of 1890 established land-grant institutions for African Americans, which also forbade racial discrimination in admissions policies for colleges receiving these federal funds. The 1890 expansion of the Morrill Act gave institutions cash instead of land; however, land-grant institutions under the 1890 act maintained the same legal standing of the 1862 act as the term “land-grant” applies to both groups. In the establishment of land-grant HBCUs, there are 19 HBCU land -grant institutions and one private.

Institutional Mission

Mission statements create obligations for colleges to keep their promises to their entire campus population. The University is equipped with a sound mission and core values. Through

these components, the university identifies individuals who are connected to these beliefs.

(Suskie ,2015) found that quality instructions have positioned leaders that exhibit the capacity and commitment to facilitate the University journey toward its goals. The land-grant HBCU is a mission-driven institution focused on the nurturing and development of students while enhancing their intellect and moral abilities (TU, 2018). Institutions have a primary responsibility, among others, to put their students first. The mission of the private land-grant HBCU is to offer culture, a rich history, and rigorous academic programs, while preparing students for leadership and service. Students enrolled and graduates of the land-grant HBCU, seek to serve the public through the institution's unique elements of the university mission. As a part of service, the land-grant institution challenges students to:

- Serve the global society as well as the regional and campus community and beyond through the development of outreach programs, that are compatible with the University's educational mission, which improves understanding of community problems, and develops relevant alternative solutions.
- Engage in outreach activities to assist in the development of communities as learning societies.

The land-grant institution rankings have provided substantial evidence that the institution is executing its mission. The students that attend the university come from various states and countries to experience the HBCU phenomenon. HBCUs are intentional with instilling their mission within their population. When first-year students enter the university, they are required to enroll in a first-year orientation, which provides students a positive learning experience of the history of their HBCU (tu.edu). This first-year course assists students in developing a sense of connection between the student and the university. (Astin,1984) student involvement theory suggested that meaningful student engagement in college activates increasing cognitive complexities leading to learning and development (Renn & Reason, 2013). When universities are embracing quality and excellence, they are fulfilling their obligation of the institutional mission and strategic plan. Understanding the value and the mission of the land-grant HBCU prepares students for completing their coursework.

Institution Profile

The land-grant HBCU is a four-year private institution with its students entering the institution with a 3.0-grade point average (GPA) and an SAT score over 1100. The university

serves over 3,000 students and has approximately a 50% acceptance rate (datausa.io,2019). In 2015, non-Black students made up 22 percent of enrollment at HBCUs, compared to 15 percent in 1976. Enrollment at HBCUs in 2015 was made up of 61 percent of women, up from 53 percent in 1976, while some 87 percent of HBCU students attended a 4-year institution, while 13 percent attended a 2-year institution. (NCES,2015) found that 75 percent of HBCU students attended public institutions, while the remaining 25 percent attended private non-profit institutions. Among Black students, the percentage enrolled at HBCUs fell over time, from 18 percent in 1976 to 9 percent in 2015 (NCES, 2015). The land-grant institution ranks first as the best HBCU in the southern state, for which in 1985, the institution acquired university status (tu.edu).

The land-grant HBCU has an enrollment of 3,289 students, 2,833 undergraduate, and 456 graduate students. The university prides itself on having an elite admission process for prospective students. Admission to the institution as a traditional first-year student is based upon standardized test scores, Grade Point Average 3.1(GPA) and high school course requirements based on student's high school curriculum. (College Factual, 2018) reported that the institution has a 53% acceptance rate of 7,529 applications. 61.6 percent of applicants are women, and 38.4 percent are men (Tu.edu/mission). The land-grant HBCU is known for its competitiveness in accepting students. The tuition at the university is quite costly; for 2018-2019, the total cost of attendance is estimated at \$41,170 (TU.edu). At the university, there is a 14:1 student/teacher ratio. The institution currently has a total of 264 employees, with 10 of the 264 are part-time. 247 employees of the 264 number have faculty status, 97 employees of this number are tenured faculty, and 60 employees are on track to become tenure. According to TU, the institution is committed to hiring full-time professors. The university ranks among the highest in the nation, with 96% of instructors are employed full-time. The institution adjunct percentage is at 4%. This number is below the national average of adjuncts at 50.8 % (AAUP, 2019). Having this low percentage in adjunct faculty attests to the university's dedication to sustaining a stable instructional staff.

As a part of history, the Institution is known for the training of Black teachers and was recognized as a prominent institution. In 1881, the institution school for colored teachers opened. The President of the university during this time was recommended by Samuel Chapman Armstrong to become the principal of the university and served for 34 years. Under his

leadership, the school acquired a 100-acre plantation, which became the education nucleus for the present site. According to (TU, 2019) President tenure led the school to obtain institutional independence in 1892. The school was able to open the campus hospital, which was staffed by Black professionals. The Institution has successfully graduated 75% of Black veterinarians that are practicing doctors to date. Included in the Institutions national prominence, in 1965, the university proclaimed a National Historic Landmark, related to the Institutions magnitude of the academic curriculum, and its role in higher-education offerings for African Americans. The land-grant HBCU is the only private land-grant institution of higher learning that offers graduate and doctoral degrees. The university is classified as Master's Colleges and Universities with small programs, where the instructional framework is centered around arts and sciences, with graduate-level courses that focus on STEM research on the doctoral level.

Admission Process

The institution is a selective four-year full-time university with low transfer-in rates. When prospective students apply to the institution, they are considering a rigorous curriculum, the historical value of the Institutions rich history, and the student's ability to apply their learning to the world. (NCES,2019) found that 84.5% of African- American students are enrolled,1.9% Native Hawaiian or other pacific islanders, 0.4% white, 0.7% Asian, 0.2% American Indian, and 0.9% Hispanic. Students apply to the institution for assorted reasons, especially their academic programs.

The institution admission deadline is April 15 annually with no rolling admission dates. The university utilizes its rigorous courses work and majors along with its acceptance rate to market for the university. The admission counselors travel across the country to host college fairs, recruitment, and school presentations, to attract the best students from around the country. The institution works closely with prospective students and their families in providing resources such as campus tours and alumni picnics, which are designed to connect with prospective students and admitted students to learn more about the land-grant institution.

Funding of HBCUs

The university receives funding from numerous funding streams, including a bequest, alumni, and donors. This funding is used to sustain the university through building renovations, hiring quality teaching faculty, and retaining tuition rates, by minimizing tuition increases for students. HBCUs receive federal funding for their

various colligate programs. The Higher Education Act (HEA) of 1965 initiated a federal grant program specifically for HBCUs, including federal matching dollars of private endowment donations. HBCUs continued to struggle through the years, as they were invisible as equal institutions of higher learning as their Predominantly White Institutions (PWI) peers. In 1980 President Jimmy Carter signed an executive order to distribute adequate capital and funds to HBCUs. This strategic move was made to create a stable foundation for Black colleges. President Carter ordered triggered massive support, which became the white house initiative on Historically Black Colleges. In 1989, President George W. Bush signed the executive order 12677, which shaped a presidential advisory board on HBCUs.

Land-grant HBCU Finances

During the institution accreditation warning period, the university worked diligently to re-instate themselves. The university reduced its cumulative institutional debt by 20 million dollars and increased its cumulative operating surplus by more than \$17 million, while expanded enrollment by 3.5 percent. The University Board of Trustees monitored this process to ensure success for the university. In 2017, the institution accreditation warnings were removed and remain diligent in acquiring operational funding. Specifically, for this study, the university (Chief Financial Officer, 2018) shared that the institution is financially healthy and stable.

The university continues to adhere to best practices in budget monitoring, expense reduction, and innovative revenue generation to maintain financial stability. In demonstrating this level of fiscal responsibility, the university composite financial index scale of 1.5 is reflective of the institution's financial diligence. Through those challenging fiscal times, the institution remained grounded in faithful stewardship. The (Chief Financial Officer, 2018) supports indicators of this stewardship included a positive change in net assets from operating activities, reductions in total debt, and increases in net assets. Successful completion of annual audits also indicates financial stewardship, with these indicators come external stewardship challenges the university faces. The (Chief Financial Officer, 2018) found that there are external issues that impact stewardship, including federal regulations, applicable to financial aid and grant programs.

The university has intentionally aligned its programs and mission through strategic budget planning. Divisions, departments, and units must ensure that the planning process

attaches resources to the institutional priorities. To heighten the impact of stewardship, the college has designed outcomes to meet its stakeholders' needs and achieve financial capacity.

The strategic plan outcomes call for the university to:

- Improve liquidity to debt ratios
- Attain to an unrestricted net asserts reserve of 5% of necessary budget expenditures
- Continued assessment of the expenditure of resources, including improvement of the institutions tuition discount rate (i.e., institutional aid) cross-functional hiring of new talent, and managerial accountability.

Higher Learning Accreditation

The Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACSCOC) is the accrediting body for the university. SACSCOC provides accreditation for institutions in the southern states, in which the accrediting body's mission is to improve the university's effectiveness. This approach is critical regarding accreditation, as this perspective encompasses the operation of a university from financial aid, grants, employment, and students. Performance on university campuses also serves as an indicator of quality assurance. All these components make up the university system. The university created a reaffirmation leadership team to assist in meeting accreditation expectations. Each member of the team holds a vital role in the overall contribution of the accreditation process.

Through this, accreditation bodies support universities in creating or maintaining a culture of continuous academic program improvement to remain reflective of the institutions mission, vision, and core values. Also, the accreditation agency is to include faculty and staff as a part of the university planning and evaluation process. To date, Council for Higher Education Accreditation found that congress is now focused on accreditation, for which the United States Department of Education has stated that there is an introduction of a bill to reauthorize the higher education act to review and revise accreditation. This process will require higher education institutions to become more intentional about the quality and processes of their academic programs.

Many HBCUs have faced challenges with accreditation due to their inability to meet the accreditation requirements. Between 1998-2013, SACSCOC put 29 HBCUs on warning and 20 on probation; it revoked the accreditation of four HBCUs (SACSCOC, 2013). The land-grant HBCU accreditation with SACSCOC has its benefits. The regional accreditation is considered

more prestigious than national accreditation, as regional is older. This agency allows the HEI to award baccalaureate, masters, and doctoral degrees. The institutions reaffirmation occurred in February 2018 when the institution hosted its SACSCOC site visit. In January of 2019.

Stakeholders who have entrusted into the university have buy-in with the institution with being consistent in their messaging and displaying an interest in all students succeeding. Accrediting bodies are challenging HEI's on their credibility in facilitating processes and policies in excellence. In 2015, the institution was placed on academic warning by (SACSSOC, 2018). Before this action, in the spring of 2014, SACSOC issued a warning after reviewing the university's fifth-year report. The university warning by the accrediting agency encompassed non-compliance with requirements established by SACSCOC regarding, fiscal stability, financial aid audits, and student learning outcome assessments, in 2017, SACSOC removed the warnings. Accreditation is essential, it confirms the quality of education provided by the institution, and it influences the college's eligibility to award financial aid. The discussion centered on HBCUs improving their accreditation status is on-going.

Institution Student Body

Students are fundamental to the institution. Student presence contributes to the origin of policies related to students interests. The university administration and faculty support student initiatives in which this process is filtered through the Student Government Association (SGA). The SGA represents the entire student population at board meetings and various committee meetings involving campus administration. At the institution, several areas formulate the sectors of the university. Those areas include academics and instruction, student services and campus life, research and outreach, marketing and communications, fiscal and business management, legal affairs, institutional advancement, and human resources management. The nucleus of the university is education. The institution academic policies and honors committee is reflective of the university's mission in leadership, knowledge, and service. SGA is instrumental in students receiving adequate academic advising.

Academic policies and honors committees manage the delivery of classroom instruction, student academic achievement, retention, and faculty professional development. The committee at the university supports all the campus departments in facilitating the goals of the institutions strategic plan. Subsumed in this committee are advising, coordination, arbitration, and research and development. The pattern of the committee organization is structured to cultivate faculty,

staff, and student relationships simultaneously these roles counsel on administrative business to assist in evolving association among university employees and students. These integral areas are associated with the completion of student degree programs.

Institution Executive Leadership

The university operations come under the cognizance of the institution President who serves in the capacity of the university Chief Executive Officer (CEO). The President represents the Institution internally and externally by being the university's face and the formal spokesperson. This position requires the President to invest time in promoting the academic integrity of the university. The executive office of the President works collaboratively with the university deans and faculty to establish program development. The President has an indebted responsibility to report to the Board of Trustees while creating programmatic areas and delegating the administrative matters of the institution. The President connects with the university general and associate general representatives, which has the role and responsibilities to govern significant academic areas of the institution. As a part of the President's cabinet, the general's role is equivalent to the Provost and Vice-President, these persons report directly to the President. The university employs several general officers, the institutions Governance Document list these positions as Chief of staff, Provost, Vice Presidents, and Chief Business Officers. This process occurs when the President intends to seek advice and assistance from the general(s) while making informed decisions regarding institutional affairs.

The general's role upholds due diligence in managing efficient planning & coordination, staffing, and organizational operations to implement and execute the institutions mission. In making decisions for the betterment of the University, the institution allows for provisions related to organizational structure that could potentially affect the university's objectives and policies or enhance these elements. The President's role encompasses numerous moving parts. In this role as Chief Executive Officer, the President is assisted by an administration team that navigates any challenges; and fosters success on behalf of the university. For each of the colleges on campus, these divisions are led by deans and directors, which manage the departmental academic curriculum and reports to the Provost and the President.

The Dean must encourage faculty programmatic development in their respective areas of research and broaden the teaching and learning that takes place on campus (TU Governance Document 2016). The school executive leadership team's comprehensive management is

governed by the Board of Trustees (BOT) which possess legal control over the school for which the President is obligated to report all university matters. The university governance document operates as a manual for leadership team members to execute the requirements of their job descriptions. Through the handbook, the administration upholds the institutions Principal and concepts in operating the university. The Board of Trustees at the university are equipped with legal capabilities to design policies, assets, and strategic planning for the university. The seats that are filled for the BOT are held by the Chair, First Vice-Chair, Second Vice-Chair, and a secretary, in which this position is voted on annually. (TU Governance Document, 2016). The university board positions require a nomination. In the event there is a vacant BOT seat, seating board members can provide the board with a recommendation in which institutional by-laws govern this process.

Institution Campus

The campus life appeals to the students as well as benefit the city. Students that attend the university are housed on campus, as the university is reflective of a four-year medium highly residential campus. The university provides amenities to supplement the minimal offerings within the small town (Master Plan, 2017). Through the rehab of buildings and the beautification of the campus landscaping, the institution ensures accessibility for disabled students was available. The restructuring of the campus extended pathways and ramps on the grounds and in campus buildings for physically disabled students. The facility housing committee facilitates capital projects, building renovations, and campus infrastructure. In 2016, the university created a Master Plan, which outlined the campus repurposing and enhancement of fifteen buildings; the plan was released in 2017.

In the development of the master plan, the university implemented a shared governance process that consisted of representatives of the university, administration, faculty, students, and stakeholders (Master Plan, 2017). The Master Plan is parallel to the institutions strategic plan. The goal behind this plan is to maximize the efficiency and utilization of all the facilities on campus. According to the (Master Plan,2017) the university absorbs 240 acres of the total 5,500-acre property. The history of the buildings on campus is dated over a century. The richness in the antiquity of the historical architecture is found in several buildings throughout the campus.

Institution Infrastructure

The infrastructure of the institutional buildings provides a sound and stable university from the sewer system, water, electricity, and internet accessibility. The reliability of technology allows the university to compete with other HBCUs as the institution remains robust, utilizing technology to advance contributions in teaching, learning, and research. The master plan's model is to increase enrollment and amplify course offerings to heighten the university research, specifically in Science, Technology, Engineer, and Mathematics. (STEM). The institution has invested in equipping students with soft skills that will supply career impetus, construct leadership skills, and add constructive value to the workforce. Merging the STEM field with research will captivate students and faculty globally.

The university has a goal to increase enrollment to 3,600 in 2020 (Tuskegee University Strategic Plan, 2015-2020). The renovations of the buildings will employ local and surrounding state contractors. The institution housing committee leads construction projects to enhance students experiences on campus through revamping dormitories. Fourteen residence halls provide housing for enrolled students. The university provides quality and safe housing for the student population, which will add to students learning by acquiring a comfortable and accessible living and housing environment. Enhancing student's experience is a priority for the institution. The quality of the campus habitat connects with the student's ability to progress through their degree programs. The university meticulously designed the campus community with modernized dining facilities, adequate study space, and recreation venues. The institution resides in an isolated town that does not have the underpinning of a metropolis city. Student activities on the campus substitutes for the isolation of the town. The institution works diligently to beautify the campus, to uphold national attraction, and galvanize student activities.

Student Life

HBCUs around the country share a universal love of the divine nine. The divine nine inhere of sororities and fraternities in 1930, the National Pan -Hellenic Council (NPHC) was the hosting organization for African -American sororities and fraternities. The organization was founded at Howard University to provide a platform for African American students to have a voice while pursuing their education. The organization protested for equal rights and fair treatment of African -American people while upholding history, traditions, and values. The

divine nine include: Alpha Kappa Alpha (AKA) Alpha Phi Alpha; Kappa Alps Psi; Delta Sigma Theta; Omega Psi Phi; Phi Beta Sigma; Zeta Phi Beta; Sigma, Gamma Rho; and Iota Phi Theta; The success of greek life is the organization's ability to build commonality among peers. Over the years, HBCUs have experienced internal investigations regarding negative behaviors on the campus of greek organizations. Some HBCUs have banned fraternities and sororities based on their conduct. In the early 2000s, the university suspended Delta Sigma Theta (women sorority) from the university based on their unruly behavior related to hazing African American women that were pledging. Pledging is a process in which sororities and fraternities enlist participants to commit to the historical perspective of the sorority or fraternities. (HBCU Digest,2018) published the troubles of sororities and fraternities. Greek life continues to remain popular among HBCU students, as the bond created among these students outweighs the catastrophic behavior that has hunted the divine nine. The Institution embraces their greek organizations too, which is one of the reasons students attend the university.

Conferred Degrees

Colleges can place students as their primary focus, this is attained through innovative planning, and teaching and learning which is designed to maximize educational achievement. As an example of this practice, campuses can become creative in enrolling students in courses that are flexible to their schedule to partake in internships/externships. Students will acquire career readiness experiences while completing their degrees simultaneously. This technique demonstrates the value that universities place in their students. The offering of rigorous courses that expand student learning is one of the varieties of dedication to student success. This offering equates to colleges enfolding student's achievement as their prime priority. The university invests in its' student population by connecting education and leadership, to prepare students to compete in the 21st-century career market. The institution encompasses its mission with the university's core values and vision.

According to (NCES, 2016-17) 33,500 African American male and female students received their bachelor's degrees in 2016-17. Careers such as educators, doctors, lawyers, engineers, scientists, and stock traders are common among HBCU graduates. HBCU graduates secure employment based upon their majors. Attending a private institution and majoring in a STEM graduate program was found to be a positive salary factor (Bell, 2010). HBCU students continue to acquire their degrees at significant rates (NCES, 2016-17) in which students are

utilizing their degrees to secure notable roles. Students who are graduates of the university can secure fellowships and careers at the university, due to fundraising efforts and donations made to the institution.

Institution Title III and IV

The institution serves underserved populations through Title III funding. Title III functions as a grant program to improve education. Students identified by Title III have access to tutoring, counseling, and resources for academic readiness components that will increase student academics. According to (Wu,2019) academic motivation is vital in promoting college students' academic outcomes (e.g., academic engagement and achievement) which has significant implications for college students. Students who feel supported on campus will have achievements in their course work. Title III is also student engagement-driven connected students with campus activities, clubs, and organizations. The framework of Title III provides wrap-around services for students to remain connected to the institution through their academics and extracurricular activities.

Student retention and completion rates are critical areas for the institution to achieve student success. Faculty and staff are supported through hiring diverse individuals, that are knowledgeable in expanding instruction and services to enhance the student's positive experience. The university is invested in professional development that will expand academic instruction in the classroom, and for staff to become technology efficient through quality customer service approaches. The United States Department of Education ensures the Higher Education Institutions learning is evaluated. Accrediting bodies have due diligence to certify institutions are modeling quality education. Accreditation is linked to Title IV funding, which provides institutions with funding from the federal government.

Title IV awards include subsidized, unsubsidized, direct plus loans, federal pell grant, federal supplemental educational opportunity grant (SEOG) and federal perkins loan. For students attending HEI's, the university has federal criteria they must meet in offering degree-granting programs. (Congressional Research Service, 2019) found HEI's must fulfill the educational integrity of the federal government which are: licensed or otherwise legally authorized to operate in the state in which it is located, accredited or pre-accredited by an agency recognized for that purpose by the Department of Education (ED) and certified by ED as eligible to participate in Title IV. HEI's must remain

complaint with accreditation, which validates the funding of Title IV. The institution has continued their accreditation, as numerous studies are connected through the institution ability to function. In connection with the institution accreditation, the university has led groundbreaking historical studies, such as the syphilis experience

Syphilis Experiment

The Bioethics Center originated from the historical syphilis study on the institution. Between 1932-1970, The United States Department of Public Health conducted the syphilis experiment on 600 poor African American male sharecroppers, in which 399 had contracted the disease in rural Tuskegee, Alabama. The President of the University at the time agreed to the study, only if the institution was recognized and Black professionals are affiliated with the study. According to the government, the study was conducted to observe individuals who went untreated from the syphilis disease. Participants in this study were promised free health care, burial insurance, and food to participate in the study. The participants were informed that the study would only take place for six months, and it lasted forty years. Unbeknownst to the men that participated in this experiment, the U.S. government lost the funding and continued with the study and did not provide treatment of the disease for these men.

(TU Bioethics, 2019) scientists tracked the progression of the disease in the participants without ever telling them that they had syphilis or informing them of treatment options -- even after penicillin had been proven to be a quick and effective cure. The (Center for Disease Control, 1972) found the case, and its public scrutiny triggered a review from the Assistant Secretary of health and an advisory panel. In the findings from the review of the study, the men were not adequately educated on the real basis of the study and were intentionally misinformed of the facts needed for permission to participate. In 1972 the syphilis experiment ended; the advisory panel found that the study was unethical, and many men died from the untreated disease. The government begins to host discussions regarding reparations for families of the syphilis case victims. In 1973, there was a class-action lawsuit filed by the families of the participants of the study to which the consecutive year the families were awarded a 10 million dollar out-of-court settlement.

The US government promised to provide a lifetime of health insurance, and burial benefits to living participants. The syphilis study was a national tragedy, in 1997, President Bill Clinton

gave a national apology to the participants and their families. The syphilis experiment furthered the launch of the institution Bioethics Center. The Bioethics Center is committed to research and health care treatment for underserved populations. The national tragedy of the syphilis experiment propelled the Bioethics Center, to equip African American with knowledge and solutions, in providing innovative health care. The university Bioethics Center in Research and Health Care was ignited in 1999. The purpose of the center is to promote racial and ethnic diversity in the field of bioethics, and in public debates about bioethical issues; conduct research and publish scholarship on bioethics and underserved populations; and advocate public policies that improve the health and health care of all Americans, particularly the underserved.

The success of the Bioethics Center has been received through grants and monetary donations to continue the research breakthroughs on campuses. The betterment of the university continues to evolve through their recruitment and retention efforts with their academic program offerings, student-parent engagement, community involvement research, and science. The Bioethics Center requires admissions and enrollment at the university.

Student Affairs

Student Affairs fosters the academic and social development of students. The department functions in the reflection of the university's mission to develop leadership, knowledge, and service. This component of the institution cultivates student wellness, balancing education, and life occurrences. Student affairs create communities for students to engage while promoting student success. Student Affairs connects with student learning at the University. (Blimling & Whitt, 1998) found that colleges and universities focus their attention on putting students and their learning first. Financial aid provides financial access for students to enroll and remain at the institution. According to (College tuition compare.com, 2019) 61% of the enrolled undergraduate students receive grants or scholarships, and the average aid amount awarded is \$5,347 (TU,2019).

Student Affairs departmental framework is intentional encounters to develop relationships with students. Through this model, the institution is also abreast of what is taking place on campus. Student housing on campus allows students to form peer relationships and connect with institutional faculty, staff, and administrators. The department has established pivotal commitments to students to enhance their academic experience while at the university. According to (www.tu.edu, 2019) the institution vows to provide the following for students:

- Provide safe and comfortable housing and dining programs to students living on campus;
- Provide comprehensive wellness services, academic services, and other student resources and support services;
- Provide leadership and governance opportunities to help inspire wholesome student behavior;
- Provide educational, social, and entertaining programs and events to engage the well-rounded student;

Most of the functionality and departments that have a direct impact on student retention and completion operates under the student development umbrella. The two most compelling departments embodied with student affairs is the Dean of Students and Judicial Affairs. These components also govern student affairs at the institution. Both offices support student needs through promoting socially and diverse learning communities. Judicial Affairs and Title IX safeguard students against internal and external negative occurrences. The university has created a sexual misconduct policy, in which the Title IX Coordinator implements this policy among faculty, staff, student employees, students, volunteers, vendors, contractors, and visitors. Due to the frequency of sexual misconduct occurrences on campus, the university has instituted the policy that is committed to fostering a safe and healthy work and learning environment without fear of sexual misconduct. These types of incidents have a direct impact on faculty, staff, and students. The safety of the university campus is the institution priority. Sexual assault cases that involve anyone on-campus effects the university brand, retention, and graduation rates. Title IX contributes to upholding discrimination and harassment-free learning environments, to add to the student's positive academic experiences.

Student affairs departments at HBCUs have an organic approach in assisting students through the academic pipeline. Research has identified this support as "Othermothering." According to (Hirt, Amelink, McFeeters, & Strayhorn, 2006) the notion of Othermothering" permeates relationships at HBCUs and the considerable importance attached to those formed between students and student affairs administrators. Relationships serve as a primary means to facilitate student retention at HBCUs and ensure the continued existence of a unique type of institution. Students at every classification level at an institution seek guidance through their collegiate process. They understand the dynamics and how each department has a vital role in its

process toward graduation. (Hirt, Strayhorn, Amelink, & Bennett, 2006) conducted a qualitative study on the nature of student affairs work at Historically Black College Universities.

There were 70 participants, who served as administrators at 25 different HBCUs. 67% female, 33% male. 89% were African American, 6% multi-racial, and 2% white. The data for this survey was obtained by the researchers rendering the National Professional Life Survey (NPLS). The administrators from these various institutions were surveyed on the pace of work, how work gets done, and the work environment. The research reported that the administrator is often multi-task and balance additional commitments with their institutions. During the survey, the data revealed that administrators at all 25 HBCUs related to racial uplift and empowerment through their work in student affairs, although these findings were outside of why the administrators were interviewed.

The study participants discussed their intention of giving back to Black students to ensure they are doing their part in producing a generation of successful leaders. This "Othermothering" terminology, deems to be appropriate for student affairs departments at HBCU's across the country. (Hirt, Amelink, McFeeters, & Strayhorn, 2006) stated HBCU administrators consider themselves guardians of their students and talk about themselves as family members (e.g., parents, siblings) to students and not merely as administrators. The administrators revealed the importance of their devotion to the students and the mission of the university to carry out the prior commitments of the founders of these HBCUs. Through TU promotion of student success, the university provides resources and opportunities for the advancement of the African American race. Student life on TU campus is home for the university clubs and organizations.

Racial Identity

The institution has multicultural clubs to connect with the various nationalities represented. According to (Cross & Fhagen-Smith, 2001) Racial Identity Development methods help student affairs departments understand the student population in which they serve. Often as traditional students develop on campus, they are critical of their own racial identity. Students who are involved in culture heritage organizations/clubs on campus utilize these spaces to learn more about their culture and the world that surrounds them. Multicultural clubs have a powerful impact on students and discovering their self-identity. Through this involvement, students can shift to dissonance in which they are embracing their racial, ethnic

group at this stage. When students fully understand themselves, resistance and immersion are activated, in which learners can convey who they are as it relates to their ancestral heritage.

Academic Advising

The twelve departments under student affairs hold an intricate piece to developing the wellness of students. On most college campuses, advising is considered as the "first stop" in which students receive campus survival tips. Advising departments at any university is the essential foundation of the institution. Advising provides guidance and the roadmap for students to follow to complete their four-year degree at degree-granting institutions. According to (Barbuto, Story, Fritz, & Schinstock, 2011) Academic Advising at HBCUs focuses on development and self-discovery. Advising is categorized under the institution's academic resources. Advising is affiliated with student affairs and assist in the development of students through their enrollment. (McGill & Nutt, 2016) found that as higher education across the globe acclimates to the disequilibrium caused by change, the stature and legitimacy of academic advising will rise, which will further inspire and require practitioner engagement on campus. During this time, academic advisors will be increasingly judged on their expertise, knowledge, and abilities. At the institution all 3,103 students are assigned an advisor.

Students on campus seek guidance as students face challenges outside of their studies, with the academic community consisting of religion, transgender, Lesbian Gay Bisexual Queer Questioning Androgynous (LGBQQA) race, and ethnicity. Adequate advising provides students with a perspective on how to manage the college process. When students are informed of their process, they tend to make better decisions. Academic advising cultivates a collaborative responsibility between the student and the advisor. The shared accountability is for the advisor to provide the resources and design an academic map, for which the student can create their path in how to obtain academic success. Campus personnel must be equipped with knowledge and empathy to advise these students.

Advisors responsibilities are to assist students in these areas to provide resources to aid in their adjustment phase in college. Understanding students allows advising to connect with the student ecosystem, which consists of the student's family unit, peers, and social involvement on campus. Adequate advising in this matter will build open communication with the students to prevent any challenges that may hinder the student from obtaining their college degree. (Lynch, 2018) supports a time when student persistence, retention, and graduation rates are being

examined; advisors are being called upon to evaluate their interactions with students throughout their academic journey toward a meaningful career. This strategy is a benefit for the university to monitor student progress and success. Student housing on campus allows students to form peer relationships as well as connect with institution faculty, staff, and administrators. Student housing at the university has a critical involvement in student affairs, as more than half of the institution student population resides. The university housing and resident life support leadership development and academic success while maintaining a safe living environment for students, through fostering a culture of trust and rapport based upon the proximity to campus.

Many of the students that attend the institution are residents of the State of Alabama, and some students come from all around the country. Carter G. Woodson, *Mis-Education of the Black Negro* is a part of the operations, teaching, and learning at the university. The book's thesis highlighted Blacks being culturally indoctrinated rather than taught in American Schools, (Woodson,1933). The institution is known for having many first, the institution is the only HBCU named a National Historic Site and the first HBCU to create a nursing baccalaureate program in the State of Alabama. Students are dedicated to academics, demonstrate an interest in the university's history and services, and be good stewards of their communities.

Institution Notoriety

The university is notable for having the College of Veterinarian Medicine, graduating 70% of the nation's African American Veterinarian in the world (TU.edu/programs, 2019). Many students interested in the institution doctoral veterinarian program select this study because of the notoriety of being the only veterinarian program at an HBCU. The institution architecture program has distinguished notability, the Robert Taylor School of Architecture and Construction Science (TSACS) named after the first accredited African American architect, and the first Black to receive an architecture degree from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Students from around the country apply to this program, based on the college of architecture mission of students obtaining a competitive advantage, that will both distinguish themselves from students at peer institutions and advance their career goals.

When students graduate from the university with their degrees, students feel empowered, understanding who they are and their history. According to the (Princeton Review top 385 colleges, 2019) edition, the institution student's feedback of the university included noting the

rich history of the university and encouraging students to achieve at the highest level of performance in all areas of service, leadership, and academics. Students stated, the university experience is like none other, (Princeton Review, 2019) school is about gaining independence and responsibility to grow and compete in the real world. Small classes and personal interaction with professors help further this process along, and the school aims for excellence within every aspect of education offered at the institution (Princeton Review, 2019). Students who graduate from the institution fulfill the unique elements of the university mission of instruction, research, and services. Graduates of the institution will be able to become lifelong learners through instruction, expand their knowledge through continuous research, and serve the global society through service.

Retention

(Millea, Wills, and Molina, 2018) found that increasing student success in college is gaged by retention and graduation rates. Models indicated that retention and graduation rates were higher for academically prepared students, received grants or scholarships, and were in smaller classes. Student retention and completion rates are critical areas for the institution to achieve student success. Faculty and staff are supported through hiring a diverse faculty and staff that are knowledgeable in expanding instruction and services to enhance the student's positive experience at the institution. The university is invested in professional development that will expand academic instruction in the classroom and for staff to become technology efficient through quality customer service approaches. Aligned with the university strategic plan 2015-2020, the faculty has a responsibility to improve student learning and overall retention.

Faculty Development

The staff has overall accountability to create a student center culture: student success and student engagement and parent satisfaction (TU Strategic Plan, 2015-2020). The university is committed to professional leadership and academic excellence, which is exhibited through faculty teaching. From this, the university continues to employ diverse faculty to partake in this learning experience. Through the faculty, support received on-campus faculty have access to numerous conferences, training, and seminars that has a direct impact on advancing faculty research and careers. The Deans of each college on campus serves as the direct person of contact for faculty. The Deans work with faculty to ensure that student learning is taking

place and that faculty are meeting the academic metrics of each department. Department Deans and Chairs challenge faculty to utilize their research past and current to generate teaching and learning.

The institution provides faculty with numerous opportunities to promote faculty performance, formal training, and professional development. The university focuses on community and service to engage faculty in real-world applications that can connect with students learning. Annual performance reviews indicate if a professor obtains the skills to promote up, Deans and Directors in this position often support faculty during this process, as faculty often seek advice in the promotion stage on promotional ranking.

The university is committed to faculty progressing in their careers. Faculty are supported and encouraged to research outside of the institution, in which the institution funds research projects. The university offers generous fringe benefits packages, which include health and vacation time benefits. The institution values faculty employment and strives to ensure that faculty are compensated for their roles. Promotion and tenure considerations are equally important steps for both the faculty and the university. For faculty, it is an element of being capable of exercising academic freedom without fear of retaliation and perhaps even losing their job. For institutions, it is a matter of maintaining quality teaching faculty (Rizvi, 2015).

The university explains within the handbook that original appointments to the faculty and consecutive review of the faculty member for promotion and tenure will be decided upon on the faculty member's professional competence, service to the university, community, and university obligations. Tenure and promotion are significant achievements for college professors; these qualifications are indicators of success in the field. The promotion criteria are in alignment with the institutions strategic plan. The institution has been successful in preserving its faculty through their appointment and ranking system, which has two kinds of teaching faculty tenure and non-tenure track. Tenure track appointments are for full-time employees of the university that result in full-time teaching positions. At the university, tenure positions will only be determined based on teaching faculty with ranks above the instructor status. In this case, professors can apply for a promotion at a higher level than the instructor con-currently with a review of tenure. Tenured faculty are often entitled to rights on campus and are protected by academic freedom. (Euben, 2002) found that academic freedom is the freedom of university

professors and the university administrators to function autonomously without government interference.

The university protects tenured faculty academic freedom and rights. The institution supports tenured faculty in conducting research and sharing information in class or academic settings without censorship. The university faculty handbook outlines the faculty protection of academic freedom in which the university guarantees the faculty member rights.

At the university, if tenured faculty rights are violated, tenured faculty has the right to file a grievance for procedures for disciplinary and grievance matters and terminations. This process is also completed if tenured faculty finds fault in issues of ethics and academic freedom. Faculty are categorized into various positions, which include instructor, assistant professor, associate professor, and professor. Adjunct faculty classify as an instructor who provides classroom instruction and has an administrative description as a part of their role. Adjuncts are part-time instructors and do not qualify for benefits or tenure. The university also considers this role as non-tenure track appointments. Assistant professors are tenured track appointments that teach within the institution in various disciplines, as well as associate professors. Assistant and Associate Professors are full-time positions.

The university has identified staff Provost, Chief of Staff to ensure policies and procedures are being carried out. (Manick, 2016) found that colleges and universities should use deliberative decision-making mechanisms to tap the collective knowledge of its academic units to identify problems and possible solutions. The university governance documents provide leadership for the institution among faculty, staff, and students. Faculty and administrators are empowered to decision making in their respective departments. Faculty who want to make changes to their curriculum or facilitate research outside of the classroom must seek approval from the university President, Provost, or Dean. The university has created checks and balances to align instruction and research to complement the institutions student success goals.

Institution Governance

The governance of the university is a necessity to nurture the intellectual, technical, and moral civic development of students (TU governance, 2016). The university has also instituted faculties of the significant educational units. The membership of these units includes the Dean, Director, or Chair; the President appoints these positions. The purpose of

this educational unit addresses any concerns at the college in the degree programs that may include but not limited to the following:

- Recommending requirements for admission to the unit subject to the approval of the Faculty Senate, the University faculty, the Provost and the President;
- Recommending and abolishing courses and curricula for the unit subject to the approval of the Faculty Senate, University faculty, Provost, and President; Recommending the schedule of studies offered;
- Recommending such regulations and procedures for their area as shall not conflict with the regulations and procedures established by the Board of Trustees (BOT), University faculty, or any regulation or procedure which has been approved by the President; and submitting to the President recommendations for the improvement of the educational program of the unit.

The university models the shared governance approach and is inclusive of faculty, staff, and administration, contributing to the implementation of academic programs that benefit the students. Faculty and staff voices are valued in improving education equality and academic program quality. (Phillips, Palmer, Zimmerman, & Mayfield, 2002) found that today many colleges and universities both Black and white are moving toward more corporate models of institutional governance. Consequently, the struggle for shared governance must continue to be a significant endeavor on all college campuses.

The university works in collaborations with the Board of Trustees, and it is constituents in guiding the objectives and goals of the institution strategic plan for 2020. The university's input from the broad campus community is needed to create or modify existing academic and extracurricular programs to remain competitive in the academic arena. The university promotes the jurisdiction and powers of the university faculty. Jurisdiction has vested authority held by the Board of Trustees, presidents, and faculty to obtain jurisdiction over academic matters, procedures, policies, and regulations that directly impact research and classroom instruction. These influences and decision making are connected to student and faculty outcomes within departments that provide services and resources such as:

- Admissions and graduation of students; promotion of the general welfare of students;
- Promotion of scholarly endeavors among students;

- Development of scholarship and research among the faculty; and determination of faculty promotions and rank.

In making decisions for the betterment of the university, the institution allows for provisions related to organizational structure that could potentially affect the university's objectives and policies or enhance these elements. The President's role encompasses numerous moving parts. The President is assisted by the administration that navigates challenges and fosters success. The consensus of the multi-dimensional governance allows the institution to have input from various departments on campus. The Board of Trustees and the college President can make an informed decision regarding institutional progress based on the input from the collective body to assist in the implementation of decision making. The university General of Counsel and external affairs supervises contracts. A contract between the university and an external party is legally binding and can be exposed to financial and policy imputation that could leave the university responsible for any cause. The classification of the contract determines the contract's authorization and its value. The institution has various contracts and documents, which include: Professional personal service contract with an independent contractor; memorandum of understanding; and sponsored program research. The university contracts regarding intellectual property are a part of the ratification process. The university general counsel safeguards this process through trademarks, patents, and copyrights, while commercialized licensing agreements elevate the university marketing of research. Under the ratifications of polices, the President and Board of Trustees review all policies from various campus committees. Final decision making and implementation rest with the institution

Shared Governance

Shared Governance at the institution is driven by the committee organization's pattern, which expands the existing relationships between faculty, staff, and students. The committee furthers the institution mission in exploring avenues to enhance committee operations while utilizing the committees to execute the university objectives, advise the administration on university occurrences, and to assist in elevating interdepartmental relationships. The university employs several general officers. The (Institutions Governance Document, 2016) list these positions as Chief of staff, Provost, Vice Presidents, and Chief Business Officers. This process occurs with the President's intention to seek advice and assistance from the general(s) in making informed decisions regarding institutional affairs. Faculty partake in the board of trustee

meetings and connect with the faculty senate in which the Senate is a representation of the institutions faculty and operates as one unit. The university encompasses faculty as apart of shared governance as faculty add value in providing valuable & diverse learning experiences. The jurisdiction of university faculty equips the institution with rooted fundamental guidelines to assist in transforming the institution through comprehensive learning while being deeply rooted in academic excellence.

The university success is built upon the ability to connect with all departments on campus. Through the shared governance model, the institution has demonstrated symbolic outcomes in retention and graduation. The President collaborates with the institutions general and associate general representatives of the university. Generals have the role and responsibilities to govern significant academic areas of the institution. As a part of the President's cabinet, the general's role is equivalent to the Provost and Vice-President, in which these persons report directly to the President. Faculty are a part of the shared governance model. Faculty partake in the board of trustee meetings and connect with the faculty senate, in which the Senate is a representation of the faculty and operates as one unit. The university encompasses faculty as apart of shared governance, as faculty add value in providing valuable & diverse learning experiences.

Purpose of The Research

The research question of What institutional factors support degree completion for African American women students at a land-grant historically Black college university (HBCU)? The university is invested in the service of people, highlighting the need to educate and elevate the whole person. There is an identifiable gap between African American female students who attend predominantly white institutions (PWI). African American females, first-time seeking degree students, lack adequate access to campus resources that include financial aid and academic advising. According to (Engle, 2007) Factors that hinder access to higher education for first-generation students included lack of academic readiness in high school, limited academic attainment aspirations, minimal parental involvement, support, and encouragement to enroll in college. Financial aid has a direct influence on the completion outcomes of Black women who are students, (Johnson, Bruch, & Gill, 2017). Regional Educational Laboratory Mid-Atlantic's HBCU College Completion Research Alliance conducted a study to determine the direct impact of financial aid on African American students that attended HBCUs. The study determined that

students who utilize financial aid to fund their education fluctuate based on award packages of students. The financial aid award packages also determine students enrollment status at HBCUs.

Services such as academic advising, adequate financial aid services, and student development (clubs & organizations) are needed for these students to encounter sustainability on campus. Academic advising is a challenge that exists for Black women who are enrolled in secondary institutions. (Alon, 2007) supports that minority students' path to graduation is far more sensitive than their white counterparts, based upon minorities' ability to secure fiscal resources, which include grants and scholarships needed to complete their degree programs. The study will examine these factors and how the framework of advising, which consists of course mapping, transcript review, academic, and career setting, and structural counseling, impact African American women retention and persistence.

The research will also explore financial aid advising, the quality of counseling African American women receive regarding scholarships, grant-aid, student loans, and their role in their completion. These findings will contribute to secondary institutions in reviewing their current models and trends. The institution can implement these findings and recommendations which can increase the university graduation rates among this population. The research will generate thought in how secondary institutions are developing their academic advisors and financial aid counselors, and potentially initiating cross-collaboration and training among both departments.

Student account balances are also a barrier to students' completion at the institution. For a student to remain enrolled at an HEI, the student must have a precise financial balance with no financial holds on their account; also, a student must remain in good academic Standing. Financial aid is needed by African American women who attend post-secondary institutions that are dependent upon financial aid for the start and completion of their degrees. (NPSAS, 2018). Minority students have the largest loan debt to pay for their degree programs, compared to other racial groups, (ACE.edu, 2019). Minority students are faced with overwhelming barriers that, in some cases, prohibit students of color from completing their degree. At the university, African American women develop relationships with the financial aid counselor to understand their options in paying for their education. Identifying grants, scholarships, and loans, assist students in paying for their education. According to (NCES, 2015) students withdraw from their programs based on their financial aid. Student's literacy

on financial aid, guide students in determining their financial status, and how much they need or will receive to finance their education. Financial aid can often become cumbersome for students. For college students, financial aid is always the deciding factor between the student attending college or not, (Johnson, Bruch, Gill, 2017).

This study has factors that will contribute to the higher education landscape. Through research and gathering data, research has not indicated that there has been an extensive study on my initial research question. This approach will add uniqueness to my research. Often, some studies are conducted at PWI's that include African American women as subjects. This study will identify the trends in the departmental areas and reveal strategies and how these departments can collaborate to serve more students and yield additional graduation rates. The enrollment at four-year institutions has increased among African American women (NCES, 2015). With the increase of enrollment, there will potentially be more African American women graduating with bachelor's degrees. This study provides the reader with an understanding of the significance of the history of land-grant HBCUs. This study will aim to answer What institutional factors support degree completion for African American women students at land-grant historically Black college and university (HBCU)?

Key Terminology

Land-grant A land-grant university is an institution of higher education in the United States designated by a state to receive the benefits of the Morrill Acts of 1862 and 1890.

Morrill Act 1862 Land utilized for endowment and Maintenance for universities teaching agriculture and mechanical arts.

HBCUs-Historically Black College & Universities

PWI-Predominately White Institutions

FAO-Financial Aid Office

NASFAA- National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators

SASFAA- Southern Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators

STEM- Science Technology Engineering Mathematics

AASFAA Alabama Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators

SASEA- Southern Association of Student Employment Association

NACADA -National Academic Advising Association

NCES –National Center for Education Statics

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The literature review for my research question of “What factors support degree completion for African American women students at a land-grant historically Black college university (HBCU)?” I considered scholarly research to support the findings of my question. As the researcher, I referenced previous studies to expand the scope of my study, in addition to providing the audience with valuable knowledge of the research topic. The conception of the Morrill Act of 1890 produced 19 historically Black land-grant institutions. During this period, these institutions of higher education did not offer degrees. According to (NCES, 2018) there are 101 HBCUs located in 19 states, 51 are public institutions and 50 are private, which offer degrees to African American students. Between 1976-2016, HBCUs experienced a 47% increase in enrollment from 223,000 to 327,000 students. The total number of Black students enrolled at degree-granting institutions doubled (NCES, 2017). Over the years, HBCUs experienced a decline in attendance; in 2017, there were a reported 298,000 students enrolled which translates to a 9% decrease.

HBCUs were founded to educate Black students. However, these institutions admit other ethnic groups. According to (Hilton & Felder, 2014) HBCUs have consistently educated and graduated more African American undergraduate students than predominantly White institutions (PWIs). In 2017, it was reported that 24% of non-Black students enrolled at HBCUs, compared to 15% in 1976, according to the (Post-Secondary National Institute 2019). African American women enrolled at HBCUs had recorded to be higher than male enrollment since 1976, which is when data tracking began at HBCUs. African American women enrollment surged from 53 percent in 1976 to 61 percent in the fall of 2017. The (NCES, 2017) suggested, 1.3 million African American women enrolled in undergraduate institutions, 210,660 of African American women enrolled at four-year HBCUs, and 39,359 enrolled at a private four-year HBCUs. The (NCES, 2017) data revealed in 2017, 87% of Black students attended four-year HBCUs, 13 percent attended two-year colleges, 76 percent attended public institutions, and 24 percent attended private institutions. During the 2016-17 academic year, an estimated 49,500 degrees were conferred, in which more than two-thirds (68% were bachelor's degrees). African American women that enrolled at HBCUs seek out support from financial aid and academic advising offices to assist in the completion of their degree.

Significance of Study

There is a preponderance of African American students enrolled in institutions of higher education, with an actual prevalence of African American women. African American women, occupy a unique position as members of two groups that have historically been marginalized in the larger society and higher education, women and people of color (Banks, 2009; Moses, 1989). In African American women living these occurrences, they have formed a community of women survival on college campuses and their ability to identify a comfortable and safe space to share their experiences (Hamilton-Howard, 2003). In studying the institutional factors of degree completion among African American women, there is a minimal amount of data and research available. The research for the study is focused on African American women and the factors that encourage their degree completion. Various studies have explored first-year students men & women, as research has established causation between academic advising, first-year students, and the effectiveness that first-year advising has on retention. Case studies or research has not concluded the institutional factors that support degree completion among the African American women population enrolled at a private land-grant HBCU.

In identifying African American women for this study, research has categorized the group of African Americans to include men, women, and multiple racial, ethnic subgroups according to (Winkle-Wagner, 2009). Winkle-Wagner research highlighted literature regarding the scholarship of African American women success as undergraduates enrolled at universities, not specifically HBCUs. In the author reviewing 119 studies, the literature specifically pertained to experiences and outcomes after college admission. According to (Winkle-Wagner, 2009) the success of Black women in college is an individual responsibility, as higher education institutions for African American women can be hostile and demeaning.

Academic Advising of African American Women

According to (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005) found that empirical research on the effects of academic advising is clear and consistent, in which advising can have an impact on persistence and graduation. Academic advisors obtain a professional and ethical obligation to be aware and informed about the needs of this population (Constantine & Greer, 2003). Numerous academic support programs bolster the academic success of first-year students. (Harris, 2018) suggested that research has demonstrated the influence that academic advising has on first-year student's retention. (Harris, 2018) conducted a study on 77 first-year students, women and men

who attended an HBCU in South Carolina. The study was to measure the experiences with descriptive and developmental advising that students encountered and their satisfaction with the advising they receive. Prescriptive advising entails specific advising on academic matters such as course selection, course enrollment, academic majors, and degree completion.

(Barbuto et al., 2011) found that prescriptive advising is the most commonly used approach, whereas developmental advising implements a student well-being approach, focusing on the student as a whole person, and addressing student issues. Developmental advising has a distinct focus on career planning, cognitive abilities, and psychosocial advancement. Through this strategic advising of students, advisors can provide supportive services with tools enhancing student development in vital social-emotional areas, including self-awareness, goal setting, and problem-solving for which these segments contribute to student success, (Williams, 2007).

The National Academic Advising Association (NACADA, 2016) utilizes advising pedagogy to advise students. NACADA implements the curriculum of advising, which is reflective of the institutions mission, culture, and expectations.

Advising from this aspect is viewed as teaching and learning that encompass preparation, facilitation, documentation, and an assessment of advising interactions. The student learning outcomes are guided through the university mission, goals, curriculum, and co-curriculum. According to (NACADA,2016) concept of advising is grounded in intentional interactions involving curriculum, pedagogy, and learning outcomes. Advising is not a one size fits all approach. Research has demonstrated that African American women are exposed to various challenges that may affect their educational attainment (Henry et al., 2011). These challenges can include income, transportation, family support, and health. According to (Tinto,1993) the theorist identified three primary sources that can lead to students not completing their post-secondary degree: academic difficulty, the ineffectiveness of obtaining education and career goals, and failure to connect with the social aspects of the institution. As a part of Tinto's theory for students to persist and be retained at a college, they must engage in their academics while formalizing professional relationships with faculty and peers to support students through the college process.

Academic Advising & Retention

It is valuable for students to engage in extracurricular activities to build friendships and expand socialization outside of the classroom. (Patterson, 2013) conducted a study on academic

advising experiences and retention of first-generation students at a public historically Black college and university in the Southeast. Through this study, research has supported academic advising and its clear correlation with retention (Backhus, 1989; Bean, 2005; Ender, Winston, Jr, & Miller, 1982; Gerdes & Mallinckrodt, 1994; Habley, 1981; Habley & McClanahan, 2004; Kadar, 2001). Academic advising is linked to improving retention in higher education. The supported resources provided in advising assist students in remaining connected to their educational goals. Advising is a profound action in higher education that amplifies beyond scheduling of appointments and meeting advising departmental goals.

The action of advising establishes human connectivity, encouraging students to identify and utilize their strengths and interest by applying these approaches to achieve their educational goals. Institutions that provide supportive services on campuses are influential to student success, similar to students that invest their time in academics have an equivalent amount of importance. Studies have noted that faculty engagement outside of the classroom increases retention (Langley, 2017). Faculty engagement can be considered as faculty serving as an advisor to campus organizations, clubs, and mentoring. Gender-specific programs can offer African American women mentorship through faculty and staff. Mentors who function in this capacity provides leadership and guidance for African American women that contribute to their persistence academically and socially.

Academic Advising & Persistence

(Tinto, 1987) found that good advising is often underestimated and is one of the most successful characteristics of the college experience. Advising is also a correlation to student persistence. (Drake, 2011) found that three crucial elements are associated with persistence these elements are: bridging students with the learning communities at the institution, (tutorial services, disability services, health & wellness) required first-year programs to assist students in becoming accumulated to the campus and substantial academic advising. Numerous studies have interpreted that academic advising has a vital outcome on student persistence, suggested by (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). HBCU persistence is essential, as (Hilton & Felder, 2014) predicted that minority populations would out number white populations by 2050.

The academic preparedness of African American women is contingent upon their access to mentoring, faculty who have facilitated or expanded their research, and are preparing students for professional careers in competitive fields that encompass STEM and finance. Faculty

engagement on campus inside and outside of the classroom can have a positive effect on students. Faculty understanding of their role in retention efforts is significant in how faculty will participate (Wilson et al., 2016). Students often arrive at the campus with a host of challenges that can have impressions upon their retention and persistence. Faculty-student interaction creates a foundation for faculty that represents other ethnic groups outside of African Americans. From these interactions, faculty and students can relate in meaningful ways that provide opportunity students and faculty to exchange knowledge about culture and how culture affects academic advising. This method in advising African American students can increase success, according to (Museus & Ravello, 2010). For students of color to maximize advising outcomes in higher education, the administration needs to invest in their advisors through professional development and training, (Museus & Ravello, 2010). Through (Museus & Ravello, 2010) approach in increasing student success, it was suggested by (Obgu, 1987) that educators should understand minority students social-culture variances, in how these variances affect students academics. Furthermore, (Obgu,1987) study defines academic performance between voluntary and involuntary amongst minority groups.

According to (Obgu,1987) voluntary minority groups that have a pragmatic attitude toward school with significant expectations from their parents, for which they have the drive to succeed regardless of the academic instruction they receive. Involuntary minority groups demonstrate an adversity towards school. In which their approach is contradictory, involuntary minority groups encourage learning, however express adversity due to their experience with society and their first-hand encounter of the school system failing them. In understanding both minority groups and addressing and modifying instructional strategies, this approach can potentially have a positive impact on students' academic success.

Advising through connecting with students

Advisors on campuses are required to understand and connect with all student populations while recognizing the characteristics of advising, that can foster or prevent degree completion for racial and ethnic minority college students. According to (Guiffrida, 2005; Jackson, Smith, & Hill, 2003; Nettles, Thoeny, & Gosman, 1986) faculty members who are open to providing African American students with purposeful academic support, generally have a positive impact on these student's college experiences. According to (Guiffrida, 2005) there was a study that examined the impact of faculty who provided holistic advising and advocating for

their students. The participants included 19 African American students, in which the study revealed through the support the students received, the participants had positive college experience. African American students face numerous barriers on PWI campuses, American Council on Education (ACE, 2012). Four factors consist of these barriers (1) sense of belonging, lack of diverse faculty; (2) student preparation received in K-12 (3) lack of family support (4) lack of financial support.

These obstacles African American students face affect retention and persistence rates at HBCUs and PWIs. For Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to develop and implement a useful retention model, institutions must understand the hindrance African American students endure, that can potentially cease the success of these students. Holistic advising that includes prescriptive and developmental provides support for this population of students, that will prevent future burn out related to the barriers African -American students face suggested by (Grier-Reed, Ehlert, & Dade, 2011; Chiang, Hunter, & Yeh, 2004; Edwards, Hershberger, Russel & Markert, 2001). The concept of mentoring in African-history focuses on the philosophy of mutual self-help, support, and conscious raising, (Cropper, 2000).

Mentoring

Mentoring in higher education creates a connection between the students, faculty, and the institution. When universities implement formalized mentoring programs, these programs contribute to student's decision to remain enrolled at their institutions. According to (DuBois, 2002) found that when students build relationships with peers, staff, and faculty, students are likely to graduate. Mentoring in higher education is a strategy used to develop students holistically, students often seek out opportunities to discuss personal issues outside of academics. Mentoring offers individual support for students who are burdened with life obstacles in balancing academics, family, and work. Attending college can be an overwhelming experience for African American students. Constructive mentoring requires a mentor comprehension of mentoring models. (Cropper, 2000) found that for mentoring to be rewarding anti-oppressive/anti-racist technique, the model should be framed within an anti-oppressive/anti-racist model. Black Feminist writers in their research have reported that other populations need to understand African American women lives and the social impacts these women face with discrimination (Collins, 1990; Hooks,1990).

Productive mentoring includes mentoring relationships between mentors and students that involve personal and political context. These conversations focus on social issues that impact African American student's lives, as well as addressing the student's issues. (Gulam & Zulfiqar, 1998) found that political and economic perspective is not a part of the educational landscape discussions that involve mentoring, any potential to engage in, and provoke liberalizing change will be lost. Degree completion of undergraduate students is complemented by several institutional factors that offer support for students academically and socially.

Students enrolled in undergraduate institutions have varied experiences of the academic and social culture of the institution. (Thomas, 2013) found that this perception interferes with student's ability to complete their degree programs. Thomas completed a study on factors that influence college completion and found that classroom culture, building faculty-student relationships, and encouraging academic confidence add to student completion suggested by (Thomas, 2013). Research has demonstrated that macroaggressions on college campuses experienced by African American women exists. African American women also revealed that the support of higher education institutions faculty being accessible, approachable, and providing authentic classroom instruction help these students in completion.

Learning Disparities

These students often are on campus, seeking a connection and commitment from faculty and administration. Research has acknowledged that African American students who attend PWIs experiences are exceedingly different from those African American students who attend HBCUs according to (Guiffrida, 2005; Johnson, et al., 2007). African American students that attend HBCUs or a PWI explore a sense of belonging to foster relatability and connection with their peers and institutional faculty and administration. (Booker, 2016) suggested that African American students that attend PWIs have reported that they are subjected to hostile classroom environments, perception of dis-identification, exclusion, and low self-esteem. These adverse experiences are triggers for students to withdraw from institutions without completing their degrees. When African American students have a sense of belonging on any campus, students perform better academically. On undergraduate campuses, the sense of belonging is related to self-esteem, (Hope, et al., 2013) positive racial identity, (Johnson et al., 2007) primary selection and satisfaction, (Green & Glasson, 2009) and increased persistence to degree (Hausmann, Schofield, & Woods, 2007) for African American undergraduates. Finance Racism exists at

PWIs (Eakins, 2017) due to the learned behavior of family dynamics, social class, and government systems. PWIs are inadequate in meeting the needs of diversity on campus (Chen & Hamilton, 2015). This population of students desires to have institutional support from faculty, staff, and administration, to assist in meeting the metrics of academic success. Colleges and universities who consider shifting education disparities must become intentional in these matters.

Examining the classroom and the learning that takes place is a start. African American students are faced with the lack of preparedness stemming from their K-12 learning culture. When African American students enroll in a post-secondary institution, they are often required to complete basic skills testing in math and reading to determine their academic placement. At PWIs, the basic skills test is prevalent among Black students. Faculty, staff, and administration at PWIs must be deliberate in creating an equity culture of learning for African American students. According to (Eakins, 2017) their research found that African American students that attend PWIs across the nation are dissatisfied with the learning communities at their respective institutions. Students are disturbed by the lack of faculty of color on campus. It was suggested by (Tinto,1993) that in creating positive student experiences will assist African American students in withstanding their familiarity with the matters of dissonance, segregation, and additional academic and social reclusion.

Financial Aid

According to the (US Department of Education, 2005) recognized that the federal support that HBCUs increased by 639 million from 1993-2002. This number was equivalent to 60 percent; however, PWIs increased by 79% during this time. Research has found that HBCUs federal support is not consistent with PWIs federal support. According to (Toldson, 2015) PWIs collected more proceeds from grants and contracts than all four-year HBCUs combined. The data indicated that in 2015, 89 HBCUs conjointly received 1.2 billion, and John Hopkins University received 1.6 billion as a single PWI. The Executive Order (EO) 13256 signed by then-President George Bush was in support of HBCUs, improve access and affordability in higher education. The American Association of University Women (AAUW, 2017) found that there is 1.31 trillion in outstanding student loan debt, which was reported at the end of 2016 by the New York Federal Reserve. At HBCUs, the financial aid department assists and service a disproportionate number of low-income students. Students are often concerned with how they are going to finance their education.

During the 2016 academic year, according to (NCES, 2017) 88% of African American students (male & female) received financial aid. The NCES does not provide a distinguished table among African American women and African American men as these genders are combined in the reporting table. Attending college for students who reside from a fiscally challenge family is complicated. These students depend on the financial award packages from the institution, for which this funding is used to cover their cost of attendance, books, and additional supplies needed to be successful in their coursework. Financial literacy is integral to the college process. According to (Murphy, 2005) Black universities can expose their students to a vast range of financial literacy, to prepare students to manage the financial challenges they will experience as adults and professionals. Research has indicated that students of color had lower rates of financial literacy compared to whites (Chen & Volpe, 1998; Joo et al., 2003). When students understand how finances work and the intricate segments of the financial aid process, such as; completing the free application for federal student aid (FAFSA) understanding the differences between a subsidized and unsubsidized loan, Pell, and additional grant money.

In navigating the financial aid channels, students must become keenly aware of what financial aid consist of and how the funding has a direct impact on their completion.

In 2002, President George W. Bush signed an executive order in which the White House Initiative on HBCUs receives support from the Federal Student Aid Minority Serving Under-Resourced Schools Division. This program details opportunity for partnership, guidance, and advancement. The Federal Student Aid consists of training on the effective administration of Title IV programs; Serving as a conduit for information and guidance from the department; Providing expertise in navigating the challenging landscape of student lending; Inviting HBCUs to workshops on fiscal responsibility and Cohort Default Rate management. The program is comprised of various minority-serving institutions, Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI) Tribally Controlled Colleges (TCIs) and minority-serving and under-resourced identified Colleges and Universities.

Financial Student Aid partners with key stakeholders that include; United Negro College Fund (UNCF) The National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education (NAFEO) and Thurgood Marshall, these partnerships have financially supported HBCUs to educate students of color. Over time, there have been changes in financial aid and student enrollment at HBCUs due to the plus credit standards. HBCUs are strategic in strengthening and maintaining

their economic partnerships. The change centers around the US Department of Education, which changed its credit requirements for parental loans for undergraduate students. These changes catalyzed into students who attended HBCUs, where PLUS loans were being denied. The reduction of these funds is not supplemented by other federal funding. This financial aid process affected enrollment numbers for first-year students at HBCUs across the country (Johnson, Matthew; Bruch, Julie; Gill, 2015).

African American students are borrowing high percentage student loans to maintain enrollment. HBCUs have employed debt management strategies to educate students on borrowing trends. Financial aid counselors maintain awareness of individual students borrowing profiles to monitor borrowing limits and initiate payment strategies for students to refrain from defaulting of student loans. (AAUW, 2017) found that the mean cumulative debt for African American students graduating with a bachelor's degree was higher than any other ethnic group. In re-paying debt, NCEES 2007-08 rate of repayment showed that in 2012, Black women owed an average debt amount of \$25,091, and women are the majority enrolled gender at higher education institutions in undergraduate and graduate programs. In 2016, the loan amounts were higher for students who attend a four-year private university, than all other institutional categories. (NCEES,2017).

The data in AAUW exposed women borrowing larger loans than men, as the debt assists women in completing their degree programs. Reported by the New York Federal Reserve in 2016, women held 833 billion of the student loan debt. 44% of women compared to 39 percent of men take out student loans, and that Black women pay off their student loans slower than men. Black women only paid back 12% of their debt, compared to 33% of white women who paid back their debt. According to (AAUW, 2017) borrowers of student loans diversify in their experiences in re-paying their student debt. Some borrowers can begin repayment immediately after graduation, and some borrowers require payment plans or income-driven repayments according to their income.

Institutional Factors on Academic Success

Limited research on African American women degree completion is available. (Bartman, 2015) literature suggested the four significant issues impacting college graduation rates for African American Women. Those issues include multiple marginalized identities, lack of critical mass, impact on the gender gap, and lack of Black faculty. Bartman's literature offered three

strategic recommendations to ensure the integration of African American women on college campuses. These recommendations include: Black sororities are serving as an element to provide social capital and an intersectional support system; mentoring through faculty in which African American students benefit from the mentoring, as the cohesiveness leads to improvement of persistence, student success, and well-being; contextual counseling. This approach offers African American women students unorthodox counseling through friendships with other African American women. This method contributes to the support of these students in overcoming feelings of separation and invisibility. (Kim & Conrad, 2006) acknowledge that African American students that attend HBCUs are connected to their academic community. Students who forge and maintain positive relationships with faculty are often linked to the curriculum inside and outside of the classroom.

(Kim & Conrad, 2006) reported that the institutional factors that contribute to African American women degree completion are respondents' gender and socioeconomic status of parents, as well as institutional factors such as selectivity and enrollment size. Data has confirmed that African American women are graduating at significant rates compared to Black males. Black women have doubled their enrollment rates and still fall behind Asian and White women (Reid, 2012); (Winkle Wagner, 2015). HBCUs provide an aggressive learning environment specializing in STEM majors, agriculture, medicine, and honors programs (Crosgrave, 2004). Honors programs are momentous in higher education. Numerous HBCUs obtain flourishing honors programs for students who qualify. Students who enroll in honors programs create considerable gains academically and professionally while formalizing opportunities to persist in their education and graduate from professional degree programs (Astin, 1984).

A study facilitated by (Winkle-Wagner, 2015) explored institutional factors and individualistic characteristics of which of these contributions complement African American women academic achievements towards degree completion. According to (Winkle-Wagner 2015) African American women lives are narrowed down in research due to the lack of research and data available surrounding this topic. (Winkle-Wagner, 2015) findings communicated that three parts affect the limiting research. These parts are prominent on individual factors related to college success, instead of institutional factors that incorporate the campus and socioeconomic matters that include race, class, and gender; an absence of deficiency data, within-group

differences among Black women; and formulating the concept of student achievement as persistence or degree completion. Black women experience gender inequities for being Black and a woman. This group desire to succeed is cognitively dependent on the barriers experienced by African American women through slavery and the civil rights movement. Education for generations has been the driving force of achievement. Through civic education, African American women at HBCUs experience inclusive learning around the history of education and how Black women were impacted. Through this movement, Black women at HBCUs are exposed to considerable racial equity and diversity (Levine,2019). Critical Race Theory highlights experiences that may be familiar with African American women at the private land-grant institution.

Critical Race Theory

(Patton, McEwen, Rendon & Howard-Hamilton, 2007) The history of critical race theory has expanded over 30-years, as the functionality of this approach is grounded in social-science research. (Patton, 2007) suggested the critical race theory (CRT) is a perspective that amplifies the climate of racism and challenges white supremacy in the law, education, politics, and other social systems. CRT evolution from the civil rights movement continues to ignite the work of education scholars. The foundational work of the iconic civil rights activist became an advocacy body of work for scholars to examine the connections between race, racism, and law. The challenges African American women face in higher education are two-fold, this population of women in combating race and gender inequalities. In 1863 slavery ended, and racism continued. 157 years later, African Americans still are challenged with racial identity across the globe. (Patton, 2007) introduced racial identity theory as social construction and components of CRT. These portions of CRT are constructed in which privilege and oppression are embedded in racial experiences towards African American people. With racism being stained on the soil of America, racial identity transcends in numerous areas such as: education, career, finances, communities, health access, and mental health.

The experiences of African American women vary from women of other ethnic groups. African American women theoretical framework is rooted in the authentic progression and ideology of Black people in the United States (Howard-Hamilton, 2003). During the 1900's, African American women were not viewed as financial contributors for their families these women served as support to their husbands and maintained the family home with their domestic

obligations (Guy-Sheftall & Bell-Scott, 1989; Payton, 1985). Education of African American women was not available in earlier times. Education achievement was not favored for African American women, as these women were measured as being less than human or slaves. With the existing prevalence of racism in the United States, according to (Patton, McEwen, Rendon, Howard-Hamilton, 2007) scholars debate that race remains underexplored in student development theory as race is often omitted and cloaked in racelessness.

The Emancipation Proclamation allowed African Americans men and women to become educated as freed people. African American women attended college in which they became elementary and secondary teachers. Through African American women attaining their education, they faced oppression, racism, and sexism when their subordinate status was assumed and invoked by white men and women as well as Black men. Stereotypes and inequities consistently affect African American women as students in higher education. These same stereotypes and inequities form roadblocks that often include financial and social challenges. In higher education, academic advisors, faculty, and staff at HBCUs are keenly aware of the historical experiences of the African American woman, understanding their needs related to their culture, personal, and social contexts. African American women as students on campuses around the country, both HBCUs and PWIs, encounter higher risks, as African American women occupy a place previously held by the white women, (Carrol, 1982).

Social Engagement

At HBCUs, student lead clubs and organizations possess enriched history and memories for students who participated in these extracurricular activities. Students on campuses often seek out peer groups to create friendships and a community of support. Social Support is viewed as a meaningful relationship that human beings create with one another (Dressler, 1991; Kim 2010). Student involvement contributes to students returning to college, which increases persistence ratios. Campus clubs and organizations are valuable to student's productivity while enrolled. This variety of groups offers student culture and a learning experience, which can contribute to their skill set. Students who participate in activities and hold leadership roles, exhibit development in their leadership competencies (Hotchkins, 2017).

Service initiatives are significant among HBCUs, as many HBCUs missions are centered on service and community. These institutions create extracurricular opportunities for students to thrive in service. As a part of social support, HBCUs are recognized nationally for their football

games, bands, dance teams, sororities, and homecomings. Many students that attend these events note that their experience in these activities is the most recognizable collegiate highlight for them. African American women can join any of these facets, in which these experiences often become life-long connections.

Review of the literature

The scholarly research and peer-reviewed articles provided in this chapter included an overview of the history and experiences lived by African American women, enrolled in four-year, degree-granting, HBCU institutions, not specifically private. Due to the limited data recorded and reported on African American women and their degree completion, there is only general data provided by NCES for African American women degree completion, such as this population of students graduating within 150% of normal time at a 4-year degree-granting institution. (NCES, 2020) only recorded and reported on selected statistics on degree-granting HBCUs by the control and level of institution: Selected years, 1990 through 2018. These statistics did not indicate if the institution is public or private. Furthermore, under this table, the degrees conferred only pertain to 2017-18 see Appendix A-Selected statistics on degree-granting HBCU, by control and level of institution: Selected years, 1990 through 2018.

The span of this research is conducted between 2002-2009 in which data was located on degree completion trends on African American women that attend HBCUs, see NCES 2018 (Appendix B-Trend Generator). The trends indicated the variance of degree completion percentages between the years. There can only be assumptions on what caused the fluid degree conferred percentages. Previous literature suggests that African American Women received silent and visible racism at institutions outside of HBCUs; however, they continued to succeed in completing their degree. The data that is relevant to the research is delicate next to none-existent in finding the completion rates for African American women. (NCES, 2019) Table 322.20 Bachelor's degrees conferred by post-secondary institutions, by race/ethnicity and sex of student: Selected years, 1976-77 through 2017-18. This table only provided the race and gender of African American Women attending any four-year degree, not specifically to HBCUs, and did not include the 2002 academic year see Appendix C. NCES Table 322.20 Bachelor's degrees conferred by postsecondary institutions, by race/ethnicity and sex of student: Selected years, 1976-77 through 2017-18.

The limitation section of my study provides an outline of the gaps and limits research on my topic. Enrollment for African American women students during the years that are indicated in my study 2002-2009 varied during this span. In 2002, enrollment of African American women at the HBCUs was a total of 183,575, and in 2009, 197,132 suggested by (NCES,2018). Although graduation data for African American women are available, it is limited and is further discussed in the limitations section.

Chapter 3: Methodology

HBCU (HBCUs) are essential to advancing the education and careers of African Americans through the institution's cohesiveness and distinct academic approaches. (Simms & Bock, 2014) describe HBCUs as having been considered a single institution group in the United States higher education for generations. According to (Gavazzi, 2018) land-grant colleges & universities involve a significant position in the terrain of American higher education. The formation of HBCUs learning format replicated liberal arts colleges, offering compatible courses which derived from the colonial colleges that were a direct import from Europe (Rudolph, 1977) in addition to social engagement fraternities, sports, and rituals created to enrich student's college experiences, (Cohen & Kisker, 2010). HBCUs are recognized for these institutions ability to foster a supportive and nurturing environment that promotes psychosocial development among Black students, (Fries-Britt & Turner, 2002; Gasman, Lundy-Wagner, Ransom, & Bowman, 2010).

Statement of The Problem

African American women have been marginalized for centuries. (Patton, 2010) noted that women make up most students in higher education across institutional sectors and types; male privilege is pervasive, often not visible, and instrumental in shaping students experiences of all genders. (Downing & Roush, 1985) suggested that women face gender discrimination and oppression in society. (Patton et al., 2007) suggested that Critical Race Theory (CRT) is so embedded in the fabric of the U.S. population that CRT has become indictable, particularly for individuals who possess the power to rid of racial hierarchies. Racial tension has existed in the United States for centuries, beginning with slavery through the civil rights movement from 1954-1968. (Dubois, 1903) accurately predicted that the problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color line. This statement is still factual 117 years later, in the twenty-first century. (Delgado, 1995; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001) explained that the responses of African Americans are factual and centered to challenging racial discourse embedded in white supremacy.

African Americans have spent most of their lives impacted by racism. The infliction of dominance and oppression exists among African Americans. In the literature review, critical race theory and racial identity were introduced, as racial identity is displayed in these actions, as (Patton et al., 2007) define racial identity as a sense of group or collective identity, based on

one's perception that he or she shares a common racial heritage with a racial group. The inequities of race in higher education on marginalized populations transcends into student development and degree completion of African American women. (Patton, 2010) noted that since the 1970s, student affairs practitioners recognized and acknowledged the restrictions of previous theories addressing diverse experiences of gender, race, and ethnicity in higher education. These limitations on African American women who have been exposed to double oppression by being African American and a woman.

Their racial and gender makeup has made these women pursue higher education vulnerable to social and psychological trauma through Ruthellen Josselson Theory of Women Development (Josselson, 1987a). At the Land- Grant HBCU, the disparity between women and men exists, as the institution enrollment consists of 62.8% women and 37.2% males, according to (College Factual, 2020). According to (dataus.io, 2017) the institution in 2017 graduated more African American Women than men, as 160 more women than men received degrees. (Libassi, 2018) described the neglected college race gap, in which the author revealed racial disparities among college completers. For decades media, research, and life experiences have displayed the gaps amongst Black people in higher education, including the inequities between races that complete college. According to (Libassi, 2018) If U.S. colleges and universities eliminated these gaps among their graduates alone—not considering disparities among those who do not make it to graduation—a large number of students would have a different credential.

Currently, there is limited research that exists specifically related to my research question. What factors support degree completion for African American women students at a land-grant historically Black college university (HBCU)? However, extensive research is published that encompasses African American women issues and supports their college success strategies. (Bartman, 2015) journal article on African American women in Higher Education: Issues and Support Strategies noted that "African American women appear to be making notable progress in higher education based on participation and degree attainment rates." Bartman's article did not provide further research on sources such as academic advising and financial aid, which are vital contributors to retention, persistence, and graduation rates. According to (Winkle-Wagner, 2015) African American women lives may be narrowed down in research that includes them through (a) an emphasis on individual factors in college success instead of institutional (within college campuses) or more significant socio-structural issues (race, class, or

gender inequities in the larger society) (b) a lack of analysis of within-group difference among Black women, and (c) framing the notion of success as persistence or completion of a student's degree program instead of self-identified or unique notions of success such as collective uplift, well-being, or satisfaction.

In Winkle-Wagner's research, the author examined 119 studies on African American women after enrolling in college. Winkle-Wagner's research was broad and did not contain participant interviews to retrieve the direct experiences of these women. Winkle-Wagner utilized an integrative approach reviewing literature from across methodologies and academic disciplines (Cooper, 1982; Whittemore & Knafl, 2005). This study centered its findings around the previous peer-reviewed studies of African American women.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study described the history, culture, and setting of the land-grant HBCU, while examining the experiences of the participants and the factors, which are academic advising, social engagement, financial aid, and culture environment. This study determined through observations and interviews that the 5 factors (culture environment, academic advising, student engagement, financial aid, and faculty mentoring) contributed to participants degree completion.

The Research Question

What factors support degree completion for African American women students at a land-grant historically Black college university (HBCU)?

Delimiters and Limitations

Delimiters

The researcher interviewed participants remotely. The selection of the participants is specific to the scope of my study, which determined What factors support degree completion for African American women students at a land-grant historically Black college university? Focusing on African American women alumni of the land-grant HBCU, enhanced my study by recalling details of experiences specifically with academic advising, social engagement, financial aid, and culture environment. The participants that were interviewed for this study enrolled at the institution as first-time and full-time degree-seeking students and completed their undergraduate degrees at the institution between 2002-2020. In this study, there was no allowance for transfer students or start-stop.

Limitations

Previous research has conducted studies of African American women and their graduation rates at Predominantly White institutions (PWI). There are limited studies conducted on my research question. The college completion among African American women at HBCUs remains underexplored, as prior research investigates the African American population that includes both men and women and not women as a single homogenous group. There is an extensive amount of research available on African American Males; (Powell, 2013) contributed a phenomenological study that explored lived experiences of successful African American men attending an HBCU in the Midwest.

With the limited studies on African American women degree completion, (Kim & Conrad ,2006) suggested that the literature on Black college students at HBCU campuses tend to have backgrounds that differ from those at Historically White College Universities (HWCU). These backgrounds include academic differences, which African American students score below their white counterparts (Nettles & Perna,1997). African American students reside from lower socioeconomic scales compared to their peers at HWCUs (Allen, 1992; Allen and Farley, 1986; Kim, 2002a). The limiting research on African American degree completion at HBCUs suggests that African American women are narrowed down within research (Winkle-Wagner, 2015).

My research highlighted the experiences and identified factors contributing to degree completion for African American women at a land-grant HBCU. My findings included challenges that the subjects experienced and how they were able to combat those challenges.

My questions yield details from the subjects and examined the style and frequency of academic advising, social engagement, financial aid, and culture environment. In exploring these factors and interviewed participants which shared their experiences of what promoted their degree completion. I asked nine open-ended sub-questions regarding academic advising, financial aid, faculty mentoring, and social engagement, to determine each categorical impact.

Research Design

Chapter 3 focused on the Ethnography methodology for which I fully described a culture in a particular place. According to (Creswell, 2007; Zaharlick, 1992) ethnography aims to make sense of a culture-sharing group. Ethnography provided my study with a grounded culture-sharing group, examining actions, interactions, and processes from within the exact location.

(Iloh, 2016) facilitated a study on Exploring the For-Profit Experience: An Ethnography of a For-Profit College to understand and reveal hidden elements, dynamics, and factors at the college, for which the institution is rooted in an empirically understudied section. (Iloh, 2016) suggested that ethnography is applicable for collecting data on a particular group or organization; ethnography also benefits ideas in culture spaces. (Creswell, 2013) stated that ethnography is rooted in the early 20th-century anthropologist, including Boas, Milinowski, Radcliffe-Brown, and Mead. These researchers utilized the natural science approach in studying cultures, while during the 1920s and 1930s, Park, Dewey, and Mead facilitated anthropological field methods to the study of culture groups in the United States (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992).

As the researcher, I was observant of the participants behavior, gestures, and language. Investigating these patterns about my studied population allowed the ethnography design to interpret the commonalities of the culture-sharing group. Through participant observations and interviews, this methodology allowed me to immerse myself in the subject's background, learning about their families, habits, and beliefs and how these entities shape their experiences at the HBCU. (Agar, 1980) stated that ethnography is a way of studying a culture-sharing group and the final conclusions of the research. The significance within my research allowed for the ethnography to disclose the meaning behind the participants behaviors. African American women share commonalities in behaviors, social event attendance, extracurricular activities, music, and the list expands. African American women share commonalities within their language; (Obgu, 1987) suggested a theoretical approach to minority academic abilities that promote student success.

The study participants consisted of African American women who identified themselves as African American and African American/Black. The language that Obgu used to determine ethnicity differed and was constructed based on custom, personal preference, political ideology, historical background, and ancestry. Obgu's study concluded that the African American women shared a common language and shared experiences. (Creswell, 2018) noted that ethnography research is interested in examining common patterns, and qualitative research is interpretive; the researcher is often connected in a sustained and intensive experience with the subjects. As the researcher, I remained unbiased in my study by utilizing the realist ethnography approach, based on my own academic experience with the land-grant HBCU. As an alumna of the private co-educational land-grant HBCU, I have been exposed to the rural campus with minority enrollment

and engaged with factors such as; faculty mentoring, social engagement, financial aid, and academic advising.

My research was intentional in understanding the behaviors of other African American women and their journey on the path of degree completion. For decades, published research has indicated that African Americans (Men & Women) lag behind other ethnic groups in degree completion. The (Postsecondary National Policy Institute, 2018) suggested that African Americans are catching up to their white counterparts in terms of college enrollment; there has been less progress in closing the degree attainment gap. In 2018, 23% of the African American population aged 25 to 29 held a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to 44% of the white population in the same age range. In the academic year of 2017–18 (NCES, 2018) noted, the majority of degrees conferred to Black students were conferred to Black female students at all levels.

As students enrolled at the HBCU, African American women seek academic and social support in their undergraduate programs, regardless of their classification of first-year, first-generation, traditional, or non-traditional. Over 50% of the private land-grant HBCU, African American women student population are from different states. Students find it challenging to adjust to their new setting, as the institution is located in a rural town. The majority of the students that attend the University are from out-of-state and are from a metropolis city. When students can adapt to this adjustment, it requires these students to locate support networks from peers, faculty, or campus administrators.

The support needed for these students is necessary, as these women gravitate to resources that can assist in the success of their academic and social connections on campus. Often at the HBCU, advisors, professors, and teacher apprentices' mentor numerous students. This approach makes it difficult for the faculty and administrators to meet with students based upon the volume of students they meet with regularly. These students have frequently faced challenges in scheduling meetings due to the number of students that faculty advise. In this instance, students seek help from departments such as financial aid, advising, faculty mentors, and friends. My research interviewed 9 participants in a naturalistic setting, observing their tone and body language responses to the questions. Participants were selected based upon their ethnicity, gender, and the year their degree was conferred. Participants shared experiences on the

challenges and success of their encounters at the land-grant HBCU, and assisted them along their journey of degree completion.

Role of The Researcher

As a researcher, I was instrumental in this study. I was responsible for collecting and analyzing the data, coordinating and facilitating interviews, and drafting and utilizing the interview protocol.

Collecting Data

(Creswell, 2013) describes data collection activities occurring in multiple phases: Locating the site and individuals, gaining access and making rapport, purposefully sampling, collecting data, recording information, resolving field issues, and storing data. With having a connection and experiences to the land-grant HBCU, I established a familiar rapport with the participants, with the thoughtfulness of creating a safe space to share willingly. Within this research, efficacy is included to outline my strategy, method, approach, data collection procedure, sample selection, research process, classification of data analysis, and the ethical considerations of the research limitations of the study (Pryczak & Bruce, 2014). Prior to my research, I submitted my IRB narrative for IRB approval. Regarding this research, I followed the National Louis University (NLU) IRB policies and procedures for conducting research and selecting participants. The IRB ensured compliance with NLU policies and procedures for conducting ethical research involving human participants (NLU.EDU).

Research involves collecting data from people about people (Punch, 2005). The data that was collected from my participants is protected from misconduct and impropriety that could reflect on their organization or institution and cope with new challenging problems (Isreal & Hay, 2006). As the researcher, I contacted alumni through social media. Before conducting the interview, I emailed participants to remind and confirm their interview dates and check their wi-fi connections. All participants completed a consent form that has been reviewed and approved by National Louis University IRB, for participation which was provided electronically through HBCUresearchdata@gmail.com (Appendix F). Participants completed their contact information (phone number & email) and the day and time participants were contacted. Participants returned all completed consent forms to the email address.

On the day of the interviews, I provided each participant an overview, informing them of the purpose of the study, the amount of time that was needed to complete the interview

(interviews last up to 1 hour) and how I utilized the information. I informed participants of my note-taking during the interview. I shared the notes that I recorded with the participants at the end of each interview, in addition to a copy of the interview were emailed to each participant. After completing the overview of the interview process, I informed participants of the interview protocol. The interview protocol possessed nine-open ended questions allowing space in between each question to record notes. Each participant was interviewed via zoom. The participants selected their space to which they wanted to complete the interview, with a preferred setting that is free of distractions.

Zoom is the preferred tele meeting carrier for NLU. Zoom allowed the participants and researcher to communicate face to face. Participants interacted with zoom by using their electronic devices (mobile devices, I-Pads, laptops, or desktop computers). This mode of electronic interviewing was selected to provide flexibility in communicating with participants. I used audio and video, which supplied me with personal interviews for the study. Also, I recorded anecdotal notes such as tone, facial expressions, trends in language, and additional characteristics that contributed to the study results. I completed each participant interview, and collected enough data from each interview that supported my research question. I asked follow-up questions and documented key details and words that contributed to the study. From this study, participants reflected on their undergraduate experiences while identifying the involvement that influenced their degree completion.

I conducted my study involving 9 African American women who are alumni of the land-grant HBCU. I used an additional 6 participants as my purposeful sample. The purposeful sample was used if a core participant is unavailable or withdraws from the study. The purposeful sample meet the same criteria as the core participants. As the researcher, I had access to these participants through the HBCU alumni social media Facebook page. The participants were identified through social media (Facebook) land-grant university alumni page. The alumni page is a secure page for only alumni of the university. The page operates through a secured Facebook network. I remained sensitive to the outcomes of collecting my data through zoom interviews, as I implemented data collection procedures designed to acquire valuable information that will answer my research questions. Video and audio interviews were conducted remotely via the zoom website, which enabled these recording capabilities. During the overview, participants

were informed that their interviews was recorded on my MacBook Air QuickTime Player and stored for the researcher to transcribe responses.

In conducting this study, participants were protected through the initiation of trust as the researcher, as I safeguarded all the data I collected from the interviews. The zoom website allowed for downloads of the recordings to save as a file to the researcher laptop. Each participant has a coded file, with their first and last initials and last-two-digit year representing the year the participant graduated from the HBCU. The file is password protected on the researcher laptop. Zoom meetings were protected by multiple security measures, which include but are not limited to end-to-end encryption, screen share watermarks (email & video) lock meetings (prohibits other participants from joining) and audio signatures (log-in credentials).

Social Media Responses

The individual interviews that were conducted for this study took place virtually. In acquiring this data, students were contacted through connecting with the HBCU alumni page on Facebook. The page administrator provided permission to post my recruitment message; this connection method yielded 100% participation responses. Also, I expanded my recruitment to Instagram to contact participants using the direct message application, as the participants are active on various social media platforms. The researcher sent individual recruitment instant messages to the participants, which participants initials and graduation year uniquely identified them. A sample message is provided below.

SMS 2002,

I hope that this message finds you well. I am completing my Doctorate in Higher Education Leadership at National Louis University- Chicago. I am in my data collection stage. My research topic What factors support degree completion for African American women students at a land-grant historically Black college university (HBCU)? I am seeking TU participants that graduated between 2002-2020. I have attached my recruitment document for your review. I am hoping you can participate. I will need to conduct a zoom interview for roughly 20 minutes (my recruitment document says 45 minutes). If you have time in your schedule, please respond to the email listed on my recruitment document. Thanks so much and talk soon. Also, please share my information with your friends who have graduated from the land-grant institution; I can certainly utilize their feedback as well.

Participants responded to the request via messenger with their verbal consent to participate in the study. Responses from the culture-sharing group were similar in language; based upon the answers, I noted a significant detail in studying this group. Each participant demonstrated support of success for their fellow peers. The exhibit of compassion from each participant was presented throughout the interviews. Through my observations of the email responses, participants were excited regarding their invitation to participate. A few of the participants responses are shared below:

Skylar: Yes! Sis, I'm so proud of you! Whatever you need!

Tracy: Sam, got you.

Kelly: Sam, I will be happy to participate.

Erin: Hey Samantha! How are you doing? Wow, I am excited and proud of you! Yes, I will do it! Let me check my messenger.

Included with the social media instant message is my recruitment document, which can be found in Appendix I.

Introducing the Interview Script

At the beginning of each interview, I provided a script as an overview of the interview expectations. It was significant to note the details in which the interviews will be conducted to create a safe space for dialogue participants. The script is provided below:

The purpose of the participant interview is to collect data to answer my research question: What factors support degree completion for African American women students at a land-grant historically Black college university (HBCU)? This zoom interview will take approximately 30 minutes, allowing additional time for continued recorded conversation. The data collected in this interview will be utilized in the doctoral research, as every participant will remain anonymous and be referred to as "participant" throughout the study. During this recorded interview, you will hear me refer to you by your initials only. Are there any questions at this time? Please inform me during the interview if you need a pause or a break; at this time, the recording will begin.

Interview Scheduling

After participants received their initial recruitment message through social media and agreed to participate in the study, the message below was emailed.

Dear participant,

Thank you for participating in my Doctoral Research Study. What factors support degree completion for African American women students at a land-grant historically Black college university (HBCU)? Attached in this email are three documents: A research compatibility questionnaire, an informed consent observation interview form, and an informed consent video consent form. At your earliest convenience, please complete and return all documentation to me via email by Wednesday, October 28, 2020, at HBCUresearchdata@gmail.com. Once documentation is received, I can then schedule our zoom interview based on your availability on the compatibility questionnaire. Please feel free to connect with me for any additional questions at (XXX) XXX-XXXX or via email at HBCUresearchdata@gmail.com Thank you so much for your time and consideration.

Participants submitted their documentation by the due dates. Upon receipt of the documentation, a google calendar invite was emailed to remind the meeting date and time. Once interviews were completed, the researcher shared the zoom interview and copies of consent documents through google drive with participants. The researcher followed up with each participant with their scheduled zoom meeting time in an email below.

Dear participant,

*My hope is that this email finds you well. I have scheduled our interview for **Friday, November 6, at 1:00 pm CST**. The zoom log-in details are located in the description section of your calendar invite. Please feel free to connect with me with any questions or if we need to reschedule for another day. I look forward to seeing you soon.*

Interviews Scheduling Results

As most of the participants are full-time employees, except for one who recently graduated from the institution in May of 2020, the participant was seeking full-time employment at the time of their interview. Before the interviews, some participants had to reschedule due to timing conflicts; those interviews took place on another date and time.

As the researcher, I exercised flexibility in scheduling, as this was necessary to execute the interviews. Discussions took place throughout the week and weekend from early morning hours

through late in the evening. Caution was given to time, as participants reside in different time zones, attention to detail in emailing calendar invites was required to ensure that the researcher and participant were both present for the zoom interviews at the correct time. One of my participant interviews took place while the participant was driving, returning home from out of town. This level of commitment exemplified by participants highlighted their dedication to the University and the research being conducted.

Analyzing the Data

As the researcher, my study analysis is reflective of (Wolcott, 1994b) traditional approach using the anecdotal notes as (sketching ideas) trends to identify patterned regularities (reducing codes to themes) contextualized with the framework from literature (relating categories to the analytic framework in literature) and display findings in tables (displaying the data). Each participant has an electronic file folder on my desktop. This folder holds the audio and video versions of the interviews. I have the capability to playback the interview and transcribe. Having the audio and video file protected on my laptop allows me to playback interviews as many times as necessary to ensure the validity of the data that is being transcribed.

This strategy assisted me in remaining organized with the data. Also, for each interview, I recorded notes in the participants folders. These notes were typed with bullet points and were used to provide additional detailed descriptions, to code the frequency of responses; and the notes were utilized in the discussion portion of my research. The notes for coding were analyzed to verify themes in the participants experiences within the key departments on the HBCU campus. (Wolcott, 1994b) noted that not all information is used in a qualitative study, and some may be discarded. The notes recorded during the interviews were also be used to ask additional questions about the participants experience at the HBCU. I included all details of the interviews and any adverse findings in my research.

Measures

This study measured the participants output of answers to the nine open ended-questions regarding culture environment academic advising, financial aid, faculty mentoring, and social engagement see Appendix H. I coded participants responses to determine the frequency of similar answers, language, culture beliefs, and behaviors.

Methodology

As the researcher, I employed the ethnography approach. The participants are of a homogenous culture-sharing group. A qualitative research design will best answer the research question. I observe behaviors, beliefs, and language to recognize if there is a correlation between participant patterns and values and degree completion at the HBCU. In interviewing each participant, I am observing these characteristics; this method provides the researcher with depth and detail, shared through the experiences of the studied participants. (Dalrymple & Nestel, 2019) found that qualitative research consists of omitting the theory evidence when heightening quality and verifying the design. The research question is phrased explicitly for the researcher to reveal which factors contribute to degree completion, seeking to determine the how, where, and when of the research question.

In understanding how the study will examine the participants answers to the sub-questions, as the researcher, I will also understand the reasons why the women attended the land-grant HBCU, for which I seek to understand and identify participants biases, values, culture, and socioeconomic status as these components serve as characteristics of the participants. Through these experiences shared from the participants, this action can potentially shape their interpretation of what participants consider factors that contributed to their degree completion.

Understanding why the participants selected the institution will provide the researcher with insight that could lead to degree completion. In exploring the research question, as the researcher, I can carefully examine critical components of the study, which will be revealed from the participants answers to the researcher sub-questions. The qualitative method will pair with the research question in utilizing the participants experiences to determine the impact of the contributing factors for degree completion.

Before beginning the interviews, a call for participants will be posted on the HBCU closed Facebook page. The message reads as follows; *I am conducting a research study on What factors support degree completion for African American women students at a land-grant historically Black college university (HBCU)? For my Doctoral Program in Higher Education Leadership capstone, I am seeking 9 African American women who graduated from the institution between 2002-2020 to participate in a 45minute interview. If you are interested, please email me your contact information at HBCUresearchdata@gmail.com. As the researcher, I will contact the participants via email to screen for research compatibility, ensuring that*

participants meet the criteria needed for the study. In the email, I will list out five questions to confirm compatibility. (See Appendix E).

All documentation was returned via email to me one week before the initial interviews. I emailed participants a reminder and confirmation of their interview dates and to inform participants to check their wi-fi connections. On the day of the interview, I entered the zoom room 10 minutes before the interview. Once the interview began, I introduced myself and provided an interview overview. Participants was informed of the purpose of the study, the amount of time that was requested to complete the interview (interviews lasted up to 1 hour) and the plan for utilizing the information collected during the interviews. I asked participants if there are any clarifying questions I can answer or statements that participants may have had. I reviewed all terminology that was used in the interview. I offered each participant a copy of their interview. I utilized (Creswell, 2018) interview protocol (Appendix G). All interviews took place remotely; participants had the leisure of interviewing from any location of their choice, with the request of being accessible through video, additionally I requested that participants interview at a location that is minimally accessible to noise.

Selection of The Research Site

The research site is a land-grant HBCU located in a rural area in the southeastern part of the United States. The institution is rich in culture and obtains significant groundbreaking academic programs in various schools on campus. The university has graduated and continues to award degrees to African American women at a significant rate. The study of the target population provides the researcher with details on vast experiences lived by the participants interviewed in this study. The site was selected to highlight participants engagement throughout their undergraduate process that promoted their degree completion. The description of the institution was only provided to protect the identity of the university. The participants in this study are graduates of the university and no longer reside at the institution, for which there will be no facilitation of my research on site.

Ethical Protection of Participants

In remaining ethical, I was aware of the ethical issues that may have occurred; it was my responsibility to protect the participants through implementing and upholding integrity and confidentiality. Before conducting my study, I sought appropriate IRB approval from National Louis University- Chicago. Examination of ethical standards occurred to ensure that standards

are being met within various areas of my study. The selection of my remote site in which I conducted my research was safe and secure, as the observation and interviews took place remotely.

Gaining Access to Participants

As cited by (Creswell, 2013) the participants provided permission to be studied, as gaining access to the individuals involved several steps. I completed the collective IRB Training Initiative (Citi) which focuses on protecting human participants being used in this study. Also, IRB approval was initiated for this study to ensure the protection of the participants and abiding by the code of ethics in studying human participants.

Selecting The participants

(Creswell, 2013) suggests selecting culture themes, issues, or theories to study the group. This approach provides an organized structure related to the culture-sharing group. The participants were selected via the land-grant HBCU alumni page on social media and responded to my call for participation in my research study. Participants for my research were selected based upon their affiliation status with the land-grant HBCU. Participants were required to be African American women; additional consideration was given extended to bi-racial students, or origin is from outside of the United States. Participants are alumni of the land-grant HBCU and have a degree completion year between 2002-2020.

Participants

(Creswell, 2013) describes purposeful sampling as the inquiry of selecting participants and sites for their study, as the researcher can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study. A convenience sample of English-speaking 9 African American women participants were interviewed for this study. These women have all graduated from the land-grant institution and have obtained various degrees, as specific degree majors were not a requirement for this research. The participants of this study classified as middle-class and consist of first-generation participants and participants who are not first-generation. Some of the participants graduated Summa cum Laude, and some graduated Magna Cum Laude. Some of the participants are members of various African American sororities represented on campus (Delta Sigma Theta, Alpha Kappa Alpha, & Zeta Phi Beta). The participants fall in the age range between 32-41. This group of homogeneous participants is

reflective of a shared culture group. According to (Creswell, 2013) all participants need to have stories to tell about their lived experiences.

Significance of The Study

Experts in literature have argued that graduation rates at HBCUs are not comparable to graduation rates at other institutions (Gasman et al., 2009). Consequently, there is underexplored literature that focuses solely on African American women degree completion rates at HBCUs. These studies are conducted collaboratively and reported on as African American completion (Men & Women) rates at Predominately White Institutions (PWI's) and not designated by gender. African American women are completing their degrees within 6-years, 150% of standard time, at their first institution, attending for the first time, according to (NCES, 2019). My study will inform readers of the first-hand experiences that African American women at the land-grant HBCU are exposed to, through personal interviews and their storytelling of challenges and success, that assisted in their degree completion.

Preliminary Pilot Findings

The preliminary research related to my research questions is minimal, next to nonexistent. Some studies are close to my research, but not exact. In my literature review I mentioned the works of (Bartman, 2015) and (Winkle-Wagner, 2015) which share some similarities in studying the African American women culture group. Through the interviews and determining the 5 factors, which include: Culture environment, academic advising, student engagement, financial aid, and faculty mentoring. The participants insisted that culture environment had a direct impact on their degree completion.

Expected Outcomes

From my research, the data collected from the interviews was utilized to consider academic approaches and the revamped institution supports to continue to promote degree completion among African American women. Peer-to-peer mentoring is a mode of support on all campuses. Through this research, I made the recommendation for the land-grant HBCU to invest financially, space, and resources into faculty mentoring as the research indicates that these relationships encourage cognitive development. (Aleman, 2000) additional research supports peer-to-peer social engagement as a decisive role in college success. Faculty mentoring is the essential expected outcome, as evidence suggest that this strategy aids success for Black women (Gallien & Preston, 2004; Lee, 1999; Lundberg & Schreiner, 2004; Patton, 2009; Strayhorn &

Saddler, 2009; Suarez-Balcazar, Orellana-Damacela, Portillo, Rowan, & Andrews-Guillen, 2003). As the researcher, it is my goal that the university utilizes the findings to recruit more faculty to mentor African American women on campus.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Findings

Chapter 4 highlights my post-interviews, delimiters, and limitations, describing, classifying, and interpreting data into codes and themes. This chapter also includes a representation and visualization of the data and participant voices of their personal experiences on the HBCU land-grant campus and how their experiences connect with the categories. Initially, my participant group consisted of 10 African American women; due to the Covid-19 pandemic that occurred nationally in winter of 2019-present, this impact on the nation was directly affected by the participant group. Chapter 4 examines the findings in my research study on What factors support degree completion for African American women students at a land-grant historically Black college university (HBCU)? This study focuses on 5 factors: academic advising, faculty mentoring, social engagement, financial aid, and culture environment. In utilizing the ethnography research design, the findings featured the three aspects of data analysis suggested by (Wolcott,1990b) description, analysis, and interpretation of the culture-sharing group. QSR NVIVO 12 is the selected software for this study to analyze, manage, shape the qualitative data, and display the created codes and categories. (Martin,1990) suggested data analysis strategies that help pay close attention to forms of information to analyze qualitative data in all approaches. Those approaches include:

- Dismantling a dichotomy (public/private, nature/culture).
- Examining Silences-What is not said.
- Attending to disruptions and contradictions, where text fails to make sense.
- Focusing on the element that is peculiar in the text, what is conceivable or permissible.
- Interpreting metaphors as a rich source of multiple meanings.
- Analyzing double entendre that may point to an unconscious subtext.

The above approaches are intertwined throughout my data analysis of this research. Within my data analysis and representation of the culture-sharing group, the participants attended the HBCU land-grant from 2002-2020 and resided in various parts of the United States. These graduates hold careers in different sectors which include, business, education, government, and non-profits. The participants careers are in relation to their degrees conferred by the HBCU land-grant university. In conducting my research, I remained intentional of the participants I needed to interview to yield meaningful data for my participant recruitment results.

Participant Recruitment Results

Post my methodology section in chapter 3; I implemented the steps in interviewing my research participants. Chapter 3 included Appendix D description table; this data is significant to my research, as it provides demographic data about the participants. The information was extracted from the compatibility questionnaire and placed in the respective columns on the table. The data includes the participants average age (40) gender identification (Women) and overlap in degree majors between psychology and business. Through the Identification, my participants during a national pandemic affected my recruitment efforts, highlighting my research delimiters and limitations.

Delimiters & Limitations (COVID-19)

My target population of African American women complimented my ethnography approach in examining culture-sharing groups. Initially, my study begins with interviewing 10 participants with a sample size of 6. Conducting a research study during a national pandemic deemed itself difficult at various levels. With the impact that COVID-19 had nationally, my sample size was comprised, as my sample size participants begin to withdraw from the study. With my reliable recruitment as the researcher, I remained with my 10 participants. As I wined down to my last interviews, my 10th participant had to remove themselves due to the pandemic's direct impact on their family; this left 9 participants interviewed for this study, which equates to a 90% participation rate. The 9 participants of my study were interviewed regarding the 5 factors organized in my research as categoric themes.

Category Themes

Culture Environment

Understanding how African American history connects with HBCUs helps the participant value the culture environment. The culture environment was the leading factor in my research, which is why the 9 African American women students decided to attend the land-grant HBCU. All the 9 participants concluded that they attended the land-grant HBCU, as the participants wanted to surround themselves with people who look like them. 4 out of the 9 participants resided from southern states, for which the 4 participants shared that their perspective on culture environment is embedded in the civil rights movement, for which they learned about during high school.

Shante

Shante, who is currently 40-years old, graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Business in 2003. Shante is from Montgomery, Alabama where she was born and raised. The participant attended an all-black high school in Montgomery, that elevated black history and HBCUs. In asking the participant the question of: Why did you select to attend a land-grant HBCU? Shante shared that, *"I wanted to experience being around students who were more like myself." It was vital for me to connect with other students that shared the same understanding and value of the culture environment.* The participants passion for the culture environment stems from the Montgomery Alabama boycott, Claudette Covin, and the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church, where Dr. Martin Luther King was Pastor between 1954-1960.

Academic Advising and The Financial Aid Process

Erin

Erin, who is 41 years old is from New York. Erin has a thick east coast accent and is extremely blunt. Erin graduated from the land-grant HBCU in 2002, and hold a Bachelor of Arts degree in English and a Bachelor of Arts in Library Science. Erin's experience and perspective on HBCUs were different before attending the HBCU. Erin shared that *"The world is not one color, so therefore she had no desire to attend the HBCU."* However, the last-minute decision changed her life. Academic advising and the financial aid process were a necessity at the HBCU. 8 out of the 9 participants in this research maximized their academics based upon their academic advising encounters.

When asked of Erin, what was your experience in navigating the academic advising and financial aid process at the Land-grant HBCU? Did you have an academic advisor? Erin shared, *"The academic advising was just like basic. I was an English major. I felt like I got more support from my employment, which I worked at the school's library than I necessarily did from my advisor.* 7 out of 9 participants understood the financial aid process. Understanding the financial aid process, especially for a freshman entering the university, can be viewed as overwhelming. For Erin, this was the case. In the follow-up question related to Erin's understanding of financial 'Erin shared, *"In the beginning during my first semester, I was by myself, my mother was on the East Coast, the process was overwhelming as the financial aid counselor is discussing a lot of information and saying a lot of numbers at one-time. I did not understand at first, so I had to ask*

questions repeatedly. I went to the financial aid office every day". It took some time to learn the ins and outs of financial aid; I had it under control by my sophomore year. Often, students experience barriers in understanding the financial aid process; through my research, it was disclosed that if students can learn how to manage their financial aid before starting college, they would better handle and understand the process.

Faculty Mentoring

Tracy

Tracy is a 39-year-old southern belle from the southern state of Louisiana. Tracy graduated from the land-grant HBCU in 2004 with a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and a Bachelor of Science in Biology. Faculty mentoring had a positive impact on Tracy. When asked how did the faculty mentorship support you in completing your degree? Tracy responded, *It was paramount! Just being able to go to my different faculty advisors and without any difficulties that I was there.*

As you know, I was having both student, academic, and personal things that hindered me from completing assignments; it was just a very supportive environment" Faculty mentoring at HBCUs is a part of the learning culture. The mentorship at the land-grant HBCU deliberately provides integration of instruction, scholarship, skills, and competencies designed to elevate students academically and professionally. 6 out of the 9 participants engaged in faculty mentoring. Many of the participants responded to faculty mentoring similarly to Tracy. The participants contribute faculty mentoring as a part of the reason they completed their degrees. The participants shared that the faculty's investment was the drive they needed to succeed.

Social Engagement

Skylar

Skylar is from the outskirts of Georgia, born and raised. Skylar graduated from the institution in 2003 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology. Skylar shared that her experience with social engagement was epic. When asked, what are experiences with social engagement on campus, such as student organizations, sororities did you have? Skylar responded *I was part of the psychology club, and I was part of the Alpha Kappa Alpha book club. While I was there, I joined the NAACP, something that I'm still a member of today.* Sorority and fraternities' parties, football games, clubs and organization meetings, and volunteerism are a few components of the social life at the land-grant HBCU. 9 out of 10 participants were affiliated

with social engagement activities on campus. Social engagement provided participants opportunities to connect with peers outside of the classroom and sometimes off-campus. Most participants found that social engagement created many memories, such as tailgating at football games, house parties, and fashion shows. During the interviews, participants even showed their pictures of these events through zoom screen sharing. The participants connection with social engagement created a solid relationship between the participant and the HBCU. The bonds that are formed from these social engagements at the HBCU are unbreakable.

Financial Aid & Degree Completion

Kelly

Kelly is 41 from the great Midwest state of Illinois. Kelly graduated from the HBCU in 2002 with a Bachelor of Science in Mathematics. When asked, do you consider financial aid contributing to your degree completion? Kelly responded with, *Yes! If I did not have financial aid, I wouldn't have completed college.* Most participants implied that they would not have attended or completed their degrees at the institution without the financial aid they received. In chapter 1, I discussed the influences that financial aid has on degree completion. Most of the participants had the same answer, except 1 participant that shared, *No, and I'll say this, I was in a very fortunate situation where I knew that even if I didn't have enough outside aid, I had home support that would take care of it.* The participants understood and valued their financial aid, as the understood how needed those financial aid award packages were.

Representing the Data: Word Frequency

Through the interviews, I recognized commonalities among responses and language. I created a query utilizing NVIVO 12, a qualitative data analysis application, to determine the top 5 most frequent words that participants spoke through this examination. The most frequent word used to the least word used. The length indicates the number of characters in the word count that shows the number of times the word occurs and the weighted percentage suggests the frequency relative to the total words counted. This query determined that the culture-sharing group responses to interview questions contained carbon answers based upon their behaviors and beliefs about their campus involvement. In understanding the culture-sharing group, I utilize the word frequency to establish participants that share the same background, actions, and interactions. The word frequency table is listed in Appendix J. My research required organization

to capture the essence of the participants interview responses, for which I organized my data into categoric themes.

Organizing the Data into Categoric Themes

Temi and NVIVO12 transcription software were used to transcribe each interview which totaled 6.5 hours of interview time for the 9 participants. The usage of transcription software processing time equated to 2 hours. In reviewing the transcripts, I identified common themes among participants and generated codes. The categories created are listed in Appendix K. These categories derived from the interview questions, observations, and responses to the interview questions for which I interpreted the data below.

Interpreting the Data

Culture Environment

In interviewing my 9 participants to answer the research question, zoom video allowed me to capture facial expressions, hear participants tone and observe body language. The first question was asked to establish a baseline in observing how the participants will respond; why did you select to attend a land-grant HBCU? The participants appeared on camera to remain thoughtful of their responses, as I noticed that each participant pondered on this question and re-stated the question before answering it. This interview question is also categorized as *culture environment*, which is 1 of the 5 factors for this study. Participants responded with a 100% response rate 9 out of 9, that culture environment impacted their degree completion at the institution.

Answers to this question varied, as participants discuss attending the university because having students who looked like them was necessary, attending an HBCU that is rich in culture, history, and founded by African Americans. Several of the answers to the baseline question were the same. During the interviews, I recognized that the participants paused for reflection. This was based upon making the connection of the participants experiences with their reasoning for selecting to attend the institution. This question provided the foundation and purpose for the participants drive to complete their degree at the university. The support of academic advising, faculty mentoring, social engagement, financial aid, and culture environment influences the participants degree completion.

Academic Advising and The Financial aid Process

In my research of the HBCU land-grant, academic advising and the financial aid process were explored to determine if these were factors for African American women enrolled at the university who were completing their degree. The answers differed among participants. Some participants acknowledged that they had a fantastic experience with their academic advisor and were familiar with financial aid and some participants did not interact with their academic advisors. The participants obtained various academic advising and financial aid involvement, which their responses reflected what the participants encountered on campus. Faculty mentoring provided the advising for students in the absence of the academic advisor.

Faculty Mentoring

The interviews in my research indicated that faculty mentoring had a direct impact on participants degree completion. During the zoom, when asked the question, did you have a faculty mentor? participants immediately responded with a yes, either providing the faculty mentor name or a description. It was evident that faculty mentoring was instrumental in many of the participants degree completion. Faculty mentorship expanded the participants connection and served as a counselor for participants who had personal experiences that interfered with their academics. The faculty mentors wraparound approach supported the participants through their degree programs. As part of those wraparound services, social engagement was pivotal for participants retention on campus. The social engagement on campus for participants elevated their commitments to service, leadership, and life-long learning.

Social Engagement

Only 1 out of the 9 participants for this research are a part of a sorority and pledge Delta Sigma Theta during their enrollment at the land-grant HBCU. Participants engaged in several other student organizations that strengthened their abilities as students and allowed them to connect with peers outside of the classroom. In my observations of the interviews, participants appeared passionate in conveying their involvement with other students within a social setting. In participants affiliations with student organizations, they created lasting associations with these clubs that some participants still serve within currently. Some of these clubs, such as; Women in Construction, Order of Eastern Star, NAACP, offered scholarships that positively impact participants financial aid. These scholarships were able to reduce participants cost of attendance.

Financial aid & Degree Completion

We discussed the barriers and benefits of financial aid during the interviews and how these funds directly correlated with participants completing their degrees. When asked this question, every participant responded with a laugh. The laugh was a response as if to say, "are you joking? Of course, financial aid was a contributing factor". It was such a significant component that 8 out of 9 participants acknowledge financial aid contributing to their completion. The responses below explain the magnitude that financial aid had on participants degree completion. In chapter 2 of my research, I discussed the financial implications of financial aid student loans. My interviews indicated that the financial aid department assists and services a disproportionate number of low-income students. Students are often concerned with how they are going to finance their education? However, students are led to borrowing an excessive amount of loans to complete their degrees. In highlighting the 5 factors, to determine the effectiveness of each factor, the NVIVO 12 software coding stripes verified participants most frequent responses to the 5 factors.

Coding Stripes

NVIVO 12 coding software was used in creating the codes to code each participant transcription; this process took up to 2 weeks to execute. Participant transcription files were uploaded into the software to categorize the data. For my research, the words codes and categories are used interchangeably. Using the coding stripes allowed me to capture the most frequent references by participants: faculty mentoring, academic advising, and financial aid. The coding stripes display the content (participants responses to the interview questions). The color graduations indicate the coding density: light gray (minimal coding) to dark gray (maximum coding).

The coding density is calculated based on all the collection of references (categories) that code the content. See Appendix L Coding Stripes. Each participant transcript was coded using 50% of the total codes. To aggregate the data for this research and pinpoint the factors of support for African American women at the land-grant HBCU, I performed various queries to reveal if the 5 supporting factors (academic advising, faculty mentoring, social engagement, financial aid, and culture environment) contributed to degree completion among the participants. With using the coding stripes, I also created a data analysis matrix coding query to authenticate the reliability of my findings, which can be viewed in Appendix M.

Data Analysis Matrix Coding Query

To provide a visual detail of the institutional factor's findings, their significance, and how each category attributed to degree completion, a matrix coding was created that includes the categories and participant demographics. The matrix coding displayed different situational classifications and how the participants connected with the categories. Participants demographics are located in the far-left column on the tables below. The descriptions include their initials and graduation year. The categories are established by letters A- V. The numbers 1 and 0 indicate student responses, 1 represents student response, 0 represents student non-response. Within this matrix are repeated categories, which the software generated in error; those categories are listed as:

- C 1.2 Participant HBCU acceptance
- F 1.2 Participant HBCU acceptance
- D2: Degree Major
- G2: Degree Major.
- E: "Untitled," which is not a code in my research coding themes.

The coding matrix provides a simplistic layout of how the data was captured for the additional categories. The pattern regularities are displayed, providing evidence of participants responses based on their connection with each category. Critical Race Theory indicated that participants share the same beliefs, which revealed that participants had no Critical Race Theory experiences at the HBCU. First-Generation is another category. The majority of the participants indicated that they were not first-generation students, which is considered a pattern of value among participants that their parents valued education. Within the matrix coding, there were shared responses in the faculty mentoring meeting frequency; participants beliefs in this category disclose that they did not frequently meet with their faculty advisor. Based on the participants responses, their experience with faculty mentoring was coupled with the number of times participants met with their faculty mentor. The views of participants associations with their faculty mentor propelled their persistence at the institution. In analyzing the participants responses to all the interview questions, the collective experiences formed structural functionalism and symbolic interactionism between the culture-sharing group.

The matrix coding query answered the research question. *What factors support degree completion for African American women students at a land-grant historically Black college*

university (HBCU)? The data provided below are the participant responses to questions directly related to degree completion 5 contributing factors. Each factor list the number of participant responses out of 9 and the category percentage value. The percentages illustrate the numerical weight of each response. Knowing this data helps me recognize which factor(s) had a maximum impact on African American women degree completion at the HBCU.

Academic advising: 8 out of 9 = 88.8% specified that advising contributing to their degree completion.

- Faculty mentoring: 6 out of 9 =66.7% specified that advising contributing to their degree completion.

- Culture environment: 9 out of 9 =100% specified that advising contributing to their degree completion.

- Student engagement: 8 out of 9 = 88.8%, specified advising contributing to their degree completion.

- Financial aid: 8 out of 9 =88.8%. Specified that advising contributed to their degree completion.

The Matrix Coding Query provided the numeric responses of each category; there were additional categories and responses based on the interview questions asked of the participants.

Additional Categories and Responses

The additional categories below furnished quantitative participant feedback to the interview questions to fully understand the culture-sharing group's learning, socialization, and enculturation. The responses also indicate the effect each category had on participant degree completion. Based upon the interviews, each category below directly impacted the participants values and beliefs while students at the HBCU. These responses resulted in participants persistence and retention. This data is used in the research to identify if other categories can be explored in determining additional factors that may contribute to African American women degree completion at the HBCU land-grant. The data represents the number of responses out of 9, and the percentage represents the numerical weighted average.

A:1 HBCU (HBCU) Land-grant- 8 out of 9 =88.8% indicated their specific knowledge of the HBCU Land-grant Institution.

- B: 1.1: HBCU Knowledge-7 out 9=77.7% had knowledge of HBCUs.
- C:1.2: HBCU Acceptance- 9 out of 9=100% of the participants were accepted to the institution.
- D:2: Degree Major- 9 out of 9 = 100% of the participants indicated their degree major.

- H:2.1: Identified provided degree majors by participants- 9 out of 9= 100% of the participants contributed the institution having their degree major influenced their decision to attend the university.
- I:3: First Generation 2 out of 9= 22.2% categorized themselves as first-generation students.
K:4.1: Enrolled all 4-6 years- Participants remained enrolled at the land-grant institution for all 4-6 years.
- L:5 7: Financial aid participant acknowledgment- 7out of 9, 77.8% indicated experiencing financial aid services, which lead to financial aid being a contributing factor of the participants degree completion.
- M:5.1: Participant understanding of the financial aid process-7out of 9 =77.8% understood the financial aid process.
- O:6: Critical Race Theory -0 participants indicated experience with Critical Race Theory while attending the institution.
- Q:8: Faculty Mentoring- 6 out of 9= 66.6% identified faculty mentoring as a part of their degree completion.
- R:8.1: Faculty Mentor Meeting Frequency-1 out of 9=11.11% recognized that faculty mentoring frequency impacted their degree completion.
- R:8.2: Received Faculty Mentoring 4-6 years- 1 out of 9= 11.11%.
- T:8.3: Retention and Persistence- 4 out of 9= 44.4% indicated that the faculty mentoring participants received encouraged them to remain enrolled at the institution.
- U:8.4: Faculty mentoring utilized as an academic advisor- 3 out of 9 =33.3%.
- V:9 9 out of 9=100% completed their degrees at the HBCU land-grant institution.

In reviewing the additional categories and responses, I created a code comparison treemap in NVIVO to compare each categoric theme, which can be viewed in Appendix N.

Code Comparison Treemap

The code comparison treemap provides a visual representation of the research themes and each participants references regarding each theme. The colors represent the hierarchy level, the highest level is the darkest shade of the color, and each lower level in the hierarchy has a lighter shade of the same color. The table below can also be viewed as the larger squares indicating the most significant coding referencing, and the smaller squares have the least number of coding references. The data represented in this chart is aggregated and specifies the number of items

coded and the number of coding references related directly to the parent theme and sub-themes. My data collected in this study viewed several components: interview responses, observation of behaviors and characteristics, and examining the culture sharing group. Below I concluded my findings from interviewing the 9 participants.

Conclusion

As this research began as a theory, I desired to find a collection of data that could answer my research question: *What factors support degree completion for African American women students at a land-grant historically Black college university (HBCU)?* I examined the culture-sharing group that demonstrated collective patterns of language, behaviors, and actions. Implementing the zoom interviews added real-life experiences through interview questions and responses. The virtual interviews created a foundation to link the ethnography setting with defining characteristics. Through my observations over time, interviews, and data collection, I created theme analysis based upon participants patterns. This continuous set of codes and categories displayed how the culture-group works, including the participants and the researcher views. For this study, I provided an overall culture portrait of my data findings for my research question. It is determined that each of the 5 factors contributed to degree completion among the study participants. The findings are listed from the most significant percentages to the least.

- Culture environment 100%
- Academic advising 88.8%
- Student engagement 88.8%
- Financial aid 77.7%.
- Faculty mentoring 66.7%

In this data analysis process, I understood the essence of the culture-group functionalities and why the ethnography framework was appropriate for this study. The interviews exposed the shared knowledge among the group that has assimilated into ubiquitous patterns. This study's ethnography provided me with a holistic assessment of the culture interpretations of the studied participant.

Glossary

Café- Cafeteria where students gather to eat meals

Family Reunion- an occasion when many members of an extended family congregate.

Greek Steps- Where sororities or fraternities have branded their organization on steps for which only their sorority or fraternity can sit.

Hazing- initiation, ragging, or deposition, refers to any activity expected of someone joining or participating in a group.

Homecoming- An annual event and tradition of welcoming back former students and members and celebrating an organization's existence.

Locals-Residents of the town

Master Promissory Note (MPN) - A legal document in which you promise to repay your loan(s) and any accrued interest and fees to the U.S. Department of Education. It also explains the terms and conditions of your loan(s).

Parent Plus, Loans-Direct PLUS Loans, are federal loans that parents of dependent undergraduate students can use to help pay for college or career school.

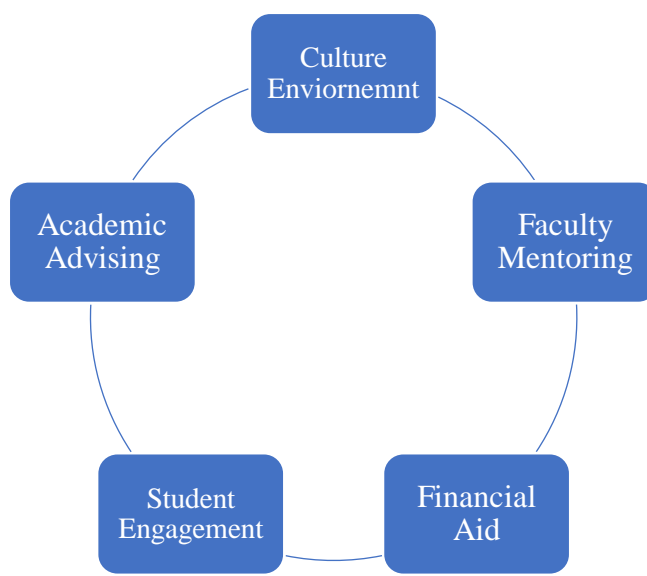
Yard-Where students gather on campus on the lawn during lunch hours.

Sis-Abbreviated for sister, friend.

Strolling- Sororities or fraternities slowly walk-through campus.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion

What factors support degree completion for African American women students at a land-grant historically Black college university (HBCU)? My research found that there are 5 factors that directly impact African American women degree completion at the land-grant HBCU. In this chapter, the 5 factors are referred to as the HBCU African American Women (AAW) 5 factors, those factors are: culture environment, academic advising, faculty mentoring, social engagement, and financial aid (diagram below). The findings in this research indicated that the culture environment significantly impacted degree completion compared to the other listed factors.



Research Implications

Research has indicated that there is minimum to non-existent research regarding my research question. *What factors support degree completion for African American women students at a land-grant historically Black college university (HBCU)?* The study of this population of women is consistently either group together with African American Men, and their educational experiences at HBCUs or African American Women are subjects in research, who are graduate students attending graduate-level programs. My significance of the study in my literature review highlights the minimum amount of data available on degree completion among African American women. (Kennedy,2012) suggested African American women routinely outnumber African American men on the Historically Black College and University (HBCU) campuses. My research offers the land-grant HBCU to examine those 5 institutional factors that propelled the participants in achieving their degrees. The factors for this research emerged from observed interactions at the HBCU. Each factor has a direct effect on the academic and social output of the participants. This research emphasized each participants academic and personal

impact and how these encounters shaped the participants perception of the HBCU. Although my research focuses on those specific 5 factors, culture environment, academic advising, student engagement, financial aid, and faculty mentoring, my study revealed that the participants impacts of each of these categories determined their degree completion.

Findings

My findings indicated the effectiveness of each category that was researched. Specific questions were asked and answered by the researcher and the participants to determine each factors validity. Each participant responded to the categorical questions based upon their experiences at the HBCU. The responses were calculated through NVIVO, a qualitative software that provided numerical percentages. The range of the 5 categories ranges from highest percentages to the least. The highest indicates the participants who answered yes and provided context for the category, and the least includes participants who answered no to the category and provided context. The categories range as follows:

1. Culture Environment
2. Academic Advising
3. Student Engagement
4. Financial Aid
5. Faculty Mentoring

The top 4 categories have high percentages of outcomes based on participants responses. My research found that these 4 categories implied that participants were selected to remain at the HBCU due to the institutions staff and peer's connection and support. These relationships on campus supported participants progress.

Interview Setting

The virtual setting allowed for accessible and flexible interviews. Many of the interviews took place in the participants homes, where 2 of the interviews took place at the participants workplace. The interviews setting allowed the participants to have comfort without needing to be politically correct in their responses. The participants were very candid in all their responses which added a personal enjoyment to the interviews.

Ethnography Fieldwork

Ethnography requires fieldwork, for which I conducted this study virtually. I specifically sought out participants who were enrolled in the institution from 2002-2020 to obtain various perspectives and experiences of the African American women on culture environment, academic advising, faculty mentoring, student engagement, and financial aid. The interactions between 2002 -2020 will look entirely different. During this span, administration and faculty had a change at the university, which caused the approach of student services that include the 5 factors to have some variances. An example of this was observed during the interviews, and was related to academic advising. Participant responses to their experiences with academic advising included:

Kiana

"I had an advisor to walk me through the first process of it; after that, I was all alone."

Leslie

"The academic advisor is fairly easy; my advisor and my professors were beneficial." There are 18 years between the two graduates, which references the changes in supportive services on campus. The advisors in 2020 were more flexible and supportive versus the academic advisors in 2002. Further research on this specific factor will have to be conducted to determine the efficacy.

Fieldwork on the HBCU African American Women (AAW) 5 Factors

Culture Environment

The interviews captured how students viewed those impacts. Over the month of interviewing participants and discussing their experiences, these interactions allowed me to access each participant individually and how the participant connected with the culture-sharing group. The culture environment for participants is held in high regard; participants sought out the HBCU institution that they felt comfortable attending, where students look like them and offer the ability to connect with the history of attending the university and have professors that support their degree completion. Within this historical culture environment, students participated in Sunday Chapel for one semester for their grade in orientation, a required course during the student's first year. The institution is grounded in faith, as the founding site of the university was at a church. During the interview's participants spoke vividly about the culture, their stories in how they survived residing from larger robust cities, in a rural town with "nothing to do," as every participant stated. The town where the institution is located does not have an extensive city infrastructure; it is genuinely noted as a college town. Participants indicated that the rural

environment created an atmosphere to focus on their studies. Participants noted that they would frequently walk or drive to the local grocery store as outings for fun. During these outings, they elevated their connections with peers and met new people from the University.

The town in which the University is located is referred to as small and family-oriented. The town residents are referred to as "locals," as this term is enduring for the residents who live there. Locals would often interact with the students on campus through many events such as sports events, homecoming parades, and career fairs. The students who attended the private land-grant HBCU originated from numerous states and countries worldwide. The atmosphere on campus was described as close-knit, safe, and encouraging. (Mobley, 2017) suggested that HBCUs have consistently operated as engines of social change and racial uplift; HBCUs are recognized as institutions where black culture is placed at the forefront, appreciated, and sustained. It is because of this very aspect that students from around the nation apply to this prestigious institution.

As the university intentionally builds on its history and ability to cultivate student awareness, the participants responses speak volumes and the importance of attending the historic institution and its strategic approach in champion African American women in particular. The institution continues to focus on promoting African American women economic progress, for which this approach has translated into providing resource services for graduates in the areas of career development, community services, and other academic attainments. The African American women who have completed their degrees have become advocates for the university, in which they share their experience as alumni and recruit other students to attend the HBCU. It is important to note that the culture environment was the ultimate deciding factor between all 5 categories when participants were in the university's decision-making stages. The culture environment is recommended to be highlighted in the institutions strategic plan, create collaboration in enhancing culture environment efforts, and strengthen campus culture that provides distinctiveness that facilitates institutional progress.

Academic Advising

Academic advising is a necessary category, as the findings indicated that participants recognized advising as a supportive category. The participants were traditional students who graduated from high school and enrolled directly into post-secondary institutions. This was the African American women first year on campus. 2 participants identified as first-generation,

meaning neither parent had a four-year college degree. In understanding first-generation students, acclimation to the college process requires some adjusting. 2 participants qualified as first-generation, there were not enough participants to determine if being a first-generation student affects how they build positive relationships with their advisors. This study determined academic advisors value, understanding the academic advisors role, and how academic advisors can support the students.

Student Engagement

Student engagement was beneficial to most participants, their ability to forge relationships resulting in 88% of the responses. Only 2 participants who did not engage in social activities on campus had an affiliation with engagement activities through their friends and peers; however, they understood these experiences value. The participants stepped outside of their comfort zones and engaged with social networks external to their majors, this action allowed for participants to form meaningful bonds with other students, for which these bonds were used as networking, to identify scholarship opportunities to pay for school and career advancements post participants degree completion. Student engagement activities were also used as an outlet from academic courses. Within my research, 2 participants were engaged in sorority activities, which led to 1 of the participants pledging in a sorority while enrolled. The other participant became affiliated with another sorority by joining their book club. Participants engagement ranged from national organizations, campus clubs, and degree major student clubs, such as *psychology club*, *biology club*, or *English club*. One of the highlighted clubs that several of the participants mentioned was the region clubs. Students that attend the university originate from various parts of the country. The region clubs represented the region that the participant is from, such as *Northeast*, *Midwest*, or *Southeast*. These clubs allow participants to meet other students from various states within their region. Participants were able to form friendships, for which if someone from that region was traveling home, participants were able to travel with them based upon the bond that was formed.

The university encourages student engagement, in which students can find the campus filled with posted flyers that invite students to various interest sessions, try-out for teams, and volunteer. To further expand student engagement, the institution has fostered the student engagement initiative, which provides opportunities for students to obtain remarkable academic performance and demonstrate leadership skills. Students can become candidates for the

President's Men and Leadership Program (PMWLP). This opportunity creates high-impact extracurricular activities while gaining leadership skills through interacting with peers and faculty. The institution continues to uplift student engagement, as it is viewed as a form of service and commitment to the university.

Financial aid

During the fieldwork of this research, based upon interviews and observations, it was expected that financial aid would be the leading factor that supports degree completion among African American women. It was astonishing to learn that based upon the participants responses, this component rated at number 4, ranging from the highest factor to the least. However, most of the participants validated that they would not have attended the university without the student loans and that it was the financial aid packages that assisted in completing their degrees. Most of the participants indicated that financial aid had a direct impact on their degree completion. The financial aid counseling that accompanied the funding was monumental. Most of the participants knew the financial aid process, which provided awareness and action for participants to advocate for appropriate financial aid packages and understand the number of loans needed to pay for their education at the HBCU. The nurturing approach of the financial aid counselors supported the participants knowledge and abilities to advocate for themselves when reviewing and requesting aid to cover the cost of the tuition, books, and supplies.

Participants describe the financial aid experiences as intense. The process was daunting for those students who received financial aid award packages. Students will stand in a line for hours to speak with a financial aid counselor, that tells the students that they would have to return tomorrow, as the student needed to get a master promissory note signed, or they needed to borrow additional student loans through parent plus, and the student would need to send forms to the parents and obtain signatures. Students indicated during the interviews that they often became frustrated with the financial aid process; it became too cumbersome. Through the participants lived experiences, the financial aid process is one lesson that is ingrained as a part of their HBCU experience. In observing the participants experiences, students could meet other students, forge relationships, and learn through conversations about navigating the financial aid process. Participants revealed that having this experience created stamina for them; not knowing the experience will prepare them for future life encounters.

Faculty Mentoring

The participants responses revealed that not every participant received faculty mentoring. Their reasons varied from not having a faculty mentor to not knowing that they could have a faculty mentor. The prominence of a faculty mentor at the HBCU can change African American women academic performance trajectory and create pathways to degree completion. The institution prides itself on the well-rounded faculty that is employed and their uniqueness in teaching disciplines. Various studies have been conducted on faculty mentoring and student academic performance, which entails that students are more likely to succeed at four-year institutions with the quality of mentoring. The participants understood the intentionality of the level of mentoring they were given, as faculty mentoring promoted African American women academic achievement.

Theoretical Framework

Research and data on degree completion for African American women are minimum, as stated in my literature review. My findings for this scope of inquiry can elevate the continued research in understanding the factors that support degree completion for African American women at a land-grant HBCU. In my literature review, my data stated that African American women graduate from their HBCUs at 150% rate of time, which is equivalent to 6 years when enrolled at a 4-year university. My findings concluded that all 9 participants graduated within 4-5 years, less than the stated 150% rate of time. These success rates were contributed to the 5 factors, significantly the institution culture environment.

The institutional factors on academic success presented in my literature review examined the impacts on African American women graduation rates. Those issues include multiple marginalized identities, lack of critical mass, impact on the gender gap, and lack of Black faculty. The data in my research is based upon the five factors. These factors addressed issues and the findings. These findings indicated that the land-grant HBCU supported African American women by providing a positive culture environment. The positive environment consisted of peers that resembled the participants, encouraged social engagements such as sororities that built leadership skills, and forged lifelong friendships. Additionally, African American women were graduating at high rates and less than 150% rate of time connected to the financial support and black faculty mentoring they received.

Conceptional Framework

Ethnography is an appropriate framework for this research. The culture group for this research consisted of 9 African American Women that resided in different parts of the country and decided to attend the HBCU. During their senior year of high school, the participants applied to the University and were accepted. Although the institution is far from many of the women home states, the university's historical culture attracted the participants. The university founding president has a presence in the African American culture, and the institution is recognized nationally for many first of historically ground-breaking moments. The participants obtained core values of their history before attending the university; the interviews captured these values as the women shared stories of their parents, siblings, parents, and relatives attending HBCUs. These women were aware of HBCUs throughout their upbringing and how these institutions of higher learning prepare Black students for knowledge capacity building and success. One of the participants during the interview shared their connection to the HBCU by sharing their response below.

The tv show A Different World highlighted HBCUs, and because of this, I wanted to attend an HBCU. The participants shared culture behaviors indicated connections, perspectives, ideas, and responses to their experiences. Critical Race Theory was a theme for which all 9 participants indicated that they did not experience any bias or racism while enrolled at the University. During the interviews, I provided examples for this theme, such as:

Were there any racial experiences between faculty that did not identify as African American? Was race an issue in participating in student clubs organizations, being discriminated against based on your skin tone's darkness? The participants responses of *no* to the critical race questions indicated the women interpreted racial bias the same way.

Beliefs

The participants shared their beliefs of the institution in how the university instills character, discipline, and persistence into all the students that attend the university. During the interviews, the participants shared their individual professor experiences in how the professors were invested in the participants academic success. This strategy is a continuum at the university. This invested approach by the university faculty had positive lasting impacts on the participants. According to the (student handbook, 2018) the university prepares students for success. The institution is founded in successfully educating African Americans to understand themselves and

their society. The institution is committed to nurturing students to elevate, challenge, and maximize their full potential.

Behaviors

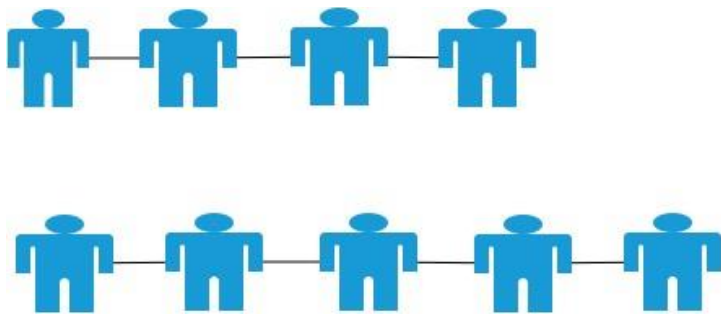
The participant behaviors in this study share resemblances. Throughout the interview, the participants displayed pride in their HBCU. Many participants knew each other as the HBCU institution is a medium-sized university with slightly over 3 thousand students in attendance. Participants sense of pride for the University uplifted the energy of the interviews. All the participants stated that they lived on campus in the dormitories their first year, in which many friendships, routines, and behaviors originated. These participants lived and ate together in the student cafeteria affectionally called the *cafe*. This is where millions of conversations took place, for which the participants received additional academic advising, faculty mentoring, and financial aid support from their peers. The *yard* was another gathering location for students during the lunch hours of 11:00 am-1:00 pm. On the yard, there will be a D.J. playing music, sororities and fraternities strolling or sitting on their Greek steps, and students in various clusters were conversing. The yard was a place where students could take a break from class and connect with their peers.

This experience holds value to the participants post-graduation, as during homecoming season, they seek to return to the yard. These friendships became family, as participants will travel home with their friends on the weekends and holidays. The participants behaviors indicated an affinity for the bonds created on campus. Weekend football games and tailgating were how the culture group connected; this was the time to share laughs, take pictures, and create memories with each other. The participants indicated that they attended these games for the libations, the university band, and the culture experience. Annually, the participants attend the institutions homecoming, which this event is described as a family reunion, where they can see old roommates, classmates, and professors. The institutions history and culture are what brought these participants together on campus.

Participant Connection

The ethnography studied the culture-sharing group; the interviews depict the participant connection. The participants shared connections through different elements such as their degree majors, roommates in the dorms, student engagement, sharing the same financial aid counselor, academic advisor, or faculty mentor. These connections between participants forged organic

support for one another in their degree completion. The participants describe their bonds as a sisterhood, for which they referred to their friends that are African American women as *sis*. It was equally important to them that their peer performed academically well in their courses and had to access the resources they needed to complete their degrees. The participants describe the sisterhood as devoted. In my observation of the participant connection, the sisterhood is enduring, for which the participants indicated that these connections still exist as their *sis* has played a significant role in their lives post-degree completion, from career to weddings, and the raising of their children. The NViVO illustration below provides a visualization of the 9 participants and their connections. The line between each participant indicates the associative line in how the participants are connected.



The Impact of HBCUs

The United Negro College Fund has been in support of HBCUs since its inception in 1944. According to unfc.org, This organization was created to fiscally support Black families to pay for the college education for their children. To date, the philanthropic organization funds 37 HBCUs through scholarships. Often there have been debates on how well does HBCUs prepare African American students for the workforce? In 2015, the Gallup -USA Funds Minority College Graduates Report initiated a study to determine the validity of students preparedness that attend HBCUs. The findings showed that HBCUs provided Black students with a better experience than Black students would receive at non-HBCUs. The study determined that Black HBCU graduates are likely to thrive in purpose and financial well-being, than Black graduates who completed their degrees at non-HBCUs. According to the (U.S. Department of Education, 2020) there are 105 HBCUs that the department recognizes, for which HBCUs provided the basis for solid academic achievement among Black students.

HBCU Policy & Legislation

The institution is recognized as a Land-grant Historical Black College & University, a part of the second Morrill Act of 1890, in which 19 HBCUs were established under this act. Over time, HBCUs continued to lag Predominately White Institutions related to funding, financial aid

awards, and degree attainment, these components were highlighted in chapter 1. With the existing financial disparities between HBCUs and PWIs, The White House Initiative on HBCU, initiated from Executive Order 12232 signed in 1980 by President Jimmy Carter. Forty-years later in 2020, this initiative is still a part of the White House agenda. This executive order increases the capacity and competitiveness among HBCUs in their drive to enhance quality education and significantly increase enrollment while focusing on 3 primary areas:

- Policy-Executive Legislative.
- Projects-State Regional Convenings.
- Programs-National HBCU Conferences; HBCU Scholars Recognition program.

According to the (U.S. Department of Education, 2019) these 3 areas were strategically designed to have HBCUs compete in national and global markets to improve the learning communities that HBCUs serve. The (U.S. Department of Education, 2020) found 17 HBCUs received a total of 3.9 million in awards to improve science and engineering education programs for students. Although the HBCU land-grant did not receive this award, several other HBCUs did, as this is a push of effort to create equitable academic opportunities for Black students in the STEM field. During the global pandemic that occurred in February of 2020, HBCUs and the students these institutions serve were tremendously affected fiscally. The U.S. Department of Education directly funded 1.4 billion dollars to Minority Serving Institutions (MSI's) including HBCUs, to ensure that learning continues during the coronavirus pandemic.

Funding of HBCU Land Gants

Chapter 1 discussed the funding of HBCU land-grants; post my interviews, it was made clear that African American Women rely on student loans to assist in funding their education. The participants in this study reside from working-class families. The cost to attend a private land-grant HBCU can cause financial strain for families. The participants also had an additional financial burden as 8 out of the 9 participants resided from other states. The cost of travel and the cost of attendance required various income streams for participants to complete their degree. According to (Kreighbaum, 2018) as a part of the \$867 billion agriculture appropriations and regulation legislative package, more than \$100 million was received by HBCUs and land-grant institutions to be given to students form of scholarships and grants. In chapter 1, I discussed the disparities of financial aid between HBCUs and PWIs. The most recent data from the (Journal of Blacks in Higher Education, 2019) reported on the U.S. Department of Education differences and

the percentages of Black and White students who receive financial aid. This report indicated the following key findings:

- Some 2.6 percent of white students received merit-based aids from states, compared to 1.5 percent of Black students. White student's average amount of merit-based aid was slightly higher than the average merit-based award to Blacks.
- Nearly 27 percent of white students, but only 22.5 percent of Black students received financial aid awards from the educational institution. The average awarded to white students was \$1,200 higher than it was for Black students.
- White students were slightly more likely than Black students to receive need-based awards from the institutions they attended. White students were significantly more likely than Black students to receive merit-based financial aid from their colleges or universities. Some 14.2 percent of White students received merit-based financial aid from their colleges or universities compared to 8 percent of Black students.

In 2021, these disproportionate awards to African American Women students exist. The cost to attend the private HBCU land-grant is an estimated \$38,000 per academic year; this amount does not include any travel expenses if the student resides out of state. If the student is graduating within 5 years, the student will have accumulated an estimated \$190,000 in student loan debt. African American Women must receive adequate financial aid packages with a combination of scholarships and grants to assist in trimming the debt they would consume before obtaining their degree and entering the workforce. With the new administration in 2021, HBCUs are placed at the forefront for adequate funding to increase enrollment and graduation rates.

HBCUs 2021

In 2021, a new Presidential administration took control of the White House. With the new administration came introductions of new policies in higher education, specifically HBCUs. In my literature review in chapter 2, I discuss the inadequacies of funding between PWIs and HBCUs. In January of 2021, President Joseph Biden presented a plan to increase racial equity in funding among HBCUs and MSIs. President Biden pledged to make the first 2-years of college free and provide \$10 billion in funding to increase enrollment, retention, completion, and employment rates; and address the historic underfunding of the institutions regarding federal research dollars (Murakami, 2021).

Additionally, the President recently requested an additional 600 million for HBCU, Tribal colleges and universities, and other minority-serving institutions, as well as “low-resourced institutions,” including community colleges (Burke, 2021). These efforts by the Biden administration places HBCUs in a neutral higher education field. With these investments, HBCUs will have the opportunity to enroll more students, hire additional faculty and support

staff, expand research, and graduate more students prepared for the workforce, ultimately contributing to HBCU retention and persistence rates.

Financially Serving HBCUs

With the allocation of 600 million dollars being directed to HBCUs and MSIs, this provides HBCUs with an opportunity to expand recruitment through their instructions admission and enrollment departments. The universities can create additional bridge programs that elevate the STEM fields to prepare high school students for academic majors and careers in this field. The universities can also utilize this funding to invest in professional development training specifically in technology to develop faculty in distance learning to meet the academic needs of the 21st century. Due to the pandemic, numerous institutions have adopted the asynchronous and synchronous learning platform. Investing in this faculty preparation and providing the technology infrastructure to deliver the learning content will benefit the institutions with increase enrollment as the various modalities degree-attainment are offered and increase admissions as students entering the HBCUs are academically prepared due to the rigorous bridge programs being offered.

Recommendations For Each HBCU AAW Factor

There were countless hours invested in my research to discover and understand the origin of the Land-Grant HBCU, the community, student populations, and underlying impacts. With the minimization of research provided for African American women and their degree completion, the recommendations below are based upon the interviews and responses from participants for this study.

Culture Environment-The institution demonstrates a commitment to the culture environment by providing orientation week, including campus tours for prospective students and their families, first-year orientation, and resident advisors to support students residing in the dormitories. These intentions are critical for the university to continue as African American women seek these supports effectively during their academic journey. These support systems also have a direct impact on African American women retention and persistence at the university. Their introduction to the institution is based on how well first-year African American women can adjust to their culture and campus life.

Academic Advising- The institution can examine closely first-year African American women academic advising experiences and determine if they are utilizing advising frequently and understand the benefits. The university can benefit from requiring that all first-year African American women meet with their academic advisor a minimum of 3 times per semester. Meeting 3x's per semester, the advisor can review academic plans, modify, and appropriately advise the women on consecutive enrollment. This practice can potentially lead to increased advising hours between African American women and advisors, for which invested hours between the student and advisor occur. These conversations between the student and advisor can increase clarification regarding student course enrollments, cost savings (based upon pre-identified courses, which minimizes and/or omit registering for courses not needed) and increase advisor student relationships. With this approach, academic advisors can create course mapping plans, achievable academic goals, and students' objectives. These goals can consist of increased GPA's number of credit hours African American women are enrolled in, tutoring, and frequency of advising meetings. This level of academic advising can enhance student tenacity and create a sense of self-awareness and perseverance. (Williams, Glenn, & Wider, 2008) found that nurturing advising can benefit students at many colleges and universities, but it is essential at HBCUs.

Student Engagement-the institution continues to encourage student engagement through the offerings of clubs and organizations. These engagements are used to build and maintain social capital among the students and the university. The institution must be observant of sororities and fraternity behaviors on the campus, to establish that these organizations follow the university protocol related to the African American women pledging process. This initiative will minimize any violations of sorority and fraternity procedures at the institution. To ensure sororities and fraternities remain in compliance, the recommendation of appointing a sorority and fraternity liaison to monitor appropriate hazing activities can facilitate this process.

Financial Aid- financial aid has an imperative impact on African American women degree completion at the land-grant HBCU. 8 out of the 9 participants indicated the need for financial aid. It is recommended that the institution requires these women to meet with their financial aid counselor a minimum of two times per semester. This allows African American

women to review and discuss their financial aid counselor loan modifications if applicable and apply for additional scholarships. This counseling level also helps students manage their student loans and institutional financial aid billing without absorbing additional fees at the end of the semester or academic year. My research has proven that financial aid has a direct impact on degree completion. Currently, African American women complete their financial aid exit counseling virtually through completing documents and answering questions. African American women should complete this process with their financial aid counselor, as students can receive guidance on how to manage loan repayments and identify the correct loan repayment applications to complete. Additionally, the financial aid department on campus must promote grants and scholarships and encourage African American women to apply. This action also reduces African American women amount of debt owed.

Faculty Mentoring

The institution can invest more funding and expand professional development opportunities for faculty. Furthermore, this action provide faculty with consistency in hosting graduate assistance to assist with students teaching and learning within their program discipline. The graduate assistance can support the lead faculty mentor and support African American women learning persistence and degree completion. With this approach, African American women can receive structured mentoring that will guide them through their academic journey.

Themes to Reject

For this research, there are no existing themes to reject. The categoric themes for this research showed that each of the categories impacted the participants degree completion. The research is grounded ethnography, in which the continuous observations through interviews, the compatibility questionnaire, and the participant description table provided descriptive information of their experiences. This study's data collection revealed additional themes for future research to consider, such as high-school academic preparedness, which was an additional discussion outside of the themes.

Future Students

In understanding the impacts of the 5 factors that contribute to degree completion, it is significant to note that student academic performance can be listed as a contributing factor for further research. Although academic preparedness was not listed as an interview question or category theme, during the interviews, this component was mentioned frequently. Academic

achievement is one factor that predicts student's ability to be admitted to a college upon graduation from high school. According to statistical data, the academic opportunity rate is higher among white students than among non-white students. For instance, white learners are 1.8 times more likely than African Americans to be in advanced placement classes, (Status and Trends in the Education of Racial and Ethnic Groups, 2016). The category of academic preparedness facilitates the elimination of poverty and decreases the wealth gap between whites and blacks, as access to post-secondary attainment is a passport to success in the job market. Future students who seek to attend the HBCU must embrace the history and culture, as throughout the research, participants displayed their pride by understanding who they are and where they come from. In selecting to attend an HBCU, students choose to become educated by professors who are reflective of themselves, and that professors base their teaching philosophy upon African American culture.

Conclusion

In my research of What factors support degree completion for African American women students at a land-grant historically Black college university (HBCU)? My research examined 5 factors culture environment, academic advising, faculty mentoring, social engagement, and financial aid, to determine if the factors affected the African American women degree completion who attended the land-grant HBCU. The ethnography framework was utilized as I observe the behaviors, beliefs, and language of the participants. My findings showed keen likeness in the commonalities among the African American women in responding to questions and body language.

In examining the factors and based upon participants responses, there was 1 leading factor in this research, culture experience. It is determined that the culture experience leads to their degree completion at the institution. Culture experiences in my research was based upon student's interaction with the campus, peers, and faculty. It was essential for the participants in this research that they had peers and faculty that looked like them. This factor assisted in participants building healthy relationships on the land-grant HBCU campus. As the HBCU continues to enroll African American women, valuing the ethnicity of faculty and peers will have an extensive impact on the degree completion rates of this population of women.

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Appendix A

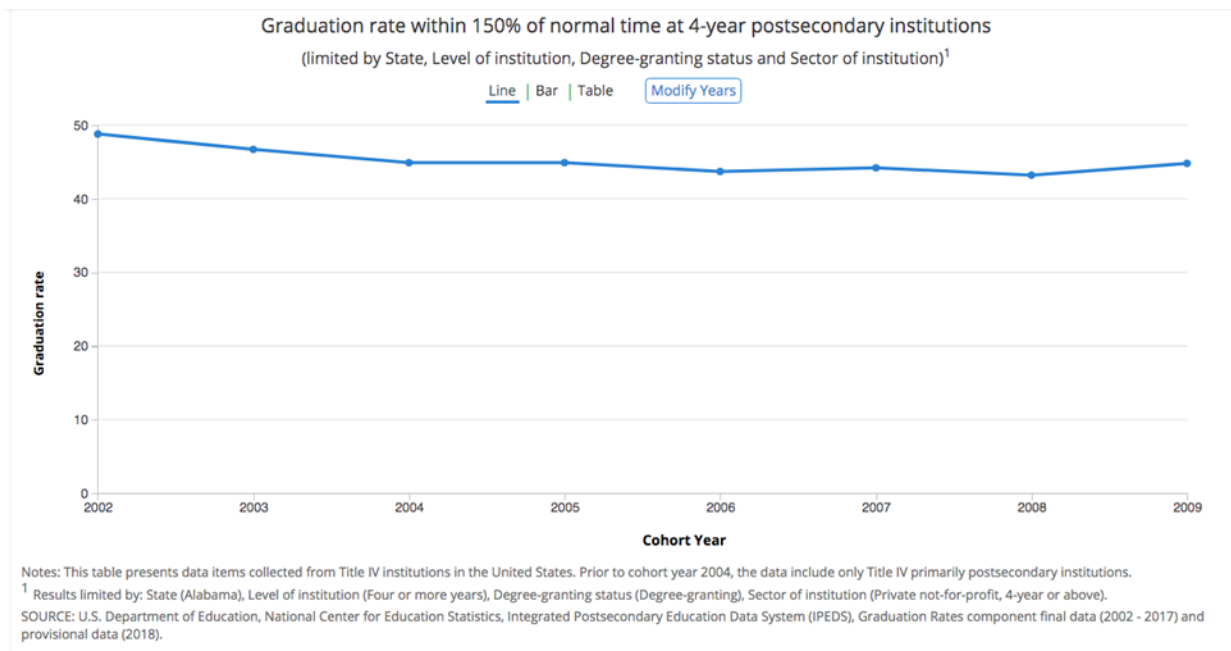
Selected statistics on degree-granting HBCU, by control and level of institution: Selected years, 1990 through 2018.

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Table 313.30. Selected statistics on degree-granting historically Black colleges and universities, by control and level of institution: Selected years, 1990 through 2018

Selected statistics	Total	Public			Private		
		Total	4-year	2-year	Total	4-year	2-year
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Number of institutions, fall 2018	101	51	40	11	50	49	1
Fall enrollment							
Total enrollment, fall 1990	257,152	187,046	171,969	15,077	70,106	68,528	1,578
Males	105,157	76,541	70,220	6,321	28,616	28,054	562
Males, Black	82,897	57,255	54,041	3,214	25,642	25,198	444
Females	151,995	110,505	101,749	8,756	41,490	40,474	1,016
Females, Black	125,785	86,949	80,883	6,066	38,836	38,115	721
Total enrollment, fall 2000	275,680	199,725	175,404	24,321	75,955	75,306	649
Males	108,164	78,186	68,322	9,864	29,978	29,771	207
Males, Black	87,319	60,029	56,017	4,012	27,290	27,085	205
Females	167,516	121,539	107,082	14,457	45,977	45,535	442
Females, Black	139,920	96,677	89,260	7,417	43,243	42,810	433
Total enrollment, fall 2010	326,614	249,146	205,774	43,372	77,468	77,325	143
Males	127,437	95,883	78,528	17,355	31,554	31,482	72
Males, Black	101,605	72,629	65,512	7,117	28,976	28,904	72
Females	199,177	153,263	127,246	26,017	45,914	45,843	71
Females, Black	164,303	121,211	107,721	13,490	43,092	43,021	71
Total enrollment, fall 2018	291,767	220,910	185,733	35,177	70,857	70,288	569
Males	110,853	83,015	68,415	14,600	27,838	27,530	308
Males, Black	81,055	57,283	51,863	5,420	23,772	23,634	138
Females	180,914	137,895	117,318	20,577	43,019	42,758	261
Females, Black	142,108	103,588	94,026	9,562	38,520	38,335	185
Full-time enrollment, fall 2018	227,415	163,126	149,356	13,770	64,289	63,958	331
Males	87,026	62,050	55,954	6,096	24,976	24,806	170
Females	140,389	101,076	93,402	7,674	39,313	39,152	161
Part-time enrollment, fall 2018	64,352	57,784	36,377	21,407	6,568	6,330	238
Males	23,827	20,965	12,461	8,504	2,862	2,724	138
Females	40,525	36,819	23,916	12,903	3,706	3,606	100
Degrees conferred, 2017-18							
Associate's	5,465	5,206	1,294	3,912	259	229	30
Males	1,909	1,794	320	1,474	115	106	9
Males, Black	716	619	135	484	97	88	9
Females	3,556	3,412	974	2,438	144	123	21
Females, Black	1,658	1,523	456	1,067	135	114	21

Appendix B Trend Generator



Appendix C

Bachelor's degrees conferred by postsecondary institutions, by race/ethnicity and sex of student:

Selected years, 1976-77 through 2017-18.

Females																		
1976-77 ²	423,476	369,527	33,489	8,425	6,155	1,522	---	4,358	100.0	88.2	8.0	2.0	1.5	0.4	---			
1980-81 ³	465,175	401,146	36,162	11,022	8,687	1,893	---	6,265	100.0	87.4	7.9	2.4	1.9	0.4	---			
1990-91	590,493	492,803	41,575	20,744	21,326	2,645	---	11,400	100.0	85.1	7.2	3.6	3.7	0.5	---			
1999-2000	707,508	526,148	70,989	44,759	42,056	5,254	---	18,302	100.0	76.3	10.3	6.5	6.1	0.8	---			
2000-01	712,331	525,577	73,204	46,377	43,037	5,349	---	18,787	100.0	75.8	10.6	6.7	6.2	0.8	---			
2003-04	804,117	580,631	87,390	57,356	50,713	6,394	---	21,633	100.0	74.2	11.2	7.3	6.5	0.8	---			
2004-05	826,264	592,549	90,312	61,634	53,498	6,164	---	22,107	100.0	73.7	11.2	7.7	6.7	0.8	---			
2005-06	854,602	608,074	94,332	65,770	56,568	6,736	---	23,122	100.0	73.1	11.3	7.9	6.8	0.8	---			
2006-07	874,913	619,561	97,052	70,201	57,710	6,955	---	23,434	100.0	72.8	11.4	8.2	6.8	0.8	---			
2007-08	895,550	630,886	100,329	74,973	59,642	6,986	---	22,734	100.0	72.3	11.5	8.6	6.8	0.8	---			
2008-09	915,977	641,232	103,138	78,877	61,808	7,372	---	23,550	100.0	71.9	11.6	8.8	6.9	0.8	---			
2009-10	943,259	653,611	108,653	85,287	64,026	7,526	---	24,156	100.0	71.1	11.8	9.3	7.0	0.8	---			
2010-11	981,894	662,698	113,716	93,581	65,797	7,137	12,561	26,404	100.0	69.4	11.9	9.8	6.9	0.7	1.3			
2011-12	1,026,391	679,954	122,180	102,653	68,656	7,022	16,289	29,637	100.0	68.2	12.3	10.3	6.9	0.7	1.6			
2012-13	1,052,973	686,550	123,882	112,610	70,323	6,821	20,294	32,493	100.0	67.3	12.1	11.0	6.9	0.7	2.0			
2013-14	1,068,245	682,989	123,147	122,113	71,818	6,613	27,285	34,280	100.0	66.1	11.9	11.8	6.9	0.6	2.6			
2014-15	1,082,276	679,653	123,513	131,217	72,836	6,141	31,970	36,946	100.0	65.0	11.8	12.6	7.0	0.6	3.1			
2015-16	1,099,004	674,489	124,561	142,201	75,075	5,913	36,427	40,338	100.0	63.7	11.8	13.4	7.1	0.6	3.4			
2016-17	1,120,093	674,618	125,770	152,859	78,688	5,858	39,443	42,857	100.0	62.6	11.7	14.2	7.3	0.5	3.7			
2017-18	1,135,684	672,998	124,698	162,139	82,803	5,651	41,685	45,710	100.0	61.7	11.4	14.9	7.6	0.5	3.8			

---Not available.

¹ For years prior to 2010-11, the survey did not yet include the "Two or more races" category, and each student could be counted in only one race category.

² Excludes 1,121 males and 528 females whose racial/ethnic group was not available.

³ Excludes 258 males and 82 females whose racial/ethnic group was not available.

NOTE: Data are for postsecondary institutions participating in Title IV federal financial aid programs. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. For 1989-90 and later years, reported racial/ethnic distributions of students by level of degree, field of degree, and sex were used to estimate race/ethnicity for students whose race/ethnicity was not reported. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Some data have been revised from previously published figures.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Higher Education General Information Survey (HEGIS), "Degrees and Other Formal Awards Conferred" surveys, 1976-77 and 1980-81; Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), "Completions Survey" (IPEDS-C:90-99); and IPEDS Fall 2000 through Fall 2018, Completions component. (This table was prepared October 2019.)

Appendix D Participant Description Table

Subject	Age	Gender W=Women	Degree Major
1.	39	W	Biology/ Psychology
2.	40	W	Business Administration
3.	40	W	Business
4.	40	W	English/ Library Science
5.	41	W	Psychology
6.	41	W	Elementary Education
7.	23	W	Construction Science Management
8.	40	W	Psychology
9.	41	W	Mathematics

Appendix E Compatibility Questionnaire

Please complete the contact information and compatibility questionnaire below and circle your availability for time or enter in a specific time if applicable.

Name:

Age:

Gender:

Academic Major:

Contact Phone Number:

Availability: Morning; Noon; Evening (Specific time) _____

Days: Sunday; Monday; Tuesday; Wednesday; Thursday; Friday; Saturday.

1. Do you consider yourself African American or bi-racial?
2. Did you attend the land-grant HBCU?
3. Did you attend the land-grant HBCU all 4-6 years?
4. What year did you graduate?
5. Are there any existing prohibits that refrain you from participating in this study?

Once compatibility has been confirmed, participants will receive the study contact questionnaire and consent forms (See Appendix F & G).

Appendix F Informed Consent Observation Interview

My name is Samantha N. Friar, and I am a Doctoral Candidate in Higher Education Leadership at National Louis University. I am asking you to participate in this study. What factors support degree completion for African American women students at a land-grant historically Black college university (HBCU)? Occurring from MM-YYYY to MM-YYYY. The purpose of this study is to inform readers of the first-hand experiences that African American Women at the land-grant HBCU are exposed to through personal interviews and their storytelling of challenges and success of the factors that assisted in their degree completion. These factors could be used in future studies to inform best practices at the land-grant HBCU. This study will assist researchers in developing a deeper understanding of the behaviors of other African American women and their journey on the path of degree completion. This form outlines the purpose of the study and describes your involvement and rights as a participant.

By signing below, you provide consent to participate in a research project conducted by Samantha N. Friar, Doctoral Candidate in Higher Education leadership at National Louis University, Chicago.

Please understand that the purpose of the study is to explore the history, culture, and setting of the land-grant HBCU while examining the participants experiences and the factors, which are academic advising, social engagement, financial aid, and culture environment. Participation in this study will include:

- 10 individual interviews via zoom, scheduled at your convenience in the spring and summer of the 2020 academic year.
- Interviews will last up to 45 min and include approximately 9 questions to understand how behaviors, beliefs, and language contribute to degree completion at the HBCU.
- Interviews will be recorded, and participants may view and have final approval on the content of the interview transcripts. Samantha N. Friar will take field notes during interviews to capture the ways participants respond to questions (e.g., tone, body language, and facial expressions)
- Participants may view field notes and have final approval on the content of field notes.

Your participation is voluntary and can be discontinued at any time without penalty or bias. The results of this study may be published or otherwise reported at conferences and employed to inform coaching practices at the land-grant HBCU. However, participants identities will in no

way be revealed (data will be reported anonymously and bear no identifiers that could connect data to individual participants). The researcher will secure recordings, transcripts, and field notes that are password protected on the researcher laptop to ensure confidentiality. Only Samantha N. Friar will have access to data.

There are no anticipated risks or benefits, no more significant than those encountered in daily life. Further, the information gained from this study could be helpful to the land-grant HBCU and other schools and school districts looking to initiate or refine induction coaching.

Upon request, you may receive summary results from this study and copies of any publications that may occur. Please email the researcher at HBCUresearchdata@gmail.com. To request results from this study. If you have questions or require additional information, please contact the researcher via email at HBCUresearchdata@gmail.com.

If you have any concerns or questions before or during participation that has not been addressed by the researcher, you may contact Dr. Nathaniel CREDIT, Assistant Professor & Founding Program Director Higher Education Leadership College of Professional Studies & Advancement, email: ncredit@nl.edu. The chair is located at National Louis University, 122 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL.

Thank you for your consideration.

Consent: I understand that by signing below, I am agreeing to participate in the study: What factors support degree completion for African American women students at a land-grant historically Black college university (HBCU)? My participation will consist of the activities below during the 45 minute-time period:

- 10 overviews lasting 5 minutes each
- 10 Interviews lasting approximately 40 minutes each

Participants Signature

Date

Researcher Signature

Date

Appendix G Informed Consent Video Consent Form

My name is Samantha N. Friar, and I am a Doctoral Candidate in Higher Education Leadership at National Louis University. I am asking you to participate in this study, What factors support degree completion for African American women students at a land-grant historically Black college university (HBCU)? Occurring from MM-YYYY to MM-YYYY. The purpose of this study is to inform readers of the first-hand experiences that African American women at the land-grant HBCU are exposed to, through zoom interviews and their storytelling of challenges and success of the factors that assisted in their degree completion. These factors could be used in future studies to inform best practices at the land-grant HBCU. This study will assist researchers in developing a deeper understanding of the behaviors of other African American women and their journey on the path of degree completion. This form outlines the purpose of the study and describes your involvement and rights as a participant. By signing below, you are providing consent to participate in a research project conducted by Samantha N. Friar Doctoral Candidate in Higher Education leadership at National Louis University, Chicago. Please understand that the purpose of the study is to explore the history, culture, and the setting of the land-grant HBCU, while examining the experiences of the participants and the factors which are academic advising, social engagement, financial aid, and culture environment. Participation in this study will include:

- 10 individual interviews via zoom, scheduled at your convenience in the spring and summer of the 2020 academic year.
- Interviews will last up to 1 hour and include approximately 9 questions to understand how behaviors, beliefs, and language contribute to degree completion at the HBCU.
- Interviews will be recorded, and participants may view and have final approval on the content of interview transcripts. Samantha N. Friar will take written field notes during interviews to capture the ways participants respond to questions (e.g., tone, body language, and facial expressions)

- Participants may view field notes and have final approval on the content of field notes.
- Your participation is voluntary and can be discontinued at any time without penalty or bias. The results of this study may be published or otherwise reported at conferences and employed to inform coaching practices at the land-grant HBCU. However, participants identities will in no way be revealed (data will be reported anonymously and bear no

identifiers that could connect data to individual participants). To ensure confidentiality, the researcher will secure recordings, transcripts, and field notes that are password protected on the researcher laptop. Only Samantha N. Friar will have access to data.

There are no anticipated risks or benefits, no more significant than those encountered in daily life. Further, the information gained from this study could be useful to the land-grant HBCU and other schools and school districts looking to initiate or refine induction coaching.

Upon request, you may receive summary results from this study and copies of any publications that may occur. Please email the researcher, at HBCUresearchdata@gmail.com. to request results from this study. If you have questions or require additional information, please contact the researcher via email at HBCUresearchdata@gmail.com.

If you have any concerns or questions before or during participation that has not been addressed by the researcher, you may contact Dr. Nathaniel CREDIT, Assistant Professor & Founding Program Director Higher Education Leadership College of Professional Studies & Advancement, email: ncredit@nl.edu. The Chair (Nathaniel CREDIT) is located at National Louis University, 122 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL. Thank you for your consideration.

Consent: I understand that by signing below, I am agreeing to participate in the study: What factors support degree completion for African American women students at a land-grant historically Black college university (HBCU)? My participation will consist of the activities below during the 45 minute-time period:

- 10 overviews lasting 5 minutes each
- 10 Interviews lasting approximately 40 minutes each

Participants Signature

Date

Researcher Signature

Date

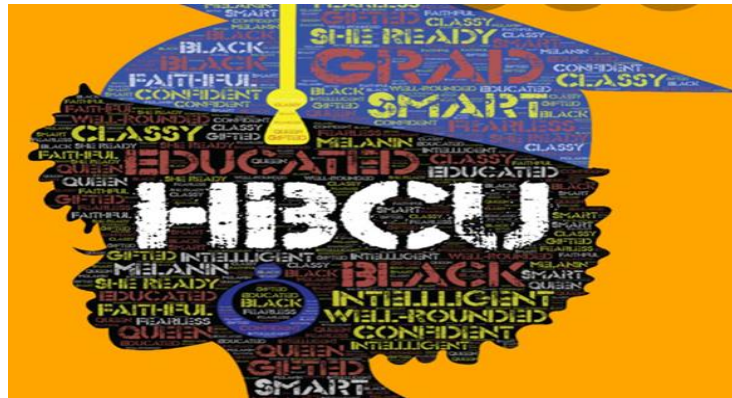
Appendix H Interview Questions

1. Why did you select to attend a land-grant HBCU?
2. What type of degree did you receive?
3. Are you a first-generation student in your family?
4. What was your experience in Navigating the academic advising and financial aid process at the land-grant HBCU?
5. Have you encounter any racial experiences on campus while enrolled at the land-grant HBCU?
6. What are experiences with social engagement on campus, such as student organizations, sororities did you have? How did these interactions contribute to your degree completion?
7. Did you have a faculty mentor? If so, how did the faculty mentorship supported you in completing your degree? If not, what was your reason for not having a faculty mentor?
8. Did you understand the financial –aid process? Did you have more loans, scholarships, or was your financial aid package balanced between student loans and scholarships?
9. Do you consider financial aid contributing to your degree completion? If you did not have financial aid, would you have completed your degree?

Appendix I Recruitment Document

What factors support degree completion for African American women students at a land-grant historically Black college university (HBCU)?

I (Samantha Friar) am conducting a research study on What factors support degree completion for African American women students at a land-grant historically Black college university (HBCU)? For my doctoral program in higher education leadership capstone. I am seeking 16 African American Women who graduated from the institution between 2002-2020 to participate in a 45-minute zoom interview. If you are interested in participation, please email me your contact information at HBCUresearchdata@gmail.com.



Appendix J Word Frequency

Word	Length	Count	Weighted Percentage
Speaker	7	180	2.66%
Like	4	107	1.58%
Know	4	105	1.55%
Financial	9	78	1.15%
Number	6	75	1.11%
Aid	3	73	1.08%
Question	8	69	1.02%
Just	4	54	0.80%

Appendix K Codebook

1. Historically Black College and University (HBCU) Land-grant

Used for participants who provided explanations in why the institution was a selection of choice to complete their degrees.

1.1 HBCU Knowledge

Used if students indicate knowledge of the HBCU and because of prior-knowledge student applied and attended the institution.

1.2 Participant HBCU acceptance

Used if a student applied and was accepted to the institution.

2. Degree Major

2.1 Used for discussion of degree major, and if the degree major influenced the student's decision to attend the HBCU Land-grant.

2.2 Used to identify provided degree majors by participants.

3. First-Generation

Used this code if students identified as first-generation in their family to attend college.

4. Academic Advising

4.1 Received academic advising Used this code if participant acknowledged receiving academic advising.

4.2 Enrolled 4-6 years

5. Financial aid

5.1 Participant Acknowledgement

Used this code if participant acknowledge experiencing financial aid services at the HBCU land-grant institution.

5.2 Participant Understanding

Used this code if the participant acknowledges understanding the financial aid process.

5.3 Financial aid and degree completion

Used this code if the participant acknowledges financial aid contributing to your degree completion.

6. Critical Race Theory

Used this code if participants experienced racial encounters while enrolled at the HBCU land-grant institution.

7. Student Engagement

Used this code if participants engaged in student organizations or sororities on campus.

8. Faculty Mentoring

Participants who identified and received faculty mentor as a support and a contributing factor to their degree completion.

8.1 Faculty mentor meeting frequency

Used this code to determine the frequency of meeting with the faculty mentor and how the frequency directly impacted student's degree completion.

8.2 Used if received faculty mentoring all 4-6 years.

8.3 Retention and persistence

Used this code to identify consistency in student responses as it relates to the effect faculty mentoring has on student retention and persistence

8.4 Faculty Mentored utilized as an Academic Advisor substitute

Used this code to determine how often student substituted the Faculty Mentoring for academic advising.

9. Degree Completion

Used this code for participants that attributed their degree completion to advising or faculty mentoring.

Appendix L Coding Stripes

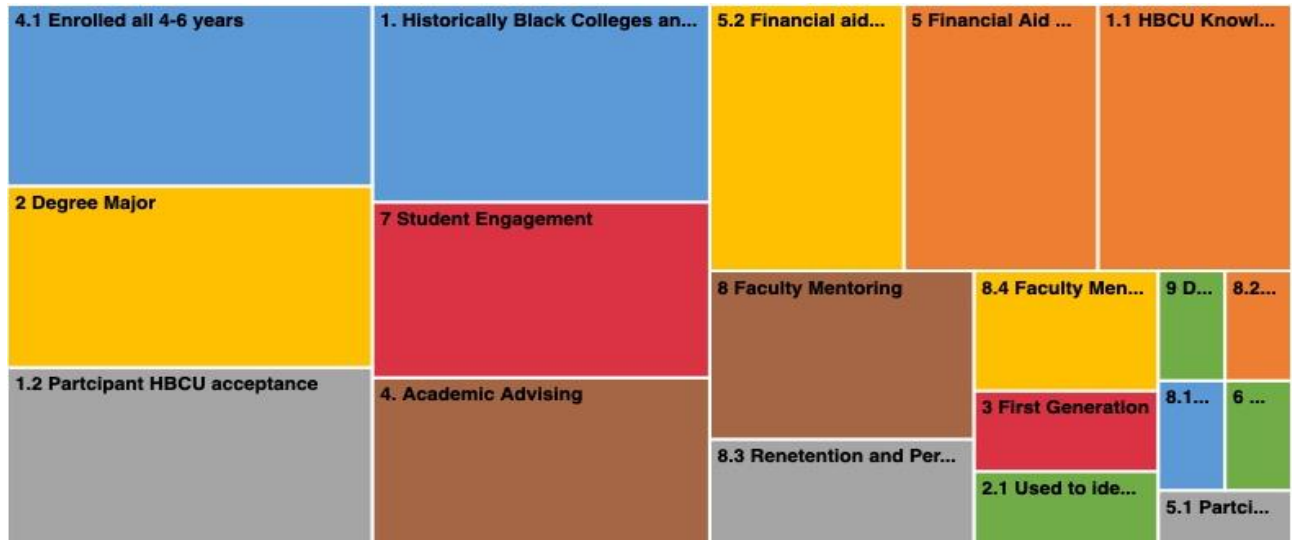
	• 8.1 Faculty Mentoring Meeting Frequency
	• 8 Faculty Mentoring
	• 7 Student Engagement
	• 5.2 Financial aid and Degree Completion
	• 5.1 Participant Understanding
	• 5 Financial Aid Participant Acknowledgement
	• 4.1 Enrolled all 4–6 years
	• 4. Academic Advising
	• 2.1 Used to identify provided degree majors by participants
	• 2 Degree Major
	• 1.2 Participant HBCU acceptance
	• 1.1 HBCU Knowledge
	• 1. Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) Land Grant
Coding Density	

Appendix M Matrix Coding Query

	A : 1. HBCU (HBCU) Land-grant	B : 1.1 HBCU Knowledge	C: 1.2 Participant HBCU acceptance	D : 2. Degree Major	E: Untitled	F: 1.2 Participant HBCU acceptance	G : 2 Degree Major	H: 2.1 Used to identify provided degree majors by participants	I : 3 First Generation	J : 4. Academic Advising	K: 4.1 Enrolled all 4-6 years	L: 5 Financial Aid Participant Acknowledgement
1 : EH 2002	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	1
2 : KD 2002	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	1
3 : KD 2003	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	1
4 : KS 2003	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	0
5 : LH 2020	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	0
6 : SG 2003	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1
7 : SM 2003	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	1
8 : SS 2003	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	1
9 : TKR 2004	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	1

	M: 5.1 Participant Understanding Of Financial aid	N: 5.2 Financial aid and Degree Completion	O: 6 Critical Race Theory	P: 7 Student Engagement	Q: 8 Faculty Mentoring	R: 8.1 Faculty Mentoring Meeting Frequency	S: 8.2 Received faculty mentoring all 4-6 years	T: 8.3 Retention and Persistence	U: 8.4 Faculty Mentored utilized as an Academic Advisor substitute	V: 9 Degree Completion
1:EH 2002										
2 : KD 2002										
3 : KD 2003	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	
4 : KS 2003	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	
5 : LH 2020	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	
6 : SG 2003	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	
7 : SM 2003	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	
8 : SS 2003	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	
9 : TKR 2004	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	
	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	
	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	

Appendix N Code Comparison Treemap



- 4:1 Enrolled all 4-6 years-9 *direct*- 9 *aggregated*
- 1.HBCU (HBCU) Land-grant-9 *direct* 9 *aggregated*
- 5.2 Financial aid and Degree completion -7 *direct* 7 *aggregated*
- 5.Financial Aid and participant knowledge -7 *direct* 7 *aggregated*
- 1.1HBCU Knowledge- 7 *direct* 7 *aggregate red*
- 2. Degree Major- 9 *direct* 9 *aggregated*
- Student Engagement- 8 *direct*, 8 *aggregated*
- Faculty Mentoring -6 *direct*- 6 *aggregated*
- 8.4 Faculty Mentoring utilized as an Academic Advisor substitute-3 *direct* 3 *aggregated*
- Degree Completion- 9 *direct*- 9 *aggregated*
- 8.2 Received faculty mentoring all 4-6 years -1 *direct* 1 *aggregated*
- 1.2 Participant HBCU Acceptance- 9 *direct* 9 *aggregated*
- 4. Academic Advising- 8 *direct* 8 *aggregated*
- 8.3 Retention and persistence -4 *direct* 4 *aggregated*
- 3. First generation- 2 *direct* 2 *aggregated*
- 2.1 Used to identify provided degree majors by participants - 2 *direct* 2 *aggregated*
- 8.1 Faculty Mentoring Meeting Frequency -1 *direct* 1 *aggregated*
- 6.Critical Race Theory -0 *direct* 0 *aggregate*
- 5.1 Participant Understanding- 1 *direct* 1 *aggregated*