
Theses and Dissertations

Abraham S. Fischler College of Education

Summer 8-31-2021

Misunderstood: A Phenomenological Study on Intersectionality and the Lived Experiences of Black Millennial Student Affairs Professionals at PWIs

Emily P. Dixon

Nova Southeastern University, ed908@mynsu.nova.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://nsuworks.nova.edu/fse_etd



Part of the [Higher Education Commons](#), [Race and Ethnicity Commons](#), and the [Race, Ethnicity and Post-Colonial Studies Commons](#)

Share Feedback About This Item

NSUWorks Citation

Emily P. Dixon. 2021. *Misunderstood: A Phenomenological Study on Intersectionality and the Lived Experiences of Black Millennial Student Affairs Professionals at PWIs*. Doctoral dissertation. Nova Southeastern University. Retrieved from NSUWorks, Abraham S. Fischler College of Education. (387) https://nsuworks.nova.edu/fse_etd/387.

This Dissertation is brought to you by the Abraham S. Fischler College of Education at NSUWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of NSUWorks. For more information, please contact nsuworks@nova.edu.

Misunderstood: A Phenomenological Study on Lived Experiences of Black Millennial Student
Affairs Professionals at PWIs

by
Emily P. Dixon

An Applied Dissertation Submitted to the
Abraham S. Fischler College of Education
and School of Criminal Justice in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Doctor of Education

Nova Southeastern University
2021

Approval Page

This applied dissertation was submitted by Emily P. Dixon under the direction of the persons listed below. It was submitted to the Abraham S. Fischler College of Education and School of Criminal Justice and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova Southeastern University.

Sherilyn W. Poole, EdD
Committee Chair

Daniel W. Turner, III, EdD
Committee Member

Kimberly Durham, PsyD
Dean

Statement of Original Work

I declare the following:

I have read the Code of Student Conduct and Academic Responsibility as described in the *Student Handbook* of Nova Southeastern University. This applied dissertation represents my original work, except where I have acknowledged the ideas, words, or material of other authors.

Where another author's ideas have been presented in this applied dissertation, I have acknowledged the author's ideas by citing them in the required style.

Where another author's words have been presented in this applied dissertation, I have acknowledged the author's words by using appropriate quotation devices and citations in the required style.

I have obtained permission from the author or publisher—in accordance with the required guidelines—to include any copyrighted material (e.g., tables, figures, survey instruments, large portions of text) in this applied dissertation manuscript.

Emily P. Dixon

Name

May 28, 2021

Date

Acknowledgments

First, I must thank my Lord and Savior for getting me through yet another test. I know You have plans for me, and I am grateful for these plans. Mom, I hope I am making you proud. I cannot wait to give you a copy of this. I want to let you know that your sacrifice did not go to waste. Michael, this is also for you. Thank you, babe, for supporting me through one of the hardest times in my life. I could not ask for a better partner in you. To the Squad: thank you for being my other family and my support as I navigated moving, dissertating through a pandemic, and so many other battles. MLITB to all of you! I want to thank my Sister Scholars: Drs. Dequies Lanier, Gabrielle Burch-Yant, Latasha Young Johnson, and Donna Barnes. I do not think that I would have even had the fortitude to continue forward without your help, your prayers, your laughter, and your love. Ladies, let us continue to change the narrative and push the envelope with our work. To my dissertation chair, Dr. Sherilyn Poole. Dr. Poole. Thank you will never be enough; especially for you going to bat for me as I battled so much during this process. To my committee member, Dr. Daniel Turner, III. Thank you for your challenges as well and your advisement as I navigated this process. To the Black Doc Students Group: Thank you for the Black Girl Wellness sessions, the writing sessions on Zoom, the laughs, the resources, the prayers, and the motivation. To the BSOM Classes of 18-22, thank you for being my motivations! Joe, DJ, Pat, Danielle, Daeja, the rest of the BBC, and my OII students at Bellarmine: thank you for being my community and for helping me go forward when I did not want to. All of you, thank you for getting this first-generation Black college student to the finished line. And to my colleagues and future leaders in higher education, let us continue to fight the good fight and cause some good trouble.

Abstract

Misunderstood: A Phenomenological Study on Intersectionality and the Lived Experiences of Black Millennial Student Affairs Professionals at PWIs. Emily P. Dixon, 2021: Applied Dissertation, Nova Southeastern University, Abraham S. Fischler College of Education and School of Criminal Justice. Keywords: intersectionality, critical race theory, millennial, black professionals, student affairs, higher education

This applied dissertation was designed to further understand the lived experiences of Black millennial student affairs professionals navigating and advancing through a predominately white institution in the southern United States. This phenomenological study, framed by critical race theory and intersectionality, sought to ultimately use these lived experiences to advocate for change. A review of the literature highlighted the needs, values, and experiences of Black Millennials based on both identities, the experiences of working in student affairs/higher education with these experiences, and the need for intentional diversity efforts by higher educational institutions.

The researcher interviewed nine participants to learn more about their lived experiences as being members of the Millennial generational cohort and identifying as Black. Using a modified version of the Hobbs (2017) questionnaire, the principal investigator framed the study in using one of the tenets of CRT and intersectionality to learn more about the lived experiences. The interviews were conducted virtually and transcribed using interpretative phenomenological analysis.

Data analysis yielded five themes that helped to amplify the unheard Black millennial voice and to bring visibility to their experiences as presented by Allen (2019) and Wilson (2019). The story presented through the findings served as a beginning for conversations to be had by higher education leaders for effective institutional changes to accommodate a diversifying stakeholder population.

Table of Contents

	Page
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Statement of the Problem.....	3
Definition of Terms	10
Purpose of Study.....	15
Chapter 2: Literature Review	16
Theoretical Framework.....	16
Generational Diversity in the Workplace	19
Historical Issues with Climate & Culture of Predominately White Institutions.....	22
Predominately White Institutions: Experiences in Organizational Climate by Employees	24
Rising Issues in Higher Education Affecting Experiences	30
Working in Student Affairs.....	32
The Role of Diversity Management in Higher Education	34
Chapter Summary	38
Research Questions.....	39
Chapter 3: Methodology	41
Aim of the Study.....	41
Qualitative Research Approach	41
Participants.....	43
Data Collection and Instruments.....	45
Procedures.....	46
Data Analysis.....	48
Ethical Considerations	49
Trustworthiness.....	50
Potential Researcher Bias	51
Limitations	52
Chapter 4: Findings.....	54
Participants.....	55
Themes.....	58
Chapter Summary	83
Chapter 5: Discussion	84
Summary and Implications of the Study.....	85
Interpretations	94
Limitations and Future Recommendations	97
Conclusion	99
References.....	101
Appendices	
A Email Invitation.....	117
B Interest Questionnaire	119
C Participant Letter for Anonymous Surveys.....	121
D General Informed Consent Form	124

E Interview Protocol..... 129

Chapter 1: Introduction

Sharma (2016) stated that the current demographic characteristics of the workforce around the world is due to a globalization of markets and is causing the employers, the government/policymakers, and other groups to have discussions about how to best handle the entry of multiple cultures and identities in the workplace. Like every other career field within the American workforce, higher education is having to deal with the challenges, the interests, and scrutiny that come with a diversifying society and changing societal pressures influencing the demographics of the campus community (Bastedo, Altbach, & Gumport, 2016; Enwefa & Enwefa, 2016; Kromydas, 2017). The navigation and management of diversity demographic categories like race, ethnicity, gender, and class, are among the concerns within a college campus community (Smith, 2016). From a national standpoint on the category of racial/ethnic diversity, the members of racially/ethnically underrepresented groups make up about 22% of the entire workforce in the United States (US Bureau of Labor, 2019). To highlight one group specifically, people that identify as Black/African Americans make up roughly 13% of the total workforce. Smith (2016) continues to say that other concerns like disability status, immigration status, and religion are growing in importance as topics of discussion.

Because there are currently five generations that make up the working population in either full-time or part-time employment, it could be safe to assume that college campuses and the American workforce are also diversifying in terms of age and generational cohorts (Carpenter & de Charon, 2014; Kleinhans et al., 2015). The first generation, the “Silent Generation” consists of those people born between 1928-1945. The second generation, the “Baby Boomers” are the people that were born between 1946-1964. “Generation X” are those individuals born between 1965-1980. The “Millennials” as a generational cohort were born between the years 1981 and 1998. Lastly, “Generation Z” are the newest members of the American workforce and consist of those born that were born after 1999 (Carpenter & de Charon, 2014; Kleinhans et al., 2015).

With about 80 million employees in the American workforce, the Millennials are the second largest population currently working and make up one in every three employees in the workplace (Georges, 2019; Hannay & Fretwell, 2011). The Millennial generation cohort is entering with more knowledge because of technological advancements, collective educational attainment, and a higher level of personal confidence (Allen et al, 2020; Hays, 2014). At the same time, the unique Millennial values, such as the desire for flexibility in work schedules to maintain work-life balance and the need for encouragement by their employers, are presenting challenges to the relationships between the Millennial employee and the leader/organization (Arnof Fishman, 2016; Blancero et al., 2018; Milhelic & Aleksic, 2017). Because of the aging and exit of the other generations coupled with the oldest millennials still in their thirties, there will be an increase in the number of Millennials moving into the workplace and coming in with different ideas and motivations than previously possessed (Blancero, Mourino-Ruiz & Padilla, 2018; The Council of Economic Advisers, 2014). These transitions indicate that the Millennial generation will be influential in the future development of the American workforce and economy (The Council of Economic Advisers, 2014). With the workforce transitions, the diversifying society, and other advancements paralleling and influencing the Millennial transition into adulthood, the Millennial generational cohort is an important cohort to understand within social and educational research (Allen et al., 2020, Milkman, 2017).

For the American higher education workforce, the creation of research studies on the intersecting of identities like age and race could increase the number of studies on intersectionality within the literature and contribute to the innovation of policymaking and practices within the field (Nichols & Stahl, 2019). Moreover, the study of the identities associated with diversity enhances the understanding of the various groups overall and the way they are embedded within the climates of higher education institutions (Allen et al., 2020; Smith, 2016). This qualitative study utilized the category of race (specifically Black) and the category of age/generation and seek to validate the lived experiences of Black Millennials working in higher

education as student affairs professionals in parallel to overall realities of these two diversity groups and student affairs professionals, respectively (Powell et al., 2020).

Statement of the Problem

For this study, the problem addressed the feeling of invisibility held by Black Millennials working in higher education, specifically in student affairs, and the lack of information about these experiences within higher education workplaces. The Millennial generational cohort has been described as feeling invisible in the modern American society and could all be assumed to navigate society the same way (Allen et al., 2020; Wilson, 2019). However, because of their racial identity and likelihood to be formally educated, Black Millennials arguably have different experiences that nuances the understanding of their Millennial invisibility and overall lived experiences (Allen et al., 2020; Wilson, 2019). Milhelic and Aleksic (2017) mentioned that as a cohort, Millennials in general have very strong values and expectations of the organizations in which they are working. They value things such as work-life balance or flexibility, being challenged, fitting into the organization, continual development through education, feedback, and mentorship, and most importantly, working in organizations that allow them to lead with their hearts or find meaning in their work (Darby & Morrell, 2019; Hoffman, 2018; Wilson, 2019). These organizational and workplace values only mirror overall Millennial frustrations with society and the economy and a growing desire to challenge and change the world around them (Allen et al., 2020; Council et al., 2020; Milkman, 2017). When there is a disruption of their values, it impacts their ability to be creative and could adversely lead to them leaving the organization (Hoffman, 2018; Milhelic & Aleksic, 2017). The combined Millennial and Black social invisibility experience and the experiences lived as a Black person working on higher education campuses that are barely promoting diversity and inclusion leads to higher attrition rates for Black and Millennial faculty and staff (Lynch-Alexander, 2017).

This study was necessary for several reasons. First, this study primarily expanded upon the existing literature about the experiences of Black people on predominately white college and

university campuses to include the experiences of professional staff that identify as Black serving in entry-level/lower-level positions and in student affairs departments. Secondly, this study added to the body of literature on the Millennial cohort and the Black Millennial in the workplace; specifically, increase the amount of information available on Millennials and Black Millennials in higher education as working professionals rather than as students. Finally, this study expanded upon the literature about diversity management in higher education.

Phenomenon of Interest

The problem to be addressed by the proposed study was that higher education institutions, especially predominately white colleges and universities as organizations need to use intersectionality and critical race studies to inform the implementation of more efficient diversity management efforts to account for the relationship between the intersecting identities that people have and various systems of inequity (Nichols & Stahl, 2019). These identities include, but are not limited to, race, ethnicity, age/generation, and gender. Gardner, Jr., Barrett, and Pearson (2014) wrote that while various departmental areas in higher education like student affairs realize the need for diversity hiring, overall, predominately white post-secondary institutions are well-known for underrepresentation of Black/African American people in all administrative positions. At the same time, like other workforce and career areas, the higher education sector is working to effectively incorporate the entry of the Millennial generation and other diversity groups into its organizational structure and policies. This generational group overall has been determined to have professional and personality characteristics that clash with the current working environment and are perceived as negative stereotypes (Ehrlich Hammer, 2015). Because Millennials overall tend to possess more respect for ethnic and cultural diversity and have a desire to protect and save the world, satisfaction in the workplace will be achieved when this generation can work with a purpose and help others (Al-Asfour & Lettau, 2014; Arnof Fishman, 2016). Additionally, millennials tend to question why the organization operates the way it does in search of a working environment that allows for customization and role innovation (Ehrlich Hammer, 2015; Gong et

al., 2018).

However, if the individuals in leadership are not able to lead and manage effectively to help the younger employees see themselves as members of the organizational team, it could lead to job dissatisfaction, lowered employee motivation and a constant turnover in the workplace (Hollis, 2014; Starrat & Grandy, 2010). While experiencing dissatisfaction within a higher education organization is a normal occurrence (Marshall et al., 2016; Strayhorn, 2009), the intersection of being a Millennial coupled with other intersections (including, but not limited to, race, gender, sexual orientation, etc.) could potentially heighten the dissatisfaction of these professionals in higher education. Within the body of literature focused on race relations in higher education, there is a common suggestion that the campus environment at predominately white institutions (PWIs) is infamous for race and ethnicity-based discrimination and prejudice behaviors being shown through microaggressions and other subtle behaviors (Franklin, Smith & Hung, 2014; Shahid, Nelson & Cardemil, 2017). These feelings and perceptions about the climate could then lead to a dissatisfaction that affects the people of color within the environment on multiple levels (Franklin et al., 2014).

Background and Justification

Historically within PWIs, Black professionals have challenges having to balance the duties of the job (teaching, presenting, advising, etc.) and fighting against the institutional racism and white privilege and power (Orelus, 2013; Kemp-Delisser et al., 2020). At the same time, these same professionals are dealing with the biases, microaggressions and tokenization that comes with being a person of color in a traditionally white space. (Orelus, 2013; Kemp-Delisser et al., 2020). This leads to the PWi becoming a climate of extreme environmental stress, blocked opportunities, and racial battle fatigue (RBF) (Smith, Hung & Franklin, 2011). Sources in the literature indicate that these feelings about the PWi experience could be enhanced by gender microaggressions and racism (Smith et al., 2011; Mena & Vaccaro, 2017). With the knowledge of this environment historically being tough to navigate, higher education and PWIs could be

violating the millennial values of identifying strongly with one's own ethnic culture and respecting and acknowledging other ethnic and racial cultures (Blancero et al., 2018).

For this study, non-faculty and non-senior administration professional staff are the people serving in lower-level leadership roles with titles such as associate/assistant director or in a support role such as coordinator, university program specialist or administrative support associate within the local PWI's student affairs division. Within the study site, these positions are generally held by Millennials/younger professionals and/or people that identify as members of certain racial and ethnic groups. In 2017, over one-fifth of the Millennial generation nationally switched jobs in the past year; a rate that is three times the rate of any other generation in the workforce (Grant Thornton LLP, 2017). This constant changing of jobs or seeking of other opportunities could be because, as previously mentioned, Millennials have different values and motivations that are the foundations for their professional endeavors (Carpenter & de Charon, 2014; Milhelic & Aleksic, 2017; Wilson, 2019). Taking the Millennial constant changing of jobs a step further, Black people in higher education that are members of the Millennial cohort are revolving through positions because higher education is not innovating fast enough to recruit and retain them with consideration of the importance of their values as both Black people and as Millennials simultaneously (Lynch-Alexander, 2017).

During the 2018-2019 academic year, the state system in which the local PWI is located conducted an employee engagement survey. Each college and university within the system was issued a survey to gather data on the institutional climate and the engagement by its employees. The survey was open to any employee of the institution including, but not limited to, full-time employees, part-time employees, permanent employees, contracted/temporary employees, faculty, and staff. For those that voluntarily agreed to participate, the survey asked questions about their perceptions of the facilities, the professional development opportunities, work/life balance, job satisfaction, the leadership in the departments and the overall institution and other parts of the institutional climate. Once the results were collected, the results were sorted into

overall positive responses and the response numbers were sorted by the demographics of gender, age, ethnicity, and race. In terms of Millennials working at the institution of study, the data showcased the overarching optimism that the generational cohort tended to possess. However, there were some disconnection points when it came to values in terms of teamwork, professional progression, and the functioning of the organization.

Another piece that is important to mention in the justification of this study and establishing the background would be the researcher's personal story as a professional within the local predominately white institution. As a higher education professional, the researcher has been working in the field for over six years in various capacities within student affairs and within health sciences. During the time of employment at the institution of this study, the researcher noticed a few concerning instances that were occurring. The first observation was that most of the people around the researcher's same age or slightly younger and of a similar racial identity were working primarily in areas around the institution in entry-level or slightly above positions. These positions would primarily have heavy workloads and sometimes reported to leadership that preferred to work longer hours, which contradicts the values of the Millennial mentioned within the literature. The second observation was that because of this preference of the supervisors to work harder and longer, most of the Millennial professionals were stressed due to working in these conditions and dealing with the emotional strain of working in a position that did not require a master's level degree, although most of these professionals hold a master's degree. Thirdly, the Millennial professionals with intersecting identities that differed from most of the campus and/or the direct supervisor sometimes struggled with acclimating to a campus culture of a predominately white institution in the South and in a rural area. The combination of all these conditions within the institution's culture sometimes led to job dissatisfaction, job switches to other departments, and in some cases, leaving the institution for another position altogether.

Deficiencies in the Evidence

There are growing numbers of studies that have been done on the characteristics of the

Millennial generation and their entry into the American workforce. Sakdiyakorn and Wattanacharoensil (2018) argued that there is a need to look at generational studies and the experiences of Millennials. Allen et al (2020) and Council et al (2020) agreed on the need to look at generational studies and to racialize and/or consider the intra-generational experiences as well to have a better understanding of the complete Millennial generational experience. After a search in the literature, this could be argued to be a need within higher education and the educational sector. While there are news articles, reports, and opinion pieces about the experiences of Black Millennials and the Millennial generational cohort overall, there are limited peer-reviewed and journal-published studies that investigate the Millennial generation as working professionals within higher education. There are even fewer peer-reviewed studies on Black Millennials as working professionals.

Most of the current articles within the overall body of literature that talk about Black Millennials in higher education discuss the generational group as students in college. There are a few articles (specifically the Allen et al (2020) and the Council et al (2020) articles) that provide the rationale to argue for overall generational studies with a focus on intersecting identities. However, these articles focus on the Black Millennial experience from a sociological perspective and not from a higher education/educational perspective. There are even fewer studies about the non-faculty, non-senior administration professional within postsecondary institutions. The literature tends to use overarching terms such as *student affairs professional* or *administrators* for people that work in higher education that are not faculty/instructors or working in academic affairs. However, the group is not divided down further to look at the groups within the overall larger entity. Mena and Vaccaro (2017) studied professionals (faculty and staff) that were women of color and noted that more research is needed on intersections including campus roles and multiple intersecting social identities. Because of this lack of studies, most of the current pieces of literature consist of dissertations and papers by students that are asking questions about the Millennial age group within higher education institutions.

Audience

The audience for this study would ideally be anyone within the field of higher education because intersectional studies allow for practitioners, researchers, and administration to better analyze policies and practices to be equitable (Nichols & Stahl, 2019). For the leadership, an intersectional lens challenges the feelings of being invisible felt by certain identities, like being Black or being a Millennial (Allen et al., 2020; Nichols & Stahl, 2019; Wilson, 2019). For student affairs professionals, utilizing intersectionality and critical race theory research findings allows for the professional to understand and respond effectively and intentionally to racism and other discrimination experienced by students (Powell et al., 2020). Previous studies in higher education primarily looked at Millennials as students within the collegiate classroom. However, the senior administrators over the institutions, the department/division leaders and the directors/managers that supervise the lower-level and younger professionals will benefit the most from this study that will focus on them as professionals. With the Millennial Generation now inching towards surpassing the previous generations as the largest generation within the American workforce, the number of Millennials working in postsecondary institutions will only continue to grow (Center for Women and Business, 2017). The leaders over these professionals will have to consider shifting their leadership style to stay in accordance with the Millennial generational cohort's personal and professional values to avoid dissatisfaction and potentially, high levels of turnover.

At the same time, the American workforce is growing more diverse ethnically and racially. With these changes on the local and global levels and in the populations on college campuses, the leadership and the way higher education institutions proceed with leading their workforce will have to fully consider diversity research and practices to create the inclusive environment mentioned in institutional missions (Chin & Trimble, 2015; Husband, 2016; Smith, 2016). This change assumes that the senior leaders do not identify within the Millennial generational cohort or as an underrepresented minority themselves. Moreover, the audience for this study will be the Black Millennials and the Millennial generation overall. First, this study

will empower these professionals to advocate either for themselves or their colleagues. Secondly, this study will add more perspective to the Black Millennial experience (and simultaneously the overall Millennial experience) in higher education that is still being developed beyond the role as a student. Additionally, this will hopefully empower these same Black Millennial to advocate for the generations that are coming behind them in the workplace.

Setting of the Study

The setting of this study was a large, public, research university in the Southeastern United States. The institution is also a PWI located in the largest city within an historically agricultural/rural-based region of the state of study. The researcher decided upon this setting to provide further relevance to the role of intersectionality in the development of personal perception of the organizational climate and the level of professional satisfaction held by the participants within this institution. This setting was also chosen due to the researcher having personally observed and perceived the research problem as both an observer of various areas and participant in this institutional setting. Within the predominately white institution that will be studied, the researcher focused primarily on the student affairs division for the undergraduate campus rather than all the divisions and academic subject schools within the institution. This focus was due to the overall diversity in terms of demographics of the employees and to further increase the trustworthiness of the study by narrowing down the scope of study. Additionally, the researcher first noticed the research problem during her time in student affairs.

Definition of Terms

The following terms provided within this section are highly relevant to the foundation and understanding of this study. While these terms may have differing meanings and interpretations across the body of knowledge, the interpretation defined within this section is relevant for setting the context of this study for higher education workplaces.

ACPA

ACPA is the acronym for the American College Personnel Association. Since 1924,

ACPA has had a mission like NASPA to help student affairs professionals with a focus on creating and sharing information from the field, shaping the practice to be more critically reflective, and to empower advocacy for learning environments that are more equitable and inclusive for college students. For this study, the mention of ACPA is about another organization that provides student affairs professionals with current information and opportunities to network with student affairs professionals from other institutions.

Generational Cohort

Debevec, Schewe, Madden and Diamond (2013) mentioned that a cohort consists of a group of individuals that were born within the same period and have similar life experiences throughout their life journey. The researchers continue to mention that a generation, on the other hand, is defined by the year of birth and consists of a span of 20-25 years. Based on these definitions, a generational cohort will be a group of individuals born between a span of 20-25 years that experience similar life events and advancements together as a group.

Intersectionality

As cited by Mena (2016), intersectionality is the term for the theoretical framework describing the relationship between social identities in which identity is defined in relation to another (e.g., the experience of being Black could be defined also within the experience of being a woman and vice versa). Even though this concept is primarily based in the lived experiences as defined by Kimberle Crenshaw, for this study, intersectionality will look at the different identities of the professional staff members within the study site. These identities include, but are not limited to, race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, position within the institutional hierarchy and generational group.

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is defined to be a phenomenon consisting of the overall feelings towards the various aspects of a job by an employee (Kincki & Kreitner, 2009 as cited by Hays, 2014). Job satisfaction can be related to the performance and work quality provided by the employee and

the inter-personal relationships that are formed with the other employees and their supervisors. (Hays, 2014). For this study, job satisfaction will consist of the overall feelings towards the work the professional is doing and the institutional climate in which they work. Additionally, job satisfaction will encompass the feelings towards the opportunities presented or available for personal and professional success within the institution and surrounding their current job responsibilities.

Microaggressions

Microaggressions are the verbal, behavioral and institutional communication cues influenced by society, education and other arenas that communicate negative and/or derogatory insults to individuals or groups (Mena & Vaccaro, 2017). In terms of the person of color's experience in higher education, Louis et al (2016) mentioned that these microaggressions could have harmful impacts and lead to difficulties with their confidence and interactions within the organization.

Millennial

Although there is not a clear definition for the time span of the Millennial cohort within the literature, for this study, Millennials are defined to be the members of society that were born roughly between 1982 and 1999 (Kleinhans, Chakradhar, Muller & Waddill, 2015). Also known as Generation Y, this generation is constantly connected to information and people due to communication and technology advances such as the internet, social media forms like Facebook and Instagram that emerged during their younger years (Ferri-Reed, 2014; Kleinhans et al., 2015).

NASPA

NASPA is the acronym for the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators. Founded in 1919, NASPA has a mission to continue to be the leading voice of student affairs work through the utilization of innovative student-centered and evidence-based practices (NASPA, 2020). For this study, the mention of NASPA is about ways student affairs professionals can receive the most current information within the field of higher education and

network with other student affairs professionals across the country.

Non-faculty, Non-senior Administrative Staff

For this study, a non-faculty, non-senior administrative staff member will be any professional that supports an office or is not responsible or involved in most of the major decisions on the campus. These positions would include, but are not limited to, Associate Directors, Assistant Directors, University Program Managers/Associates and Administrative Support Associates/Specialists. In the state university system, these titles are uniform across the other state institutions. However, University Program Managers/Associates and Administrative Support Associates/Specialists may have other titles, referred to as *working titles*, that may be more commonly known. These positions would also be more entry-level/lower level overall within the academic structure and more likely to be held by the younger professional/Millennial (Hollis, 2014).

Predominately White Institution (PWI)

Sometimes used interchangeably with *historically white institution* or *historically white colleges and universities*, a predominately white institution is a college or university that historically has larger populations of white students and is based in a white cultural ideology when it comes to the culture, climate, and values of the institution (Gusa, 2010).

Race

Race is defined to be a socially constructed and significant classification of people based on the color of their skin used to establish privilege and means of discrimination (Simpson, 2003). This definition is important to this study to showcase the presence and importance of race in discussions of organizational climate perception based on intersections of the employees.

Senior Administrative Staff

The senior administrative staff is defined as any professional within the institution that will have most of the decision-making and leadership authority. These positions would include, but are not limited to, the Chancellor, the Vice Chancellors, the Provost, the Associate and

Assistant Provosts, Deans of the various colleges, the Associate Vice Chancellors and the Directors of the various departments and centers.

Student Affairs Professional

A student affairs professional (SAP) is a staff employee working in areas on a college or university campus that influence a student's growth and development outside of the classroom. These professionals work in areas including, but not limited to, student activities, orientation/new student programs, student conduct/discipline, student center management, and minority student services/centers for racial minorities (Marshall et al., 2016). For this study, this definition will include all these areas plus student government association offices, campus recreation & wellness, student health services, housing/residence life, leadership & service-learning/civic engagement, centers for LGBTQ+ and Women's/gender interest, Greek/fraternity and sorority life, veterans' services, disability support services, commuter and transfer student support, career development, and dining services.

Unconscious Bias

A term that is growing in relevance with higher education institutions and other organizations, unconscious bias is defined as a phrase or gesture association held by individuals that negatively or positively affects the attitudes and behaviors towards a person or group of people (Tate & Page, 2018).

Underrepresented Minority/People of Color

For this study, underrepresented minority/people of color will refer to individuals that identify as Black/African American/African-descent, Latinx/Hispanic, Native American/American Indian/Alaskan Native and Asian/Asian American/Pacific Islander based on the population at the local institution that will be studied and historically defined underrepresented populations within the predominately white institution. Multiracial or identifying as two or more races will also be included within this definition.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to further understand the lived experiences of Black millennial student affairs professionals as they navigate and advance within the workplace based on their intersecting identities at a predominately white institution in a state in the southern United States. Milhelic and Aleksic (2017) mentioned that as a cohort, Millennials in general, have very strong values and expectations of the organizations in which they are working. They value work-life balance, being challenged and achieving their personal and professional goals in addition to other values. When there is a disruption of their values, it impacts their ability to be creative and could adversely lead to them leaving the organization (Milhelic & Aleksic, 2017). These same Millennial values and expectations could change even more because of the Millennials' racial/ethnic, class, or gender identity (Allen et al., 2020; Council et al., 2020). The body of literature indicates that the perception of campus climate is both influenced by the educational and social outcomes and the intersections of the professionals within their social groups and their roles on campus (Rankin & Reason, 2005; Vaccaro, 2012). Furthermore, the operationalization of intersectionality theory in higher education institutions allows for leaders and administrators to work towards understanding the complexity of the relationship between identity, inequalities, and power (Nichols & Stahl, 2019). This study expanded upon the existing literature about the experiences of Black people on predominately white college and university campuses to include the experiences and perceptions of professional staff of color serving in entry-level/lower-level positions in student affairs departments. This study expanded the existing literature on Black Millennials, Black student affairs professionals, and both Millennials and student affairs professional experiences overall.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The review of the literature focused on several primary objectives. First, this review will discuss the previous studies of millennials in various career fields and as student affairs/higher educational professionals that identify as people of color. Secondly, the traditional barriers and foundation perceived of the climate of the predominately white institution by various diversity groups will be discussed. Lastly, a discussion of the toxic working environment and the role of diversity management will be discussed. This chapter also includes a summation of the literature into themes that are relevant for the research questions and the study overall. For this study on the perception of organizational climate and professional satisfaction by Black Millennial student affairs professionals, the purpose and premise for doing the study was grounded in the theoretical frameworks of intersectionality and, subsequently, critical race theory.

Theoretical Framework

Critical Race Theory

While intersectionality has become a valued theoretical concept to explain social justice and societal issues, the concept has foundational roots within critical race theory (CRT). According to Delgado and Stefancic (2012), critical race theory came out of a movement started by civil rights activists and scholars to investigate the relationship between race, racism and the level of power people possess. Specifically, legal professor at New York University and civil rights activist, Derrick Bell, Jr. is often labeled as being the CRT movement's father figure due to his drafting of the documents that led to the initial advocacy and creation of the ideology of CRT in critique of the civil rights movement in the United States (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Hughes et al., 2013; Marshall & Rossman, 2016). CRT consists of several primary tenets as it relates to race and society. First, CRT states that race is a socially constructed product and not an inherent or fixed concept that people possess (Bondi, 2012; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). Second, CRT argues that there are instances in history and society in which racism continues because the eradication of racism would put the white majority at a disadvantage in terms of privilege (i.e.,

utilizing affirmative action practices or other civil rights policies) (Bondi 2012; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). Third, CRT proposes that racism is a common occurrence in society and is ingrained in the American society and lifestyle structures and institutions (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). With these tenets as the foundation, CRT arguably has three goals in discussing race and racism in society (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The first goal is to present narratives from people of color on perceived discrimination to build cases against discriminatory practices, racially influenced leadership, and white privilege complacency in society (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002, as cited by Creswell & Poth, 2018). Secondly, CRT recognizes that 1) race is a creation of society and 2) argues for removing race as a tool for control in society (Parker & Lynn, 2002, as cited by Creswell & Poth, 2018). Lastly, CRT has a goal to be used to discuss and study other social inequities, not limited to gender, and in the case of this study, age, and organizational position (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Critical Race Theory in Higher Education. In 1995, Ladson-Billings and Tate introduced a perspective of the critical race theory to serve as a framework to better understand the racial inequalities and role of racism in K-12 and higher education (Patton et al., 2007; Pizarro & Kohli, 2020). Keeping the original tenets in mind, the three propositions for CRT in higher education are: 1) race is a continual and significant factor for determining inequity in the US, 2) Property rights are important in American society, & 3) These inequities can be understood by analyzing through a intersectional lens based on race and property (Patton et al., 2007). Under the first proposition, the well-noted difference in the education of students of color and white students is used to explain how the curriculum of the PWI college and universities tends to focus on a white viewpoint and perpetuate the institutional oppression (Bondi, 2012). The second proposition iterates that property in higher education refers to the ownership of the curriculum and who “owns” the right to design the curriculum (Patton et al, 2007). If the professors identify as a particular identity, the way they design and teach their course could reflect that. The third proposition focuses on the agency possessed by white people being in most of the senior

leadership and faculty roles across the university. By many of these roles being held by white people, perceptions of white people having more status than people of color are formed (Patton et al., 2007). Ledesma and Calderon (2015) stated that because CRT focuses on the acknowledgement of the experiences of historically marginalized groups, in academia, the utilization of CRT means recognizing and validating the usually unheard experiences of underrepresented students, faculty, staff, and administrators. Because this study is focusing on multiple identities, intersectionality helps to further validate and tell the story of the Black Millennial.

Intersectionality

In a spin-off movement based in a women's studies perspective on critical race theory, intersectionality was first coined by Columbia professor and legal scholar Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw in a paper written for the 1989 edition of the University of Chicago Legal Forum (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). In "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics", Crenshaw wanted to highlight the fact neither the racial nor gender theories adequately covered some experiences (Howard & Navarro, 2016). The introduction of this concept presented an argument that utilizing a single axis thought process negatively affects legal thought and the work towards social justice (Cho, Crenshaw & McCall, 2013). Crenshaw (1989; 1991) continued to state that this concept was used to showcase how race and gender intertwine with one another when it came to the employment experiences of the Black woman.

However, as Mena (2016) mentions in her article, the term intersectionality is becoming more synonymous with the overall relations between multiple social and diversity-based identities (i.e., gender and generational cohorts) (as cited in Shields, 2008). Additionally, the concept's foundational goal to examine and discuss differing and same dynamics has been used in the discussions of various academic disciplines, including but not limited to sociology, gender studies, ethnic studies, history and organizational studies (Cho et al., 2013). The underlying

premise of Crenshaw's theory of intersectionality is to analyze identity categories, or intersections, of individuals and their interactions with the societal system's approach to power, privilege, and authority (Blockett, 2017). For this study, the theory of intersectionality, with the support of CRT is used to better understand the relationship of Black student affairs professionals that identify as Millennials and their perception of the organizational climate of their workplaces based on the historical reputation predominately white institutions to policies and practices shaped by interlocking systems of oppression (Howard & Navarro, 2016; Mitchell, Jr., 2016). Additionally, the use of intersectionality specifically allows for the experiences of individuals with multiple minority identities that are usually hidden to be acknowledged while exploring the influence of the social structure on these inequitable experiences and perceptions. (Atewelogun, Sealy, & Vinnicombe, 2015; Gillborn, 2015).

Generational Diversity in the Workplace

Lyons and Kuron (2014) stated that the discussion of generational differences has been a popular topic over the past couple of decades in the modern workplace. These differences in values, motivations, and beliefs held by the different generations are some of the biggest challenges that leaders and managers have in maintaining effectiveness (Kleinhans et al., 2015; Lester, Standifer, Schultz, & Windsor, 2012). The differences between generational cohorts can reportedly lead to clashes between leaders and employees or among co-workers due to the challenges of one group's behaviors and values by other cohorts (Al-Asfour & Lettau, 2014; Sakdiyakorn & Wattanacharoensil, 2018). To avoid these clashes, organizations will have to look beyond the differences and consider an individual's generation to be a salient identity in the same respect as race and gender (Urick, 2012). In terms of higher education, Kleinhaus, Chakradhar, Muller and Waddill (2015) stated that the need to consider generational diversity is important in retention and productivity of employees.

Characteristics of Millennials

Coming into the current workplace, Millennials are generally the children of the Baby

Boomers and the siblings of the Generation X (Debevec et al., 2013). Naturally, these generations will have differing values. Hannay and Fretwell (2011) asserted that Millennials generally value work-life balance and continuous learning. However, they also summarized that Millennials were “emotionally needy”, “self-absorbed” and “high maintenance overall”. However, this could be due to events, such as the financial aftermath of 9/11, that have happened in society/American history that have shaped the way that this generational cohort values their working experience and professional development within their careers.

In their 2009-2010 study, Debevec et al (2013) wanted to research whether the Great Recession in 2009 divided the Millennial generational cohort into two sub-generational cohorts that have differing sets of values. Conducting the study in 2009, the researchers explored this possible phenomenon by first interviewing the younger Millennials (YM) who were juniors and seniors in college at the time. Utilizing a state institution, approximately 350 juniors and seniors were asked about pivotal events/occurrences in history that defined their values. Out of this first round of exploratory interviews, events like the Great Recession, the election of President Obama as the first African American President of the United States, the scandals on Wall Street and the events on 9/11 were determined to have shaped the YM’s values of having job stability, stable careers, and financial security. This led to the creation of a questionnaire that had 112 Likert items and 50 behavior items based on the values that were expressed by the YM population.

The questionnaire was then distributed in a first round of the study to the YM population with a marketing class that consisted of 377 seniors and 117 juniors aged between 19 and 23 years old in the fall of 2009. In the second round of interviews, the researchers interviewed 266 older Millennials (OM) that were aged around 27-31 years of age in the following summer of 2010. Their responses were assessed in comparison to the YM that were interviewed previously. Overall, the data collected asserted the postulation that the Millennial generational cohort was divided by various events in American history and society. Because of these events, the same Millennials that may appear to be or described as self-absorbed within some parts of the literature

are seeking job stability, financial security, and a solid career due to fear of financial loss similar to the Great Recession (Debevec et al., 2013). This search for financial security, the skills needed to be successful, and an environment that builds reassurance and passion in their jobs may also lead to horizontal job hopping (Debevec et al., 2013; Ferri-Reed, 2014; Hoffman, 2018; Wilson, 2019).

Black Millennials in America

In her article for *The Journal of Ethnic and Cultural Studies*, Wilson (2019) stated that living as a Black Millennial in America is hard to do. Being a Millennial already leads to feelings of not being heard/misunderstood and societal distrust due to the criticism and stereotyping by society (Darby & Morrell; 2019; Hoffman, 2018; Wilson, 2019). However, Wilson (2019) argued that the Millennial desire to be formally educated leads to Black people within this generational cohort learning about American history and society and combining it with their lived experiences. With this information in mind, the author continued to say that the Black Millennial has to work to maintain their place in the Black community while maintaining social capital in the overarching American society through the pursuit of education and a career; operating in a form of *double consciousness*, or dual life (Wilson, 2019). A more popular name for this double consciousness addressed by Bernie Hogan and Ervin Goffman is *code-switching*, or the altering of the way a person presents to manage their impression on others (as cited by Pitcan et al., 2018). This constant code-switching by the Black Millennial leads to a hardened and shifted personality due to a developed racial battle fatigue from having to work twice as hard in a society that requires an assimilation to the majority standards and dealing with racism (Pizarro & Kohli, 2020; Smith, 2020, Wilson, 2019). In terms of higher education, the juncture of the Millennial values like social justice advocacy and philanthropic work and Black lived experiences on higher education campuses manifests in the constant turnover of Black faculty and staff of this generation in response to bare minimum diversity commitments by institutions (Harper, as cited by Lynch-Alexander, 2017). Lynch-Alexander (2017) continued to say that higher education

institutions have been allowing Black people and other people of color to constantly turnover for decades. This is because the predominately white institution, acting as a micro-version of the larger society, can exert the same or a similar version of colorblindness, lack of safety, erasure of minority lived experience, and barriers to upward mobility (Cabrera et al., 2016; Harper; 2012; Ledesma & Calderon, 2015; Wilson et al., 2016).

Historical Issues within the Climate and Culture of Predominately White Institutions

Microaggressions and Bias

Predominately white colleges and universities have been found to be areas in which people of color at various levels have experienced microaggressions and biased behaviors/actions. In her study, Mena (2016) focused on describing experiences of women of color within higher education as faculty and staff professionals and providing attention through their voices. Women of color when they are successful in their careers tend to experience feelings such as, but not limited to, being able to make fewer mistakes, being perceived with low credibility and being questioned about their leadership potential. Using ethnographic methodology and a theoretical framework of intersectionality, the researcher both interviewed thirteen women faculty and staff professionals of color over a span of a year and engaged in a campus organization for women professionals of color as a participant observer.

The study consisted of a demographic makeup of ten African American/Black women, two Asian women and one Latina woman who all work at a PWI in the Northeast region of the United States. The interviews consisted of one meeting lasting between 50 and 120 minutes and the data received were coded from two different approaches. The participant observation consisted of attending six meetings that presented a broader view of the experiences of women of color at PWIs. Based on the results, there were several themes that emerged. All the study participants reported experiencing microaggressions and oppressive behavior. At the same time, they all experienced barriers and challenges professionally based on their intersections.

It has been argued that because microaggressions generally happen unconsciously every day, the predominately white space of most colleges and universities negatively targets people of color and leads to feelings of dismissal and unsafety (Cabrera, Watson, & Franklin, 2016; Sue et al., 2007). The subtle nature of microaggressions also makes it challenging for organizations to identify cases of discrimination and adversely affects job performance, job satisfaction and the retention of employees (Offermann et al., 2013). To combat microaggressions, discussions about how to utilize good diversity management practices, such as training programs and effective climate assessment, are important (Offerman et al., 2013). Additionally, working towards leader equity and empowered leadership could help with the success of various groups and their different intersections (Offerman et al., 2013; Mena, 2016).

Marginalization and Isolation

For people of color, specifically, Black/African American people, the predominately white institution can sometimes lead to marginalization and feelings of isolation within the higher education workplace. In a call-to-action article, Lloyd-Jones (2014) wrote that African American/Black women faculty tended to have differing cultural beliefs, experiences and backgrounds from the mainstream, or predominately white, higher education institutional climates, best practices, and unwritten rules for navigating as a professional. Because of these differences, African American/Black women are less likely to be promoted or hired for tenure-track positions in colleges and universities. The limitation to their success then leads to two primary barriers: 1) social exclusion, or alienation based on their identities, and 2) scholarly marginalization, or the relegation to a minor position within academia. Based on her review of the literature, the researcher proposed the use of mentoring initiatives as one of the effective strategies to aid in socialization of African American/Black women faculty to better navigate through the general university culture and to remove or limit the effects of the barriers. She states that mentoring has been established as a practice that leads to decreased experiences of social exclusion for African American/Black women and increased levels of productivity, scholarly

collaboration, and eventually, advancement in their professions. She also suggests that the same mentoring initiatives could narrow the divide between the cultures of the African American women and the predominately white colleges and universities.

Even though Lloyd-Jones's review of the literature focuses on the experience of African American/Black women as faculty, there are several studies within the literature that indicate that these same feelings of marginalization, isolation, and cultural misfit are generally felt by most African American/Black men and women as staff and faculty (Mena & Vaccaro, 2017; Orelus, 2013; Patterson Dilworth & Wolfe, 2015; Smith, Hung, & Franklin, 2011; West, 2015). As PWIs or mainstream colleges and universities continue to push for and include diversity and inclusion as one of their values, the senior administrators will have to continue to work to create initiatives and opportunities for African American people and, with the inclusion of generational diversity, Millennials, and incoming generations (Blancero, Mourino-Ruiz & Padilla, 2018; Patterson Dilworth & Wolfe, 2015). At the end of her study, Garcia (2015) concluded that people of color entering higher education as student affairs professionals will have differing perceptions of campus climates. She continued to state that different perceptions will not only be based on the diversity of the campus community, but also the various departments and areas in which they work on campus. Based on this statement, it could be safe to presume that any of the identities the professional possesses will also have a role in how they view the climate of the campus including, but not limited to, their age and position within the organization (Hannay & Fretwell, 2011; Ly, 2015)

Predominately White Institutions: Experiences in Organizational Climates by Employees

In their article for *Research in Higher Education*, Moran and Volkwein (1988) presented a seminal study with the purpose to establish the proper construct as it relates to climate within higher education institutions and to examine the differences in the perception of the organization. The researchers questioned whether the construct of climate will vary among campuses due to the relevance at the organizational level and whether the membership in various groups will influence

the expectation on climate. Creating a sample of nine institutions based on mission, public support and size, a questionnaire was issued to study participants asking about the climate and common issues that may occur, including but not limited to, autonomy, support, and performance evaluation. The data were also analyzed using variance testing and the results determined that the institutional climate varies from school to school and that groups within the campus could change the perception; specifically, the position within the academic hierarchy. When it comes to academic spaces, institutional leaders will have to be mindful of including perception of the environment and whether various groups of people can see themselves in the environment to maintain a diverse and inclusive climate (Griffin, Cunningham & George Mwangi, 2016). A review of the literature identifies that the experiences within an organizational or institutional culture can be influenced by the various intersections that the employee possesses including, but not limited to, their positions within the organization, their racial and ethnic identities, and their generational group.

Experiences Influenced by Campus Role Within the Institution

Vaccaro (2012) presented an ethnographic study that focused on understanding how the LGBTQ faculty, staff and students within an institution perceived the institution's climate. With a focus on one midsized, private institution in the United States, the researcher collected information by observing all six of the LGBTQ employee resource groups at the institution during their meetings. During the meetings and through emails, the researcher invited members of these groups to interview individually about their experiences. After 49 individual interviews, Vaccaro found that the undergraduate students felt the campus was very homophobic and discriminatory to the LGBTQ community. However, they felt support from various staff and faculty on the campus.

On the other hand, the theme that emerged with the graduate students was that as they were getting into their professions more, the intersection of being LGBTQ and a newer professional/graduate student shaped their perception of the campus climate. The graduate

students' idea of what it meant to work within their professions was tied to their perception of the campus climate. Within their discussions with each other, the graduate students spent more their time talking about what it meant to identify as LGBTQ within their professions as lawyers, social workers, and businesspeople. In terms of support, the graduate students received it primarily from the faculty of their departments. For the faculty and staff, the perception of the climate focused on the departments and/or offices they worked in. Both groups mentioned the fact that the institution has LGBTQ-friendly policies. The staff, especially in student affairs, overall felt safer coming out to people around them. However, the faculty felt more guarded in exposing their lifestyle due to the comments that are said around them that were anti-gay and discriminatory towards the LGBTQ community.

Although Vaccaro's study is focused on faculty, students and staff that identify as members of the LGBTQ community, the findings present good points for overall diversity and climate management within the higher education work setting. Additionally, Vaccaro's study mentioned that there is a variation in how the employees of various roles perceive the climate of the institution. Those who have the same or similar roles tended to have the same viewpoint of the campus' climate (e.g., administrative support associates could have the same viewpoint as other administrative support associates). However, this would be different from other roles within the organization. An important piece of this study to consider is that the experiences within the campus climate will also be held by people of similar identities within the organization (Vaccaro, 2012).

Experiences of Higher Education Influenced by Identity

Experiences Influenced by Race/Ethnicity. Noticing a limitation in the literature as it relates to the voice of scholars of color and the support of first-year faculty of color, Cole, McGowan and Zerquera (2017) focused on examining the experiences of these scholars of color within the larger scale of faculty issues and grounded the study in critical race theory as the theoretical framework. Critical race theory (CRT) identifies the presence of racism within society

and educational institutions, recognizes intersectionality in the telling of oppression within society and works to bring awareness to the voices of the underrepresented through social change (Cole, McGowan & Zerquera, 2017; Ledesma & Calderon, 2015). With this understanding of how CRT has a role in higher education socialization, Cole et al. (2017) utilized a narrative inquiry method to study the stories of these new faculty of color. The participants were the three researchers themselves and the data were collected in four phases through autobiographical narratives, reflections, and other means. To build trustworthiness, the researchers/participants presented the findings at conferences for peer review.

Based on their findings, the authors realized that successful socialization and acceptance into the campus climate is dependent on formal and informal networks for support and constant reflections in balancing and maintaining their desired identity while getting used to the faculty addition to their identity (Cole et al., 2017). Because perceptions are constantly changing, understanding how identities are growing and changing along with understanding the importance of support systems will help in challenging environments in higher education that are oppressive to various groups of people (Atewologun, Sealy, & Vinnicombe, 2016; Griffin, Cunningham & George Mwangi, 2016).

Organizational Climate Based on Experiences of the Millennials. Age or generational cohort could arguably be one of the identities that is becoming just as important as race, gender, and sexual orientation as campuses and workplaces demographics change (Lyons & Kuron, 2013; Wilson, 2019). Milhelic and Aleksic (2017) stated that Generation Y, also known as Millennials, are on their way to becoming the largest and fastest growing generational cohort in the workforce. The purpose of their study was to examine the effects of certain Millennial characteristics on their creativity, or how they develop original ideas and solutions to problems. The study hypothesized that because Millennials' perception of their organizations is based in maintaining a healthy work-life balance and feeling satisfied and fulfilled, organizations will have to focus on allowing job-crafting and the management of flow, or the level of individual motivation, enjoyment, and

happiness, to maintain Millennial creativity. To collect the data, two surveys were sent out to identified Millennials (18-25 years of age) that were students within a university business school that inquired about their campus involvement, academic experience, and feelings about the institution. A third of the students also worked part-time in various career fields in addition to their studies.

The surveys sent out by Milhelic and Aleksic measured job crafting, flow, creativity, and work-life balance. Because the authors also presented correlational statistics between the study constructs to test significance, this study had a mixed methods approach. The results stated that crafting and flow were correlated, however, work-life balance satisfaction and creativity were not correlated. This caused for subsequent studies to be performed to further look into the correlations. Based on this study, it was concluded with practical implications suggesting that organizations should work towards creating climates and cultures that allow for the expression of creativity and individual motivation as deemed necessary by a Millennial employee. Even though this is a Dutch study, the call for organizations to work towards supporting the Millennial generation and the subsequent generation is a global issue. The creation of a more accepting and inclusive organization climate for Millennials is achieved by motivating them with tasks and, at the same time, being mindful of the desire for work life balance (Mihelic & Aleksic, 2017). Considering that Millennials place more importance on being in work environments that help people, provide social connections and other values, the perception of the culture and environment will need to be considered by employers and institutions in their hiring actions (Kuron, Lyons, Schweitzer & Ng, 2014).

Within the discussions about the Millennial generation in the workplace, there are conversations beginning that suggest this generational cohort could be the target of bullying in the higher education workplace. Hollis (2014) mentioned that because of their possession of the least amount of power within the organization, the Millennials (people under the age of 35) are the most likely to be exposed to bullying in the workplace. The initial literature review by Hollis

mentioned that although workplace bullying is mentioned within other sectors domestically and internationally, none of current literature mentioned workplace bullying within the higher education setting. However, the review of the literature does confirm that the younger employees tend to be bullied and paid less due to the lack of working experience. Based on this review of the literature, the purpose of the study was to examine the Millennial experiences with workplace bullying in American higher education institutions due to cross-generational tension between employees of the organization (Hollis, 2014, Salazar et al., 2019).

To collect the data in their study, Hollis developed a survey that was sent to various higher education institutions (PWIs, Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Ivy League, etc.) in the eastern part of the United States for a total of 175 participating institutions. The participants consisted of professionals at four-year institutions between the ages of 23-35 from various departments within the organization (e.g., athletics, human resources, academic departments, and student affairs). Over five weeks, the researcher received responses to the survey from 15 percent of the sample. The survey results confirmed that the Millennials in the organization have either witnessed or experienced being bullied in the workplace with 71 percent of the responses in the affirmative. The researcher reported that most of the cases of bullying took place in one-on-one meetings or in front of other staff members and eventually led to isolation and taking more sick time in response (Hollis, 2014).

Based on the review of the literature, the perception of Millennials of their working environments could potentially be a primary factor in the level of satisfaction in their working environments. Additionally, the literature is beginning to highlight the experiences and perceptions of Millennials as they work in various sectors, including higher education, in the American workplace; specifically, the mistreatment and perceived lack of *fit* of these younger professionals (Hoffman, 2019; Hollis, 2014; Marshall et al., 2016). If the Millennial employee in higher education is also having issues with their supervisors, being bullied, and lacking professional development in the workplace, their perception of the organization's climate could

lead to low employee morale and consequently, high turnover and large number of people leaving (Marshall et al., 2016; Smith & Fredricks-Lowman, 2019). This experience by the Millennial employee also could lead to the perception of the organization being toxic; a phenomenon that has been found to be on the rise within the higher education working environment in the United States (Smith & Fredricks-Smith, 2019).

Rising Issues in Higher Education Affecting Experiences

The Rise of Toxic Leadership in Higher Education

Toxic leadership is not a new phenomenon nor rare within organizations (Green, 2014; Smith & Fredricks-Lowman, 2019). However, the research into toxic leadership within higher education workplaces is newer with the earliest research appearing in 2007 (Smith & Fredricks-Lowman, 2019). In a study based in Tierney's organizational culture theory, Smith and Fredricks-Lowman (2019) conducted research to highlight and better understand how toxic leadership has grown within the higher education setting. In brief, Tierney's theory on organizational culture is based on six concepts: environment, mission, information, strategy, leadership, and socialization (Deese, Gokpinar-Shelton, & Wendling, 2018). These six concepts help higher education institutions develop the most effective strategies, tools, and values for a successful organizational culture. Smith and Fredricks-Lowman's study used a thematic synthesis concept developed by James Thomas and Angela Harden to conduct a ten-year review of the current body of knowledge on higher education and toxic leadership between 2007 and 2017. After organizing the data, three themes emerged about toxic leadership in higher education: the culture of the organization, the employee morale, and the performance of the employee. Using these three themes, the researchers suggested that the institutions help combat the development of toxic leadership by helping to build resiliency, creating appropriate policies for leadership behavior, and practicing good conflict management. Overall, student affairs professionals have described having trouble with leadership being one of the reasons for feeling unwelcome/invisible within an institution and/or for ultimately deciding to leave higher education (Marshall et al., 2016; Mena & Vaccaro,

2017). Trouble with leadership has been documented in the negative perception of Black professionals across various levels in academia at PWIs (Davis & Maldonado; 2015; Feraud-King, 2020; West, 2015). Even though there are limited academic studies about Millennials working in higher education, there are academic blogs that are discussing these same negative feelings (Perez, 2018). The utilization of a transformational leadership style could help in making sure the voices, or opinions and ideas, of the professional staff with multiple minority identities (i.e., Black Millennials) are well received by the senior leadership and administration and that the socialization into the organization is as smooth as possible (Atewologun, Sealy, & Vinnicombe; 2016; Cole, McGowan & Zerquera, 2017). Additionally, using a transformational leadership style could help recruit and retain Millennials, who value achievement and advancement, reach their professional goals (Kuron et al., 2014).

Role of Work-life Balance in Combating the Perception of Toxic Leadership

Between the various occurrences of webinars, courses and conferences, national accrediting bodies, and resource groups like NASPA and ACPA are stimulating questions on the importance of work-life balance for student affairs professionals. Wilson, Vilaro, Fellingner and Dillenbeck (2015) wrote that work-life balance has an importance in the overall impact on individuals' pursuit of and advancement in careers in higher education, especially in the careers of student affairs professionals. Based on Dr. Terrell Strayhorn's 2009 article that suggests a high rate of dissatisfaction and turnover by student affairs professionals, Wilson et al (2015) executed a study that explored the satisfaction of student affairs professionals with their current level of work-life balance and their current job status. Additionally, the researchers looked at the overall factors that contribute to the level of satisfaction that is held. The study took an intersectional approach and looked at the impact of gender on the work-life balance and job satisfaction. In general, student affairs professionals have iterated that their roles have led to work-life conflict or imbalance in the many aspects of their lives (Marshall et al., 2016). For the millennial

professional in higher education, the literature suggested that a Millennial is more focused on work-life balance than the generations before them (Hannay & Fretwell, 2011).

Taking into consideration that most lower-level student affairs professionals are also Millennials, the way that the organization values work-life balance will be important to their overall satisfaction or contentment in the field (Wilson et al., 2016; Marshall et al., 2016). Work-life balance is also important to the Black professionals that are assuming multiple roles and pursuing multiple opportunities to advance within the organization/field and overcome professional barriers (Mena & Vaccaro, 2017). Dr. Alison Smith (2020) specifically mentioned that while higher education institutions are working to stay “on trend” with diversity, equity, and inclusion to create task forces and hire diversity consultants, these good ideas do not always affect Black professionals in a positive manner. This is because these ideas add to the mental and emotional loads that Black professionals are already carrying working at PWIs due to racial battle fatigue, microaggressions and other instances (Husband, 2016; Smith, 2020).

Working in Student Affairs

In the first chapter of their book, Killam and Degges-White (2017) stated that the earliest version of the student affairs profession in the United States consisted of the faculty and the tutors in the residential halls essentially being tasked with taking care of the students and their development while attending the university. Over time, this secondary role of caring for students evolved into positions like Deans and other administrative positions being created and programs to aid in serving the students. Killam and Degges-White (2017) continued to state that as the student demographics changed to include women, racial/ethnic minorities, and students from lower socioeconomic statuses, the services expanded to serve the needs of these students that were coming into the universities and allowing them to be successful. While working in Student Affairs as a professional, the work can be fulfilling and deemed important to the success and development of the college student (Killam & Degges-White, 2017; Stokes & Fredenburg, 2020). The professionals that work in Student Affairs departments serve as keepers of knowledge,

creators of the campus environment, the managers of diversity and inclusion practices within the environment and a host of other roles (Dantzler, 2020; Garcia, 2015; Killam & Degges-White, 2017). However, this work can generally be difficult due to the long hours infringing on maintaining work-life balance, the seemingly limited opportunities for development and advancement, and lower salaries, among other things (Marshall et al., 2016). However, as a Black professional, these perceptions of the student affairs working environment could be accompanied with perceptions from their self-identified race or ethnicity. Additionally, these same student affairs working environment perceptions could be accompanied with perceptions based on other social identities including, but not limited to, age, gender, and sexual orientation (Vaccaro, 2012).

Working in Student Affairs as a Black Professional

Regarding Black student affairs professionals (SAPs) working at PWIs, one of the primary perceptions consists of feeling unwelcome in the space (Gardner Jr., Barrett, & Pearson, 2014; Kemp-Delisser et al., 2020). These professionals feel unwelcome or not a fit for the organization due to feelings of isolation and marginalization and feeling the environment is unsafe/hostile/toxic due to microaggressions and systemic discrimination (Gardner, Barrett, & Pearson, 2014; Mena, 2016; Stokes & Fredenburg, 2020; West, 2015). The second perception held by Black SAPs is the need to endure through the unwelcome and hostile feelings for the sake of the students they serve. Black SAPs often feel as though they must constantly advocate for the students and all Black issues through an abundance of service commitments (Mena & Vaccaro, 2017; Stokes & Fredenburg, 2020). The already hard work of being in student affairs coupled with the perceived barriers being a person of color can lead to experiencing racial battle fatigue and experiencing burnout from the constant coping in the workplace (Husband, 2016; Smith, 2020). To mitigate feeling racial battle fatigue (RBF), to voice concerns and challenges with work with white colleagues as a Black professional, and to endure the PWI working environment, Black SAPs are turning to working with the racial culture within the microculture (higher education) to create counterspaces that empower, support, and affirm their identity (Husband,

2016; Kemp-Delisser et al., 2020). These counterspaces that are created *for us, by us* include, but are not limited to social media groups like the Black Student Affairs Professionals (BLKSAP) Facebook group, racial affinity group meetups at conferences like ACPA and NASPA, professional development programs, and affinity groups in the workplace (Husband, 2016, Kemp-Delisser et al., 2020; Smith, 2020; West, 2017).

Working in Student Affairs as a Millennial

With the Millennial generation moving from the role of student to the professionals now serving students, there are limited academic studies focusing on what it is like for the Millennial professional. Discussions on working in student affairs are happening using methods that this generation are well known for being adept at: social media. On a student affairs blog, Perez (2018) inquired if student affairs divisions were meant for Millennials and if it was time for higher education to consider making the workplace accessible and acceptable for this generation. She continued to describe experiencing what she called *millennial spirit barriers*, or obstacles that hindered that perception that the working environments in student affairs and higher education were good climates for Millennials. These obstacles include but are not limited to not having the support of the management/leadership, not having professional development available, and feeling like they are not a good fit for the institution where they work (Hoffman, 2018). These obstacles conflict with some of the primary career values of Millennials of having and expecting help to develop skills for advancement in their organizations and working for organizations that give them meaning and purpose as professionals and individuals (Arnof Fishman, 2016; Carpenter & De Charon, 2014).

The Role of Diversity Management in Higher Education

Diversity management is an organizational concept that is focused on the creation of initiatives to focus on efforts to have a non-discriminatory and inclusive environment that respects the differences of everyone within the organization (Cornelius, Gooch, & Todd, 2000 as cited by Sharma, 2016). As organizations and institutions are working on their diversity and

inclusion efforts, organizations are beginning to discuss the best way to manage diversity. These conversations will also have to include the best practices for leadership and ways to maintain job satisfaction in all employees.

Discussions of Diversity Management Within the Organization

To successfully recruit, retain and manage a diverse group of employees, organizations have been implementing diversity policies (Ashikali & Groeneveld, 2015). In their study, the researchers explored how the diversity management practices within organizations are linked to the employees' affective commitment (loyalty) through both the leadership style of the manager and the organizational culture's inclusivity. The researchers first formulated three hypotheses based on diversity management and its possible effects on affective commitment by employees. Then, three more hypotheses were formulated based on the effect of transformational leadership on the relationship between diversity management and organizational culture inclusivity as a mediating tool. The data were collected using an online survey sent to all the employees within the Dutch public sector (Ashikali & Groeneveld, 2015).

Analysis consisted of the structural equation model and the use of item scales for the measurement of diversity management, usage of transformational leadership, an inclusive/equitable organizational culture, and the level of affective commitment, or loyalty, held by employees. Overall, the results of the study supported all six hypotheses and confirmed the impact of transformational leadership on diversity management and the perception of inclusivity in the organization by the employees. By utilizing a transformational leadership style, the leaders within the institutions and organizations can change and adapt to better retain core values of the organization, like service and diversity and inclusion (Ashikali & Groeneveld, 2015; Martin, 2015).

Utilizing Transformational Leadership Styles to Increase Job Satisfaction

Additionally, utilizing transformational leadership could help to foster an environment that is inclusive and based in respect (Ashikali & Groeneveld, 2015; Martin, 2015). A

transformational leadership style consists of intentionally engaging to create connections between the leaders (administration) and the followers (employees) to raise the morale and motivation within the organization (Lewis, Boston, & Peterson, 2017). If this becomes the standard and goals set by the leadership in a workplace, Sang Long, Yusof, Owee Kowang and Hock Heng (2014) argued that the satisfaction of the employees with their job could be enhanced. The purpose of their study was to investigate the correlation between using transformational leadership in the workplace and the job satisfaction held by employees. Using a mixed methods approach, the researchers utilized a survey for primary data collection and then used correlation analysis and descriptive statistics to analyze the effect of the four dimensions of transformational leadership: behaving and operating ethically (*idealized influence*), having a purposeful mission and vision (*inspirational motivation*), providing opportunities to continually learn and develop (*intellectual stimulation*), and considering the needs of each employee (*individualized consideration*), on job satisfaction (Jameel & Ahmad, 2020; Prochazka, Gilova, & Vaculik, 2017; Sang Long, Yusof Owee Kowang, and Hock Heng, 2014) . Overall, the relationship had a negative correlation, except in the case of individualized consideration, or the attention to the employee’s needs for development and success and motivating factors. As a transformational leader, paying attention to the needs of their employees will not only help with their motivation and confidence in the workplace, but it could also help with the appearance of having good management by the organization and its leadership to outside stakeholders (Martin, 2015; Sang Long, et al., 2014).

Utilizing Theories for Approaching Diversity Management

Even though their paper focuses on the experiences of racially minoritized students within college and universities, Powell, Demetriou, Morton & Ellis (2020) presented an approach to enhance the lived experiences on campus and outcomes of this population of students utilizing CRT as a foundation. Starting with a discussion on the concept of multicultural competence—a concept that calls for student affairs professionals and practitioners in higher education to develop the knowledge to support students of color and to incorporate social justice advocacy in their

efforts to maintain inclusivity on campuses—the researchers argued that this concept does not emphasize racism as a primary mechanism for the marginalization of students of color. Additionally, because the multicultural competence literature dilutes the importance of race and racism and focuses on presenting broadly to multiple identities, the researchers argued that the concept limits how it can help student affairs professionals to address the specific racial issues on their campuses. To combat this affect, a model was proposed to help student affairs professionals (SAP) better support students. At the same time, this model promotes racial consciousness and equity.

The model consists of four primary practices which can be applied on the individual and programmatic levels. The first practice, *validate*, consists of the SAP accepting and embracing that racial realism, or the understanding that racism/racial discrimination is a permanent part of the societal structure within the United States, permanently exists and jointly developing a continual awareness of how racism impacts the lives of students of color. The second practice, *reflect*, consists of the SAP looking inward and exploring their position, societal/organizational power and privileges in an environment that is either afforded to or limited to them by various demographics they possess (i.e., education, ability, race, and gender). The researchers encouraged the practice of discerning to be the third part of the model. To *discern* as an SAP is to approach normal situations with both a strong awareness of how societies can be oppressive to people and a commitment to personally not perpetuate oppression. The final practice of the model is to *act* and to work in solidarity with oppressed populations to disrupt the systems and practices that perpetuate inequality. The utilization of all four practices by SAPs showcases an intentionality to improve the campus and personal experiences of students of color and work with them as equal partners in the pursuit of an equitable climate.

Even though this presented approach is more for the student affairs professional supporting students, it could be posited that the use of this same model or others for critical race theory and other theoretical approaches could be beneficial to helping with managing diversity

and equitable experiences as it relates to the climate for the Black student affairs professionals themselves. McEwen (2003, as cited by Patton et al., 2007) stated that the use of theory provides a strong basis for knowledge and expertise in the student affairs profession and that without theories, informal attempts to understand observations and phenomena could be made. Using theories like critical race theory and intersectionality to inform the institutional actions would provide more effectiveness and intentionality in understanding inequities in higher education (Council et al., 2020; Nichols & Stahl, 2019; Patton et al., 2007; Powell et al., 2020;). Moreover, the use of intersectionality specifically will allow for the challenging of the dismissal/institutional invisibility of certain identities and how the various contexts continue the inequalities for these groups (Nichols & Stahl, 2019).

Chapter Summary

Higher education institutions, especially predominately white institutions, will have to use or improve diversity management efforts to create and maintain inclusive working environments that recruit, support, and retain student affairs professionals with intersecting social identities more effectively. The literature review emphasized this importance and suggested that critical race theory and intersectionality approaches will be needed within these diversity management efforts (Nichols & Stahl, 2019). While higher education has several studies that focus on the racial and ethnic minority experiences and perceptions in various positions across a college campus, Garcia (2015) mentioned that there are few studies that research how student affairs professionals perceive and experience the climate of a college/university campus based on race.

In terms of the Millennial generation, there are more studies needed to research the Millennials that are working in the field of higher education and serving in the lower-level professional positions. Kuron et al (2014) mentioned that previous research on Millennial work values relied on student samples. Given that the values of Millennials are mostly based on their time as students in academia and not professionals, the work values will need to be interpreted to

consider changing values and transitions from students obtaining degrees in academia to staff professionals in the academic workplace (Kuron et al., 2014). Additionally, there is a discussion growing about the erasure of the Millennials within the workplace (Wilson, 2019). Millennials are feeling disconnected in general from the other generations due to their values, however, the invisibility grows when they are not understood or prompted to engage at work by their managers (Darby & Morrell; 2019; Hoffman, 2018; Urick, 2012). This invisibility could be further nuanced by race, ethnicity, and other intersecting identities and offers the argument that the Millennial conversation should include intersectional discussions (Allen et al., 2020; Council et al., 2020).

Rankin and Reason (2005) mentioned that identity perceptions and the differing perceptions of climate will present a challenge unless they are discussed and considered in diversity management practices. A similar sentiment or call to action for institutional reform on diversity issues, specifically racial equity, has been raised and supported by scholars within academia in various articles as it relates to the campus experiences of students, faculty and administrators that identify as people of color (Hurtado et al, 1998; Powell et al, 2020). Along these same lines, effective diversity management within an institution's climate must be expanded to include intersections beyond race and ethnicity like sexual orientation, gender identity, position within the organization, and age (Blancero et al., 2018; Cole et al., 2017; Ferri-Reed 2014; Mena, 2016; Wilson et al., 2016; Vaccaro, 2012). Based on the experiences of the researcher within the study site, the observations by the researcher of other colleagues, and the information from the literature review, this study looked into the experiences of Black Millennial professionals to advocate for change within the predominately white institution climate, specifically in this institution in a southern state within the United States.

Research Questions

The researcher established the following research questions for this phenomenological study:

1. What are the lived experiences of Black Millennial student affairs professionals who work in predominately white institutions?
2. How do Black Millennial student affairs professionals make meaning of these lived experiences in terms of their personal and professional goals?

Chapter 3: Methodology

Aim of the Study

The aim of this study was to develop a better working knowledge of the lived experiences of Black Millennials working in student affairs at a predominately white institution in a southern state in the United States and Black Millennials overall. By the end of this study, the researcher hoped to have the knowledge to develop an intersectionality-framed approach to managing diversity and inclusion best practices within the institution she serves as it relates to serving groups that are unheard. Additionally, the researcher aimed for this study to add to the growing knowledge on the Millennial work experience, the Black Millennial experience overall, the Black professional work experience, and the experience of working in higher education as a Black student affairs professional.

Qualitative Research Approach

For this study, a qualitative research approach was used. Qualitative research is defined as an approach studying a research problem using theoretical and interpretative frameworks and assumptions to address and provide transformative practices to social and human phenomena (Creswell, 2013; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Although there are numerous qualitative approaches for studies, Creswell and Poth (2018) determined that the main approaches are ethnography, grounded theory, phenomenology, narratives, and case studies. The researcher chose the phenomenological study research design to understand the lived experiences of Black Millennials working in PWIs as student affairs professionals based on the influence of their intersecting social identities. This methodology allowed for a more in-depth investigation of a contemporary social phenomenon within the context of a group of individuals experiencing the same phenomenon and assigning a universal essence to the meaning. (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Lacdo-O et al (2018) utilized a phenomenological study approach to gain the understanding of the expectations of Millennial teachers in a Filipino school district. Based on their research, Millennial teachers were the largest group working within the public school

system. Because of this growing trend in the Filipino education system, the researchers argued that the Millennial teachers and their lived experiences needed to be explored for clear understanding. Utilizing Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory and McClelland's achievement motivation theory, the researchers sought to examine how the Millennial teachers in this school district identified their needs and motives and the goals needed to achieve satisfaction of their needs. The study consisted of the interviewing of 10 teachers between the ages of 20 and 37. The data collected from these interviews led to three overall themes for discussion: 1) the set expectations of the Millennial teachers, 2) the challenges experienced, and the coping mechanisms used in response, and 3) the rewards of the job. Based on the data, Lacro-O et al (2018) found that Millennial teachers were under a wrong impression of better financial stability and compensation and this impression, along with the challenges of the administrative duties of the job, were leading to stress and the need for support. The researchers continued to say that if the job has both tangible rewards (e.g., money) and intangible rewards (e.g., rewards, promotions, and recognition), the teachers were motivated to continue the work.

According to Creswell and Poth (2018), transcendental phenomenology focuses on using a fresh perspective to achieve a description of the phenomenon of interest based on the lived experiences of the participants and less on the interpretations created by the researcher. With the understanding that this transcendental state can be rarely achieved, the researcher specifically chose this type of phenomenological study to further remove herself from the experience and to focus on the understanding of the phenomenon of the Black Millennial student affairs professional experience within this institution. Moreover, the researcher was currently external to the institution and was able to further remove herself from the phenomenon as it is notably happening within the study site. While the issue within the institution was seemingly unique because of the focus on Black Millennials working in higher education, there have been several discussions in the literature about the experiences of Black people working and studying within predominately white institutions (Gardner, Barrett & Pearson, 2014; Mena & Vaccaro, 2017;

Rankin & Reason, 2005). Moreover, the number of studies about the experiences of Millennials in the workplace are increasing (Hays, 2014; Kleinhaus, Chakradhar, Muller & Waddill, 2015; Kuron, Lyons, Schweitzer & Ng, 2015). Based on the Lacdo-O et al study and the description of a phenomenological study, the researcher chose this qualitative research design for learning more about Black Millennial student affairs professionals and their lived experiences. The researcher conducted interviews with a select group of Black Millennial student affairs professionals within the study site that have expressed interest in participating after recruitment.

Participants

Ideally, the sample aimed to include between 8-14 participants, however, the researcher recruited until data saturation, or the point in which information collected is fully developed, is met (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The participants in this study consisted of current or former student affairs employees at a public historically predominately white institution in a state in the Southern United States chosen first through purposeful sampling. Purposeful sampling was defined by Creswell and Poth (2018) as the intentional selection of people and sites for a study to inform an understanding of the phenomena and the research problem. More specifically, the participants were chosen through a type of purposeful sampling called homogenous sampling. This type of sampling states that the researcher will sample individuals and sites based on subgroup membership (e.g., all being Black Millennials within a particular site) (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). To be included in the study, the participants had to be currently or formerly employed in the Division of Student Affairs for at least 6 months. The participants had to self-identify as Black/African American and be a member of the Millennial Generational cohort, or between the ages of 21 and 38 (Kleinhaus et al., 2015). Additionally, the participants had to or have held a title of Associate Director, Assistant Director, Program Coordinator/University Program Associate, Administrative Support Associate, or any other lower level/entry-level position within a student affairs area at the institution. The only exclusion for participants was for Black Millennials who did not work at least 1 semester within a student affairs officer or center. The

researcher also asked for suggestions for others that may qualify for the study in a sampling strategy defined as *snowball sampling* to make sure the study reaches data saturation (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The researcher asked for additional participants in both the interest questionnaire and at the end of each interview.

In terms of organizational permissions, the researcher reached out to the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs and the Associate Provost of Equity and Diversity at the study site. Permission from the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs and giving notice to the Associate Provost of Equity and Diversity was necessary because the participants would be employees within the Student Affairs division and the study was centered around a potential diversity and equity issue. Once permission was received from both senior leaders, the next step was to receive the approval from the Nova Southeastern University (NSU) Institutional Review Board and the study site's Institutional Review Board (IRB) if needed. After the approval was received by the NSU IRB, the researcher began to recruit the participants within the study site. The researcher asked the Division of Student Affairs to send a crafted email (see Appendix A) on her behalf over the listserv to recruit those employees who fit the study criteria that explained the purpose and intent of the study and allowed them time to contact the researcher with questions if necessary and to complete a questionnaire (see Appendix B) for possible eligibility. This email also had the participant letter for surveys (see Appendix C) attached as a separate attachment. All submissions for the questionnaire remained in Microsoft Teams unless they identified they would like to participate in the interview portion of the study and submitted their email for contact by the researcher.

The rationale for collecting a questionnaire from all possible participants was to enrich the understanding of the research questions and trustworthiness of the study through triangulation. Hastings (2012) defines triangulation to be the practice of using and having multiple sources of data to enhance the credibility and trustworthiness in the findings of a research study. Along with the email, the researcher included a short bio that explained her tenure

and connection with the study site. Based on the responses from the initial questionnaire, the researcher generated a pool of participants to interview further one-on-one. These participants were selected based on two primary criteria: 1) affirming their interest in continuing to the interview portion of the study in a closing question on the questionnaire and 2) an interest by the researcher to expand on the answers provided within the questionnaire. Once the initial number of desired participants was reached, the researcher followed up with them to set up a time for an interview via SignUp.com and to sign all necessary forms. A copy of the final signed consent form (see Appendix D) was given back to the participants for their records before the interview. The researcher placed the email communication used to obtain organizational permission, to recruit the participants, the questionnaire, the participant letter, and the consent form in the appendix. In terms of the interview, The Black Millennial student affairs professionals was expected to participate in a 45-60-minute semi-structured interview via a video meeting that was recorded via Zoom. In terms of reporting, the participants were referred to as Participant 1, Participant 2, etc. and referred to with the gender-neutral pronouns “they/them/theirs”.

Data Collection and Instruments

In addition to the procedure for collecting data, data collection in qualitative studies means anticipating ethical issues, utilizing a good sampling strategy, quick response to issues and using good data security methods (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Creswell and Poth (2018) mentioned that typically phenomenological studies focus on two main data points: 1) the experiences of the participants in terms of the phenomenon and 2) the contexts that have been affected by the experiencing of the phenomenon. For this study, one source of data collection was a questionnaire sent out to all the Black Millennials working in Student Affairs. A study conducted by Hobbs (2017) qualitatively studied the Millennial experience in the news media workplace in America. The original instrument was based on a study by Sara Smith and Quinn Galbraith (2012) for the study of Millennials working in libraries. Hobbs received permission to modify the instrument as needed for his study. Based on the modified questionnaire that was used in the Hobbs’ study,

some of the questions would be relevant to the study of Millennials in the higher education workplace. However, to best address the questions of the perceptions based on the intersecting identities of identifying as Black and a Millennial, some questions needed to be added to discuss race, ethnicity, and diversity. The researcher contacted Dr. Hobbs via the professional social media platform LinkedIn and received verbal and written permission from Dr. Hobbs to use his instrument and to modify as needed. This modified instrument was used in this study to create an interest questionnaire (see Appendix B) and to formulate questions for the interviews with the participants.

After a submission to the Nova Southeastern University IRB, the researcher made the necessary adjustments based on feedback and resubmitted. The main point of data collection was the interviews of the participants. The researcher conducted interviews with a portion of the Black Millennial student affairs professionals based on the answers from the questionnaire determining eligibility. These interviews had questions that allowed for the understanding of possible invisibility and other experiences based on being Black Millennials working within the study site. The researcher created an interview protocol utilizing original and modified questions from the Hobbes questionnaire that guided the interviews conducted with the selected participants (see Appendix E).

Procedures

The researcher obtained permission from the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs at the study site to interview qualified people who are or were employed within the Division of Student Affairs at the study site. This permission was requested via an email to the Vice Chancellor identifying the researcher and giving a description of the objectives and goals of the study. The researcher also alerted the Associate Provost of Diversity and Equity and the Equity and Diversity office. The Vice Chancellor alerted and checked with the study site's IRB, university research office, and divisional assessment office for other necessary actions. The researcher obtained approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Nova Southeastern University. The

researcher generated a flyer that provided information about the purpose of the study and the requirements to be selected as a participant. The email announcement included the same information along with a bio of the researcher's time within the organization and a copy of the consent forms for both the questionnaire and the interview (see Appendices A-D). All documents were emailed to a departmental listserv by the Division of Student Affairs to recruit for potential participants based on their self-identified demographics. The flyer was also shared on Facebook, Instagram, GroupMe, Twitter and LinkedIn as social media platforms. The flyer was also shared in various networks within the organization to recruit potential participants that were now working externally from the division of student affairs. Potential participants were able to contact the researcher with any questions or concerns during this time.

The general timeline for the study was expected to be 6-8 weeks minimum after the call for recruitment of the initial sample of participants. The first two weeks was for all potential participants to answer the questionnaire and to express interest in participating in interviews for the next phase of the study. This questionnaire served as a second source of data to ensure the trustworthiness of the study. Once the participants were selected based on qualification and interest, the participants were provided more details of the study, details on their ability to withdraw from the study for any reason, the link to a SignUp.com page to sign up for a time, and a consent form. Within the next 3 weeks, the interviews were conducted via Zoom for convenience and to be considerate of social distancing measures during the COVID-19 pandemic. Participants were reminded of the purpose and intent of the study and asked if they were willing to continue with the study. The interviews were a maximum of 60 minutes and was guided by the selected interview protocol (see Appendix E). The questions for the interviews were open-ended to allow for probes, or follow-up questions, to naturally occur (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). To record the interview, the Zoom transcribe feature was used to generate a voice recording, a video recording, and a transcript at the same time. At the end of the interview, the researcher reassured the participants that their identities would be protected by informing them that their consent forms

and all documents will be moved to an external hard drive and locked within the researcher's home. The researcher also informed the participants that pseudonyms would be used in all published and unpublished writings. The researcher also asked for suggestions for others that may qualify for the study in a sampling strategy defined as *snowball sampling* to make sure the study reached data saturation (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The transcript of the interview was sent back to the participants for clarification and assurance of accuracy in process called *member checking* (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). The participants were given time to read over the transcript and to clarify any questions from the researcher. The researcher solidified all transcripts and began to code the data over a three-week period.

Data Analysis

Because this study was a phenomenological study that examined how a group of individuals are making meaning of their life experiences that may have been significant to their life's trajectory, the researcher used interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) as the method for data analysis (Smith et al, 2009). According to Creswell and Guetterman (2019), there are several steps used to analyze qualitative data. The first step is to prepare and organize the data. The researcher created electronic folders for each participant that held all their interview recordings, transcripts and other documents associated with the study. Marshall and Rossman (2016) and Smith et al (2009) mentioned that researchers should read and reread the data multiple times to become well-versed in the data content. After each interview, the researcher thoroughly read the transcripts from the participants. The transcripts were prepared for analysis by using the Zoom transcription feature to assist with generating a Word document transcript. The researcher corrected and cleaned all transcripts based on the audio and used the comment bubbles feature to make notations. For clarity on the transcripts, the participants were contacted as needed for clarification. During the multiple readings, the researcher started with general notes of observations and then conducted initial noting. This initial noting assigned one of three types of comments to the data. In IPA, commenting consists of three types of comments: *descriptive*

comments (the key words, phrases, or explanations by the participant), *linguistic comments* (language use), and *conceptual comments* (interpretations based on the data) (Smith et al., 2009). These comments were noted on the transcript using comment balloons to indicate the thoughts of the researcher and the notes on the comments. Depending on the comment, it was notated with the letter “D” (for descriptive), “L” (for linguistic), and “C” (for conceptual). The researcher also color coded each code (Blue for descriptive comments, orange for linguistic comments, and green for conceptual comments) to maintain clear understanding of the associated phrases with the notation.

After the initial noting, the researcher gradually narrowed down the codes to formulate categories and to start developing a better understanding of the transcript. At the same time, the researcher kept memos on how the data were theming together or insights that were formulating on the side of the transcript. These memos helped with developing interpretations or meaning to the themes (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). The researcher focused on connecting the categories through the identification of patterns and then bringing them together into themes (Smith et al., 2009). The researcher followed these steps for every transcript and then began to look for patterns across each participant’s experience that lead to a group of overall themes for the Black Millennials. Once the patterns were no longer yielding new themes after the overall themes were established and no new data were needed, data saturation was achieved (Fusch & Ness, 2015). After achieving saturation, the last step of analyzing the data consisted of the researcher writing a final narrative report that explains and summarizes the findings from the data analysis.

Ethical Considerations

Marshall and Rossman (2016) stated that a researcher or proposal writer must satisfy four demands to protect human subjects: 1) make sure that participants understand the parameters and interests of the study, 2) understand that they are free to participate or not without judgement, 3) communicate the plan to reduce risks, and 4) ensure protection of the participants. To maintain an ethically sound study, the researcher clearly communicated the purpose of the study to all

potential participants. If the participants agreed to be a part of the study, all participants signed a consent form and given a copy for their records. The researcher also reiterated that the participants could choose to withdraw from participating in the study at any time without consequences or negative treatment. For protection of their identities, pseudonyms were used in place of participants' names. The researcher used pseudonyms and assured the participants that the only person with any access to the data was the researcher. To minimize readers' ability to match quotations in the document with specific participants, the researcher also reported demographic data as ranges (i.e., 1-3 years working in the field) and used gender-neutral pronouns. Finally, all items, including transcripts, interview notes, and recordings, from the study were kept electronically on an external hard drive or physically in folders within a locked drawer in the researcher's desk at home. After three years, all study materials will be destroyed as required by Nova Southeastern University.

Trustworthiness

Marshall and Rossman (2016) stated that the trustworthiness of a qualitative study's interpretation is dependent on building the credibility of the researcher. This is because in qualitative studies, the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection. To enhance the accuracy of this qualitative study, triangulation was used. Triangulation is a process that corroborates evidence from multiple sources including, but not limited to, people within an organization, archival data, and interviews (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). The researcher collected data from the student affairs professionals' interviews and from a general questionnaire sent to all Black Millennial professionals currently and formerly employed within the university's division of student affairs. The validity of the study was also enhanced by having the interview protocol reviewed by experts in the field. The researcher had the interview protocol reviewed by experts in higher education. A third step was to use a questionnaire that was tested and used in a previous study. The researcher used a questionnaire that was based on the Hobbs' study questionnaire. The Hobbs questionnaire was modified with permission from a similar earlier

study by Smith and Galbraith (2012). One final step was ensuring the accuracy of the final report throughout the entire study. This will be achieved by sharing the transcripts and drafts of final reports with the participants.

Potential Research Bias

As a researcher conducting a qualitative study, one's personal biography can serve as a source of inspiration for a research question as well as a source of potential research bias (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). The researcher for this study personally identifies as a Black or African American within the Millennial generational cohort and worked a significant amount of time within the study site's various centers in Student Affairs and other areas at the university. The researcher's first change in the perception of the organization and the possibility of advancement came during the time of working in the service-learning office. When the office merged with another office, the researcher acquired several of the duties from the roles that were left vacant by the transition and exit of some of the team members. Because she was newer to the team and a younger professional, the researcher accepted every duty given to try to fit in with the team. This led to a stressful working environment because of little time to complete tasks, mismanagement by the leadership, and a doubt about organizational fit. However, the expectation was that the researcher had to continue working to maintain the operation of the office. This led to a perception that the organization was biased towards certain employees and that professional growth was going to be hard to accomplish.

Regarding the topic, the researcher assumed that her personal feelings are shared by most of the Black Millennials that currently work or worked within the same organization based on discussions with colleagues. This assumption was based on conversations with coworkers who expressed similar feelings. However, this same assumption also raised concerns for the topic of choice and other questions that could be researched. One concern was the exclusion of other underrepresented minorities (URM) that could be perceiving the institution the same way based on their intersecting identities. The researcher questioned if these other URM populations have

the same perceptions of the organization because of their treatment within the workplace.

Additionally, as the researcher continues to work within student affairs, she questions how the incoming generation of Black student affairs professionals will navigate and experience these organizations based on their identities.

The researcher believed that the field of higher education, specifically historically and predominately white institutions, needed to approach management of their organizational cultures and the retention of its employees from an approach informed by critical race theory and intersectionality. Given an extensive history of mismanagement and mistreatment of underrepresented populations discussed in the literature, the researcher believed that higher education needs to begin to strongly consider the intersecting identities of its employees as higher education and its institutions are growing more diverse racially, ethnically, and generationally (Powell, Demetriou, Morton & Ellis, 2020; Kemp-Delisser et al., 2020). This is important especially to the Millennials who are becoming a large part of the workforce and the generations that are entering behind them. The incorporation of other social identities such as age, race/ethnicity, and gender possessed by the professionals will only increase the importance of change. To manage the bias, the researcher worked diligently to be impartial during the research study and relying on the literature to inform actions. The researcher continued to journal thoughts about the personal feelings of dissatisfaction with and distrust of the institution in a paper journal. Additionally, to add clarity to thoughts and perceptions, the researcher shared these thoughts with a trusted advisor or expert in a safe space to process through them.

Limitations

Limitations are defined as the potential problems of a study (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). This study was executed in a public predominately white institution in a state in the southeastern United States and focused on the lived experiences of the Black Millennials who work (or previously worked) in the institution's division of student affairs. Based on these boundaries, the study was limited in terms of location. This study did not consider other states or

countries that could be experiencing the same phenomena. Additionally, this study did not consider multiple PWIs, private PWIs, public or private historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs), Hispanic serving institutions (HSIs) or other types of racial minority serving institutions (MSIs) and community/junior colleges. The criteria to participate in the study was limited to one racial group, one generational group, and one division within the university. In terms of time, the study was potentially limited due to the current teleworking situation in higher education in response to the COVID-19 outbreak. While people are still working, professionals were still adjusting to the current method of operating and still trying to maintain their livelihoods and overall wellness. Additionally, there was no definitive time as to when people would have been able to return to a more normal pace of operations that is not heavily reliant on virtual means prior to this study. This could have potentially caused a problem in terms of how and when the study could have been carried out.

Chapter 4: Findings

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to understand and highlight the lived experiences of student affairs professionals working at predominately white institutions (PWIs) that identified racially as Black/African American and as a member of the Millennial generational cohort, or between the ages of 22 and 39 years old. The study explored and discussed Millennial navigation and advancement in the higher education/PWI workplace, Millennial professional and personal values, and the nuanced challenges that come with intersecting identities; more specifically, identifying as Black and younger in these spaces. For this study, a qualitative research methodology and phenomenological research design was used to carefully examine the experiences of this unique group of student affairs professionals to understand how they made and continue to make their own meaning of the phenomenon that is happening at this institution (Smith et al., 2009). The study utilized a pre-survey hosted on Microsoft Forms for participants to opt into the study and a subsequent interview via video calls for those that were willing to share in detail their experiences and personal thoughts on the Millennial and Black Millennial generation, student affairs, and higher education overall with the researcher. Data collection for the study consisted of a call for participants over a two-week period. All pre-surveys and interviews were conducted primarily via virtual means (email and Zoom) because of the COVID pandemic and the different locations of the participants and the researcher. In addition to the transcripts collected and coded, the researcher made notes as possible categories and ties between the participants working within the institution emerged.

This study was guided by two research questions:

1. What are the lived experiences of Black Millennial student affairs professionals who work in predominately white institutions?
2. How do Black Millennial student affairs professionals make meaning of these lived experiences in terms of their personal and professional goals?

In this chapter, the demographics of participants interviewed is presented verbally in an overview utilizing ranges for their age and years served at the institution. The data are presented by answering the two researcher questions with a development of subsequent themes that materialized after the analysis of the interview transcripts. The chapter ends with a summation of the data collection and analysis.

Participants

With the assistance of the division of student affairs at the local institution and social media platforms LinkedIn, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and GroupMe, the call for potential participants was disseminated via emails over the internal listserv and strategic posts several times over a certain period. From this initial call, 13 people initially responded to the pre-interview survey, identified their demographics, and opted into the study if interested. After emailing a sign-up page via SignUp.com and verifying if everyone that opted in qualified, the researcher solidified 9 participants for interviews. Two of the initial 13 participants either did not qualify because they did not currently or previously ever work at the study site. Another two of the initial participants expressed interest in speaking with the researcher through the demographic questionnaire, however, did not utilize the sign-up page to schedule an interview after a reminder was sent. One additional potential participant expressed interest, however, did not proceed through with the questionnaire or the interview.

The 9 interviews conducted consisted of 14 primary open-ended questions and 12 secondary open-ended questions to understand in-depth the experiences as a student affairs professional, a self-identified Black individual, and a self-identified Millennial. Some additional questions were asked based on the researcher's need for clarification based on an answer. The first seven primary open-ended questions focused on the participants' higher education and student affairs experiences while the second seven open-ended questions focused on the Millennial experience in the general workplace. The secondary open-ended questions were used to nuance the question based on the intersecting identities of being Black and/or a Millennial.

Overall, the demographics of the participants presented several points for noting within the study. While most of the participants identified as being in their thirties, two of the participants were in their late twenties. Only one had obtained a doctorate, however, several of the participants were pursuing doctoral studies. Several other participants were considering the pursuit of higher degrees/other certifications as well. In terms of student affairs expertise, several areas were represented included within the study. The number of years participants had worked at the institution ranged from 1 year-8 years. Out of the 9 participants, three have since left the institution for various reasons. Four other participants are contemplating leaving the institution, with one planning to leave before the start of the next academic year. However, all 9 have worked at least one year at the study site. The ages of the participants and the years worked at the institution have been summarized into more broad ranges by the researcher to enhance the confidentiality of the participants. The areas of work within the division of student affairs have also been broadened to enhance the confidentiality. Additionally, participants will be identified by the word “participant” and a number 1-9 (i.e., Participant 1, Participant 2).

Demographics

Participant 1. Participant 1 is a Black Millennial student affairs professional over the age of 35. They have worked at the institution studied for at least 3 years but less than 5 years. They also have obtained at least one graduate degree and have experience in student affairs at multiple institutions. Student affairs/higher education is not their original career field.

Participant 2. Participant 2 is a Black Millennial student affairs professional over the age of 35. They have worked at the institution for at least 3 years but less than 5 years. They have also obtained at least one graduate degree and have experience in student affairs at multiple institutions. Student affairs/higher education is not their original career field.

Participant 3. Participant 3 is a Black Millennial student affairs professional over the age of 35. They worked at the institution for at least 1 year but less than 3 years. They are in the pursuit

of other educational opportunities. They have experience in student affairs at multiple institutions. Student affairs/higher education is not their original career field.

Participant 4. Participant 4 is a Black Millennial student affairs professional between the age of 31 and 35 years old. They have worked at the institution for at least 1 year but less than 3 years. They have also obtained at least one graduate degree. Student affairs/higher education is not their original career field.

Participant 5. Participant 5 is a Black Millennial student affairs professional between the age of 31 and 35 years old. They have worked at the institution for at least 6 years but less than 8 years. They have also obtained at least one graduate degree. Student affairs/higher education has been their primary career field.

Participant 6. Participant 6 is a Black Millennial student affairs professional between the age of 27 and 30 years old. They worked at the institution for at least 1 year but less than 3 years. They are in the pursuit of other educational opportunities. Student affairs/higher education was their primary career field; however, they have since left the field.

Participant 7. Participant 7 is a Black Millennial student affairs professional between the age of 31 and 35 years old. They have worked at the institution for at least 3 years but less than 5 years. They have obtained at least one graduate degree and are in the pursuit of other educational opportunities. Student affairs/higher education has been their primary career field.

Participant 8. Participant 8 is a Black Millennial student affairs professional between the age of 22 and 26 years old. They worked at the institution for at least 1 year but less than 3 years. They have obtained at least one graduate degree. Student affairs/higher education was their primary career field; however, they have since left the field.

Participant 9. Participant 9 is a Black Millennial student affairs professional between the age of 31 and 35 years old. They have worked at the institution for at least 3 years but less than 5 years. That have also obtained at least one graduate degree and are in the pursuit of other

educational opportunities. Student affairs/higher education was not their original career field; however, they have experience in multiple institutions in higher education/student affairs.

Themes

Themes are phrases that identify the psychological essence of the data using enough details to also ground the phrase conceptually (Smith et al., 2009). The phrase is based on pulling together of codes to find commonality between them (Creswell & Poth, 2018). As themes were being developed, the researcher made sure to use the phenomenological device of bracketing to set aside any potential bias or preconceived thoughts and beliefs as she listened to each participant's experience (Chan et al., 2013; Eddles-Hirsch, 2015). Within this utilization, the researcher focused on using two of the four strategies to achieve bracketing as mentioned by Chan et al (2013). The first strategy consisted of the researcher continuing to ask reflective questions of herself throughout the process (Chan et al, 2013). The second strategy consisted of choosing the best approach between transcendental (or descriptive) and hermeneutic (or interpretive) to analyze the data (Chan et al., 2013). Using interpretative phenomenological analysis to understand the "complexity of meaning in the respondents' experiences" (Smith et al., 1999 as cited in Chan et al., 2013), the researcher analyzed all transcripts using the comment feature in Microsoft Word to identify descriptive, linguistic, and conceptual comments, and to note any memos.

Based on the analysis, five themes were identified and relevant to learning more about the general lived experiences of Black Millennial student affairs professionals in society, how they navigate the higher education/student affairs workplace, and how they navigate achieving their personal and professional goals. The result of at least half of the participants' coded data collecting into patterns, the noted patterns led to the five themes. The emergent themes were:

1. *Balancing Visibility and Authenticity*
2. *The Role of Transformational Leadership by Managers in Supporting Black Millennial Student Affairs Professionals*

3. *The Burden of Invisible Work and “Other Duties” Assigned*
4. *The Need for Intentional Institutional Efforts for Inclusive Campus Culture*
5. *The Juxtaposition of Black and Millennial Values*

Using direct quotes from the interviews, the researcher supported the pattern and contextualized the themes.

Balancing Visibility and Authenticity

This theme, *balancing visibility*, and authenticity, encompasses the experience of Black millennial student affairs professionals describing having to juggle when and where to be authentic and visible as Black people. All of the participants mentioned having to occasionally code-switch or have differing personalities in certain situations and spaces. This code-switching could be adding to an erasure of Blackness and authenticity within a PWI to be accepted by the majority culture/be deemed professional for the workplace. However, the participants felt that being Black, being proud to be Black, and understanding the underrepresented student experience was why they were attracted to student affairs work as a career and why they needed to be in the field to motivate and educate students that looked and identified in similar identities as they did. Participant 1 mentioned that they were frustrated with having to modify their personality in comparison to their white colleagues in the following quote:

I don't know. I look at how frustrated sometimes my white colleagues can be and how they express that frustration, right? Versus how I'm able to do that or not...um... And so yeah, it's a little---it's a little different being a Black millennial in that regard, right? Wanting that holistic approach. Wanting to make sure that I am being fed at my job, and that I have purpose in my work but also not being able to uhm...having to be very strategic about when I say what I say.

At the same time, they entered higher education to work with a certain population of students based on understanding their experiences in the following statement:

After I was done with my degree, I got my first job. I started in [a particular field], working with underserved or underrepresented youth... And so, I worked in [a different field] for about five years before I went back and got my master's degree. And I did that specifically because I understood that. I know I love working with a population of students that I work with, right? But I also had a passion for kind of the whole um... I want to say student development piece... um I was really passionate about helping students plot their courses right and kind of overcome barriers...

Participant 1 also mentioned because of the group of students she is assigned to for work, she found it important to be there for those students of color navigating a tough field.

I feel like my role is really important; specifically, it's important for minority students in the STEM field. I have heard that from them. You know when they see a person of color in a meeting or coming to their class that might be able to help them with their career major choices, their whole demeanor changes. It's just amazing to see, right? And I'm glad to be that for them. I'm glad to be that representation for them.

Participant 2 mentioned that they tried to avoid conflict with various colleagues because of stigma and stereotypes associated with their identities in the subsequent statement:

In addition to that, when it came to the Caucasian generation that I had conflict with, it was like "don't push it too much, because at the end of the day you're a Black [individual]. And some people don't do well with conflict and if they go speaking to someone higher before you do, it's kind of going to look bad on you simply because you're a Black [individual] and this is a Caucasian woman or this the Caucasian man..."

Participant 2 continued to mention that they stay in higher education for Black students to have someone motivating and encouraging them in a PWI in the following quote:

The African American population at a PWI; specifically, the one that I'm at, is low. And no one understands the struggles that those students endure just because of who they are, right? So being an administrator in student affairs, looking the way that they look, even if

they don't know me, if someone points and says “Hey that's So-and-So. They are a coordinator in Student Affairs and then one day, they're a director in student affairs. That student who doesn't know if they can make it, what they can be, will look and say:

“They're a Black [individual]? With [redacted] and they have that position? No one can tell me what I can't do.”

During her time at the institution, Participant 3 mentioned having to code switch in certain spaces to be able to navigate in the following quote:

Or just I guess you know, or kind of like be what the organization is looking for because I just---or they felt like the organization's looking for---because I definitely, you know, when at [the university] when you got with, you know, people of your ethnicity, you can like let your hair down. But I definitely feel like working there, there's a lot of code switching and stuff that has to go or people feel like they have to do to uhm kind of, you know, make the situation work for them or to flow in certain circles and certain rooms, if that makes sense.

Participant 4 mentioned that while they do code-switch, they forget to do so in being comfortable with their Blackness. However, they realize that currently working in higher education comes with the added need to do so in the following statement:

I would love to see not just higher education but all spaces kind of be comfortable with Black people just how they are. So, if---and I'm sure all black people would be---but not just you know when we wear a certain hairstyle or when we wear certain clothing, or when we talk a certain way. Like I would--I would appreciate it if I did not have the code switch anymore. Because sometimes I forget. *laughs* I forget to code switch. I'm like “Oops! I'm sorry!” So, you know, even right down to like my hair, sometimes I think like “Okay, I don't know if I---I came to my interview with like locs in my hair and I was like “Well. Don't know if I'm gonna get this job or not.” But you know, like I would love to see it---but my daughter is five---I would love to see by the time my daughter grows up

and gets to the point where I am, and she doesn't necessarily have to think twice about is she professional in her appearance enough for this particular position.

Participant 4 also mentioned that they love working in their area of student affairs to be a sounding board for students that are navigating the PWI culture in this statement:

So, I don't see many students that look like me, but I feel like for the ones that do ...because I have several--I have several young--younger girls that just started at [name of university] not too long ago that discovered I was student affairs. So, they'll come, and they'll ask for me, and I think it's important for them to have someone who is---Someone who cares about them and looks like them that's in a leadership position when they are away from home. Because if you think about it, they're thrust into a space where they are yet again the minority. They might be experiencing the same kind of microaggressions that we all experience that they might not necessarily be used to. So, to have somebody who they can actually come to talk to about it and been through it, even if they're not home, like in a space where it's their home away from home, I think that's important...

Participant 5 discussed how they had to contemplate how to proceed after an internal job interview in this quote:

But it was like when I was interviewing for the positions, I was getting not direct feedback but indirect feedback that, you know, I wasn't being assertive enough in my interviews. And you know that's a whole issue on its own. Like, how do you kind of balance that in the interview as a Black [person]?

Similarly, to other participants, Participant 5 mentioned that they were working in student affairs to be a motivator for the students in this statement:

My students for sure. Uhm, that's pretty much what got me to, you know, even want to become a counselor; go for counselor ed in graduate school. My personal experiences and undergrad at [name of university] and having some people that just kind of like gave me the informationals and was like "Here you go. Do whatever with it" and then having

those people that are like “Okay let's wait. You have this. You have that. You have this. Let's look at this. You have this option. You can do this.” Like really seriously being in my corner and wanting to make sure that I made it and I succeeded. That was something that I wanted to provide for other students and just being able to provide them with those resources and provide them with some support as they need it

In terms of code-switching, Participant 6 mentioned that they feel like as a Black Millennial, it is a necessary trait to code switch to be able to network professionally.

We...Well, we still have to do a lot of code-switching. Now...and I've even seen that in the students that I've worked with. Uhm. That's a big thing that kind of stands out to me and thinking about that uhm...that we kind of have to live at least two separate lives. You have the life that's at work...Being a professional and you have that life that's uhm--- your personal life. And it's like “okay uhm this is who I am at work, this is who I am at home, um but do not test me. *laughs* We will have to settle our differences some type of way.” But, um yeah, so that's the biggest thing I can think of as far as like a Black-- being a Black millennial. It is a little bit harder to move up, you know. Networking is not--as I've noticed for myself--networking was--it took a little bit to even get into a position to even get where I'm trying to go. Versus some other folks have had a little bit easier route. It's like “Okay what--am I not saying the right words? Like what is happening?” Uhm, yeah, sometimes you have to think of is like “Okay, I have to work twice as hard just to get to this one place.”

Participant 7 mentioned that it was frustrating to have to consistently switch back and forth. It was also frustrating to them for their leadership to not realize the benefit of their ability to easily switch their communication and personality to talk to students.

But yeah, that's also the other thing is the---the constant having to code switch or my linguistic abilities to be able to communicate back and forth with students not be appreciated... Uhm, like they understand what I'm saying. Like “Do you know what ‘no

cap' means? Okay, then you sit over there, and let me explain it." Uhm So that's---that's also you know.

Participant 7 also mentioned like many of the other professionals that they needed be in their role to be an example to students that identified with similar identities as they do in the following statement:

Uhm, how important do I think my role is? Depending on the day, I think it's very important. It provides opportunities for learning, opportunities to be able to see yourself and have somebody value your experiences and kind of highlight them to show the beauty of it to other folks.

Participant 8 mentioned that millennials of color overall were having to code switch to fit in the overall working environment in America in this quote:

I think a lot of friends who I know who are either biracial or Black or like people of color for millennials, they really struggle with that that sense of identity and belonging. And it's like very consistent among all of us, you know and even some of my Black friends who like work in corporate America and they're like "Oh, you know I have locs and I need to be really intentional about making sure I keep them looking nice because if I--if I let them grow out for too long, that people think that I'm unprofessional. Or you know, I have a Mexican friend who works in corporate America and, you know, he's like "Oh yeah, like I have to make sure that, you know, I dress this way, dress that way so I don't come off as being like incompetent because I'm Mexican." You know, and so I feel like with people of color and being a millennial in the workplace, trying to be professional, there's these other layers that we are aware of. Like we're aware of the microaggressions. We're aware of how people look at you, perceive you based off of your racial identity...

Participant 9 mentioned needing to have a role for various spaces in the following quote:

...you know they're tired of playing roles or playing the face. Like you gotta have a face for this space, you got to have a face for that space, and I can recognize and understand

what they're...where they're coming from because I do the same thing when I'm around my, you know, students that look just like me or myself. But then when I'm with my supervisor or colleagues that don't look like me, I have to change my dialect.

Even with this happening, Participant 9 mentioned that they were motivated to go into student affairs to be a representative in the following quote:

I was a first-gen (first-generation) [student]. And I wanted to be the representative for the---my loved ones that were coming behind me to go into...to go to college and to be in a space where I work for an institution. Uhm, I'm hoping that it shows them, or shows my nieces and nephews rather, that how—how valuable a college degree is and how important it is.

The Role of Transformational Leadership by Managers in Supporting Black Millennial Student Affairs Professionals.

This second theme emphasizes the need for the leadership (the managers and divisional leaders) to adopt more of a transformational leadership style, or a style that inspires and considers the personal and professional goals of the employees they lead. All of the participants mentioned the importance of trust in their leader's leadership style and their consideration of their various identities, roles, and goals as employees within the organization. Findings also showed that the participants valued someone that advocated for them as needed.

Participant 1 mentioned that a past supervisor had the ideal leadership style for them. They talked about his transparency for her expectations in following his vision in the following quote:

I've had one really great director/supervisor. I still refer to techniques and styles and things that he taught me to this day, and I haven't ... You know, been supervised by him in several years right. One thing that... some of the things that made him great was that. He was...he had clear expectations for me. But he was so knowledgeable! Right?... so knowledgeable and... He was um... He had vision. And for me if you have vision, and you can share that vision and you have you know you have kind of like those clear

expectations. I can get behind you right if we're moving toward a goal. I'm the one you want because we're gonna make that happen. Without that I don't---I don't do well. I can do it on my own...

Participant 2 felt that their supervisor showed good transformational leadership when considering their development needs from a professional level and mentioned it in the following quote:

My supervisor is extremely supportive of my professional development. If I ever take something to my supervisor, like a workshop that I want to attend, whether it's virtual or something XYZ, my supervisor is extremely supportive, as long as I could justify it and it doesn't interfere with the things that I have to do for work.

Participant 2's supervisor was also supportive in their efforts to develop personally. They mentioned that both their supervisor and colleagues were supportive in his educational endeavors in this select quote:

They are very supportive. I did not have any issues um once I began to pursue my master's degree especially because my degree program was completely online, and I assured them that work time was work time and not homework time. So, they were really supportive and that they never pressured me about, you know, what my grades, they were always just, "you know if you need"---not just my direct supervisor but also my colleagues within the department, who had all obtained their master's degrees. They, you know, were always like "Hey if you--there's a book, you need, let us know xyz" so they were all supportive...

However, transformational leadership usually consists of looking at someone's identities for their development and the achievement of their goals. Participant 2 mentioned that sometimes, they were being considered for development opportunities solely based on their identities. They discussed the situation in this statement:

Unfortunately, I think that taking into consideration of my identity is what causes a lack of sending a variety of professional development opportunities to me. Because I am an

African American [individual], the majority of the professional development opportunities that are--that I'm geared towards have to do with diversity and inclusion. And I desire, and I deserve to be developed in more ways than those of diversity and inclusion. Although diversity and inclusion is really big and it's needed---it is very important---I am TIRED of being sent to and expected to go to diversity and inclusion-type development because I feel as if it is because I am an African American person.

Participant 4 mentioned that their ideal supervisor would allow them to think for themselves and trust them to handle the work in the following quote:

...the perfect supervisor would give me detailed instruction but not micromanage me. So, you give me a project, you tell me what the end result needs to be um and just hand it here. And if I need you, I will check in with you. But I--I don't work well when I feel like someone is always kind of checking behind me, I need to feel like my manager trusts me enough and thinks that I'm, I guess, smart enough to do the job without you checking up on me every 10 minutes or so.

However, Participant 4 also mentioned that one thing their current supervisor does well within his leadership style is to consider how their identities, though important, could affect their work ability in this select quote:

In fact, he met me at my car the other day---we talked about a lot of stuff. He met me at my car the other day and he was like "Did you see the news?" And I said "What?" and he's talking about the latest police shooting and how he just can't understand he does---he will never understand like how you mistake a gun for taser, and you know. So, he understands, and I appreciate him being...I guess...open minded enough to understand that there might be a problem here, not that there might be, but there IS a problem here. So, I understand, and I appreciate him being...I guess...awaken to the to the issues that affect me outside of work. Because he knows, I have Black children that I'm raising by myself. He knows that I have, you know, a young daughter that I'm raising by myself

so...and he understands if I might show up, you know, a few minutes behind schedule is not because I'm Black. It's just because I have kids I gotta get to daycare so--so he understands that...

Participant 3 had the experience of interacting with several leaders/decision-makers at the institution studied. While they had some occasional issues with the leadership of one, they mentioned that all three considered their personal and professional needs overall in the following quote:

We have a different relationship now, uhm [first permanent supervisor] and I, so I know that he is...he cares more about my personal and professional development, because he definitely doesn't think that--didn't take it lightly, that I moved a whole city, you know, to work for him now. Uhm, but him and I, you know it's a lot of growing pains working with each other. There was an interim period where [redacted]...Uhm, I felt like---that's the first time I felt like I actually had a real supervisor because he [the interim] was just on point with different things and at that time, I was personally going through a period of being treated for [health related issues] and um he definitely supported my need to like leave work and stuff to--to get help and uhm definitely was intentional about how I was doing and things of that nature. And then when [second permanent supervisor] came on, and I was still going through that process, he didn't care about that. Uhm, so he definitely was kind of empathetic towards different things.

Participant 6 had the experience of working with multiple leaders in their time at the institution as well. One supervisor gave them praise and made them feel valued. However, one supervisor highly exemplified why transformational leadership was important to their values in a leader.

They mentioned needed traits and what they loved in their supervisor in this quote:

What I expressed to my supervisor then was that [I preferred] someone at least...they're going to guide me, where I would have been able to had a level of autonomy to work on things on my own. Not someone that's micromanaging anything. Just...you---you give

me something to do, you give me a little baseline and I'll take it and run with it. And just then, of course, being supportive in a decision but challenging me, at the same time, you know? And I know something I just love so much about the previous supervisor was that she was able to push back when it needed to be done. I may not have liked it sometimes, but...*laughs*

For Participant 7, their supervisor, while not a micromanager, was perceived to be still lacking in the traits and attributes of someone that utilizes a transformational leadership style. They mentioned their needs for this type of leader in the following quote:

Uhm. I think one where you're communicative. You're clear about your needs. You're adaptable because [expletive] happens. You understand that I'm a holistic person, and while I may be an employee of yours, I have my own baggage and [expletive] I have to deal with that may pop up. Someone that comes with care. Oh, if you see that I'm messing up on something instead of just being like "You're messing up", ask me what's going on because I'm not someone that generally is like "Oh, I don't give a [expletive]." But if I'm on a "I don't give a [expletive]" there's something going on that's leading to that. So, to be able to have those conversations from a standpoint of care. Uhm, yeah, so clear communication, clear expectations of what you want, and then having a standard of care and how you interact with me...

Participant 8 mentioned that overall, their supervisor was good at maintaining a transformational leadership approach. They also mentioned that for their future supervisors they are looking for some specific traits of this leadership style in this quote:

...definitely a supervisor who trusts that I'm going to do a good job. Offers like guidance, but not necessarily like strict requirements, because I think like strict, for me...I'll ask for help when I need it. So, I need somebody who is---is---like has enough confidence in me to---to take what is given to me and then make it what it can be. Probably something better um, I would say...somebody who is willing to see my personhood. I think having a

supervisor who recognizes like I'm a person before I was an employee is really important. Yeah, I think overall like having a flexible style as built on trust and then also just very open communication...

In their student affairs area, Participant 5 mentioned that they have some autonomy as it relates to the programming they can do for students and the hours that they work. However, they mentioned that they would like to have some other traits of transformational leadership in their supervisor (especially as it relates to support Black employees during periods of social unrest) in the following quote:

Someone who's not passive and really goes to bat for the people that they are supervising. Uhm, somebody that takes initiative, and you know, even though we might have a cultural difference, trying to gain an understanding of what's going on, and not just totally avoiding it. Uhm and just you know some level of understanding, so it's kind of like not always feeling like business as usual, or, you know, I'm holding the weight of the world on my shoulders, and they don't even realize it. Uhm, in the workplace again, somebody that would you know stick up for me in those departments that I'm working with as opposed to, you know, it kind of just being dependent on me to handle any conflict that may come up

For Participant 9, transformational leadership in their leaders consist of treating people with different backgrounds with a similar manner. However, they also mentioned that someone who can really analyze the department and be approachable is important in this quote:

Probably someone that is strengths-based that will be very intentional about seeing every--seeing the differences in the department, seeing, you know, where everyone's strengths are and aligning them with where they will be best served or best--or be in the space that will best serve them and best serve the institution. Uhm, there are a lot of people in my department that I'm still trying to figure out how they get the job because they don't have the degree. So, I would rather have a supervisor that's very strengths-based, very

insightful about where my student affairs area is headed long-term and being more--- more approachable. I would want someone also that I can say “You know what? I'm looking for another job” and---and not feel like I will be retaliated against for sharing that.

The Burden of Invisible Work and “Other Duties Assigned”

The third theme focuses on the pressure that comes with the working in a PWI workplace including overworking and carrying additional workloads to support the offices they work in. 7 of the 9 participants mentioned that they are carrying more work than their jobs require to maintain relationships with departments, groups of students and to maintain the work goals of the office. The student affairs professionals also mentioned sometimes not being compensated fairly for taking on these additional tasks which lead to feelings of unappreciation, pressure, mental strain, and even toxicity and abuse.

Participant 1 mentioned that their work ethic is attractive, however, the more they advocated for clarity on the parameters of the job, and they did well with the heavy load of maintaining various relationships, the more work they felt like had in this quote:

...It's a demanding [area of student affairs], with a lot of... there's a lot on my plate, as far as maintaining that relationship, because that relationship means a lot to my department. Having said that... and saying to--to my director over and over and over again hey like we need something in writing to let the--the leaders know what my scope of my job is because they will continue to ask, as long as I continue to give, right? Because that relationship is so important, the director is like what you got to keep giving because we need you know, like we need this relationship so need you to do what you need to do. I've even asked to move positions. I've been like “look I'll go over to [another area]. But...but all of that is kind of not really listened to or taken into consideration and more work is then added on top of my plate. I will tell you that I am--I am appreciative of

the different opportunities, because those different--different opportunities, give me a different skill set.

Participant 1 also mentioned that carrying all these other duties that are not necessary in their job description means that they are doing well. However, they also mentioned feeling abused in this quote:

I think---I think it's a little bit of that, but then I also think, well, I think it's that and I think that I am familiar with my work ethic, right? And I know that that's attractive to folks. One of the things that I'm most proud of, you know, [is] the work ethic that I have, and I think that people see that, and I think it's kind of that will we know if [Participant 1] does it or if we give it to them, it'll get done right. Uhm it's I think it's a little bit of abuse of that like, you know...Yeah, you do great work, and your reward is more great work.

Participant 2 mentioned that while they felt they were initially respected and appreciated for their hard work in innovating their area, it has now transformed into feelings of being used and disrespected as they continue carrying other duties. The following quote highlights their experience:

So, I was a great asset to my department yet and some instances, it was all where “you're an admin so you can't do this, or you know”, but I was able to continue to do what I did and keep high spirits, because I was obtaining my degree in adult education, specifically getting the certification in student affairs. Now that I am no longer in that position, I honestly feel used and disrespected because my superiors recognize my gifts and talents and I feel as if it was utilized. But the compensation that I was asking for was not given. And I know that it was available. And now that I'm not in the position, I feel as though I'm not respecting their view because they continue to want to put me in the admin box. I have job duties and responsibilities that I'm supposed to be fulfilling [in their current role], and I can barely focus on those because you have so many admin duties that you

want to continue to make me or request of me. So twofold at first, I felt appreciated until... You know, and now I feel disrespected and used.

With their years at the institution, Participant 6 typically had a great grasp on the institution and how it operates. However, because of these same intersecting identities in addition to their social ones, they would have some extra work from time to time. They mentioned how this manifested in a situation with a donor in the following quote:

I do remember one particular time like even presenting. Here's the one thing that really stands out that---I was working with uhhh, not a funder but like someone that's going donate to the university for the program I was working with. Uhm. *laughs* And, it just came off that "okay I had to be the one to represent for not just being the person who ran [this program] but also the person who just had a different perspective on things." And it's like, I realized for one, I was not very familiar with like talking with someone that's going to fund something, but also, I was the only *laughs*-- the only person that looked like me in that group of people that were talking to them. And it made it a little difficult trying to advocate for my program and trying to like be up against the other programs. I didn't think---I didn't know that was probably the case. I did---I thought we were working together. Okay, gave them a little leeway and they ran with it.

For Participant 5, even though the extra work is not necessarily because cultural taxation or more typical realms of invisible work, the work comes in maintaining the integrity of the office amid constant turnovers. They mentioned it briefly in this quote:

My department right now is [dealing with some change] and I know that my director himself probably can't control that at this time. But you know with that-- with those [changes] comes additional work for the people that are still there. So, you know, just the whole "being expected to do more with less" type of situation that a lot of schools are going through in the [state university] system, but it will be nice to have that reflected in other ways

For Participant 7, they mentioned that they have and continue to do work that is above their title and running the office as a representation of a Black person in higher leadership but is not given the respect for the work. They elaborated on this in this quote:

Like we're asking for a title change because we are the [leaders] of our offices. And it's not so much that I want the title--I do want the title--but y'all respect title so I come and tell you I'm a [certain position] and you're like "Oh, but I want to speak to the director." [Expletive] that's me! So, give me the title so I don't have to like have those additional annoying conversations with people initially not giving me the respect for the position that I hold. And so that has been a fight and they ultimately told us no...

In their office, Participant 8 dealt with transition and changes in their responsibilities because of changes within the office operations. They mentioned how their workload increased in this quote:

Yeah, so like halfway through, like my responsibilities kind of changed and I got other things added on that I wasn't expecting. So, and it was just kind of, I don't know, I guess, there was the assumption like "oh yeah [Participant 8] can do it." I was like... "Okay cool. Yeah, let's just add another program. Oh yeah, okay let's just add a scholarship, cool cool cool.

Because of the large population of students they serve, their race, and the lack of clear expectations from their leadership, Participant 9 mentioned that there was always a pressure to be continually working; even while out on leave for a health concern. They highlighted this experience in the following quote:

One thing Emily that comes to mind is, you know how when you work in student affairs, you have an assigned HR rep or assigned HR person? So, I had an experience, where I had to take like medical leave. And my medical provider had specific guidelines of when I was expected to return to work. And my supervisor was sending constant emails during that timeframe of me being in recovery. And I--and I've had instances where pre--you know, colleagues have been out, and they were not bombarded with emails and tasks to

do. And I do feel like that if I was not an African American individual, that would not have happened. Because I also had I was also getting phone calls from HR [asking] when I was returning to work, and they had the documentation from my medical provider for when I was expected to return. So, there was a heightened stress of, you know, trying to rush back to work, even though I was supposed to be recovery.... And my responsibility on campus, it's almost like if--if that person is not there...now, what do we do, right? Because we don't have any guidance and no vision and no, you know, memorandums of understanding, if someone is out what to do, it's uhh, there's that level of pressure of like "When you gonna be back?"

The Need for Intentional Institutional Efforts for Creating Belonging

The fourth theme is a call to action specifically called for by all of the participants. All of participants mentioned that as student affairs professionals that identify as Black and millennial there is a need for institutional efforts by the university to create and continue to create a campus culture that allows for a sense of belonging. This sense of belonging could be created by having leadership that identifies as some of the other identities and the institution taking intentional efforts to diversify the hiring pool and create policies for assurance.

Participant 1, who has been at the university for some time, feels like the institution is working on diversity efforts and mentioned it in the following statement:

...it seems to be that there's a concerted...and I don't know this to be true, but it seems that there's a concerted effort to--to have folks have both diverse backgrounds and diversity in experiences right, because one thing that blew my mind when I came here was you know a lot of people at [the university] have only been at [the university]. So, it kind of, you know, blew my mind...and things like that contribute to creating a stagnant culture within an organization. Uhm, so yeah. The hiring and both that so that makes it a little bit more diverse, but also in like some of the programs and initiatives that have been sparked over the past few years since I've been here leads me to believe that. You know

there's a shift in the matrix, so to speak, right like there's you know uhm an effort to make sure that there's representation for both the students and staff um so yeah, it's getting better...

However, Participant 1 also feels that the institution still has work to do to in the diversity efforts overall. They mentioned the additional need in the following quote:

...more women in administrative roles and more women, more women of color. Uhm, well I'm not just gonna say more--more women, but more people of color in administrative roles, leadership roles. That is. Yeah...that's I think--that's a big one, I think you know. God bless [the Vice Chancellor] for...carrying the load that she carries, you know? I've told her that before. Uhm because it is like when you're the only person, regardless of what people say and regardless of how much you don't want it you're going to be it, right? Uhm but, having--having some assistance with that and having folks that are that--that are a little more diverse in those roles, I think, can contribute to a more inclusive environment.

Like most of the other participants, Participant 2 mentioned that there was not diversity in the senior leadership in the following quote:

If we are specific to my location, all of my directors and associate vice chancellor are all white males. I was just about to say that. I do feel like...Overall, there is diversity, but specifically when it comes to the higher positions--the directors, the assistant and associate vice chancellors, and things of that nature--I don't see a wide variety when it comes to actually those three things, I mentioned to you uhm with my identity. I don't see a lot of women, if I do, I don't see a lot of women of color...

Participant 3 postulated that the willingness to diversify the campus population was on the senior-level leadership to hire more people of color.

--the willingness is on, I guess, the senior level or the decision-makers to hire more people of color. I definitely feel like that---sometimes this is my thought that there was like “a look” that maybe people were looking for, you know.

Participant 3 continued to say that that this willingness would lead to a diverse population and representation in this second quote:

I guess maybe like in the---maybe if, I guess, the population, the working population was balance, if that makes sense. Uhm because it is kind of is and was...there was kind of intimidating. Uhm, I mean, representation is everything everywhere, you know. I would think you would feel more comfortable uhm working in this space, if you have people that you look and---that you know look and feel like you. Like there was more, it's more accessible and not just like a pocket here and there.

Newer to the institution and the division of student affairs, Participant 4 mentioned that the institution needed to make more room for Black women. However, they stressed that the institution also really needed to be intentional about making space for Black men in this quote:

Aside from obviously making room for more Black women, I think, even more so, making more space for like Black men. Uhm, I have not, I have yet to see...there's like--there's not one Black male professional in the entire area. There's not one Black male that works in--I don't think I've seen one in leadership yet--and they could be just because I'm, you know, just because I'm new. But I mean that goes to show you that if there were a lot that I would have seen one by now, but obviously there's a shortage of those. So, I think that would help because I think about how like you know the football players have their coach and stuff like that, but as a Black male going to a PWI, how dope would it be to see like a black male in a position of leadership, and you know he could be your mentor...like I think we need space for them too.

Participant 6 also mentioned about the need for intentionality within the hiring process to diversify the pool. However, from the standpoint of the Black millennial, they stressed the need for support systems in the following quote:

So, there are definitely some--some things that need to be done as far as making sure a Black professional and a millennial is able to go to work day-to-day, feel good about what we're doing, feeling valued. You know, just for the merit, you know, being recognized for that merit of what we're doing. Even having that support when someone is acting um, you know, against us, or even.... Yeah, but even against us or not even truly believing us for who we are and what we're doing. Question us and stuff like that, yes.

Participant 7 mentioned that having voiced their desire for institutional changes in various situations before. However, they mentioned that there are several things that need to be done by institution in this quote:

...it really kind of comes down to one, pay equity---because the salaries are ooh, they--- ooh, they trash but I mean. This is the South, so the price of living is cheaper in some instances down here so that's---I think that's why the salary seems lower than I would deem it necessary. I think the other thing that would be needed is how we're advertising positions. Uhm, taking concerns with validity and then how we're treating our students. So, I think those are the things that--what is it? Listen, it's been a while, since grad school, but the campus—how to measure campus climate...who...I want to say it's Hurtado. Oh gosh. It's like Hurtado and three or four other people talked about it's basically a three-prong need. You can't do one without the other. You can't recruit students of color without recruiting faculty and staff of color in order to ensure that everybody feels valued and welcomed on their campus so

Participant 5, also having been at the university for quite some time as both an employee and a student, felt like the university needed to take notice of sister institutions within the state university system and they the way they were handling diversity hiring in the following quote:

...definitely having equal opportunity for people of color to hold those types of positions. Uhm and the same thing with the hiring of the staff. I know that I have a friend that works at [another university system institution], and they have this thing where they do...they have some kind of diversity-something where they're making sure that they have a diverse applicant pool before they even get to the interview process. And I've never worked in, you know HR or anything like that, so I'm not sure how [the study university] does it but I think that that could be something that that will be beneficial. Because [the study university] does talk a lot about diversity like we have, you know Office of Equal Employment Diversity, all that good stuff. But it when it comes to those higher up positions, we're just not seeing the same level of diversity that even [the study university] reflects as a whole when you look at its students...

Breaking from the norm, Participant 9 suggested that the institution should consider a program or policy dealing with mentorship to help people that are coming into student affairs. They highlighted their thoughts on the proposed program in this quote:

I do think, Emily, it would be beneficial if, you know, people that are new coming into student affairs at PWIs, if they were assigned with a mentor or assigned with someone that is tenured at that institution that's either---either worked in their space, you know, either worked in that same department or had some experience in that department so that they can have a--I will say, Emily, like a leg up but have a---a better transition into the institution. Like their process will be a little bit smoother if they had someone that they can trust that they are assigned to. Like they can talk to about some of their challenges. Confidentially. This, you know, that has actually been there. I think--I think millennials really appreciate people that they can trust. And so why not assign someone with someone that can say "Hey, like I had that same goal. Like let me show you how I, you know, worked it or tried to figure it out to work the way up the ladder."

In a holistic view comparing the student experience to the professional experience, Participant 8 advocated for a need for institutional change in this quote:

And so, I think, you know, having more people represented in student affairs can definitely increase like the amount of belonging that the students feel, which is really important. And especially as we move forward and our population as a country becomes more diverse and has these other people, um I think it's important that the universities are flexible with that, you know? They create that space and not just to check a box, but because it's the right thing to do.

Participant 8 continued to say while there were some efforts made to recruit more intentionally, more efforts are needed. This sentiment is highlighted here:

I don't know if it's--it's like the cool thing to do, or if it's like “Oh, we're gonna make sure that these people are represented here”, but I feel like there there's effort. Uhm, but then I also know that just working in an office with prominently---like that's predominantly white. Like it's more than just being there like just putting a Black person in this position doesn't make them feel like they belong or make them want to work there, you know? And so, it--I feel like there was there was definitely effort, but I think that, in order to attract these candidates and have them want to work there, and like be in a place in a position where they feel comfortable takes more than just interviewing them. It takes like actually creating a culture around making sure that they're valued.

The Juxtaposition of Black and Millennial Work Values

This fifth theme encompassed values of being a Black individual clashing or occasionally coming in conflict with typical millennial values. For over half of the student affairs professionals in this study, they valued doing work and having careers that aligned with fulfillment and passion. However, in some cases, these same participants had to decide to choose opportunities that would allow them to better support their families, provide stability, and other needs for security, which are traditionally known to be strong concerns for Black people (Gould & Wilson,

2020).

Participant 1 stated that they do not have the luxury to have their work to satisfy the “other parts of them” because of the intersecting identity of being Black as well. In the following quote they mentioned how being Black alters their work values and ethic:

The experience, maybe that's why I don't look, for those other parts right I don't look for my work to kind of satisfy those other parts of me, because I know that the black experience is a very specific experience, right? My lens is different. And so...My experience is that I have to work harder, I have to do more, I have to be more resourceful.

In my own career planning and development in my own, you know...I am not allowed to.

For Participant 2, they went back to pursue a degree in student affairs to ensure financial security and to be able to better advocate for equitable compensation for the work their doing. They spoke about the decision in this selected quote:

So, I got the student affairs degree, because I had to have a real conversation with myself and say, although this is your passion, you see yourself, making a difference, you know you love what you're doing...You also need to make sure that you are being that you have put yourself in the position to be compensated, the way that you should be, right? And, unfortunately, although I had the years of experience and I had recommendation letters from administrators, chancellors, school Presidents, those letters will only take you so far, when it comes to your pay. So, I needed to get the educational credentials in order to put me in a higher market for making the money I needed to make to do what I do.

Participant 3 mentioned that they realized that as a Black Millennial they were always “betwixt and between.” They discussed their thoughta on passion versus stability as a Black Millennial professional in this select quote:

Uhm, I feel like some of us are betwixt and between uhm in life and careers and things because I feel like when we grow up...well as we're growing up and maturing...the formula that's given to us is, you know, go to school, get a job, find stability that way,

build your home, build your family. But I've had a lot of my 30-something friends that I speak with now, we all kind of hit the same slump. Like “okay, we--we have the job, we have the stability, but it's not really making us happy as far as feeling like we're actually doing something within our purpose.” So, it's kind of like, you know, change what do you, what do you do, do you chase uhm...do you chase stability and go for that. Do you chase purpose... like it's uh...just like a constant conversation I've had with friends in recent days so...

Participant 3 continued and used their own journey as an example in this quote:

“What do I do now?” Exactly. Exactly. And it's like but you can't just quit a job, where you know you have benefits. Uh, like I'll take myself for example. I know that I was born to be a creative, but I also know that I have a skill set that I have acquired, you know, through jobs and stuff with, you know, being an administrative professional. But even though it's something I can do, I'm not passionate about it at all and people tell me all the time “Oh, Maria! You're such a wonderful artist. You should do this full time.” I get that, but I get great benefits with the State. I know that my check is, you know, guaranteed twice a month. So, it's kind of like, you know, what do you do? I do it on the side but it's like what do you devote more time? What you're passionate about or what you need to survive?

Participant 5 had mentioned that although they were a finalist for another department, they had to choose their current position. They mentioned that the need in the following quote:

“Oh yeah, you know, you were one--or one of our top candidates but we're considering you for a temporary position” Knowing full well that I already worked on campus full-time, and I believe that I applied for the full-time position, but they had a few open at the same time. And so that's what she told me, she was like you know “Yeah we're considering you for the temporary position and we hope to make it full-time later on.” So, of course that made my decision easy. I need some full-time work with benefits and all

that stuff. I don't have time for a temporary position, so I ended up going with [the area they worked in].

As previously mentioned, Participant 9 had a desire to be representation for their nieces and nephews by showing them the importance to go to college and how valuable it is. However, their Millennial value of being fulfilled has clashed with the desire to maintain stability as a Black person. They elaborated further in this quote:

But I—honestly, Emily? I don't--I don't want to work for—I want to work for my own self. I want to be self-employed. The pandemic and the pandemic, for me, opened my eyes to how unappreciated I was. And how you, I'm just---I'm just the affirmative action quota. I meet the quota. And what I've been...have been exploring is how to be my own entrepreneur because there are not a lot of African American entrepreneurs and what I do currently, I could actually do that as a business. Uhm. So, that's where I'm personally headed. If that does not---if that does not transcend into anything, what I would also like to do, potentially, is is work in HR. And do recruiting for companies.... I have--I have come to the realization that I'm [currently] going to do what I'm supposed to do, check the boxes, and get my paycheck.

Chapter Summary

The purpose of this study was to learn more about the lived experiences of Black millennial student affairs professionals working at predominately white institution in the southeastern United States. Chapter 4 highlighted the shared comments from the participants as it related to their lives as a Black millennial both working in higher education as student affairs professionals and in American society overall. The data collected and analyzed in this phenomenological study revealed five themes: Using a table representation and selected comments from the participants, the researcher presented the findings.

Chapter 5: Discussion

The Millennial generation is coming into the American workplace with distinct relationships with their organizations and being known for challenging established work and cultural norms as they recognize the influence of systemic and institutional issues on diversity and inclusion efforts (Alonso-Almeida & Llach, 2018; Bogosian & Rousseau, 2017; Schildkraut & Marotta, 2018; Allen et al., 2020). These millennials are also coming into organizations and institutions with experiences and relationships that are affected by their other social identities such as, but not limited to, their race/ethnicity, their class/socioeconomic status, and their gender (Allen, 2019, Allen et al., 2020; Brown, 2018; Wilson, 2019). With effective diversity and inclusion efforts becoming driving forces in society and challenges from the incoming generation of Millennials, there is also a need for institutional changes by American higher education institutions (Smith, 2016). Patton and Haynes (2018) argued that current institutional efforts for change rarely consider the fact underrepresented/minoritized people experience forms of discrimination and oppression simultaneously (i.e., to experience racism and sexism as a Black woman).

While Powell et al (2020) spoke about using an informed and intentional CRT approach to the student of color experience attending PWIs. It would be safe to say that based on the literature, using a CRT/intersectionality approach, specifically the tenet of storytelling, could help with challenging the systems and structures that are oppressing all people of color and marginalized groups in higher education (Harris & Patton, 2019; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Jackson & Hui, 2017; Turner & Grauerholz, 2017; Walkington, 2017). Similarly, the findings of this study aligned with these sentiments that are starting to be discussed. As new generations are coming into the higher education workplace and the American workplace overall, the leadership and decision-makers will have to adjust policies and procedures to better accommodate the needs of that generation (Rue, 2018).

Summary and Implications of the Study

The sentiment that it is time to start encouraging the use of intersectional and other critical approaches by higher education institutions (Patton & Haynes, 2018) and the personal observation of various experiences at the study site was the foundation for this study. While there is literature on the Black experience in higher education and the Millennial generation as students, a review of the current literature revealed there is limited academic research on millennials working in higher education, Black millennials in higher education, and Black millennials' lived experiences overall. To aid in fulfilling this need, this study had a purpose to learn about the Black millennial lived experiences in higher education and in society overall as it related to one institution in the Southeastern United States. The study was framed using critical race theory and intersectionality to help understand these lived experiences based on historical racial inequities which exist in certain structures and how they may be nuanced even further by other intersecting identities like age/generation. Based on the shared experiences of the participants, the researcher identified the following five themes: 1) *Balancing Visibility and Authenticity*, 2) *The Role of Transformational Leadership in Supporting Black Millennial Student Affairs Professional*, 3) *The Burden of Invisible Work and "Other Duties" Assigned*, 4) *The Call for Intentional Institutional Efforts for Creating Belonging* and 5) *The Juxtaposition of Black and Millennial Values*. These themes best captured the essence of being a Black millennial working in higher education at a PWI, working in student affairs, and being a Black millennial in American society.

Balancing Visibility and Authenticity

Nguyen and Anthony (2014) defined Black authenticity as all the ideals and expectations that affect the meaning of "being Black" in terms of identity. The authors continued to say that college or transitioning in higher education could challenge Black authenticity by leading to a possible repression or minimization of Blackness to fit within the space and a dilemma in being authentic. On one side of the authenticity dilemma there are Black millennials repressing their

Blackness by participating more in the white campus culture and now questioning their own authenticity because of treatment by other Black people (Turner & Grauerholz, 2017). One participant, Participant 2, never questioned their authenticity, however, they had situations with white coworkers and other white female colleagues in which they had to rethink their actions to not be perceived as “the angry Black person” or “threatening Black person” stereotype. On the other side of the authenticity dilemma, there were participants who were very comfortable with their Blackness to the point where they are not recognized for possessing a higher level of education and are constantly dealing with the underestimation of their abilities. In speaking with Participant 4, they attributed part of this experience to there being “a different crowd at predominantly white institutions that aren't necessarily used to seeing a woman of color; particularly a black woman who wears braids and faux locs and you know, nails...they're not used to seeing us in that professional capacity being used to being in our skin”.

One of the ways that this dilemma has evolved is into the formation of a modern version of code-switching. While the concept of code-switching has been in use since the 1950s, Elkins and Hanke (2018) practically defined the process of code-switching in higher education to be the way people shift their speech, nonverbal communication, and indicators of social class (i.e., physical appearance and material items) to navigate through different classes. The mention of code-switching in the PWI space by every participant was one of the primary foundations for this theme. All the participants mentioned having to change depending on the spaces they were navigating and whom they would have to interact with. For these participants, code-switching and trying to maintain authenticity with the PWI culture could be leading to conditions of visibility for how Black people are seen. McCluney and Caridad Rabelo (2019) defined conditions of visibility to be the result of conflict between trying to maintain uniqueness (authenticity) and belongingness (institutional fit). Within these conditions, the authors stated there are at least four various types of visibility that could result in how Black women present within the organization: *invisibility, hypervisibility, partial visibility, and precarious visibility*.

The first condition, *invisibility*, would be based in someone not being unique and fitting well into the institution's dominant culture or, in the case of underrepresented individuals, assimilating. The second condition is *partial visibility*. Someone who is partially visible is seen/valued for their race but assumed to be in different category than the one they are one. For example, one participant mentioned that they would be assumed to be a support associate or administrative assistant in their area rather than the manager in their student affairs office. As a Black individual, they were moved to a different social class based on possible stereotypes held by the various people within the institution. The opposite of *invisibility* is *hypervisibility*. Someone who is hypervisible is based in being both seen/valued for being Black and being included for contributions to the organization. However, this could be to their detriment and subject them to being watched and subjected to certain areas of work. In one participant's experiences, they felt often that they were being sent to only diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) trainings based on identifying as a young, black individual that was not helping them to develop holistically. The last condition, *precarious visibility*, is when the employees feel they do not belong, and their Blackness is not valued. Based on the discussions with the participants, most of them are experiencing a form of precarious visibility and not feeling valued or supported by the institution (McCluney & Caridad Rabelo, 2019).

While McCluney and Caridad Rabelo (2019) focused on women, it could be argued that Black men are dealing with a related experience with a different gender-based component (Turner & Grauerholz, 2017). Moreover, because millennials have desires to be heard and to feel tied to a purpose within their work (Blancero et al., 2018; Bogosian & Rousseau, 2017; Council et al., 2020), they could be experiencing a type of tension with visibility in organizations that are not ready for a new/younger generation to enter as employees. In her book, Allen (2019) mentioned that Black millennials overall are looking for "respite for a generation that's tired of working twice as hard in their personal and professional lives" and to move from "constantly trying to vouch for your humanity and dignity" (p.34). To help these Black millennials that are trying to

navigate society and their careers, it is important for PWI leaders to see Black individuals, to value them and their experiences balancing between these concepts, and to realize that representation alone is not enough to truly improve a campus climate based in traditions of whiteness and operating with colorblindness (Brooks-Immel & Murray, 2017; Phillips et al., 2018).

The Role of Transformational Leadership in Supporting Black Millennial Student Affairs Professionals

Adserias, Charleston, and Jackson (2017) wrote that transformational leaders use the four tactics of *idealized influence*, *inspirational motivation*, *intellectual stimulation*, and *individualized consideration* to lead by example, challenge, inspire, and coach/mentor employees to achieve various goals. One of the foundational pieces of transformational leadership is trust. The efficient transformational leader has employees who trust them to lead them, to inspire them as parts of the organization, to motivate them to be creative, and to achieve their development goals (Jameel & Ahmad, 2019). Within this foundation, transformational leaders also must focus on the individual and their experiences in the organization. Institutional leaders that use transformational leadership could potentially improve the job satisfaction of the Black student affairs professional because these approaches could allow for understanding and implementing changes for an inclusive and equitable environment with the consideration of their identities (Adserias et al., 2017; Jameel & Ahmad, 2019). This is because transformational leadership through the tactic of *individualized consideration* focuses on the needs of the individual in achieving their personal and professional goals (Jameel & Ahmad, 2019).

For example, a leader who is managing/leading a person who identifies as Black or any other racial minority category, could consider the fact that many Black/African Americans navigate society and the workplace under this cultural adage that is often shared during childhood: “Unlike white people, Black people have to work twice as hard to get half as far” (DeSante, 2013; Social Sciences Feminist Network Research Interest Group, 2017; Wilson,

2019). This could lead to them experiencing more stress and potential burnout from having to navigate as a Black person through various systems that uphold systemic racist practices (Hawkins, 2021; Stokes & Fredenburg, 2020). While all participants mentioned navigating the PWI culture and climate came with an additional pressure being Black, one mentioned that in their leadership it would be “helpful to have an advocate that would understand where I’m coming from” in relation to their own personality and why they are more introverted in the workplace.

In a similar context, millennials are navigating society under a worldview that has been shaped by American cultural events like 9/11 and the Great Recession and advancements like the development of the internet and mobile technology during their childhoods (Bogosian & Rousseau; 2017; Debevec et al., 2013). Therefore, it has been argued by Bogosian & Rousseau (2017) that within this effort to have transformational leadership there should be a development of a *culture of voice*, or culture that allows everyone to have a voice and contribute their opinions to the organization. This need was reiterated by one participant who felt that they were not valued in the organization because their voice was not being heard. In reference to their supervisor, Participant 7 said “yeah, no, I think it's identities [as a factor for feeling undervalued] because I don't think he values the voice of women. I don't think he values the voice of minority folks unless they're above him, so it's the positionality as well.” For this same participant, this experience was leading to their decision to possibly leave the organization and adding to the negative experiences experienced at the institution overall.

Jameel and Ahmad (2019) mentioned in their study that the transformational leadership tactic of *individualized consideration* had the highest impact on the level of job satisfaction experienced by academic staff. They continued to say that the staff preferred the advice and feedback from their leadership. One participant, Participant 8, mentioned that they often got “really frustrated because, when she [their supervisor] would evaluate them, she wouldn't give full marks, but also wouldn't have feedback.” According to Bogosian and Rousseau (2017), this

lack of clear expectations and unclear evaluation on her performance would be a violation of her values based on being a Millennial. At the same time, keeping in mind “the work twice as hard, to get half as far” mantra, the participant as a Black millennial could have been feeling extra frustrated with a violation of both sets of values. To support Black Millennials in a predominately white space, supervisors and senior leaders will have to adopt a transformational leadership style that allows for seeing color in a space that traditionally does not. Moreover, the field of higher education will have to adjust for the desires and needs of the various millennial experience.

The Burden of Invisible Work and “Other Duties Assigned”

The concept of invisible work has been described as the work that is taken up by various marginalized groups (i.e., women and staff/faculty of color) to make the institutions they work for “a better place” (Social Sciences Feminist Network Research Interest Group, 2017). For Black faculty and staff, invisible work manifests in several ways including mentoring and support students of color, serving on diversity committees, being the voice for minorities, and the expert for all things diversity, equity, and inclusion (De Welde, 2017; Patton & Haynes, 2018; Social Sciences Feminist Network Research Interest Group, 2017; Turner & Grauerholz, 2017; Turner Kelly et al., 2017). These additional tasks are generally added to or assumed to be part of the professional’s position and most of the time is not compensated (Patton & Haynes, 2018; Turner & Grauerholz, 2017). Participant 2 recalled that in serving in a previous role for their student affairs area, they were “being mandated to do higher level work.” When they asked for financial compensation to match having to do tasks that would be assigned to a person serving in a mid-level or higher role, they were told “the workload didn’t call for it”. Even now, with them being in that higher level role, the new person in that role with differing social identities is now making significantly more than they do without having to carry the extra labor. Richard Reddick in Akin (2020) referred to this phenomenon as “the Black tax or brown tax”. Givens (2016) further mentioned that the Black tax or invisible tax is intertwined with the experiences of Black campus stakeholders and is a direct cost of having to cope with a discriminatory environment. To give an

example, because a professional identifies as Black and younger and they are systemically assumed to be familiar with all things Black (Turner & Grauerholz, 2017), they may have to advise the Black student association or various diversity Greek life entities in addition to their other duties.

For Millennials, there is not much mentioned in the literature in terms of an actual “Millennial tax”. However, if the researcher had to conceptualize the term, a Millennial tax would consist of having to physically, mentally, and emotionally cope with being perceived as the entitled job-hoppers with no experience and no desire to stay in jobs that are a misfit with their values (Bogosian & Rousseau; 2017; Darby & Morrell; 2019; Gargouri & Guaman, 2017; Hoffman, 2018). For Participant 8, they spoke often of having to navigate a work environment that sometimes indicated that they were qualified to do the work based on their experience and other times would have them left out of conversations because they were “just like a utility player and wasn’t actually supposed to contribute.” Knowing that Millennials are dealing with the negative perception of their age and values by the other generations, it could be leading to the “job-hopping” to find that right fit that is preferred (Hoffman, 2018). Another participant, Participant 6, spoke of this possible tax in this quote: “We don’t do the 20 years, 30 years of a job and retire there. If something is not working out right and it’s just can’t be reconciled or fixed, we’re gonna move on.” For PWIs and institutional leaders to work towards an inclusive campus, the discussion and work begins with simply realizing that this Black tax and this intersecting Millennial discrimination/tax exists does exist.

The Call for Intentional Institutional Efforts for Creating Belonging

The call for intentional institutional efforts by higher education institutions to create and maintain inclusive campus climates and create a sense of belonging has been voiced across the literature. However, many of these studies and articles focus on the student perspective. Based on the Strayhorn (2012) and Hurtado and Carter (1997) explanations that argue that belonging is the individual’s sense of feeling respected and valued within the college campus community,

employees, and other campus stakeholders outside of students could be looking for the connection with society and higher education institutions. For individuals within the Millennial generation, this sense of belonging helps them to feel like they are part of a bigger vision or mission within the organization and to personally fulfill them (Alonso-Almeida & Llach, 2018; Blancero et al., 2018; Bogosian & Rousseau, 2017; Hoffman, 2018). Adding in the dominant identity of being Black in a predominately white space, the sense of belonging helps with minimizing or avoiding isolation, racial battle fatigue, feelings of invisibility, inability to present their authentic selves, and other typical Black feelings and perceptions experienced at a PWI (Smith et al., 2011; Turner & Grauerholz, 2017; Vaccaro & Newman, 2016; Walkington, 2017).

Several participants issued a call for a re-evaluation of the hiring process to make sure that the applicant pool for all positions consisted of a diverse population of candidates. The rationale given consisted of two parts: 1) so the staff in the division could see more people that looked like them and 2) so students could see staff that looked like them supporting them at the university. Within this call of action issued to the institution, one participant mentioned that with the recent chancellor search, the committee or search firm had not widely shared the candidates that were being considered. They continued to inquire how can the Black and brown people at the institution ensure equitable practices and feel valued by the institution if the process is so secretive. However, a second participant mentioned how the leader over their area was very intentional in hiring several black professionals (including them) which helped with retention of Black staff and feeling valued as they adjusted to working on a PWI campus.

As institutions are becoming more diverse and there are multiple identities coming with the campus stakeholders, the senior leadership and administrators will have to be intentional to implement efforts and interventions that do not present monolithic experiences but focus on common experiences across multiple identities (Atewelogun et al., 2016; Patton et al, 2007). The participants specifically called for intentional hiring efforts which is a recommendation that was supported by Turner and Grauerholz (2017). However, Turner Kelly, Gaston Gayles, and

Williams (2017) specifically argued that recruiting Black campus stakeholders without the work being done to combat the institutional and systemic discrimination will continue to lead resistant efforts, making demands, and a lack of retainment at PWIs. These changes must be visibly valued from top to bottom with continual commitment, inclusive of allies across the board and owned by the entire campus, and not one entity to truly begin to make equitable change (De Welde, 2017).

The Juxtaposition of Black and Millennial Values

Wilson (2019) mentioned that to be a Black millennial in America is a taxing experience because it requires this unique individual to balance two sub-experiences: 1) having their right to voice opinions and to challenge the system but being rendered invisible because of pushback from a society based on the values of the previous generations, and 2) wanting to achieve the “American Dream” of education and success in a society that wants Black people to “stay in their lane”. This clash of sub-experiences is seemingly leading to a conflict of acquired values. One participant especially mentioned how much it was a challenge right now to be in a job that needed for stability for them and their family but wanting to be fulfilled and pursue their hobby and creative outlet as a primary career. Black millennials traditionally are concerned with financial stability because of identifying as Black (Gould & Wilson, 2020; Smock & Greenland, 2010 as cited by Allen et al., 2020). Bogosian and Rousseau (2017) mentioned that most millennials have developed the value of financial security from being exposed to the fear associated with various American events that have caused financial insecurity. So, as a Black millennial, it would be safe to say that it would be hard to choose a job for passion when the primary objective is to establish financial security. Allen (2019) wrote the following passage in her book exemplifying this juxtaposition and conflict as a Black Millennial:

We are learning that we don't have to define our dreams in the same ways as our White counterparts, and we have adjusted accordingly. Maybe we're tired of watching a system that failed our parents—that downsized and laid them off, pushed them out of their family homes, and left many struggling to survive. Maybe it's that we think playing by

the previous generation's rules all but guarantees losing. Maybe it's the intersection of millennial entrepreneurial spirit, a generation of "wokeness" and individualism that's creating this new vibe. Or maybe it's all just an "F--- you" to a country that never seemed to truly believe in young Black America.

For one participant, they mentioned that working so hard during the COVID-19 pandemic made them realize just how unappreciated they were in their job and expressed wanting to do their current work at the university as an entrepreneur for their own firm after finishing their degree. Another professional that participated in the study has since left higher education temporarily to move out of state while opting to follow their Millennial value for desiring fulfillment and to create lasting social change. For the American workplace and higher education especially, knowing that Black millennials are experiencing this constant battling of their values between their dominate and subordinate identity group memberships could offer more knowledge in developing more analysis on intersectional experiences; specifically, the complexity of the lives of Black millennials (Atewologun et al., 2016).

Interpretations

Significance of the Study

This research is significant because it viewed and discussed the lived experiences of Black millennials, a group that is going unheard, working in a predominately white institution in the southern region of the United States. By using a qualitative approach, the findings may provide important unheard information on these lived experiences for this institution serving as the study site and other similar PWIs to better inform effective diversity and inclusion efforts rather than assuming what needs to be done. In this same scope, the findings may also be used by decision-makers within the institution to advocate for the use of critical race theory and intersectionality framed approaches as a method that may better tell the story of the marginalized and underrepresented stakeholders on a PWI campus. The findings from this study may be used by senior-level leadership (university/college administrators) and other leaders that supervise

millennial and/or Black employees to have a better understanding of Black millennial needs for personal and professional success. Lastly, this study begins the conversation for more analysis on generational experiences and intersectional experiences that are going unheard overall.

Reflections of the Researcher

While this study was intended to be a start to the discussions on the Black millennial experience in student affairs/higher education at one institution, the study was just that: a start. The study could easily be replicated at other institutions to discuss the Black millennial student affairs professionals' experience at other predominately white institutions. The researcher especially noticed this after getting used to another PWI and beginning to network with other Black millennial student affairs professionals at other institutions. However, the researcher made sure to strongly come into the study as not someone navigating the same racial battle fatigue and similar issues working in the PWI environment and possessing a previous history at the university, but as an observer who is truly external to the situation happening at the study site and someone that was trying to share a story.

After listening to each interview, the researcher made sure to meditate on what was shared. Each interview confirmed two important points to consider when summarizing the study. The first was that the Black millennial experience is not necessarily something that can be looked at as a double disadvantage. The best way to look at this experience was in a way Atewologun et al (2016) suggested which was as both advantageous and disadvantageous. To be a Black millennial has its challenges, especially in a predominately white and older space. However, as several of the participants mentioned, there is a great pride that comes with being younger in the age and identifying as Black in student affairs work and in American society right now. In their description of what it means to be a Black millennial, Participant 2 mentioned that this generational group does not care about the risks associated with being Black and proud; "we appreciate, and we exalt what it is to have melanated skin and being Black."

Each interview also confirmed to the researcher that some employees' lived experiences were going unheard by the senior leadership and decision-makers at the institution. Each interview also allowed for the researcher to hear from the participants how grateful they were that she was doing the work to shine a light on their experiences. Two quotes strongly resonated with this sentiment. The first highlighted a feeling of the field of higher education needing an "awakening" in the following statement:

I just again wanted to kind of reiterate I think you're doing really good work, and I think that is going to be painstakingly obvious to a lot of sisters in the field, a lot of brothers in the field. But I think it might be a kind of a rude awakening for--for white folks and in these institutions, right? So good on you. Thanks for doing the work. I know it's---I know it's hard. We were all doing the work right, like all of us in these spaces are doing the work, but this is extra. So, thank you for...for taking this on...

The second reiterated the importance of counterstorytelling in the utilization of critical race theory and intersectionality-based approaches to learn more about the Black Millennial lived experience.

I thank you for such detailed questions and for taking the opportunity to listen to my experience. You are doing this, of course, to fulfill that requirement for you to obtain your next level of education. I am not sure if your professors understand and realize what this project does. But what it does, it lets the individuals that you are interviewing know that their experiences and their stories matter. It gives life to situations that probably have been cast aside, so thank you for fulfilling this obligation.

Navigating higher education as a Black person and a younger professional in student affairs at a PWI can be difficult. On one side is dealing with all the microaggressions, bias, and toxicity to the point of wanting to "call out Black" or opting to frequently use leave and paid time off to mitigate racial battle fatigue from these lived experiences (Feraud-King, 2020). The other side is dealing with having to prove you have the experience and the knowledge to do the work

(Turner & Grauerholz, 2017; Walkington, 2017). At the same time, this navigation is happening while managing long hours and work-life conflict as a student affairs professional in a culture that dictates putting the needs of students first (Marshall et al., 2016). However, in the middle of this constant navigation, the story and experiences of Black millennials working in this space is what was getting lost and being rendered invisible in a micro version of American society (Allen, 2019; Wilson, 2019). Solorzano and Yasso (2002, as cited by Griffin et al., 2014) argued that composite storytelling can at minimum reveal issues, validate the experiences of those that are similarly suffering, and provide voice for unheard perspectives. The findings of this study reaffirmed some diversity and inclusion issues mentioned in the literature, validated the experience of Black student affairs professionals as written in the Kemp-Delisser et al (2020) book, *#BLACKOUT*, and amplified the unheard voice of the Black millennial experience overall further across the literature.

Limitations and Future Recommendations

One of the primary critiques of the findings and a limitation of the study overall was in the diversity of the demographics of the participants. The researcher was able to obtain 15 people to express interest in the study and only 9 to proceed to share their experiences in an interview. This could be because of the time of the year the study was conducted with the end of the semester and university commencements approaching. Additionally, it was after a university holiday and during the local K-12 system's spring break. Within the demographics of the participants, there could have been some more diversity in terms of other identities. Although several Black male current and former student affairs employees of the institution expressed interest, the number that followed through was extremely low. While this shortage of men as participants could be because of the timing of this study, it could be another instance indicating that there is a shortage of Black men working in higher education and education overall (Bell, 2017; Turner & Grauerholz, 2017). Based on this occurrence, the researcher would recommend further research exploring the Black millennial experience based on gender; specifically, the

Black millennial male. Given the fact that Black female student affairs professionals almost outnumber Black male student affairs professionals 3:1 (16,482 to 6,933 in 2017, respectively), this scarcity of Black men in the profession could continue to add to the diversity challenges within collegiate recruitment and retention of Black male students that already have a generally complex experience on PWI campuses (Jackson & Hui, 2017; Turner & Grauerholz, 2017; US Department of Education, 2019).

A second recommendation within the scope of participant diversity is to recommend research based on other social identities that may overlap with be a Black Millennial including, but not limited to, identifying as a member of the LGBTQ+ community, social class, and ability/disability. While the researcher asked the participants their preferred pronouns, she did not know whether they were members of the LGBTQ+ community. At the same time, the researcher did not ask about their socioeconomic status or ability status. For future studies in the Black Millennial experience and in intersecting identities in higher education, the consideration of additional identities could explore deeper into various marginalized groups' lived experiences and provide some more insight on intersectional dynamics and identity work as mentioned by Atewologun et al (2016).

As previously mentioned in the methodology chapter, the COVID-19 pandemic was a major limitation in the study overall. The researcher was already initially limited to virtual and phone interviews because of her location in proximity to the study site. However, the difficulty in navigating the recruitment of participants and collecting data were increased. This could have been because of a lack of willingness or mental bandwidth to participate after an entire academic year navigating a global pandemic individually and professionally. Based on this limitation, a third recommendation for future research in the Black Millennial student affairs experience would be to discuss the possible effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Black Millennial experience in higher education. Given that Black Millennial student affairs professionals already experience the world differently because of their intersecting racial and generational social identities, the

already racially stratified higher education workplace in a PWI could be become increasingly more so with COVID-19 potentially affecting the job stability of its employees; especially the front-line workers that are more likely to be Black (Adams et al., 2020; Allen et al, 2020; Gould & Wilson, 2020; Harper, 2020; Wilson, 2019). COVID also required a quick shift in operations to accommodate the new restrictions in a field that already has a culture for being stressful and causing burnout (Feraud-King, 2020; Husband; 2016; Marshall et al., 2016). Several of the study participants mentioned that the pandemic started to negatively change their working experiences at a predominately white institution and led them to contemplating exiting the field of higher education altogether.

During the execution of this study and the writing of this dissertation, the country navigated through some periods of social unrest centered around race. Husband (2016) mentioned that with the increase of diversity on college and university campuses, it is important to understand 1) why Black stakeholders see PWI campuses as unsafe, stressful, and hostile, and 2) why this may be the case even more after seeing the national events unfold. Several of the participants mentioned having to interact awkwardly and tiredly at work after the George Floyd killing and then during the Derek Chauvin case. The researcher herself had to work during those same events while being in a city that drew national attention for a major shooting. One final recommendation for research would be to explore the lived experiences of these same Black millennials working in student affairs at PWIs during major racially charged events.

Conclusion

In this phenomenological study framed by intersectionality and critical race theory, the researcher explored and discussed the lived experiences of Black Millennials working in student affairs at a Southern US PWI. Various professionals across the division of student affairs shared their general experiences as a Black individual, as a member of the Millennial generational cohort, and how they navigated their goals professionally and personally. This study is important to the field of higher education because existing literature has focused on the millennial

generation as students and not as working professionals. Moreover, the existing literature has limited information on the Black millennial experience within the PWI. The findings of this study and the five themes developed highlighted this group's lived experiences through storytelling to start the conversation for deeper analysis and effective DEI management efforts in relation to keeping and supporting this group within the field of higher education and the American workplace. This study is also important to the study of organizational leadership specifically within higher education because it further highlighted the need for the update of leadership styles to include discussions and new thoughts on strategies to address institutional and social inequities and for diversity leadership efforts to extend to all individuals who are leaders as presented by Adserias et al (2017).

Higher education is in a critical time of change with a population of stakeholders that is gradually growing more diverse and navigating the after-effects of a global pandemic. The time for higher education to really be intentional about listening to the stories of unheard populations is now. In a time that has higher education and education overall questioning whether to utilize critical race theory or intersectionality to understand lived experiences because of potential racial divisiveness, the researcher offers this quote as a closing argument:

While intersectionality is not a comprehensive remedy, as an approach it can at minimum guide institutional leader toward fully recognizing minoritized groups that are typically forgotten and erased at the individual level, and the enduring, interlocking structures that prevent institutional change towards justice and equity for the groups and postsecondary institutions (Patton & Haynes, 2018, p. 14).

References

- Adams, M. O., Robinson, C. G., Johnson, L. A., & Yitbarek, K. (2020). The black/african american millennial. *Public Policy and Administration Review, 8*(2), 32-43
- Adserias, R. P., Charleston, L. J., & Jackson, J. F. L. (2017). What style of leadership is best suited to direct organizational change to fuel institutional diversity in higher education? *Race Ethnicity and Education, 20*(3), 315-311
- Akin, Y. (2020). The time tax put on scientists of colour. *Nature, 583*, 479-481
- Al-Asfour, A., & Lettau, L. (2014). Strategies for leadership styles for multi-generational workforce. *Journal of Leadership, Accountability and Ethics, 11*(2), 58-68.
- Allen, R. (2019). *It was all a dream: A new generation confronts the broken promise to black america*. New York, NY. Nation Books
- Allen, S. E., Davis, I. F., McDonald, M., & Robinson, C. C. (2020). The case of black millennials. *Sociological Perspectives, 63*(3), 479-485
- Alonso-Almeida, M. D., & Llach, J. (2018). Socially responsible companies: Are they the best workplace for millennials? A cross-national analysis, *Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management, 26*(1), 238-247
- Arnof Fishman, A. (2016). How generational differences will impact america's aging workforce: Strategies for dealing with aging millennials, generation X and baby boomers. *Strategic HR Review, 15*(6), 250-257.
- Ashikali, T., & Groeneveld, S. (2015). Diversity management in public organizations and its effect on employees' affective commitment: The role of transformational leadership and the inclusiveness of the organizational culture. *Review of Public Personnel Administration, 35*(2), 146-168
- Atewologun, D., Sealy, R., & Vinnicombe, S. (2016). Revealing intersectional dynamics in organizations: Introducing 'intersectional identity work'. *Gender, Work and Organization, 23*(3), 224-247

- Bastedo, M. N., Altbach, P. G., & Gumport, P. J. (Eds.). (2016). *American higher education in the twenty-first century: Social, political, and economic challenges* (4th ed.). Baltimore, MD. John Hopkins University Press
- Bell, E. E. (2017). A narrative inquiry: A black male looking to teach. *The Qualitative Report*, 22(4), 1137-1150
- Blancero, D. M., Mourino-Ruiz, E., & Padilla, A. M. (2018). Latino millennials—the new diverse workforce: Challenges and opportunities. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Science*, 40(1), 3-21
- Blockett, R. A. (2017). ‘I think it’s very much placed on us’: Black queer men laboring to forge community at a predominately white and (hetero)cisnormative research institution. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 30(8), 800-816
- Bogosian, R. & Rousseau, C. (2017). How and why millennials are shaking up organizational cultures. *Rutgers Business Review*, 2(3), 386-394
- Bondi, S. (2012). Students and institution protecting whiteness as property: A critical race theory analysis of student affairs preparation. *Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice*, 49(4), 397-414
- Brooks-Immel, D. R. & Murray, S. B. (2017). Color-blind contradictions and black/white binaries: White academics upholding whiteness. *Humboldt Journal of Social Relations*, 39, 315-333
- Brown, K. (2018). Race as a durable *and* shifting idea: How black millennial preservice teachers understand race, racism, and teaching. *Peabody Journal of Education*, 93(1), 106-120
- Cabrera, N. L., Watson, J. S., & Franklin, F. D. (2016). Racial arrested development: A critical whiteness analysis of the campus ecology. *Journal of College Student Development*, 57(2), 119-134

- Carpenter, M. J. & De Charon, L. C. (2014). Mitigating multigenerational conflict and attracting, motivating, and retaining millennial employees by changing the organizational culture: A theoretical model. *Journal of Psychological Issues in Organizational Culture*, 5(3), 68-84
- Center for Women and Business at Bentley University. (2017). Multi-Generation Impacts on the Workplace: A Curated Research Report. Retrieved from: <https://www.bentley.edu/files/2017/11/01/Bentley%20CWB%20Generational%20Impacts%20Research%20Report%20Fall%202017.pdf>
- Chan, Z. C. Y., Fung, Y., & Chien, W. (2013). Bracketing in phenomenology: Only undertaken in the data collection and analysis process. *The Qualitative Report*, 18(30), 1-9
- Chin, J. L. & Trimble, J. E. (2015). *Diversity and leadership*. Thousand Oaks, CA. SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Cho, S., Crenshaw, K. W., & McCall, L. (2013). Toward a field of intersectionality studies: Theory, applications and praxis. *Signs*, 38(4), 785-810.
- Cole, E. R., McGowan, B. L., & Zerquera, D. D. (2017). First-year faculty of color: Narratives about entering the academy. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, 50(1) 1-12
- Council, L. D., Johnson, C., Santellano, K., & Yazdiha, H. (2020). Linking contexts, intersectionality, and generations: Toward a multidimensional theory of millennials and social change. *Sociological Perspectives*, 63(3), 486-495
- Crenshaw, K. (1989). Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: A black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory and antiracist politics. *The University of Chicago Legal Forum*, 140(1), 139-167
- Crenshaw, K. (1991). Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color. *Stanford Law Review*, 43(6), 1241-1299

- Creswell, J. W. & Guetterman, T. C. (2019). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research*. Saddle River, NJ. Pearson Education, Inc.
- Creswell, J. W. & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA. SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Dantzler, P. A (2020). Developing expertise beyond our professional roles: Discussing race & privilege within higher education. In Kemp-Delisser, K., Stone, Q., Fredenburg, J., & Burwell, N. (Eds.). (2020). *#BLACKOUT: Real issues and real solutions to real challenges facing black student affairs professionals*. Independently published.
- Darby, V. & Morrell, D. L. (2019). Generations at work: A review of generational traits and motivational practices impacting millennial employees. *Drake Management Review*, 8(1-2), 1-13
- Davis, D. R. & Maldonado, C. (2015). Shattering the glass ceiling: The leadership development of african american women in higher education. *Advancing Women in Leadership*, 35, 48-64
- Debevec, K., Schewe, C. D., Madden, T. J., & Diamond, W. D. (2013). Are today's splintering into a new generational cohort? Maybe! *Journal of Consumer Behavior*, 12(1), 20-31
- Deese, J. J., Gokpinar-Shelton, E., & Wendling, L. A. (2018). International branch campus: Reviewing the literature through tierney's organizational cultural framework. *Journal of the Student Personnel Association at Indiana University*, 2018, 1-14
- Delgado, R. & Stefancic, J. (2012). *Critical race theory: An introduction*. (2nd ed). New York, NY. New York University Press.
- DeSante, C. D. (2013). Working twice as hard to get half as far: Race, work ethic, and america's deserving poor. *American Journal of Political Science*, 57(2), 342-356

- De Welde, K. (2017). Moving the needle on equity and inclusion. *Humboldt Journal of Social Relations*, (39), 192-211
- Eddles-Hirsch, K. (2015). Phenomenology and educational research. *International Journal of Advanced Research*, 3(8), 251-260
- Ehrlich Hammer, E. (2015). Shifts in calling: An emphasis on calling for millennials. *American Journal of Management*, 15(4), 22-25
- Elkins, B. & Hanke, E. (2018). Code-switching to navigate social class in higher education and student affairs. *New Directions for Student Services*, 2018(162), 35-47
- Enwefa, S. & Enwefa, R. (2016). Redefining the future of higher education in the 21st century: Educating and preparing for today and tomorrow. *International Journal of Innovative Business Strategies*, 2(2), 95-101
- Feraud-King, P. T. (2020). When you are needed, but not wanted! In Kemp-Delisser, K., Stone, Q., Fredenburg, J., & Burwell, N. (Eds.). (2020). *#BLACKOUT: Real issues and real solutions to real challenges facing black student affairs professionals*. Independently published.
- Ferri-Reed, J. (2014). Leading a multi-generational workforce: Learning to leverage the uniqueness of every age group. *The Journal for Quality and Participation*, 37(1), 21-24
- Franklin, J. D., Smith, W. A., & Hung, M. (2014). Racial Battle Fatigue for Latina/o Students: A Quantitative Perspective. *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education*, 13(4), 303–322. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1538192714540530>
- Fusch, P. I. & Ness, L. R. (2015). Are we there yet? Data saturation in qualitative research. *The Qualitative Report*, 20(9), 1408-1416
- Garcia, G. A. (2015). Exploring student affairs professionals' experiences with the campus racial climate at a hispanic serving institution (HSI). *Journal of Diversity*

in Higher Education. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0039199>

- Gardner, Jr., L., Barrett, T. G., & Pearson, L. C. (2014). African american administrators at PWIs: Enablers of and barriers to career success. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education*, 7(4), 235-251
- Gargouri, C., & Gauman, C. (2017). Discriminating against millennials in the workplace analysis on age discrimination against young adults. *Journal of US-China Public Administration*, 14(1), 38-45
- Georges, L. (2019, April). *How generational stereotypes hold us back at work* [video]. TED Conferences.
https://www.ted.com/talks/leah_georges_how_generational_stereotypes_hold_us_back_at_work?utm_campaign=tedsread&utm_medium=referral&utm_source=tedcomshare
- Gillborn, D. (2015). Intersectionality, critical race theory, and the primacy of racism: race, class, gender, and disability in education. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 21(3), 277-287
- Givens, J. R. (2016). The invisible tax: Exploring black student engagement at historically white institutions. *Berkeley Review of Education*, 6(1), 55-78
- Gong, B., Ramkissoon, A., Greenwood, R. A., & Hoyte, D. S. (2018). The generation for change: Millennials, their career orientation, and role innovation. *Journal of Managerial Issues*, 30(1), 82-96
- Gould, E. & Wilson, V. (2020). *Black workers face two of the most lethal preexisting conditions for coronavirus—racism and economic inequality*. Economic Policy Institute. <https://files.epi.org/pdf/193246.pdf>
- Grant Thornton LLP. (2017). *The State of Higher Education in 2017*. Retrieved from: <https://www.grantthornton.com/-/media/content-page-files/nfp/pdfs/2017/State-of-higher-edu-2017-002.ashx>
- Green, J. E. (2014). Toxic leadership in educational organizations. *Educational*

Leadership Review, 15(1), 18-33

- Griffin, R. A., Ward, L., & Phillips, A. R. (2014). Still flies in buttermilk: Black male faculty, critical race theory, and composite storytelling. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 27(14), 1354-1375
- Griffin, K. A., Cunningham, E. L., & George Mwangi, C. A. (2016). Defining diversity: Ethnic differences in black students' perceptions of racial climate. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education*, 9(1), 34-49
- Gusa, D. L. (2010). White institutional presence: The impact of whiteness on campus climate. *Harvard Educational Review*, 80(4), 464-490. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxylocal.library.nova.edu/docview/881465338?accountid=6579>
- Hannay, M. & Fretwell, C. (2011). The higher education workplace: Meeting the needs of multiple generations. *Research in Higher Education Journal*, 10(1), 1-12
- Harper, S. R. (2012). Race without racism: How higher education researchers minimize racist institutional norms. *The Review of Higher Education*, 36(1), 9-29
- Harper, S. R. (2020). COVID-19 and the racial equity implications of reopening college and university campuses. *American Journal of Education*, 127, 1-10
- Hastings, S. L. (2012). Triangulation. In Salkind, N. J. (Ed.) (2010). *Encyclopedia of Research Design*. SAGE Publications
- Hawkins, D. F. (2021). A racism burnout: My life as a black academic. *Race and Justice* [special issue], 1-17
- Hays, D. W. (2014). Examining differences between millennial and all employee levels of job satisfaction with the immediate supervisor relationship. *International Journal of Managerial Studies and Research (IJMSR)*, 2(8), 1-7
- Hobbs, H. L. (2017). *A qualitative study of millennials in the workplace: Gaining their long-term employment in news media firms in north alabama* [Doctoral

- dissertation, Florida Institute of Technology]. Florida Institute of Technology Repository. <https://repository.lib.fit.edu/handle/11141/1360>
- Hoffman, B. (2018). Why millennials quit. *Journal of Property Management*, 83(3), 42-44
- Hollis, L. P. (2014). Lambs to slaughter? Young people as the prospective target of workplace bullying in higher education. *Journal of Education and Human Development*, 3(4), 45-57
- Howard, T. C. & Navarro, O. (2016). Critical race theory 20 years later: Where do we go from here? *Urban Education*, 51(3), 253-273
- Hughes, S., Noblit, G., & Cleveland, D. (2013). Derrick bell's post-*brown* moves toward critical race theory. *Race, Ethnicity and Education*, 16(4), 442-469
- Hurtado, S., & Carter, D. F. (1997). Effects of college transition and perceptions of the campus racial climate on latino student's sense of belonging. *Sociology of Education*, 70, 324-345
- Hurtado, S., Milem, J. F., Clayton-Pedersen, A. R., & Allen, W. R. (1998). Enhancing campus climates for racial/ethnic diversity: Educational policy and practice. *The Review of Higher Education*, 21(3), 279-302
- Husband, M. (2016). Racial battle fatigue and the black student affairs professional in the era of #blacklivesmatter. *The Vermont Connection*, 37(10), 91-98
- Jackson, B. A. & Hui, M. M. (2017). Looking for brothers: Black male bonding at a predominately white institution. *Journal of Negro Education*, 86(4), 463-478
- Jameel, A. S., & Ahmad, A. R. (2019). The effect of transformational leadership on job satisfaction among academic staff. In the 34th International Business Information Management Association (IBIMA) conference: 13-14 November 2019, Madrid Spain
- Kemp-Delisser, K., Stone, Q., Fredenburg, J., & Burwell, N. (Eds.). (2020).

#BLACKOUT: *Real issues and real solutions to real challenges facing black student affairs professionals*. Independently published.

- Killam, W. K. & Degges-White, S. (2017). *College student development: Applying theory to practice on the diverse campus* (1st ed). New York, NY. Springer Publishing Co.
- Kinicki, A. & Kreitner, R. (2008). *Organizational behavior: Key concepts, skills and best practices* (4th ed). New York, NY. McGraw-Hill/Irwin
- Kleinhans, K. A., Chakradhar, K., Muller, S., & Waddill, P. (2015). Multigenerational perceptions of the academic work environment in higher education in the united states. *Higher Education*, 70(1), 89-103
- Kromydas, T. (2017). Rethinking higher education and its relationship with social inequalities: Past knowledge, present state, and future potential. *Palgrave Communications*, 3(1), 1-12
- Kuron, L. K. J., Lyons, S. T., Schweitzer, L., & Ng, E. S. W. (2015). Millennials' work values: Differences across the school to work transition. *Personnel Review*, 44(6), 991-1009
- Lacdo-O, F. L., Macawile, M. V. P., & Caliwán, Jr., M. A. (2018). The 'need to transcend': a phenomenological study on the lived experiences of millennial teachers. *International Journal of Scientific Research in Education*, 11(3), 318-334
- Ladson-Billings, G. (1998). Just what is critical race theory and what's it doing in a nice field like education? *International Journal of Qualitative Studies*, 11(1), 7-24
- Ladson-Billings, G. & Tate, W. F., IV. (1995). Toward a critical race theory of education. *Teachers College Record*, 97(1), 47-68
- Ledesma, M. C. & Calderon, D. (2015). Critical race theory in education: A review of past literature and a look to the future. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 21(3), 206-222

- Lester, S. W., Standifer, R. L., Schultz, N. J., & Windsor, J. M. (2012). Actual versus perceived generational differences at work: An empirical examination. *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies, 19*(3), 341-354
- Lewis, E., Boston, D., & Peterson, S. (2017). A global perspective of transformational leadership and organizational development. *Journal of Research Initiatives, 2*(3), 1-6. <http://digitalcommons.uncfsu.edu/jri/vol2/iss3/5>
- Lloyd-Jones, B. (2014). African-american women in the professoriate: Addressing social exclusion and scholarly marginalization through mentoring. *Mentoring and Tutoring: Partnership in Learning, 22*(4), 269-283
- Louis, D. A., Rawls, G. J., Jackson-Smith, D., Chambers, G. A., Phillips, L. L., & Louis, S. L. (2016). Listening to our voices: Experiences of black faculty at predominately white research universities with microaggression. *Journal of Black Studies, 47*(5), 454-474
- Lynch-Alexander, E. (2017). Black minds matter: The call to retention of young black academics (YBAs) in higher education. *International Journal of the Academic Business World, 11*(1), 31-37
- Marshall, C. & Rossman, G. B. (2016). *Designing qualitative research* (6th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA. SAGE
- Marshall, S. M., Gardner, M. M., Hughes, C., & Lowery, U. (2016). Attrition from student affairs: Perspectives from those who exited the profession. *Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice, 53*(2), 145-159
- Martin, J. (2015). Transformational and transactional leadership: An exploration of gender, experience, and institution type. *portal: Libraries and the Academy, 15*(2), 331-351
- McCluney, C. L., & Caridad Rabelo, V. (2019). Conditions of visibility: An intersectional examination of Black women's belongingness and distinctiveness at

- work. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 113, 143-152
- Mena, J. A. (2016). I love my work, but this is not my life: Women of color in the academy. *NASPA Journal About Women in Higher Education*, 9(2), 190-207
- Mena, J. A., & Vaccaro, A. (2017). I've struggled, i've battled: Invisibility microaggressions experienced by women of color at a predominately white institution. *NASPA Journal About Women in Higher Education*, 10(3), 301-318
- Mihelic, K. K., & Aleksic, D. (2017). Dear employer, let me introduce myself—Flow, satisfaction with work-life balance and millennials' creativity. *Creativity Research Journal*, 29(4), 397-408
- Milkman, R. (2017). A new political generation: Millennials and the post-2008 wave of protest. *American Sociological Review*, 82(1), 1-31
- Mitchell, D., Jr. (2016, June 9). How to start a revolution: Use intersectionality as a framework to promote student success. *ACPA*.
<https://www.myacpa.org/blogs/senior-scholar-blog/how-start-revolution-use-intersectionality-framework-promote-student>
- Moran, E. T., & Volkwein, J. F. (1988). Examining organizational climate in institutions of higher education, *Research in Higher Education*, 28(4), 367-388
- Nguyen, J. & Anthony, A. K. (2014). Black authenticity: Defining the ideals and expectations in the construction of “real” blackness. *Race & Ethnicity*, 8(6), 770-779
- Nichols, S. & Stahl, G. (2019). Intersectionality in higher education research: A systematic literature review. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 38(6), 1255-1268
- Offermann, L. R., Basford, T. E., Graebner, R., Basu DeGraaf, S. & Jaffer, S. (2013). Slights, snubs, and slurs: Leader equity and microaggressions. *Equity, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal*, 32(4), 374-393

- Orelus, P. W. (2013). The institutional cost of being a professor of color: Unveiling micro-aggression, racial [in]visibility, and racial profiling through the lens of critical race theory. *Current Issues in Education*, 16(2), 1-10
- Patton, L. D. & Haynes, C. (2018). Hidden in plain sight: The black women's blueprint for institutional transformation in higher education. *Teachers College Record*, 120(140309), 1-18
- Patton, L. D., McEwen, M., Rendon, L., & Howard-Hamilton, M. F. (2007). Critical race perspectives on theory in student affairs. *New Directions for Student Services*, 120, 39-53
- Perez, N. (2018, January 28). Are millennials meant to work in student affairs. Student Affairs Exchange. <https://sa-exchange.ca/feature-title/>
- Phillips, K. W., Dumas, T. L., & Rothbard, N. P. (2018, March-April). Diversity and authenticity. *Harvard Business Review*. 132-136. <https://hbr.org/2018/03/diversity-and-authenticity#>
- Pitcan, M., Marwick, A. E., & Boyd, D. (2018). Performing a vanilla self: Respectability politics, social class, and the digital world. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 23(3), 163-179
- Pizzaro, M. & Kohli, R. (2020). "I stopped sleeping": Teachers of color and the impact of racial battle fatigue. *Urban Education*, 55(7), 967-991
- Powell, C., Demetriou, C., Morton, T. R., & Ellis, J.M. (2020). A CRT-informed model to enhance experiences and outcomes of racially minoritized students. *Journal of Student Affairs Research in Practice*, 1-13
- Prochazka, J., Gilova, H., & Vaculik, M. (2017). The relationship between transformational leadership and engagement: Self-efficacy as a mediator. *Journal of Leadership Studies*, 11(2), 22-33
- Rankin, S. R., & Reason, R. D. (2005). Differing perceptions: How students of color and

- white students perceive campus climate for underrepresented groups. *Journal of College Student Development*, 46(1), 43-61
- Rue, P. (2018). Make way, millennials, here comes gen Z. *About Campus*, 23(3), 5-12
- Sakdiyakorn, M. & Wattanacharoensil, W. (2018). Generational diversity in the workplace: A systematic review in the hospitality context. *Cornell Hospitality Quarterly*, 59(2), 135-159
- Salazar, L., Garcia, N., Diego-Medrano, E., & Castillo, Y. (2019). Personal and professional challenges of millennial faculty. In Strawser, M. G (Ed.) (2019). *Leading millennial faculty: Navigating the new professoriate*. Lanham, MD. The Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group
- Sang Long, C., Yusof, W. M. M., Owee Kowang, T., & Hock Hang, L. (2014). The impact of transformational leadership style on job satisfaction. *World Applied Sciences Journal*, 29(1), 117-124
- Schildkraut, D. J., & Marotta, S. A. (2018). Assessing the political distinctiveness of white millennials: How race and generation shape racial and political attitudes in a changing America. *RSF: The Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences*, 4(5), 158-187
- Shahid, N. N., Nelson, T., & Cardemil, E. V. (2018). Lift every voice: Exploring the stressors and coping mechanisms of black college women attending predominately white institutions. *Journal of Black Psychology*, 44(1), 3-24
- Sharma, A. (2016). Managing diversity and equality in the workplace. *Cogent Business & Management*, 3(1), 1-14
- Shields, S. A. (2008). Gender: An intersectionality perspective. *Sex Roles*, 59, 301-311
- Simpson, J. S. (2003). *I have been waiting: Race and U.S. higher education*. Toronto, CN. University of Toronto Press.
- Smith, A. (2020). FUBU: The necessity of organic safe spaces for black women higher

- education administrators, created for us, by us. In Kemp-Delisser, K., Stone, Q., Fredenburg, J., & Burwell, N. (Eds.). (2020). *#BLACKOUT: Real issues and real solutions to real challenges facing black student affairs professionals*. Independently published.
- Smith, D. G. (2016). The diversity imperative: Moving to the next generation. In Bastedo, M. N., Altbach, P. G., & Gumport, P. J. (Eds.). (2016). *American higher education in the twenty-first century: Social, political, and economic challenges* (4th ed.). Baltimore, MD. John Hopkins University Press
- Smith, J. A., Flowers, P., & Larkin, M. (2009). *Interpretative phenomenological analysis: Theory, method, and research*. London, UK: Sage.
- Smith, N. & Fredricks-Lowman, I. (2019). Conflict in the workplace: a 10-year review of toxic leadership in higher education. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*. DOI: 10.1080/13603124.2019.1591512
- Smith, S. D., & Galbraith, Q. (2012). Motivating millennials: Improving practices in recruiting, retaining, and motivating younger library staff. *Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 38(3), 135-144
- Smith, W. A., Hung, M., & Franklin, J. D. (2011). Racial battle fatigue and the miseducation of black men: Racial microaggressions, societal problems, and environmental stress. *The Journal of Negro Education*, 80(1), 63-82
- Social Sciences Feminist Network Research Interest Group. (2017). The burden of invisible work in academia: Social inequalities and time use in five university departments. *Humboldt Journal of Social Relations*, 39(39), 228-245
- Starratt, A. & Grandy, G. (2010). Younger workers' experiences of abusive leadership. *Leadership & Organizational Development Journal*, 31(2), 136-158
- Stokes, T. N. & Fredenburg, J. (2020). Interrupting the narrative: Racial battle fatigue. In

- Kemp-Delisser, K., Stone, Q., Fredenburg, J., & Burwell, N. (Eds.). (2020) *#BLACKOUT: Real issues and real solutions to real challenges facing black student affairs professionals*. Independently published.
- Strayhorn, T. (2009). Staff peer relationship and the socialization process of new professionals: A quantitative investigation. *College Student Affairs Journal*, 28(1), 38-60
- Strayhorn, T. L. (2012). *College students' sense of belonging: A key to educational success for all students*. New York: NY. Routledge.
- Sue, D. W., Capodilupo, C. M., Torino, G. C., Bucceri, J. M., Holder, A. M. B., Nadal, K. L., & Esquilin, M. (2007). Racial microaggressions in everyday life: Implications for clinical practice. *American Psychologist*, 62(4), 271-286
- Tate, S. A., & Page, D. (2018). Whiteness and institutional racism: Hiding behind (un)conscious bias. *Ethics and Education*, 13(1), 141-155
- Turner, C. & Grauerholz, L. (2017). Introducing the invisible man: Black male professionals in higher education. *Humboldt Journal of Social Relations*, 1(39), 212-227
- Turner Kelly, B., Gaston Gayles, J., & Williams, C. D. (2017). Recruitment without retention: A critical case of black faculty unrest [special issue]. *The Journal of Negro Education*, 86(3), 305-317
- United States Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2019). *Employment status of the civilian noninstitutional population by age, sex, and race*.
<https://www.bls.gov/cps/demographics.htm>
- United States Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2019a). *Labor force characteristics by race and ethnicity, 2018*. <https://www.bls.gov/opub/reports/race-and-ethnicity/2018>
- United States Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2019). *The Digest of Education Statistics*.

- Urick, M. J. (2012). Exploring generational identity: A multiparadigm approach. *Journal of Business Diversity, 12*(3), 103-115
- Vaccaro, A. (2012). Campus microclimate for LGBT faculty, staff, and students: An exploration of the intersections of social identity and campus roles. *Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice, 49*(4), 429-446
- Vaccaro, A., & Newman, B. M. (2016). Development of a sense of belonging for privileged and minoritized students: An emergent model. *Journal of College Student Development, 57*(8), 925-942
- Walkington, L. (2017). How far have we really come? Black women faculty and graduate students' experiences in higher education. *Humboldt Journal of Social Relations, 39*(39), 51-65
- West, N. M. (2015). In our own words: African american women student affairs professionals define their experiences in the academy. *Advancing Women in Leadership, 35*, 108-119
- West, N. M. (2017). The african american women's summit: A student affairs professional development program. *Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice, 54*(3), 329-342
- Wilson, A. B., Vilardo, M., Fellingner, R., & Dillenbeck, T. (2015). Work-life balance satisfaction: An analysis of gender differences and contributing factors. *New York Journal of Student Affairs: The Journal of the College Student Personnel Association of New York State, 14*(2), 3-17
- Wilson, M. E., Liddell, D. L., Hirschy, A. S., & Pasquesi, A. (2016). Professional identity, career commitment, and career entrenchment of midlevel student affairs professionals. *Journal of College Student Development, 57*(5), 557-572
- Wilson, P. K. (2019). Am I invisible?! Millennial invisibility in america. *Journal of Ethnic and Cultural Studies, 6*(3), 13-26

Appendix A
Email Invitation

Good morning/afternoon:

My name is Emily Dixon, and I am a doctoral candidate in the Doctor of Education with a concentration in Organizational Leadership at Abraham S. Fischler College of Education and School of Criminal Justice at Nova Southeastern University. I am conducting a study to understand the lived experiences of Black millennial student affairs professionals working in predominately white institutions in a state in the southern United States. This would include looking at relationships with supervisors, microaggressions experienced, and opportunities for advancement and development presented. This study will be based in using intersectionality and critical race theory, which focuses on the complex relationship between intersecting social identities (e.g., race or gender) and the way discrimination is received, as the foundation for research.

I am recruiting for 8-14 participants for taking a 45-60 interview. This would be after taking a 5-10-minute pre-survey to opt in and express interest. For eligibility, you would identify as the following:

- Black/African American/African descent
- A Millennial (an individual between 22 and 39)
- Work or worked in student affairs at ECU for at least 6 months in a position as associate director, assistant director, program manager/coordinator/associate, administrative support roles, or any other roles not leading an area within the division.

If you are willing to participant, please use [Forms link] and fill out the consent form and email back to ed908@mynsu.nova.edu.

Thank you in advance,

Emily P. Dixon, MA
Doctoral Candidate, Fischler College of Education and School of Criminal Justice
Nova Southeastern University

Appendix B
Interest Questionnaire

An individual that is defined to be a *Millennial* is someone that was born between 1982 and 1999 (Kleinhaus et al, 2015). This generational cohort has been described as having strong values and expectations of their workplaces (Milhelic & Aleksic, 2017). They also value work-life balance, organizational fit, and working in organizations that allow them to lead with their hearts (Darby & Morrell, 2019; Hoffman, 2018; Wilson, 2019). When these values are not respected, it could lead to an invisibility by the Millennial individual (Allen et al., 2020; Wilson, 2019). These feelings could change based on the nuances that come with identifying as a Black person (Allen et al., 2020; Wilson, 2019).

In 1988, American lawyer and professor, Kimberle Crenshaw, coined the theory of intersectionality to better identify the oppressive experiences of Black women in the legal field. The term has been expanded to be defined as a theoretical framework that focuses on the understanding of the complex relationship between social identities (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation) and the way discrimination is received.

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to further understand the lived experiences of Black millennial student affairs professionals as they navigate and advance within the workplace based on their intersecting identities at a predominately white institution (PWI) in a state in the southern United States. For this study, the researcher is looking to investigate the professional treatment of Black Millennial student affairs professionals which means relationships with supervisors, microaggressions experienced, professional development opportunities offered, and opportunities for advancement presented. The intersectionality framework (along with critical race theory) will be used to understand how Black Millennial student affairs professionals are experiencing the PWI workplace.

Interest Questionnaire

- **Basic Demographic Information**
 - Name
 - Age
 - Race/Ethnicity
 - Preferred Pronouns
 - Education Level
 - Position/Title within the Institution
 - Years within the current institution
- Based on the description provided, have you felt invisible and/or like your values have been challenged in your workplace?
- Have you felt like this challenge was because of one or more of your social identities (e.g., identifying as Black, because of your age)?
- If you are interested and answered yes to the previous questions, would you be willing to speak with the researcher in detail about your experiences?

Appendix C

Participant Letter for Anonymous Surveys

Participant Letter for Anonymous Surveys
NSU Consent to be in a Research Study Entitled

*Misunderstood: A Phenomenological Study on Lived Experiences of Black Millennial Student
Affairs Professionals at PWIs*

Who is doing this research study?

This person doing this study is Emily P. Dixon, MA with the Abraham S. Fischler College of Education and School of Criminal Justice. They will be helped by Sherilyn W. Poole, Ed.D.

Why are you asking me to be in this research study?

You are being asked to take part in this research study because you are an individual that self-identifies as a Black (African American/African descended) person between the ages of 22-39 and working in student affairs at a predominately white institution (PWI) in the Southern United States. You also hold a position no higher than Associate Director in a student affairs area and have held it for at least six months. Because of this work, you may have experienced some microaggressions and other discriminatory practices and navigated the workplace differently based on your race and/or age. This study will include about 8-14 people.

Why is this research being done?

The purpose of this study is to find out more about the lived experiences of Black Millennials working in student affairs at a Southern United States PWI as they work through the higher education workplace with these intersecting identities. While there are studies about Millennials, very few have been done to learn about Millennials that identify as Black (African American/African descended) as mentioned in articles by Adams et al (2020), Allen et al (2020), Council et al (2020), and Wilson (2019), respectively.

What will I be doing if I agree to be in this research study?

You will be taking a one-time, anonymous survey. The survey will take approximately 5-10 minutes to complete.

Are there possible risks and discomforts to me?

This research study involves minimal risk to you. To the best of our knowledge, the things you will be doing have no more risk of harm than you would have in everyday life.

What happens if I do not want to be in this research study?

You can decide not to participate in this research, and it will not be held against you. You can exit the survey at any time.

Will it cost me anything? Will I get paid for being in the study?

There is no cost for participation in this study. Participation is voluntary and no payment will be provided.

How will you keep my information private?

Your responses are anonymous. Information we learn about you in this research study will be handled in a confidential manner, within the limits of the law. To ensure your privacy, the researcher will not ask for any more information besides what is given in the survey unless the participant decides to move forward to be interviewed. All participants interviewed will be assigned a pseudonym to each participant and the researcher will communicate the pseudonym for their record keeping. You do have the option to change the pseudonym if the suggested is not preferred. This data will be available to the researcher, the Institutional Review Board and other representatives of this institution, and any granting agencies (if applicable). All confidential data will be kept securely on the private laptop and external hard drive of the researcher in her home. If printed, the information will be electronically scanned, and all physical copies will be locked in the researcher's desk. All data will be kept for 36 months from the end of the study and destroyed after that time by a mass deletion and/or shredded by a professional service if physical copies are kept.

Who can I talk to about the study?

If you have questions, you can contact Emily P. Dixon at [redacted] or email at [redacted]. In the event that the primary investigator is not available, you may contact Sherilyn W. Poole, Ed.D at [redacted].

If you have questions about the study but want to talk to someone else who is not a part of the study, you can call the Nova Southeastern University Institutional Review Board (IRB) at (954) 262-5369 or toll free at 1-866-499-0790 or email at IRB@nova.edu.

Do you understand and do you want to be in the study?

If you have read the above information and voluntarily wish to participate in this research study, please follow the link here to take the pre-interview survey. For questions or concerns, please contact the researcher at ed908@mynsu.nova.edu.

Appendix D
General Informed Consent Form

General Informed Consent Form
NSU Consent to be in a Research Study Entitled

Misunderstood: A Phenomenological Study on Lived Experiences of Black Millennial Student Affairs Professionals at PWIs

Who is doing this research study?

College: Abraham S. Fischler College of Education and School of Criminal Justice

Principal Investigator: Emily P. Dixon, MA, BA

Faculty Advisor/Dissertation Chair: Sherilyn W. Poole, Ed.D

Site Information: East Carolina University, 1001 E. 5th Street, Greenville, NC 27858

Funding: Unfunded

What is this study about?

This is a research study, designed to test and create new ideas that other people can use. The purpose of this research study is to learn more about the experiences of Black (African American/African descended) individuals between the ages of 22 and 39 (Millennials) that are working in higher education; specifically, at a predominately white institution in an office/center that supports the co-curricular (outside of the classroom) development of students. The primary benefit of this study is to highlight the phenomenon of Black Millennial invisibility within discussion of the Millennial experience in society overall and within higher education as mentioned by Adams et al (2020), Allen et al (2020), Council et al (2020), and Wilson (2019). This study will also enhance discussions on generational diversity and lived experiences based on intersecting social and professional identities.

Why are you asking me to be in this research study?

You are being asked to be in this research study because you may self-identify as a Black/African American Millennial in student affairs at a Southern United States predominately white institution (PWI). You also hold a position no higher than Associate Director in a student affairs area and have held the position for at least six months. Because of this environment, you may have experienced different experiences (i.e., microaggressions, behavior, supervisory treatment, etc) and navigated differently in the higher education workplace at PWIs because of your race and/or your age group.

This study will include about 8-14 people.

What will I be doing if I agree to be in this research study?

While you are taking part in this research study, you will take 1 pre-study survey and 1 45–60-minute virtual session if you choose to participate beyond the survey.

Research Study Procedures - as a participant, this is what you will be doing:

- First, you will need to complete the brief demographic pre-interview survey. This should take you no more than 5-10 minutes and it is a one-time participation to determine eligibility and interest in the study.

- Once the survey is completed and permission is given, you will be contacted to schedule a 45-60 minute interview about your experiences as a Black Millennial, working as a student affairs professional, and working at a predominately white institution. These interviews will be recorded.
- After the transcript has reviewed by the researcher, the researcher will send to you for your review and to ask any additional questions, as necessary.
- The researcher will also send over a pseudonym for you to approve or change if necessary.
- At the end of the study, the researcher will send over a copy of the final report to you for your records.

Are there possible risks and discomforts to me?

This research study involves minimal risk to you. To the best of our knowledge, the things you will be doing have no more risk of harm than you would have in everyday life. One of the primary risks associated with this study is a potential loss of confidentiality because of the collection of personal information in both the pre-interview survey and the recorded interview. This risk is similar in nature to the use of social media to express personal opinions and viewpoints. Based on some of the questions we ask you, you may find them to be upsetting. If so, we can provide you materials to help with these feelings.

What happens if I do not want to be in this research study?

You have the right to leave this research study at any time or refuse to be in it. If you decide to leave or you do not want to be in the study anymore, you will not get any penalty or lose any services you have a right to get. If you choose to stop being in the study before it is over, any information about you that was collected **before** the date you leave the study will be kept in the research records for 36 months from the end of the study and may be used as a part of the research.

What if there is new information learned during the study that may affect my decision to remain in the study?

If significant new information relating to the study becomes available, which may relate to whether you want to remain in this study, this information will be given to you by the investigators. You may be asked to sign a new Informed Consent Form if the information is given to you after you have joined the study.

Are there any benefits for taking part in this research study?

There are no direct benefits from being in this research study. We hope the information learned from this study will help to raise awareness of the experiences lived by Black Millennials working in student affairs divisions at PWIs, add to the current body of knowledge on Black Millennials overall, and to serve as an initial step for institutional change within higher education. Although this study is taking place at one institution, this study could be replicated and used to identify changes needed at other institutions.

Will I be paid or be given compensation for being in the study?

You will not be given any payments or compensation for being in this research study.

Will it cost me anything?

There are no costs to you for being in this research study.

Ask the researchers if you have any questions about what it will cost you to take part in this research study (for example bills, fees, or other costs related to the research).

How will you keep my information private?

Information we learn about you in this research study will be handled in a confidential manner, within the limits of the law and will be limited to people who have a need to review this information. To ensure your privacy, the researcher will not ask for any more information besides what is given in the survey unless the participant decides to move forward to be interviewed. All participants interviewed will be assigned a pseudonym to each participant and the researcher will communicate the pseudonym for their record keeping. You do have the option to change the pseudonym if the suggested is not preferred. This data will be available to the researcher, the Institutional Review Board, and other representatives of this institution, and any regulatory and granting agencies (if applicable). If we publish the results of the study in a scientific journal or book, we will not identify you. All confidential data will be kept securely on the private laptop and external hard drive of the researcher in her home. If printed, the information will be electronically scanned, and all physical copies will be locked in the researcher's desk. All data will be kept for 36 months from the end of the study and destroyed after that time by a mass deletion and/or shred if necessary.

Will there be any Audio or Video Recording?

This research study involves audio and/or video recording. This recording will be available to the researcher, the Institutional Review Board, and other representatives of this institution, and any of the people who gave the researcher money to do the study (if applicable). The recording will be kept, stored, and destroyed as stated in the section above. Because what is in the recording could be used to find out that it is you, it is not possible to be sure that the recording will always be kept confidential. The researcher will try to keep anyone not working on the research from listening to or viewing the recording.

Whom can I contact if I have questions, concerns, comments, or complaints?

If you have questions now, feel free to ask us. If you have more questions about the research, your research rights, or have a research-related injury, please contact:

Primary contact:

Emily P. Dixon, MA can be reached at [redacted] or [redacted].

If primary is not available, contact: Sherilyn W. Poole can be reached at [redacted].

Research Participants Rights

For questions/concerns regarding your research rights, please contact:

Institutional Review Board
Nova Southeastern University
(954) 262-5369 / Toll Free: 1-866-499-0790
IRB@nova.edu

You may also visit the NSU IRB website at www.nova.edu/irb/information-for-research-participants for further information regarding your rights as a research participant.

Research Consent & Authorization Signature Section

Voluntary Participation - You are not required to participate in this study. In the event you do participate, you may leave this research study at any time. If you leave this research study before it is completed, there will be no penalty to you, and you will not lose any benefits to which you are entitled.

If you agree to participate in this research study, sign this section. You will be given a signed copy of this form to keep. You do not waive any of your legal rights by signing this form.

SIGN THIS FORM ONLY IF THE STATEMENTS LISTED BELOW ARE TRUE:

- You have read the above information.
- Your questions have been answered to your satisfaction about the research

Adult Signature Section

I have voluntarily decided to take part in this research study.

Printed Name of Participant

Signature of Participant

Date

Printed Name of Person Obtaining
Consent and Authorization

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent &
Authorization

Date

Appendix E
Interview Protocol

Interview Protocol Form

Date:

Location:

Interviewer:

Interviewee:

Assigned Pseudonym:

Release Form Received:

Introductory Script

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study today. My name is Emily Dixon, and I am a doctoral candidate at Nova Southeastern University and I am conducting my study for the fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership degree. Thank you for completing the initial questionnaire and this interview will take about 60 minutes and include questions regarding your experiences and perceptions as a Black Millennial student affairs professional working in a predominately white institution.

Please note, I will be taping the interview so I do not miss any comments and can be attentive to our conversation. I will also be taking my own written notes. Also, I assure you that the comments will remain confidential. For my report, your story will be assigned to a pseudonym.

Before we get started, please read this description of the study again.

Would you like to continue with this study?

**If participant decides to discontinue with the study, proceed to closing script.

Student Affairs/Higher Education Experience

Q1. What was your first professional position in higher education?

- If you have worked in other areas of higher education besides student affairs, how did you get started in student affairs?

Q2. How often do you feel biased or discriminated against professionally?

- Would you attribute this experience/experiences to being of different identities? (E.g., to being Black)
 - If yes, what happens in the organization that makes you feel this way?

Q3. How diverse do you feel the division of student affairs is?

- What attributes make it diverse or not diverse?

Q4. How important do you perceive your role is within student affairs?

- Do you feel appreciated/valued in this role?

Millennial Experience in the Workplace

Q1. How do you describe the Millennial generation?

- How would you describe the Black millennial generation?

Q2. What attributes and characteristics would you say define Millennials as unique in the higher education workplace?

- How about as a Black Millennial?

Q3. What motivates you professionally to work in student affairs

- What motivates you to want to remain long-term in student affairs?
- With this institution?

Q4. How often do you experience conflict with other generations in the workplace?

- Describe the experience/experiences.

Q5. What kind of supervisor/management style do you respond best to?

- How does this style response change based on the supervisor's social identities? For example, if you are Black and they are Black in comparison to if you are Black and they are white.

Q6. With leadership meaning your direct supervisor, how supportive is your leadership in professional development?

- Do you feel their support considers your social identities?

Q7. How supportive are they in your personal development? Please provide examples.

- Does this support consider your social identities?

Closing Script

Thank you for participating in this study. I appreciate you taking time out of your day to provide helpful comments. The findings from this study will hopefully help to innovate the field of higher education by providing some insight of the lived experiences of some of its employees. Once again, I would like to reiterate that your identity will be kept anonymous during this study and in all published and unpublished writings. Once I have viewed the transcript, I will send it back to you for your viewing to make sure the essence of the transcript is clear. Is there any other information regarding your experiences within this institution that would be helpful for me to know?

- If yes, ask to share and listen to the information.
- If no, thank for participating.