

Observations, Values, and Beliefs about Ethnic/Racial Diversity by
Members of Community College Faculty Search Committees

by

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A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

Approved November 2010 by the
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ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

December 2010

ABSTRACT

As open-door institutions, community colleges provide access to students from a wide range of backgrounds, experiences, and cultures. Yet while enrollment of students of color in community colleges continues to increase, representation by faculty of color has not. This qualitative study investigated community college faculty search committee members' implicit and subjective observations, values, and beliefs about ethnic/racial diversity in order to gain an understanding of how they may influence the faculty hiring process. The researcher interviewed 12 subjects—administrators and faculty members at three community colleges in a large district in the southwest region of the United States—who served on faculty search committees from 2006-2009.

Findings revealed three major themes: (a) the communication of diversity; (b) search committee dynamics with the sub-themes of role of the chair, role of administration, and the issue of time; and (c) subjects' observations, values, and beliefs, with the sub-themes of conflict, the idea of a "good fit," colorblindness, self-perception of having attained enlightenment about diversity, and the blaming of applicant pools. Discussion of the results was facilitated by utilizing three critical race theory constructs: (a) the pervasiveness of racism as ordinary and normal, (b) the use of Whiteness as the normative standard, and (c) the rejection of liberalism. The findings support the literature's assertion that colleges and faculty search committees can publically claim to value diversity but

engage in practices that are incongruent with such claims. Despite the best institutional rhetoric on faculty diversity, failure to address search committee members' values, beliefs, and behaviors will result in little change.

Communication and effective leadership can help increase faculty of color representation at community colleges. Communication about the relevance and practical application of diversity should be strong and consistent. Additionally, search committee definitions of "qualified" need to be challenged specific to members' colorblindness and beliefs in the effectiveness of meritocracy. Moreover, leadership is needed to advocate and hold people responsible and accountable for inclusive practices. Critical race theory served as a useful theoretical framework to identify the obstacles and analyze policies and power structures that facilitate underrepresentation of faculty of color in community colleges.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my family—the one I was born into and the one I have helped create. To my family of origin, nothing instills security and confidence as much as growing up in a family environment of unconditional love. My parents, James and Janice Fujii, and my sister, Valarie, created that environment for me when I was small and continue to extend unconditional love to me as an adult. When your family members tell you that you can do anything, you believe them. And so I share this major accomplishment with them. Look, Mommy, Daddy, and Stinky, now I am a Phid!

Second, I dedicate this research to the amazing family I have created with my husband, Brad Golich. Brad's constant support, despite the craziness this work has caused, is truly amazing. His support exemplifies the incredible love and respect he has always given to me. I could not have accomplished the doctorate without him. He is my density [sic]. To my children, Jimmy and Lilly, you both are way smarter and more capable than me. Maybe by seeing Mom do this, you will know that we are never too old to grow and learn.

And I dedicate this work to God. There were times when I did not know how I was going to do this. Yet because of God's continual presence and guidance in my life, the road blocks and doubts disappeared. "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Philippians 4:13).

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to express my utmost appreciation to the study participants who graciously shared their insights and experiences. While at times I was surprised by their comments, these are good people who care. Without their willingness to assist me, this study would not have been possible.

I wish to express my sincerest appreciation for the support of my committee members who made what is often described as a harrowing and excruciatingly difficult process, relatively painless and, at times, even pleasant. To Dr. Alfredo G. de los Santos Jr., I cannot begin to express how indebted I am to you for your constant guidance and attention to my work. Gracias. To Dr. Caroline Turner, your encouragement and belief in me and my work provided great reassurance during the rocky moments. And, to Dr. Maria Harper-Marinick, I am amazed that no matter how busy you were, you always made the time to share your wisdom, your experience, and your intellect. Your support and mentorship mean so much to me.

I would be remiss if I did not thank all the people who helped me along this journey. To Rey R., for providing me with information about ASU and his own journey in pursuit and attainment of the doctorate. To Laura B., without whom I never would have been able to make the application to the Ph.D. program. To Laura D., whose cookies and counseling provided significant comfort. To Eric L., whose skills as an

English teacher and writing coach were put to considerable use, far too many times to count. To Tanisha JM, I think I figured out the “what” and “whys.” To my pal, Al, you are the consummate professor and even after so many years, you still get how I think and know how to get me where I need to go. To Bertha, for the treats and pep talks as I was preparing for the defense. And, to Ernie L., thank you for believing in me through all my rants and raves. I have been blessed to have such incredible people, both personally and professionally, to support me through this process. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter provides an introduction to the study. Background information that informs the statement of the problem is provided. The purpose of the study is stated and the significance of such is provided. The theoretical framework is described, and the research questions guiding the study are listed. Assumptions and limitations are identified, the methodology is described, and key terms relative to the study are defined. Lastly, a summary and overview of the organization of the study conclude the chapter.

Background

The community college is a uniquely American institution representative of democracy in mission and function. As open-door institutions, community colleges provide access to all, attracting and enrolling students from a wide range of backgrounds, experiences, and cultures. However, while enrollments of community college students of color continue to increase, the representation by faculty of color in the community college has not increased (Carter, 1994; Moody, 2004; Moreno, Smith, Peterson, Parker, & Teraguchi, 2006; Smith, Turner, Osei-Kofi, & Richards, 2004).

According to the American Association of Community Colleges (2008a), community colleges enroll 46% of all undergraduate students in the United States. Community college students constitute 55% of Native American/Indian, 46% of Asian/Pacific Islander, 46% of African American,

and 55% of Hispanic undergraduate students in American colleges and universities. Nonetheless, as the student populations have become more diverse, the faculty has not (Moody, 2004; Moreno et al., 2006; Smith, et al., 2004; Turner, Gonzales, & Wood, 2008). Table 1 illustrates that 83% of community college faculty are White in contrast to a 65% White student body.

Table 1

U.S. Community College Demographics

US Community Colleges	White	African American	Hispanic	Asian American	Native American	Non- resident
Full-time Faculty	83%	7%	5%	4%	1%	1%
Total Students	65%	13%	15%	6%	1%	N/A

Source: American Association of Community Colleges (2008a, 2008b).

Carter reported on the status of faculty in 1994:

Although most colleges and universities espouse the goal of increasing the number of minority faculty on campus, employment growth among faculty of color has been uneven at best, and overall minority representation remains relatively small on most predominantly white campuses. (p. 3)

Yet, after a decade, little has changed. Smith et al. described the reality in

2004:

While fueled by numerous arguments related to the increasing diversity of their student body and the need to prepare all students for a diverse society, the reality is that perhaps the least successful of all diversity initiatives on campuses are those in the area of faculty diversity. (p. 133)

Statement of the Problem

Community colleges have been described as “the greatest egalitarian force in twentieth century society” (Nichols & Oliver, 1994, p. 37). Due to the low cost of tuition, convenience of location, and availability of courses, community colleges serve as “the access point for minority students seeking a college education” (Bower, 2002, p. 79). Community colleges enroll and teach the most ethnically diverse students among all higher education institutions, but these colleges fail to mirror that student diversity in the faculty. Thus, while many institutions state diversity as an institutional value and seek to foster inclusiveness, evidence indicates that the actualization of these goals falls short of expectations (Moreno et al., 2006; Morfin, Perez, Parker, Lynn, & Arrona, 2006; Opp & Smith, 1994; Owens, Reis, & Hall, 1994; Smith et al., 2004; Turner et al., 2008). Institutions’ inability to hire faculty of color representative of the student body is both an “educational and political problem” (Kayes, 2006, p. 65).

Faculty of color representation is important in the community college because these instructors’ presence results in increased opportunity for institutions to be more responsive to the access issues and academic needs of students of color (Carter, 1994; Fox, 2005; Hagerdorn, Chi, Cepeda, & McLain, 2007; Kirkpatrick, 2001; Laden, 2004; Opp, 2001). If community colleges are committed to the achievement of students of color and research demonstrates that faculty of color can aid in helping those students succeed, it is imperative that institutions gain

greater understanding of why current hiring practices for minority faculty fail to yield increased representation despite claims of inclusion.

Purpose of the Study

This study is a qualitative investigation of the observations, values, and beliefs about ethnic/racial diversity held by community college faculty search committee members. Search committees screen, select, and recommend prospective candidates. In this role, search committees have immediate influence and power in the decision making process. A study of committee members' observations, values, and beliefs about ethnic/racial diversity can provide greater awareness, understanding, and insight into the issues and efforts to diversify the faculty.

Rather than examine policy, this study investigates the implicit, subjective nature of how individual values and beliefs about diversity may influence the hiring process for community college faculty. In higher education, diversity is proclaimed to be of great importance and is explicitly and publically affirmed. Yet, the practices and behaviors are not congruent with these claims, evidencing inconsistency between the stated value of inclusiveness and the practices of exclusiveness. Rather than exploring how the phenomenon of diversity is stated by the institution, this study will focus on how diversity is defined, experienced, and observed by participants on faculty search committees. Exploration and analysis of diversity and search committee dynamics can yield valuable information into the issues and challenges in hiring more faculty of color.

Significance of the Study

There are a variety of reasons why this study is important. First, research shows that community college students of color are more likely to achieve and persist on campuses with a higher percentage of faculty of color with whom they connect (Hagerdorn et al., 2007; Laden, 1999; Owens et al., 1994). If community colleges desire to improve and positively influence the achievement and success of underrepresented students, it is imperative to their mission that practices be as inclusive as possible to achieve that outcome (Carter, 1994; Opp & Poplin-Gossetti, 2002).

Second, there is a significant lack of research about community college faculty search committees specific to diversity and faculty of color. A majority of the research about diversifying the faculty in higher education focuses on four-year colleges and universities with very little investigation of community colleges (Smith et al., 2004; Turner, Garcia, Nora, & Rendon, 1996; Turner et al., 2008). In their extensive review of 20 years of literature, Turner et al. (2008) conclude that "more work examining faculty of color within community college... environment needs to be conducted" (p. 157). Only 19 of the 252 articles they located for their paper focused on faculty of color within community college settings (Turner et al., 2008). Research on community colleges is not pursued nor published at the volume of four-year colleges and universities.

Existing articles on community college faculty of color are few (Lewis & Middleton, 2003; Twombly & Townsend, 2008). Less is found in the literature on hiring processes and practices of community college faculty specific to diversity. Only two articles (Flannigan, Jones, & Moore, 2004; Twombly, 2005) published in the past 15 years could be identified that addressed community college faculty hiring practices, and only one of those articles discussed diversity of prospective candidates (Flannigan et al., 2004). In their attempts to review the literature on community college faculty hiring, Flannigan et al. (2004) found that “although there is vast discipline associated with hiring practices in general, especially related to business and human resource management, there was little specifically related to the hiring process in the community college” (p. 826).

It is difficult to increase the representation of faculty of color in the community college because so little is known and documented about the issue. This study contributes to the literature by creating greater awareness and understanding of the issues and challenges in trying to increase representation of faculty of color in community colleges.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework undergirding this study is critical race theory (CRT). Critical race theory has its roots in legal studies, but it has emerged as a field of inquiry inclusive of many academic fields and movements (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Lynn & Parker, 2006). It is a sociological theory that examines and

analyzes policy and practices through the relationships of race, power, and politics. Three major tenets of CRT are applied to this study: (a) the pervasiveness of racism as ordinary and normal, (b) the use of Whiteness as the normative standard, and (c) the rejection of liberalism's belief in colorblindness and the "neutral principles of constitutional law" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p. 21).

To best understand issues of diversity in higher education, one must recognize that the "pluralism of the United States originated from a system of conquest, slavery, exploitation of foreign labor creating a negative environment for the preservation of racial difference" (Turner et al., 1996, p. xix). Utilizing a CRT framework, one must consider the historical and social state during the time higher education and its policies were established. Harper, Patton, and Wooden (2009) explained, "from its inception, the United States was founded on racist principles that have permeated the systems upon which this country functions; education is no exception" (p. 403). Critical race theory recognizes America's history as one rooted in racism, and this recognition serves as a foundational claim and rationale for explaining present-day policies and practices of privilege.

Critical race theory provides a full picture of the prevalence of racism and how it is embedded implicitly throughout organizations. The theory shifts focus from individual racism to institutional racism. If higher education is a product of society, one can assume it, too, reflects the ideology and assumptions of racism as well. As Harvey (1996) explained:

The world of academe does not operate in a vacuum. The values of the larger society—including the pernicious malady of racism—are found on colleges and university campuses, and are practiced by the individuals who study and work there. (p. 349)

Search committees do not operate in isolation; rather they act as an extension of a larger organization—the institution—and are equally susceptible to the influences of society. Critical race theory allows for the investigation of how societal norms influence educational processes and practices to serve the needs and will of the majority. As the theoretical framework for this study, CRT is used to examine how the power and politics of racism influence community college faculty hiring processes and practices specific to search committees and the value of diversity held among their members.

Research Questions

The goal of this research is to gain an in-depth understanding of search committee members' values and beliefs about ethnic/racial diversity and their observations and reactions to it in the faculty search process. Institutional policy statements professing efforts regarding diversifying of the faculty are to be commended, but policy is only as effective as the personnel implementing and adhering to it. As Valadez (1994) explained, "The culture of an educational institution is reflected in the values, traditions, rituals, and the system of beliefs of the faculty, staff, and students" (p. 81). Three research questions provided guidance for this study:

1. Are values and beliefs about ethnic/racial diversity commitment communicated to faculty search committees?
2. What observations do subjects have about their peers and college's values and beliefs about diversity?
3. What influence do values and beliefs have on the search committees and, if any, when is this influence evidenced in the selection process?

Assumptions and Limitations

As a student of critical race theory and one who has spent nearly 20 years working in higher education as a diversity advocate, the researcher questions higher education's claims of diversity and inclusiveness as a value when she observes the lack of faculty of color on college campuses. Faculty search committees operate in a system that has a great deal of politics and power often fueled by strong personalities. As this study's researcher, she has identified the following assumptions related to this study:

1. Search committees do not operate in isolation and thus are influenced by the personalities, values, and beliefs of their members.
2. Search committee members bring with them a set of values and beliefs about ethnic/racial diversity that may or may not be explicitly expressed in the search committee.

3. Institutional racism exists and is perpetuated in institutional policies and practices. Personnel have varying degrees of awareness and acknowledgement of institutional racism and its perpetuation of Whiteness as the normative standard in the review and selection of prospective faculty candidates.
4. Critical race theory's "skepticism toward dominant legal claims of neutrality, objectivity, colorblindness and meritocracy" (Lynn & Parker, 2006, p. 261) can aid in understanding faculty search committee members' values and beliefs about ethnic/racial diversity.

This study utilized a qualitative methodology to examine community college faculty search committee members' observations, values, and beliefs about diversity. The data collected are of a subjective nature; participants were asked to self report, relying on memory. The research design provides information and findings that are not generalizable. It is important to acknowledge the possibility of the researcher's influence on the study. As a biracial Japanese-American woman and the one conducting the study, the researcher's ethnicity and familiarity with the research site could have unintentionally influenced the study subjects' participation and responses to the interview questions.

Definitions of Key Terms

Several key terms relevant to this study are defined in this section.

Administrator. Administrators are college personnel employed full-time as either a Dean and/or Vice President of Academic Affairs.

Anglo/White. The terms Anglo and White are used interchangeably to refer to people residing in the United States of Western European descent.

Diversity. Diversity is used as a general term to refer to the cultures of underrepresented ethnic/racial minorities in the United States, such as those of African American, Hispanic, Asian/ Pacific Islander American, and Native/American Indian descent.

Ethnic/racial. This term refers to the cultures of underrepresented people in the United States, such as African American, Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander American, and Native/American Indian descent (de los Santos, 1994, Turner, 2002).

Faculty. In this study, faculty refers to full-time, tenure-track faculty.

Minority. The term minority refers to people residing in the United States who are of African American, Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander American, and Native/American Indian descent.

People of color. People of color refers to people residing in the United States of African American, Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander American, and Native/American Indian descent.

Search committee. A search committee is a collective group of individuals, a majority of whom are faculty, who review and evaluate prospective candidates for full-time, tenure-track faculty positions.

Summary and Organization of the Study

Education serves as an equalizer among citizens, allowing for greater access to economic opportunities and success. As open-door institutions facilitating access and equity, community colleges provide education to very diverse student populations. Yet, despite the increased enrollments by students of color, community colleges have failed to increase the representation of faculty of color. Though many institutions state that diversity is a value and seek to foster inclusiveness, the evidence suggests that actualization of such practices falls short of expectations. This is particularly disturbing considering that “an important function of the democratic process is that the institutions and programs responsible for preparing our future leaders reflect the diversity and talent of our nation” (Morfin et al., 2006, p. 250).

This study is a qualitative investigation of the observations, values, and beliefs about ethnic/racial diversity held by community college faculty search committee members. The researcher is interested in search committee dynamics and the members’ observations of diversity as experienced in the confines of the committee process. Little research exists on the topic. This study can make a meaningful contribution to the

literature and aid future researchers and practitioners in understanding and addressing issues related to increasing the representation of faculty of color in the community college.

The study follows a five-chapter organization. Chapter one introduces the study, and chapter two reviews the literature on critical race theory and its application to higher education as well as the limited research on community college faculty search committees. Due to the lack of literature on community college faculty search committees and the hiring process, the literature review includes related research in the areas of community college faculty diversity. Chapter three outlines the study's qualitative methodology, describing data collection and analysis processes. Chapter four presents the results and findings, identifying major themes in the data. Chapter five provides a discussion of the results specific to the study's research questions and makes recommendations for future implications and practice.

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

This chapter provides a review of the literature on community college faculty search committees and hiring practices related to diversity. Although there is significant research relative to faculty diversity in higher education, this study focuses specifically on community colleges. Therefore, literature concerning institutional practices and processes of four-year universities is intentionally omitted. Because there is a lack of research on the topic, this chapter addresses the broader issues in the literature about faculty diversity in community colleges. The chapter begins with an overview of critical race theory (CRT), the theoretical framework for the dissertation study, and then addresses more general issues of the underrepresentation of community college faculty of color. Lastly, the chapter concludes with an exploration of research specific to the community college faculty hiring process.

Critical Race Theory

Critical race theory has its roots in legal studies. However, CRT has evolved to be interdisciplinary in nature, drawing from numerous academic fields and movements (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Lynn & Parker, 2006). It is a theory that can be applied to any social structure for the purposes of examining and analyzing policy through the relationships of race, power, and privilege. “Critical Race Theory aims to challenge conventional accounts of educational and other institutions and the social processes that occur

within them” (Powers, 2007, p.151). As a theoretical framework, CRT is an analytical tool for examining inequity as well as a call to social action. “It not only tries to understand our social situation, but to change it, sets out not only to ascertain how society organizes itself along racial lines and hierarchies, but to transform it for the better” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p. 3).

Extensive written material on CRT is available in the literature. For the purposes of this chapter, the research literature reviewed is specific to CRT’s application to education. Critical race theory is a relevant paradigm for analyzing the use of power and its relationship to racism in the policies, processes, and practices in higher education (Iverson, 2007; Morfin et al., 2006; Smith, Yosso, & Solorzano, 2007). Smith et al. (2007) described CRT’s usefulness in higher education as a tool more researchers are utilizing with greater “scholarly interest” in helping “educators understand how race and racism shape the educational pipeline” (p. 562).

In their analysis of critical race studies in education, Lynn and Parker (2006) identified three “distinct claims that give shape and emphasis” to critical race theory as a “political scholarly movement” (p. 259):

1. Racism has been a normal daily fact of life in society and the ideology and assumptions of racism are ingrained in the political and legal structures as to be almost unrecognizable.
2. As a form of oppositional scholarship, CRT challenges the experience of White European Americans as the normative standard.

3. Critical race theory attacks liberalism and the inherent belief in the law to create an equitable society. (Lynn & Parker, 2006, p. 260)

Racism. A major claim of critical race theory is the belief that racism is inherent and common place in American society (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Iverson, 2007; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Lynn & Parker, 2006; Morfin et al., 2006). This claim is more than a mere recognition of racism; rather it envelopes the awareness of society's creation of and investment in it. Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) maintained that race is "a significant factor in determining inequity in the United States" (p. 48). The reality of racism is acknowledged as the "usual way society does business, the common, every day experience of most people of color in this country" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p. 7).

This reality does not represent an acceptance of racism; rather critical race theory recognizes the omnipresence and pervasiveness of racism throughout society. Drawing on the work of earlier scholars, Morfin, et al., (2006) explained: "In general, Critical Race Theory views racism as a normal fact of life in society and the ideology and assumptions of racism are so ingrained in the political and legal constructs as to be almost unrecognizable" (p. 251). Time and energy is not exerted in arguing the existence of racism; rather it is acknowledged for the purposes of analyzing and addressing how power and privilege are used and protected.

Whiteness. “Race and races are the products of social thought and relations. Not objective, inherent, or fixed, they correspond to no biological or genetic reality; rather, races are categories that society invents, manipulates, or retires when convenient” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p. 7). This definition does not present racial identity as defined by the individual, but rather views it as a category assigned by society. Whiteness is a social and political construct, which serves to separate and label people of color as inferior (Lynn & Parker, 2006; Perez Huber, Benavides, Malagon, Velez, & Solorzano, 2008). The concept of Whiteness is a strategic tool for maintaining and controlling power and privilege, as Delgado and Stefancic (2001) explained:

The legal definition of whiteness took shape in the context of immigration law, as courts decided who was to have the privilege of living in the United States. As many ordinary citizens did, judges defined the white race in opposition to blackness or some other form of otherness. Whiteness, thus, was defined in opposition to nonwhite, an opposition that also marked a boundary between privilege and its opposite. Only those deemed white were worthy of entry into our community. (p. 77)

Drawing on the work of Haney Lopez (1996), Lynn and Parker (2006) explained that “whiteness has historically stood not only for members of the white race but for a set of concepts and privileges associated with it while Black has been defined by the legal denial of those privileges” (p. 263). A legal and political tactic of discrimination, Whiteness affords a set of unearned privileges to those who possess it,

and denial of the same privileges to others who do not. But, the recognition of Whiteness does not mean one must complacently accept it as a practice. Critical race theory employs the concept of Whiteness as “an effective tool in terms of articulating the nuances of racism in a legal theoretical sense, particularly in terms of formal and informal barriers to job entry, law school admissions, etc.” and “articulate(s) the conception of race that is operationalized as social construction at the larger level of institutional entry” (Lynn & Parker, 2006, p. 263).

In her critical race theory analysis of higher education policy discourses on diversity, Iverson (2007) found deficit-based beliefs about people of color, describing them as being disadvantaged prior to entrance to the college community and remaining so as members of the community in terms of non-promotion, non-advancement, and non-tenure. She used CRT to challenge the “use of a White, male majority experience as criteria against which to measure the progress and success of people of color” (p. 594).

Rejection of liberalism and colorblindness. Critical race theory is a rebuff to the civil rights tradition of liberalism. While liberalism advocates a colorblind view of policies, believing that laws are objective and race neutral, CRT's critique of it maintains that such objectivity and neutrality do not exist nor are possible (Lynn & Parker, 2006). Liberalism fails to account for the personal, social, and historical influences on the

legal system. Laws are not created nor adjudicated in a vacuum, absent of people.

People claim to desire equality in policies, but inequities of practice exist. The current system of liberalism is one of contradictions, which “applauds affording everyone equality of opportunity, but resists programs that assure equality of results. Moreover, rights are almost always cut back when they conflict with the interests of the powerful” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p. 23). An example of how this contradiction between equality versus inequity exists can be found in higher education’s diversity policies as described by Iverson (2007):

Equality as a concept has been the cornerstone of democracy, yet this concept has been contested throughout history and this struggle is evident in diversity action plans...CRT illuminates the ways in which the permanence of racism in institutional practices, such as affirmative action, privileges White and Whiteness and sustains exclusionary procedures. (p. 602)

This is not a dismissal of the accomplishments of the civil rights movement, but a critique of it as a strategy to protect current and further future rights. Critical race theory is distinguishable from the civil rights perspective because it “questions the very foundations of liberal order, including equality, legal reasoning, enlightenment rationalism, and neutral principles of constitutional law” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001 p. 3).

Whiteness is “masked by notions of individualism, meritocracy, and colorblindness” (Perez Huber et al., 2008). Colorblindness ascribes to the belief that racial fairness is achieved by disregarding race/ethnicity, and

thus it minimizes the pervasiveness and subtleties of racism. A claim of colorblindness serves as a tactic to reject Whiteness and deny the power and privilege that accompanies it. “It creates a lens through which the existence of race can be denied and the privileges of Whiteness can be maintained without any personal accountability” (Harper & Patton, 2007, p. 3).

The defiance of difference allows people to avoid the reality of racism in society, “to avoid confronting the racial realities that surrounded them, to avoid facing their own racist presumptions and understandings, and to avoid dealing with racist events (by deracializing them)” (Lewis, 2007, p. 35). Liberalism’s professing that race does not matter dismisses the unique experiences of people of color. Its insistence of neutrality, meritocracy, and colorblindness serves as a strategy for ignoring privilege, marginalizing people of color, and absolving society from addressing racist practices.

Building upon Crenshaw’s argument (1997) of the detriment of colorblindness, Lewis (2007) explained:

In its assertion that race does not matter, colorblind ideology attempts to mask the power of race as it simultaneously demonstrates precisely the difference race does make (that is, when one asserts that one does not pay attention to race, the implication is that to notice it would have deleterious outcomes). (p. 34)

Power and politics. The critical race theory claims of addressing the pervasiveness of racism as ordinary and normal, the use of Whiteness

as the normative standard, and the rejection of liberalism have relevancy and application in higher education and its policy and practices related to diversity. Critical race theorists believe that “legal racial designations have complex, historical and socially constructed meanings that insure the political superiority of racially marginalized groups” (Lynn & Parker, 2006, p. 260). Writing about the contempt for African American men and critical race accountability in education, Smith et al. (2007) explained how CRT “exposes the facade of colorblindness by identifying, examining, and challenging negative campus racial and gender climates in postsecondary educational contexts” (p. 562).

Winston Churchill is attributed with having said, “History is written by the victors.” This quote reflects how history is not necessarily an accurate representation of the times, but rather it is created and influenced by the people in power. And, the people in power have been exclusively White men. Thus, the history and the laws created within it have been constructed by White men using White patriarchy as the norm. Writing about White privilege and racism in higher education, Colin (2010) cited his earlier work (Colin & Preciphs, 1991), explaining that “(1) racism permeates the roots of American society and is reflected in all its societal institutions, and that (2) racism was created by White Americans and is perpetuated by them” (p. 62).

Reviewing affirmative action policy in higher education through critical race theory, Morfin et al. (2006) referenced the work of Yosso, Parker, Solorzano, and Lynn (2005) and their conclusions:

From a CRT perspective, what we are witnessing is the conservative legal groups' political emphasis on colorblind interpretation of civil rights law as a strong movement driven to dismantle an array of outreach and recruitment efforts. This, in turn, will create a host of new legal and political challenges for groups. CRT should be one of many intellectual tools used to aggressively counter this trend on behalf of fighting racial discrimination, both overt and institutional. (p. 265)

Lack of Community College Research

Review of the literature for this study focused on research of community college faculty search committees and hiring practices, specifically efforts to be inclusive of prospective candidates of color. It is important to note that the literature review in this chapter concentrated on community colleges as a whole. The review did not seek to identify institutions that sought or targeted specific student populations, such as tribal colleges, Hispanic-serving institutions (HSIs) or historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs). Although these types of community colleges were not the focus of this research, they were not excluded. In researching the existing literature, institutional types were identified according to the descriptors of "community college" and "two-year college."

Articles were searched using the following research databases: Academic Search Primer/EBSCO host, ERIC (via CSA Illumina) and

Education Full Text/Wilson. Of the research literature found relevant to community college faculty and diversity, a majority were published by the *Community College of Journal of Research & Practice* (10 articles) and *New Directions for Community Colleges* (13 articles). Two articles were also found in the *Journal of Higher Education*. The researcher was unable to identify relevant articles specifically identifying community college faculty and diversity in *Research in Higher Education* or *Review of Higher Education*.

The researcher discovered a lack of research about community colleges. Among existing publications, less was found about community college faculty, and when combined with the keyword “diversity,” the research field decreased significantly. Within the literature about community college faculty specific to diversity, little was found addressing hiring practices and processes. This phenomenon—lack of research on the hiring processes and practices of community college faculty specific to diversity—is one noted by other researchers interested in the topic (Flannigan et al., 2004; Isaac & Boyer, 2007; Perna, 2003; Twombly, 2005).

Moreover, there is very little research in general about the experiences and the diversity of community colleges faculty, and much less exists about the practices and processes used to recruit, hire, and retain them (Lewis & Middleton, 2003; Opp & Poplin-Gosetti, 2002). In researching the literature about African Americans in community colleges,

Lewis and Middleton (2003) reviewed articles from a 10-year period (1990-2000) in the *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*. They found only 11 articles that focused on African American populations. Of the 11 articles, only two addressed faculty issues.

Twombly and Townsend (2008) reviewed literature on community college faculty published in the last 20 years in peer reviewed articles, chapters, and books. They discovered only 86 articles out of 777 (11%) about faculty in community college specific journals (*Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, *Community College Review*, and *Journal of Applied Research in Community Colleges*). In the three general higher education journals (*Journal of Higher Education*, *Research in Higher Education*, and *Review of Higher Education*), they found 30 articles addressing issues of community colleges, but only three (14%) were about community college faculty (Twombly & Townsend, 2008).

They concluded that, "What is intriguing about the neglect of community college faculty members in the research literature and the lack of respect they often receive is that their numbers alone suggest they should at least merit attention" (Townsend & Twombly, 2008). Using data from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System "Fall Enrollment Survey" and the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics 2004 National Study of Postsecondary Faculty, Provasnik and Planty (2008) identified that over six million

students in the United States attend public community colleges, being taught by approximately 62,000 faculty of color.

As an institutional research site, the community college is not as prevalent in the literature as traditional four-year college and university sites. While a variety of publications exist for higher education research such as the *Journal of Higher Education*, *Research in Higher Education*, and the *Review of Higher Education*, a majority of the articles published are interested in the practices, processes, and issues of university and four-year institutions. These publications may not purposely exclude community college research; rather the editors are affiliated with universities, interested in university research, and thus support research about the institutions of which they are products of and upon which their employment is dependent.

Twombly and Townsend (2008) attributed the lack of research in the literature to differences in roles and responsibilities between community college faculty and university faculty:

There are several possible reasons for the relative lack of attention to community college faculty members. One may be that research designed for publication is primarily conducted by individuals at research universities as part of their quest for tenure, promotion, or merit pay. Those who write about higher education issues and constituents tend to focus on the world they know—the research university—and not on the world they may never have experienced—the community college. (p. 8)

A majority of the research about diversifying the faculty in higher education focuses on four-year colleges and universities (Smith et al.,

2004; Turner et al., 1996; Turner et al., 2008). Turner, et al. (1996) noted the lack of literature about community college faculty of color in their ASHE reader, *Racial and Ethnic Diversity in Higher Education*. Over a decade later, very little new research has emerged. Turner et al. (2008) conducted a review of two decades (1988-2007) of literature about faculty of color in higher education. In their review, they found 300 authors from 252 publications addressing the status and issues of minority faculty in academe. Their review was not limited to four-year colleges and universities and was inclusive of community colleges. They identified a number of themes throughout the literature that are shared among community colleges and four-year colleges and universities, which are included in this chapter specific to its research area. Yet, in the wealth of existing research reviewed by Turner et al. (2008), they observed the literature's "focus of faculty of color within public four-year university settings" and noted the need for more research "examining faculty of color within community college[s]" (p. 156).

University-level research is not to be discounted nor dismissed. There is some validity and relevance for community college practice, but there are also considerable limitations. Because there is a lack of research about community colleges and their hiring practices, some may presuppose that they are the same as universities. Twombly (2005) explained:

In the absence of information about the dynamics of the hiring process in community colleges, the tendency is to assume that the processes (e.g., where and how jobs are advertised) and norms guiding selection of faculty are similar to those of other types of colleges and universities. However, such assumptions may not be accurate. (pp. 426-427)

The practices of community colleges and universities are different because the institutions are different. The community college is not the same type of institution as the traditional four-year college or university. Differences in structure, mission, and student demographics all result in a very different type of job description (roles and responsibility) for faculty (Clark, 1987; Flannigan et al., 2004; Perna, 2003; Provasnik & Planty, 2008; Twombly, 2005).

Unlike university faculty for whom teaching is but one part of their responsibilities, a community college faculty member's primary job responsibility is to teach (Provasnik & Planty, 2008). The work is different depending upon where (whether community college or university) a faculty member is employed. Each institution requires different skills, abilities, and experiences specific to the expectations of the work to be done. "If the academic market is segmented based on primary task (teaching or research), the definition of quality faculty in community colleges and the norms guiding their selection should be different from those used in universities that value research" (Twombly, 2005, p. 425).

The educational degree requirements for community college faculty are among the differences. A doctoral degree, preferably a doctorate in

philosophy (Ph.D.), is required for most university positions, whereas it is not required for community college positions. The minimum credential necessary is often a master's degree and/or 18 graduate hours in the discipline (Harvey, 1994; Twombly, 2005).

Significant difference also exists in the teaching load of community college faculty as compared to four-year college and university faculty. Full-time community college faculty typically teach four to five (three to four credits/course) introductory (100-200 level courses) serving 20-30 students per class per semester. As Cohen and Brawer (2008) explained, "instruction is stubbornly labor intensive" (p. 410).

The emphasis on teaching and learning makes the role of the community college faculty integral to the institution (Owens et al., 1994). As result, community college faculty members are a significant institutional investment (Sprouse, Ebbers, & King, 2008). Estimated institutional costs spanning the career of one community college faculty member are between one to three million dollars (Hammons, 2003). This considerable expense warrants the need for community colleges to pay attention to their faculty hiring processes (Ebbers, Wild, & Friedel, 2003; Flannigan et al., 2004; Sprouse et al., 2008).

The literature relevant to community college faculty and diversity references issues of lack of representation of faculty of color and the benefits of a diverse college community. In the limited research addressing community college faculty hiring processes specific to

diversity, the issues addressed include those related to search committees, attitudes and assumptions in the hiring process, and observations and recommendations about inclusive practices. The themes of personal experience observations, attitudes, and assumptions are important and relevant because of this dissertation's qualitative focus on the attitudes, beliefs, and assumptions of diversity held by faculty search committee members. The remainder of this chapter will explore issues in the literature specific to community college faculty and diversity as well as the faculty hiring process.

Community College Faculty and Diversity

As noted in chapter one, community colleges enroll a greater percentage of students of color than any other type of higher education institution. Nonetheless, the representation of faculty of color in comparison to the student population is disproportionately low. Therefore, it is appropriate to consider the underrepresentation of faculty of color as well as the benefits of diversity at community colleges.

Underrepresentation of community college faculty of color.

Numerous researchers note the discrepancies between a diverse and heterogeneous student body and a homogeneous, monocultural faculty. Although minority student enrollment has increased at community colleges, faculty demographics have failed to mirror the rich diversity in the student body (Bower, 2002; Carter, 1994; Chapman, 2001; de los Santos, 1994; Isaac & Boyer, 2007; Jackson & Phelps, 2004; Lewis &

Middleton, 2003; Miller, 1997; Opp & Poplin-Gosetti 2002; Perna, 2003; Townsend & Twombly, 2007; Twombly & Townsend, 2008). Nicholas and Oliver (1994) asserted:

Despite all the rhetoric, elaborately written plans, data, shelves full of documents, and despite all the protestations of Board of Trustees, educational leaders and government officials, the reality is that little progress has occurred for most minorities and women since the mid-1970s. (p. 36)

Furthermore, these researchers explained that while the number of people of color hired and working in community colleges has increased, “it is roughly proportional to the number of new positions in higher education over the same period” (p. 36).

The lack of faculty of color in the community college is particularly “surprising and disappointing” (Townsend & Twombly, 2007, p. 12) considering the role and function of faculty. In their review of the literature, Turner et al. (2008) found that for faculty of color, “love of teaching was noted as the primary reason for their presence in academe” and that this love of teaching “provides inspiration and passion as they fulfill their desire to serve in response to the needs of their communities” (p. 143). Unlike in universities, teaching is the primary responsibility of community college faculty members, and so it would appear community colleges allow for the greatest expression of teaching and working with diverse communities.

Reviewing and comparing job satisfaction of African American faculty at community colleges and four-year colleges and universities,

Flowers (2005) found that “African American faculty at two-year institutions are more likely to experience greater levels of contentment” than their counterparts at universities (p. 324). Despite the attraction of the community college, these institutions continue to struggle with underrepresentation by faculty of color. Isaac and Boyer (2007) explained this conundrum: “Although community colleges appeal to minority faculty, maintaining diversity among them is a challenge community colleges face” (p. 360).

Benefits of diversity at community colleges (faculty, staff, and students). As teaching institutions, community colleges recognize the influence of faculty in student achievement. Teaching and student learning are highly valued in community colleges, with many institutions believing that “quality faculty members are essential to student success” (Rouche, Rouche, & Ely, 2001 p. 532). Faculty of color representation is important at the community college because their presence yields benefits to all. “If minority students are to succeed, it is important that schools cultivate a welcoming atmosphere. Part of the texture of such an atmosphere is having minority role models among the faculty” (Robertson & Frier, 1994, p. 67).

The benefits of diversity include an increased opportunity for institutions to be more responsive to the access issues and academic needs of students of color (Carter, 1994; Fox, 2005; Hagerdorn et al., 2007; Kirkpatrick, 2001; Laden, 2004; Opp 2001). “One of the most

effective and most visible support systems for students is faculty with whom they can identify and receive strength” for faculty of color because they share similar experiences as students of color are able to “bring a unique sensitivity that suggests a mutual understanding of cultural differences” (Owens et al., 1994, p. 58). Faculty members of color, with their own academic success, serve as positive role models who can motivate students (Opp & Smith, 1994; Robertson & Frier, 1994).

Kirkpatrick (2001) stressed the importance of diversity in the community college, which can be achieved through a multicultural faculty. Furthermore, he explained that faculty members’ relationship to students is instrumental to learning. “It is beneficial for minority students to see members of their race and ethnicity in prominent faculty positions because reflections of one’s self are vital affirmations of worth and value” (Owens et al., 1994, p. 58).

A diverse community of both students and faculty of color can “lead to a synergy that supports the retention and development of both groups as well as attracting others” (Turner et al., 2008, p.151). This synergy is not at the exclusion of others. Greater representation of faculty of color in community colleges also creates a more positive environment within which increased understanding and appreciation of differences can be facilitated (Harvey & Valadez, 1994; Jackson & Phelps, 2004; Lewis & Middleton, 2003 Opp & Poplin-Gosetti, 2002). “Because institutions are enriched by the perspectives and consideration of minority faculty members, both

colleagues and students gain immeasurably from their presence” (Harvey & Valadez, 1994, p.7). When students and staff members are exposed to people with whom they share both similarities and differences, increased opportunities contribute to the development of new teaching and learning strategies and methodologies (Jackson & Phelps, 2004). Students of color benefit from faculty of color who provide “culturally relevant instruction” that is meaningful and more germane (Jackson & Phelps, 2004, p. 82).

Community College Faculty Hiring Process

There is little qualitative research specific to the dynamics of community college faculty search committees. In an effort to gain greater understanding of the subjective nature of search committee decisions relative to diversity, this study’s literature review was expanded to include associated issues of barriers and negative climates as potential contributors to the underrepresentation of minority faculty (Bower, 2002; Carter, 1994; Harvey, 1994; Kayes, 2006; Opp & Smith, 1994; Townsend & Twombly, 2007; Turner et al., 2008). Although not specifically identifying community colleges when discussing higher education’s hiring process for prospective faculty of color, Moody (2004) suggested the existence of “unconscionably high barriers to minorities’ early entry into and success in the professoriate” (p. 1). Therefore, institutional climate and its role in the faculty hiring process are explored in this study.

Community college researchers address issues of climate as it relates to diversity and faculty of color (Carter, 1994; Hagerdon & Laden, 2002; Harvey, 1994; Perna, 2003; Townsend, 2006; Turner et al., 2008). Townsend (2006) described a positive campus climate for people of color as being representative “of women and minorities proportionate to their percentage in the population served by the institution” (p. 815). The current lack of representation, however, suggests the opposite. For these reasons, upon review of community college faculty hiring process in the literature, this next section of the chapter organizes pertinent research addressing search committees, attitudes and assumptions in the hiring process, and observations and recommendations about inclusive practices from the literature review.

Search committees. The culture of an institution is socially constructed, communicating the values, assumptions, beliefs, and traditions of the faculty, staff, and students (Harvey, 1994; Valadez, 1994). Awareness of the institution’s culture and the impact individual and society influences have on it and its processes are important. Nothing occurs in isolation, including decisions made about faculty members hired. Faculty search committees exercise significant influence, power, and authority in the decision making process. While colleges may communicate the value of diversity, the reality is that the “search committees charged with this task often approach their task in a passive, routine way” (Turner, 2006, p. B32). Kayes (2006) explained further that “unfortunately what is often

overlooked in the diversity hiring conundrum is the crucial role that both search committees and institutional culture play in the recruitment and retention of diverse faculty and staff at predominantly White colleges and universities” (p. 65).

Institutions delegate the authority and responsibility to search committees to identify and recommend candidates for one of its most valued assets—the faculty. “The search process,” explained Twombly (2005), “serves as the window through which to examine the ‘rules’ guiding the hiring process” (p. 427). The search committee is responsible for the processes of screening prospective faculty candidates, including qualifications, credentials, and employment applications. Search committees do not, however, operate in isolation; they are influenced by the institution.

Despite best efforts to ensure the hiring process and the operations of search committees are as objective as possible, the reality is that subjectivity is inherent in the process. Faculty and administrators carry certain expectations, values, and beliefs about education and about people (Valadez, 1994). The screening of prospective faculty members is done by search committees, comprised of people “who all carry the baggage of stereotypes and biases” (Kayes, 2006, p. 65).

Attitudes and assumptions in the hiring process. The literature on community college faculty of color and the hiring process addresses the presence of attitudinal barriers and racism as influencers of climate

and faculty diversity (Harvey, 1994; Lewis & Middleton, 2003; Opp & Smith, 1994). Moreover, assumptions are significant contributors to an institution's culture (Townsend, 2006). The review of search committee members' values is important because values serve as principles and drivers of process. Twombly (2005) explained how "values determine the kinds of characteristics search committees look for when selecting finalists from a large pool of candidates" (p. 431).

Twombly (2005) conducted a case study in which she analyzed institutional values and their influence in the hiring process for full-time community college faculty in the arts and sciences. Her goal was to understand how institutions operationalize their values in the faculty search and selection process (Twombly, 2005). Among the values she identified was the importance of effective teaching. As a way to evaluate prospective candidates' ability to teach, the search committees in Twombly's study utilized numerous strategies to measure teaching ability, including reviews of educational credentials, courses, and prior teaching experience as well as observations of candidates conducting a mini-teach.

The value of teaching ability was of such importance in Twombly's (2005) study that the committees sought multiple measures for the active assessment of candidates' ability to exhibit and evidence effective teaching. However, when attempting to address issues of diversity and underrepresentation of faculty of color, colleges and search committees

tended to be much more passive in their efforts. Twombly's study did not address issues of ethnic/racial diversity of candidates, beyond the recognition by a college president's desire to recruit nationally as a "greater strategy to bring diversity to the campus" (p. 439). Yet, despite efforts to recruit nationally, the reality was that candidates residing in the local region were hired (Twombly, 2005).

Throughout the past 15 years, a rationale emerges in the majority of the literature that speculates on the possible causes for the underrepresentation of faculty of color on community college campuses. One such speculation is that the lack of community college faculty of color can be attributed to a purported lack of representation in the applicant pools (Carter, 1994; Chapman, 2001; Harvey, 1994; Kayes, 2006; Lewis & Middleton, 2003; Opp & Smith, 1994; Townsend, 2006; Tuner 2002). Discussing the status of community college faculty and the underrepresentation of faculty of color, Carter (1994) asserted that "it is imperative that academics move beyond the all-too-familiar rationales and excuses of being unable to find 'qualified minority' candidates or unable to attract faculty of color" (p. 16). Chapman (2001) found that community college chief academic officers used this rationale to explain a perceived barrier to the recruitment of minority faculty.

Such use of this rationale is an example of how college leadership contributes to an organizational climate that perpetuates inaccurate and false beliefs about the ability of people of color. Such conjectures are

referred to in the literature by Townsend (2006) as a “tacit negative assumption” (p. 820). This assumption resides in a belief about minorities that blames them for “their failure to succeed...[and] is related to patterns of discourse about minorities and women” traditionally held in academe (p. 820). In her discussion of the need to create a positive climate inclusive of minorities and women at the community college, Townsend (2006) explained:

[T]he organizational climate for women and minorities will not improve until we embody in our own discourse, including its tacit assumptions, the perspective that women and minorities are not deficit because they do not fit the norms of White middle- and upper-class males. (pp. 823-824)

Addressing claims about the lack of prospective credentialed (master’s degree) African American faculty candidates, Harvey (1994) reviewed data of master’s degrees conferred on ethnic/racial groups and found that “a pool of African Americans who had earned their master’s degrees did exist, thus the supposed scarcity of qualified applicants does not seem a credible explanation” (p. 20).

If the hiring process is unable to yield qualified candidates of color, perhaps search committees need to review how the term “qualified” is defined. Carter (1994) explained the detriment of allowing subjective connotation:

[F]aculty and administrators must examine assumptions in the hiring process that may unfairly eliminate candidates of color from the pool of “qualified” applicants. One of the most persistent and damaging obstacles to employing more faculty of color is the belief among white faculty that educational standards of quality and

excellence are invariably compromised by pressures to hire minority faculty. (p. 17)

The literature addresses underrepresentation of faculty of color and alludes to possible attitudes and assumptions of diversity in search committees, but little is found in the literature specific to attitudes and assumptions in the actual hiring process. According to the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2004 National Study of Postsecondary Faculty, African American and Hispanic faculty are represented at 12% at the community college, compared to 8% at public four-year institutions and 8% at private four-year institutions. While this representation of faculty of color in community colleges is greater than at four-year institutions, it “is by no means a place where women and minority faculty never encounter the barriers of discrimination, glass ceilings, or academic funnels” (Townsend, 2006, p. 816).

Turner et al. (2008) noted in their review of the past 20 years of research on faculty of color that campus climate was “a major factor” discussed in the literature (p. 147). Among the themes they identified as having negative influence for faculty of color on college campuses is “a perceived bias in the hiring process” (p. 143). Additionally, they reported “a perceived lack of departmental/institutional effort to recruit and retain faculty of color” (p. 143).

Flannigan et al. (2004) published an article specifically addressing community college faculty hiring practices. They observed that early

community college faculty hiring practices were informal, unstructured, and exclusionary of people of color. This observation was consistent with Harvey's (1994) findings 10 years earlier: "Whether due to the hasty manner of selecting faculty or to attitudinal considerations...[the majority of community college faculty members were] "white and male" (p. 20).

Reviewing current hiring practices, Flannigan et al., (2004) found that barriers still exist in the hiring of prospective faculty of color as evidenced by the lack of minority faculty on community college campuses throughout the United States. They noted:

Additionally, minorities and women were working to achieve both recognition and inclusion, while the historic pattern of hiring had always defaulted to white, Anglo-Saxon men, with practices that mostly reinforced those requirements. Minorities and women had no recourse but to claim discrimination and in some cases, move forward with legal claims. (Flannigan et al., 2004, p. 831)

Harvey (1994) argued that the lack of faculty of color in community colleges was attributed to practices that sought to facilitate the hiring *by* people *for* people with whom they share similarities. "Faculty members, who operate at the core of the institution, tend to select others who share their academic and personal experience, their value orientations, and their outlooks, to join them" (Harvey, 1994, p.21). As a result, institutional practices and policies allow for the facilitation of privilege by those in power. Moreover, Harvey (1994) maintained that "community colleges routinely use hiring procedures that result in new faculty members whose racial backgrounds are the same as the individuals responsible for their

selection from the candidates considered” (p. 22). Homogeneous, monocultural search committees replicate similar versions of themselves.

Turner (2006) explained:

Many committees create a job description that would attract faculty members much like themselves. They advertise the position in publications that people mostly like themselves read. They evaluate resumes of people who often resemble themselves, invite three to five candidates for campus interviews who again are similar to themselves, and then make an offer to the person with whom they are most comfortable. Over time, that process has inevitably resulted in campuses that are more homogeneous than not. (p. B32)

Some of the literature referenced racism as a possible barrier, acknowledging the difficulty in concretely proving its existence (Lewis & Middleton, 2003; Opp & Smith, 1994). Rather, the practices of privilege appear to document the implicit influence of racism. “The historical legacy of racial discrimination continues to make its presence felt in American society,” explained Harvey (1994), “and the manifestations of this insidious practice in both overt and covert ways, can be seen in both individual and institutional patterns of behavior and action” (p. 19).

The rationales used to excuse the underrepresentation of faculty of color among the community college ranks (e.g., a lack of minority candidates with the educational credentials) are categorized as structural barriers that ensure no discussion occurs related to the personal biases, stereotypes, and values that permeate the institutional climate of the college. “Those who tend to ignore or discount the role of racism in higher education point to structural factors that impede progress in hiring and

retaining minority faculty” (Opp & Smith, 1994, p. 51). Critical race theory argues that the structures were created to allow for the racism to continue.

Opp and Smith (1994) found that the more strongly college personnel (chief academic affairs officers and faculty) believed that minority faculty would have difficulty socially belonging (or fitting in) in the community, the lower the institution’s percentage of minority faculty. The researchers also found that the more strongly respondents believed faculty of color were not available (i.e., lack of prospective candidates with the appropriate credentials in the applicant pool), the smaller the colleges’ representation of faculty of color. “In short, this perception of unavailability may result in a self-fulfilling prophecy” (Opp & Smith, 1994, p. 50).

Observations and recommendations about inclusive practices.

Research shows a positive correlation between the number of faculty members of color and the number of senior administrators of color employed at institutions of higher education (Carter, 1994; Lewis & Middleton, 2003; Opp & Poplin-Gosetti, 2002; Opp & Smith, 1994).

Administrative leadership “has frequently been identified as one of the important elements in facilitating diversity” (Harvey, 1994, p. 22).

Furthermore, administrators serve an important role in ensuring practices of discrimination do not occur (Townsend, 2006). Kayes (2006) discussed the myth that if senior administration appears to embrace diversity and affirm its value and “openly advocate for faculty and staff diversity, then it will be actualized in the search and hiring process” (p. 65). She continued

to explain the fallacy of such a belief, “This myth assumes that those who serve on search committees also prioritize diverse hiring when in reality many have never even discussed, let alone agreed upon, the institutional and departmental advantages of a diverse faculty and staff” (p. 65).

However, influence by senior administration is a double-edged sword.

Faculty members seek to operate with full autonomy in the hiring decisions of their future colleagues and are critical of administration’s functioning in the process or influencing it. “Attempts to influence departments to hire minority faculty...evoke the red flag signaling interference with faculty prerogatives” (Opp & Smith, 1994, p. 51). The question of where the authority and responsibility for hiring faculty resides represents the conflict between administration and faculty related to autonomy, power, and control. Yet, what is the dividing line between influence and interference? Twelve years later, Kayes (2006) acknowledged this balance and challenge:

To be sure, administrative leadership is crucial to a college’s success in attracting, hiring, and keeping faculty and staff of color, but if there is any resistance to diversity and multiculturalism in the institutional culture, such advocacy can spawn a backlash that plays out behind the closed doors of search committee deliberations. (Kayes, 2006, p. 65)

Among the literature’s recommendations and strategies relative to community college faculty hiring practices and inclusion of diverse candidates is the importance of having minority faculty members serve on search committees (Turner, 2002). Nicholas and Oliver (1994)

researched community college faculty hiring practices and recommended that institutions demonstrate strong commitment to diversifying the faculty. They noted such commitment is evident in institutions that insist “that interview committees have minority representation” (p. 40). The inclusion of individuals from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds on the institution’s faculty search committee positions members to “broaden the range of options examined and to ensure their sensitivity to alternative approaches (Owens et al., 1994, pp. 61-62).

The literature also addresses the role of the department chair in facilitating inclusive hiring practices aimed at diversifying the faculty. de los Santos (1994) described a large community college district’s efforts to enhance leadership’s direct communication with department chairs. He explained the chancellor’s role in the process:

[He] convened the department chairs—most of whom were white men at the time—and met alone with them. Because of their mid-management positions and their power as persons who screen and recommend candidates, he thought it was important to meet with them. He discussed with them...the need for the community colleges to diversify the faculty. (p. 76)

When addressing the underrepresentation by faculty of color in community colleges, the research suggests that part of the issue resides in failure to educate and train members of search committees (Eddy & Lester, 2008; Kayes, 2006; Turner, 2002). Assumptions may be made that faculty members, because of demonstrated mastery in their discipline, are equally masterful at human resources processes and hiring practices

and, as such, can be inclusive of cultures other than their own. But, current practice suggests otherwise.

To truly increase representation of faculty of color in the community college, greater persistence and assertive action may be necessary specific to candidate pools. Nicholas and Smith (1994) observed that strong commitment to faculty diversity was evidenced by an institution's refusal to finalize candidate pools "until minority and female candidates with appropriate credentials are found" (p. 40). Studying positive contributors to minority faculty recruitment and retention practices, Opp and Smith (1994) suggested closing and "canceling positions where minority candidates have not been recruited into the applicant pools" (p. 50). They rationalized that "departments that have canceled positions when minority candidates have not been recruited into the applicant pool may be motivated to disseminate information widely about faculty job openings to prospective candidates" (Opp & Smith, 1994, p. 50).

Summary

This chapter provided a review of the literature relative to (a) the study's theoretical framework of critical race theory and its application to education, (b) the underrepresentation of community college faculty of color, and (c) the community college faculty search committee's practices related to diversity. Although a wealth of research on university faculty diversity exists, there is little literature specific to community college faculty diversity, and less research could be found relative to community

college faculty search committees. As a result, this chapter addressed a broad range of issues related to faculty diversity in community colleges and general hiring practices and faculty search committee functions.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

The aim of this study was to investigate the implicit, subjective nature of individuals' observations, values, and beliefs about ethnic/racial diversity that may influence the faculty hiring process at the community college. The research design employed a deductive approach to interviewing for the purposes of illuminating the theoretical constructs (pervasiveness of racism as ordinary and normal, the use of Whiteness as the normative standard, and the rejection of liberalism) of critical race theory. This chapter describes the qualitative inquiry methodology and accompanying critical research perspective. The research questions guiding the study are presented, and data collection and analysis strategies are described.

Qualitative Methodology

Qualitative methodology enables a researcher to address complex research questions about people and their experiences that cannot be explained by mere numbers and statistics (Morrow & Smith, 2000). It focuses on "the ways people construct, interpret, and give meaning" to their experiences (Gerson & Horowitz, 2002, p. 199) by moving beyond statistical representations of data to the use of words and narratives to create a more holistic picture of the phenomenon being investigated. Qualitative inquiry is most appropriate for researching faculty search committee members' observations, values, and beliefs about ethnic/racial diversity, since the data are expressed through the descriptive

experiences and insights of the participants. Auerbach and Silverstein (2003) explained:

Qualitative research is particularly well suited to the study of diversity, because it did not assume that there is one truth to be discovered, but instead focuses on listening to the subjective experience and stories of the people being studied. (p.26)

This study was not focused on causation and generalizations; rather the researcher used qualitative methods to understand the phenomenon as defined through the voices of the participants (Creswell, 2007).

The investigative goals of qualitative inquiry are understanding, description, discovery, and meaning as opposed to quantitative inquiry's goals of predication and confirmation (Merriam, 2009). Rather than investigate the phenomenon as it is explicitly stated by institutional policy, this study examined ethnic/racial diversity as it is observed, defined, and experienced by the individuals participating in institutional faculty search committees.

Critical Research Paradigm

The epistemological orientation for this study's research design was critical theory. Critical research is used to "critique and challenge, to transform and empower" (Merriam, 2009, p. 34). A critical research perspective explores how the structure of an institution is created to preserve the interests of some groups at the expense of others (Merriam, 1998). Much of the literature and discourse on faculty diversity addresses the importance of diversity and the need for inclusiveness; however,

questions arise about the actual implementation and application of diversity policies among personnel. A critical research orientation allows for multiple realities and positions the researcher to investigate how those realities operate relative to politics, personalities, power, and privilege (Merriam, 2009).

A critical research paradigm seeks change “by detecting and unmasking beliefs and practices that limit human freedom, justice, and democracy” (Scott & Morrison, 2005, p. 47). A transforming characteristic of critical research is making research findings visible and public in order to address inequities and inform future practices (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). This study’s researcher is attracted to critical research because of its relevancy to practice and change. “Advocacy and activism are key concepts” in critical theory (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 113). The audiences for this study are those who can be activists and advocates in efforts to diversify community college faculty. The main audiences for this study are (a) community college faculty and administrators (activists) and (b) higher education scholars (advocates) who are interested in community college faculty and diversity.

Research Questions

The goal of this study was to gain an understanding of faculty search committee members’ observations, values, and beliefs about ethnic/racial diversity among community college faculty. While efforts may be made to make the process objective, search committee processes are

inherently subjective and influenced by the personalities of their members. Search committees do not operate in isolation. To better understand the challenges associated with hiring faculty of color, one needs to delve deeper into the observations, values, and beliefs of the committee members. The three research questions guiding this study were:

1. Are values and beliefs about ethnic/racial diversity commitment communicated to faculty search committees?
2. What observations do subjects have about their peers and college's values and beliefs about diversity?
3. What influence do values and beliefs have on the search committees and, if any, when is this influence evidenced in the selection process?

Data Collection

This section on data collection is divided into three subsections. The first subsection introduces the research site. Secondly, the study participants are described. Lastly, the data collection methods are detailed.

Research sites. Diamond Vista Community College District (DVCCD) is located in a large metropolitan area in the southwestern region of the United States. The district serves approximately 250,000 students annually and employs about 1,400 full-time faculty members teaching at ten colleges. Three colleges were identified as sites from which to recruit study participants: Community College of Water Valley

(CCWV), Community College of Sunset Reef (CCSR), and Community College of Granite Way (CCGW). The three institutions were selected because of the similarities and differences shared in comparison with the district's overall faculty of color representation.

As seen in Figure 1, 2009 data showed that more than one-fifth (21.4%) of the full-time, tenure-track faculty in the district were faculty of color. More than three quarters of faculty were White. Community College of Water Valley had a higher representation of faculty of color (34.2%) than that of the district. Community College of Sunset Reef's representation of faculty of color was significantly lower (13.1%), while CCGW's representation of faculty of color (18.3%) came closest to mirroring the district's overall representation of faculty of color.

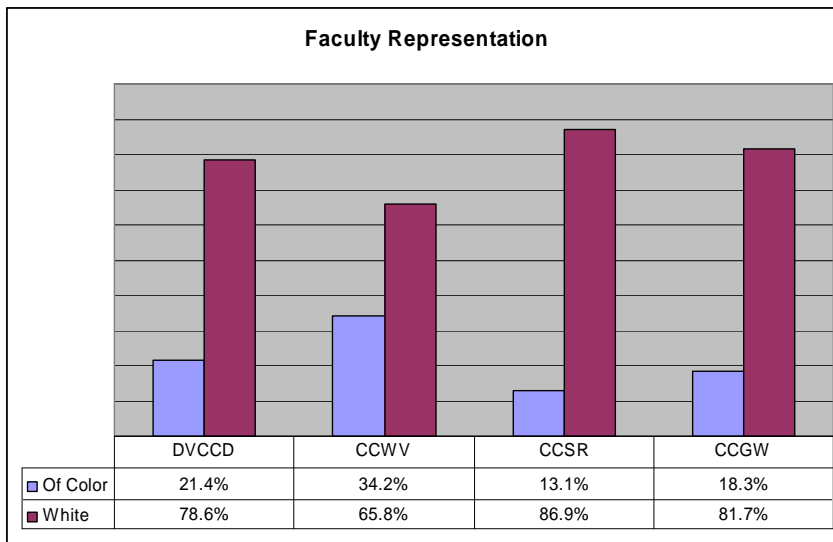


Figure 1. Research sites' faculty ethnic representation: district and institutional levels, 2009.

As sister institutions in the same district, all three research sites shared the district's vision of meeting the needs of diverse students and

communities, as well as a stated value of inclusiveness. All sites adhere to the same hiring procedures and guidelines as outlined by the district's human resources office. Full-time, tenure-track faculty positions are processed through the district office and must be approved by the district's Board of Trustees. All colleges are accountable to the district's policies, standards, and minimum hiring qualifications for faculty positions.

Each college has responsibility for managing its search process and the decision-making authority. Colleges identify positions/disciplines for hiring, select search committee members, and decide when (timing) to advertise and hire positions. Colleges may also add to the minimum qualifications by including desired qualifications in the posting of the job description.

Study participants. The participants selected for this study were full-time, tenure-track faculty members and administrators within DVCCD at CCWV, CCSR, and CCGW who had participated on tenure-track faculty search committees over the past three years (2006-2009). The district does not use faculty rank. DVCCD does not distinguish in the hiring of faculty between assistant professor, associate professor, and full professor. Faculty positions are posted based upon length of employment: one semester, one year, or tenure-track.

Two types of study participants were identified for interviews: faculty members who served as either search committee members or chairs, and administrators. Division chairs provide leadership for the

process, and administrators (academic deans and vice presidents) have responsibility over the search and provide direction to the committees.

Reviewing human resources information on district hires from 2006-2009, the researcher found 854 DVCCD employees who participated on faculty search committees. While subjects' demographic diversity of ethnicity, gender, age, discipline, and years of service in the district was of interest to the researcher, the decision was made to allow for random selection of prospective participants. From the list of search committee members obtained from DVCCD, prospective participants were divided based upon site—CCWV, CCSR, and CCGW—and then names were randomly drawn to determine order from which to contact and recruit participation.

Subjects were contacted via email requesting an interview about his/her observations, values, and beliefs about ethnic/racial diversity in faculty search committees (see Appendix A). After agreeing to participate in the study, subjects were given a letter providing detailed information about the research and an informed consent form (see Appendix B). Interview appointments were scheduled at the participants' convenience (date, time, and location) and then confirmed via email.

Data collection process. The data were collected in two phases. The first phase occurred in a 2008 pilot study investigating efforts to facilitate a faculty search process inclusive of more diverse candidates. The responses provided by faculty search committee members in the pilot

study served to guide the research questions and to identify the relevancy of critical race theory for this study. Four of the interviews from the pilot study were used in this study. Two of the four subjects who participated in the pilot study were interviewed again for the purpose of updating efforts. The second phase data collection consisted of an additional eight interviews. A total of twelve subjects were interviewed. The first phase of interviews was conducted in spring 2008, and the second phase of interviews occurred in spring 2010.

Data were collected through two instruments: a short demographic survey (see Appendix C) and an interview protocol (see Appendix D). The short demographic survey was administered to each subject prior to the interview. The short survey requested information about subjects' age, tenure with the district, ethnicity, gender, discipline, and title. Interviews were used as the primary data source.

Interviews provided a way to "uncover motives, meanings, and conflicts experienced by individuals as they respond to social and interpersonal situations and conflict" (Gerson & Horowitz, 2002, p. 215). Interviews are a strategy by which to delve in greater depth the meaning of the subject's experience from his/her own perspective. Data collected through interviewing yields "better data or more data or data at less cost than other tactics" (Dexter, 1970, p. 11). It captures the reality of events as best explained by the participants and provides insight into "the ways

that people construct, interpret and give meaning to these experiences” (Gerson & Horowitz, 2002, p. 199).

Interviews were recorded using a digital recording device (iPod and tune talk stereo microphone). Most interviews were 30 to 45 minutes in length and utilized a semi-structured interview protocol (see Appendix D).

A semi-structured interview protocol is guided by a set of questions but allows for flexibility whereby additional issues can be addressed, and questions need not adhere to a specific order (Merriam, 1998). “This format allows the researcher to respond to the situation at hand, to the emerging worldview of the respondent, and to new ideas on the topic” (Merriam, 1998, p. 74). A semi-structured approach facilitated the researcher’s deductive approach to interviewing for the purpose of illuminating the theoretical constructs (pervasiveness of racism as ordinary and normal, the use of Whiteness as the normative standard, and the rejection of liberalism) of critical race theory while permitting flexibility to explore any additional issues subjects shared. This approach had “the advantage of asking all informants the same core questions with the freedom to ask follow up questions that build upon the responses received” (Brenner, 1994, p. 362).

The data collected in this study were very subjective, asking participants to self-report from memory while sharing observations and making inferences. Study participants were asked not to identify any faculty applicants, and they were not asked questions specific to particular

search committees or prospective faculty candidates. To maintain confidentiality, pseudonyms were assigned to participants and all identifiable characteristics (of site and/or individuals) were altered or removed from the interviewees' quotes.

Data Analysis

A qualitative researcher reflects, considers, and analyzes data as they are being collected (Merriam, 2009; Miles & Huberman, 1994b). Data collection and analysis occur simultaneously in qualitative research (Merriam, 2009). The data analysis in this study employed Miles and Huberman's model (1994b), which explains data analysis as interactive components made up of three sub processes: data reduction, data display, and conclusion/verifications. As the researcher collected data, she reduced and organized the information to best facilitate interpretation and summarization. The data reduction part of the analysis enabled the researcher to focus on addressing the research questions and the study's use of critical race theory as a theoretical framework from which to better understand the phenomenon.

Prior to each interview, a contact summary sheet of each interview was created as recommended by Miles and Huberman (1994b). These summary sheets outlined and organized observations from each interview and were used to capture any following notes/memos that the researcher had about the specific interview. After each interview, the researcher scheduled time immediately following it to write down what Turner (2008)

referred to as “seat-of-your pants” notes. These seat notes included thoughts and insights that the researcher had immediately (within 30 minutes) following the interview. Within 24 hours of the interview, the researcher wrote a memo of that interview including her seat notes (Lareau, 1989). The researcher consolidated notes and memos with her summary sheets. Review and organization of all notes provided the researcher the opportunity to reflect on the specifics of each interview environment, context, and any other possible information that was meaningful to the study.

The researcher immersed herself in the raw text, reading and re-reading through each transcript to classify, simplify, and select data germane to the research questions. As she read her summary sheets and interview transcription notes, the researcher looked for repeating ideas specific to the research questions, making notes of possible themes. When the same (or similar) words and phrases were used and repeated to express the same idea, they were coded as possible themes (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003). Time was used to reflect on how to best identify and organize emerging themes.

Next, the researcher arranged the data in data displays. A data display is the “organized compressed assembly of information that permits conclusion drawing” (Miles & Huberman, 1994b, p. 429). The data displays summarized and categorized information in an attempt to delineate between relevant and unrelated data. A “researcher typically

needs to see a reduced set of data as a basis for thinking about its meaning” (Miles & Huberman, 1994b, p. 429).

The data displays were important for providing a visual representation from which to identify, organize, and manage the data. Such a process allowed the researcher to detect patterns, repetition, and references in the text from which to make interpretation and draw conclusions. Miles and Huberman (1994a) explained the importance of data displays specific to validity in the analysis of qualitative studies:

We have become convinced that better data displays are a major avenue to valid qualitative analysis. All displays are designed to assemble and organize information in an immediately accessible, compact form, so that the analyst can see what is happening and either draw justified conclusions or move on to the next-step analysis which the display suggests may be useful. (p. 11)

Within the reduction phase of the Miles and Huberman (1994a, 1994b) model, the researcher intentionally chose to first create data displays by research site, and from the site displays she then created a master data display of all three research sites. This method made the data more manageable. In creating data displays, the researcher engaged simultaneously in both reducing the data and attempting to draw possible conclusions. Additional data displays were created based upon subject ethnicity (White or minority) and employee group (faculty or administrator).

Utilizing the master data display, the researcher began the coding of themes. From the master data display, she created a matrix of themes

and codes. The matrix identified categories specific to the research questions, themes for coding, and the data source referencing origin of the raw text (subject's individual interview). The process of reducing, creating data displays, and making conclusions was both iterative and continuous throughout the analysis phase.

Validity. This study sought to provide insight and information and was not designed to be generalizable. While traditional notions of reliability and generalizability are ideal standards in quantitative, positivistic inquiry, their application and relevancy in qualitative research are unrealistic and inexplicable to obtain (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003). This did not dismiss nor ignore the importance of validity. Rather, the researcher chose to use validity as defined and explained as research that is “credible” (Guba & Lincoln, 1985; Merriam, 1998, 2009). This means that the findings and conclusions are credible given the data presented (Merriam, 2009). As Firestone (1987) explained, “The qualitative study provides the reader with a depiction in enough detail to show that the author’s conclusion ‘makes sense’” (p. 19).

Serving as the primary instrument for data collection and analysis, the researcher recognized the shortcomings, such as subjectivity and bias, of having a human instrument (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003; Merriam, 2009). However, these shortcomings are a “necessary part of human interaction and therefore cannot be eliminated or controlled” (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003, p. 27). Instead, it is imperative that

subjectivity and bias be acknowledged so that their influence in data collection and analysis can be monitored (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003; Merriam, 2009). To help scrutinize and reduce subjectivity and bias, the researcher incorporated the following two strategies: respondent validation and peer examination.

Respondent validation or member checks involve a researcher soliciting feedback on possible findings from some of the subjects interviewed (Merriam, 2009). Credibility is attained when subjects “recognize their experience in your interpretation or suggest some fine tuning to better capture their perspectives” (Merriam, 2009, p. 217). As the researcher began coding and identifying possible themes, she asked three subjects representing two of the sites for feedback. The three subjects were sent the researcher’s coding of possible themes in their respective interviews as well as the raw text from their interview. All three subjects confirmed the researcher’s interpretation of findings contained in his/her respective interview.

Utilizing peer examination, or peer review, the researcher requested colleagues’ comments and thoughts about the data analysis and findings as they emerged (Merriam, 2009). Peers were asked to “scan some of the raw data and assess whether the findings were plausible based upon the data” (Merriam, 2009, p. 220). The researcher sought feedback from two types of peers: those who are knowledgeable on the topic and those who are unfamiliar. It is believed the advantages of

receiving feedback from both helped to monitor and to control for subjectivity.

Four colleagues of the researcher participated in peer examination. All four colleagues currently work in higher education. Two have doctorates and two have master's degrees. Their knowledge of and experience in diversity issues varied on a scale from significant research and work in ethnic studies to very little. One colleague read through the raw text of three interviews to assist in the identification of possible themes. This was done in a desire to reduce researcher bias and subjectivity. Upon his review, he and the researcher discussed their respective interpretations. Through this collaboration and this colleague's feedback, the researcher was able to confirm and discern from another's objective perspective her own interpretation and identification of emerging themes that were used for coding.

The other three colleagues read through the researcher's coding of themes in the raw text and were asked to evaluate the accuracy and credibility of her conclusions. All three colleagues offered valuable feedback and confirmed the researcher's identification of themes.

Upon receiving all the feedback from the respondent validations and the peer examinations, the researcher updated the master data display from which meaning was constructed and interpretations were made. The researcher examined and evaluated the displayed data looking for associations, connections, and linkages to the research

questions and the study's critical race constructs relative to the pervasiveness of racism as ordinary and normal, the use of Whiteness as the normative standard, and the rejection of liberalism.

Summary

The chapter presented the qualitative methodology used in this study, the aim of which was to investigate the implicit, subjective nature of individuals' observations, values, and beliefs about how ethnic/racial diversity may influence the hiring process of community college faculty. The chapter provided a discussion of the study's qualitative methodology as operating from a critical research perspective. The guiding research questions were stated, and data collection and data analysis strategies were detailed. Chapter four presents the study findings.

Chapter 4: Results

This study explored the observations, values, and beliefs about ethnic/racial diversity held by community college faculty search committee members. The investigative goals were focused on exploration and understanding of the subjects' particular observations, values, and beliefs as self-reported through semi-structured one-on-one interviews. The purpose of the study was not to identify causation or to generalize the findings to other populations.

First this chapter presents the demographics of the study subjects. Next, the three major themes found in the data are discussed: (a) the communication of diversity, (b) search committee dynamics, and (c) subjects' observations, values, and beliefs. In search committee dynamics, the four sub-themes were identified as diversity within search committees, role of the chair, role of administration, and the issue of time. Relative to subjects' observations, values, and beliefs, five sub-themes surfaced: (a) conflict, (b) the idea of a "good fit," (c) colorblindness, (d) self-perception of having attained enlightenment about diversity, and (e) the blaming of applicant pools.

Demographics of the Subjects

The researcher selected three community college research sites, identifying a total of 12 subjects. Demographic information about each subject, self-reported via a brief survey was collected prior to each interview. This information enabled the researcher to identify possible

variations and similarities in observations and experiences of subjects as members affiliated with various groups (i.e., site, gender, ethnicity, age).

Table 2 provides an overview of demographic information about the subjects by college.

Table 2

Demographics of Study Subjects

	CCWV	CCSR	CCGW	Total
Subjects	5	4	3	12
Gender (men: women)	4:1	2:2	2:1	8:4
Ethnicity (White: minority)	2:3	3:1	1:2	6:6
Median age	30s	40s	50s	35

Note. The three study sites belonged to the same community college district, Diamond Vista Community College District (DVCCD), located in a large metropolitan area in the southwest region of the United States (names are pseudonyms): Community College of Water Valley (CCWV), Community College of Sunset Reef (CCSR), and Community College of Granite Way (CCGW).

Due to the lack of people of color employed at the district, listing detailed information about subjects specific to their respective site could endanger confidentiality and thus make them easy to identify. Therefore, this information is excluded from Table 2. However, the data are presented in the following narrative without reference to individual site.

Of the 12 subjects, two were academic affairs administrators and ten were full-time, tenure-track faculty members. The two administrators were from different sites. Six of the faculty members have chaired a search committee at some time. Eight men and four women were

interviewed. The ethnic/racial background of the subjects is equally divided with half being people of color and the other half categorizing themselves as Anglo/White. Most of the subjects (eight) come from general education disciplines, and two are from non-academic/instruction, student support service areas. There was diversity among the general education disciplines represented by subjects as well as the disciplines of the search committees on which they had participated.

Subjects' years of service in the district varied from three years to more than 25 years, with about half being employed by the district for at least 10 years. Subjects ranged in age from the twenties to the sixties. The median age range for subjects was late thirties to early forties. All but one of the subjects had participated on at least two faculty search committees, and three subjects participated on as many as 20 search committees. Most of the interviews were approximately 40-45 minutes in length. Subjects offered depth and breadth in their observations about diversity specific to the faculty hiring process and search committees, as well as diversity in general at their college and in the district.

Communication of Diversity

Subjects at each site reported that, at some level, messages about diversity are communicated. However, the messages are not consistent in delivery, content, or understanding. The level at which messages are communicated and the degree of perceived institutional commitment varied depending upon the research site. All CCWV subjects reported

having explicit conversations about diversity and the faculty search process with either administrators and/or the committee chair. One CCWV subject shared his chair's explicitness about diversity's value to the college in hiring:

Our division chair at the time, basically flat out said we value diversity and globalization on campus, and so it was pretty clear to me. I didn't feel like it was life or death or anything like that, but it was apparent. It was apparent in the question [*sic* diversity interview question]; it was apparent just in informal conversations. (S6 personal communication, March 24, 2010)

Another CCWV subject who recently chaired a search committee described administration's direct involvement: "it was in the planning stages of our position. They had come in and discussed what affirmative action is, and it's clearly not quotas; all it is is providing access to groups who normally don't have access" (S1 personal communication, March 3, 2010). He continued to explain that "we do promote diversity in a very strong way" and that administrators are "very much pro-diversity, pro-inclusiveness" (S1 personal communication, March 3, 2010). Diversity was described by a few subjects as a "core value" (S1 personal communication, March 3, 2010; S6 personal communication, March 24, 2010). One subject described diversity as "part of standard operating procedures" (S3 personal communication, April 29, 2010), and another subject characterized the college as being "definitely committed" to diversity (S12 personal communication, March 24, 2008).

Subjects spoke of concrete measures used at CCWV to promote diversity and inclusiveness specific to the faculty search processes. Subjects detailed examples of the content included in the job postings for faculty. The job postings did not list the Ph.D. as a preferred qualification, and included experience working with diverse populations and a diversity statement. Personnel at CCWV believed requesting a Ph.D. would decrease the minority applicant pools, because fewer people of color have doctorates. According to the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, universities graduate only 12.8% doctoral students of color (2010).

CCWV subjects described the use of demographic data to target underrepresented populations in their marketing efforts and the insertion of a diversity question as a part of the candidate interview. One CCWV subject provided clarification:

So not only do we ask interview questions about diversity, we also include it in our desired qualifications. We specifically state that they have to have experience working with a population similar to the population they would be working with here. So we are actually looking for evidence of that. (S10 personal communication, March 31, 2010)

Another CCWV subject described administration's messages about diversity:

We value it and we will value it, and here's how we're going to value it. People are going to sit on screening committees and [administration] expect[s] they're going to be diverse committees. Otherwise we will not let this go forward. (S3 personal communication, April 29, 2010)

Explicit messages about diversity and its value and practical application at other sites varied. One subject believed the administration is engaged in efforts to create greater awareness of the need and benefit of having more faculty of color. He shared that as a person of color, he felt greater support because the college had more people of color working at the institution presently than in the past (S2 personal communication, March 9, 2010). Other subjects were unclear, sharing confusion over the message, including another subject of color from the same site:

I think the definition of diversity are [*sic*] kept very broad and they are not flushed out. They are not well articulated and that leads to all kinds of different interpretations of what diversity means. Many times I have unfortunately seen that diversity is used to push specific agendas, and that has been because of how loosely interpreted or how loosely defined it is, that it doesn't really allow for a consistent interpretation of any specific policy. (S8 personal communication, March 31, 2010)

In reference to diversity's application in search committees, another subject from the same site explained, "I think the ideal is presented as valuable to seek, but I think the subtext is that may not be achievable and that's okay" (S4 personal communication, April 15, 2010). Another subject from a different site shared that "I think there is a desire to address the issue of diversity on this campus" but stated she was unsure of what that meant to the institution (S11 personal communication, March 14, 2008).

In explaining messages faculty might receive about diversity, some study participants questioned their respective institution's commitment:

I don't know how, I guess, how serious that desire is. I question that. Or, I think it's something maybe that at the higher levels is

something that they want, they want to pay attention to and change, but once it translates down to the actual individuals involved for example on a search committee, I wonder if everyone is as committed to this issue of diversity. (S11 personal communication, March 14, 2008)

Two subjects, both from different sites, spoke of an “intellectual commitment” when discussing their colleges’ value of diversity. One stated, “I think intellectually they support diversity; I think it’s a value. On the other hand, if it’s going to present some challenge for them...” and shrugged without completing the sentence (S4 personal communication, April 5, 2010). Another subject mused about the topic:

I think it’s a [laughs] an intellectual commitment, meaning they’ll sort of talk the talk. Walking the walk...that’s sort of more in actions...I, I think, my sense is that they mean well. But, they really do see themselves as supporting diversity and yet, when push comes to shove, there’s some pieces they’re missing. And, I think, some of it, they have no idea. (S7 personal communication, April 7, 2010)

Search Committee Dynamics

Four subthemes were identified from the data relative to search committee dynamics. Diversity within the search committee was often articulated by study participants. Furthermore the subjects discussed the role of the chair and administration. Lastly, time was an issue often identified by the study subjects.

Diversity within the search committee. All but one of the subjects reported their institutions and/or the district communicated the expectation that faculty search committees would have an ethnically diverse make-up of faculty members participating in the screening and

selection processes. This expectation was described as a requirement by the district, the college, and/or the state. A mix of messages and sentiments were communicated by subjects about this requirement. Some subjects articulated clear benefits of a diverse committee on the faculty search/selection process. Others claimed not to notice or to attend to the ethnic diversity of peers on search committees, and one believed such requirement was “completely cover your ass” (S9 personal communication, March 24, 2010).

Subjects referenced as a benefit of ethnically diverse search committees a greater opportunity to have diversity of perspectives in the review process of applicants. Diversity of perspectives served to increase faculty members’ sensitivity when reviewing the depth and breadth of applicants’ diversity experience specific to teaching and supporting community college students. One of the subjects described the depth with which he, as a person of color, reviewed candidates’ experiences with diversity:

I think with [*sic*] having people of color on committees is a big plus because they can, when you look at a resume’ or look at an application, you can see those people that have [*sic* experience], you can see that....I remember one time that I was looking at a candidate and they had done some research activities trying to, working with some of the native populations in either New Mexico or here in Arizona....maybe some other people looking at that would have said, “Okay. They’re working with students,” but I was looking at, yeah, [*sic*] they’re working with students but, you know, that’s because the National Science Foundation, NIH, all these organizations have said, “We need to increase the pipeline in terms of getting our underrepresented populations in these pipelines.” So for them to have been involved with that in the very

beginning, whether they were in grad school or as a faculty member, I mean that's really showing that they understand what the problem is and they are trying to come up with solutions or working with people that are coming up with solutions. (S10 personal communication, March 31, 2010)

Some subjects, both minority and White, spoke of the challenges of minority faculty representation on search committees. White subjects' sentiments focused on the difficulty of identifying minority faculty because there are so few on their campuses. Two subjects from different sites both echoed the same problem, as one explained:

Because of our lack of diversity among our residential [tenure track] faculty and the need to have diverse search committees, it's really kind of pathetic where we have to tap the same folks. It's really more than a little embarrassing. They tend to be good sports, but that's got to just wear people down. So [since] I'm the brown guy, I need to go sit on this committee again. I mean, that's just got to be exhausting for folks. (S5 personal communication, May 11, 2010)

The other subject concurred, commenting on the multiple requests minority faculty receive to participate on search committees:

We're supposed to have someone representing Hispanic; we try to get an African American on every committee. Sometimes that is very challenging because since we have such few people in XYZ category. They are hard pressed to fulfill the request that any number of people make; they only have so much time and energy and they can't be on every hiring committee. (S4 personal communication, March 31, 2010)

Another subject shared both the difficulty and frustration of being required to have minority representation on search committees:

It's unfortunate that we can't see past that a bit more but I think, even too, it's becomes a burden on faculty who are deemed minority, you know. We have this committee that we were thinking about meeting this summer. But you know what's the chance that our one Asian American or our couple of Hispanic people might be

able to serve on that? So no business can be done because apparently everybody that is left doesn't have the good sense to hire a quality candidate without them. (S9 personal communication, March 24, 2010)

In review of the demographic survey data completed by each of the subjects, faculty of color participate on three times more search committees than their White peers at a rate of 12.6 to 4.2. Two subjects of color, both who have participated on more than 25 search committees, expressed feeling a sense of responsibility as well as feeling burdened to serve on committees, as one explained:

I would never have turned down an opportunity to sit on a search committee. Yes, I always felt a sense of obligation...I think that I could probably say for many other minorities it is the same for them because they care deeply about what's happening and want to effect change, but it's time. (S3 personal communication, April 29, 2010)

Role of the chair. All 12 subjects indicated that faculty search committee members are selected by the committee chair. Many subjects described the process as the chair selecting people who share the same characteristics and subscribe to the same beliefs and the same "group think." One subject recounted how chairs select committee members who are "aligned philosophically" with his/her view of diversity's relevancy in the search process:

[S]o, if a committee member is, let's say they are of the sort who is not wanting to look at diversity issues, not be mindful of that, they will not likely choose somebody who is mindful, who they know tends to be looking at those things because they don't want to have to deal with that person and bringing up, or what about the race of this person, we should consider that. They are going to consciously and/or subconsciously avoid that. And likewise for the

group that wants to be mindful of diversity, they are not likely to bring in somebody who is, wants to do that objective. (S7 personal communication, April 7, 2010)

Subjects at all three sites reported the chair's influence on the search committee. Two subjects, both who have served as committee chairs, spoke specifically of the chair's ability to persuade search committee members to consider issues of diversity:

Often the chair can set that tone. I think the chair can go into the initial meetings and you are discussing the qualifications we're looking for; and if they are stating that we should be mindful of diversity. I think that's going to be more likely to set up a committee being mindful of it. If the chair comes in and is essentially ignoring that whole topic, it would be one way to do it. Or even specifically saying, "we are just going to look at objective qualifications." I think that would likely create the one [committee] that ignores diversity. So I think sometimes, I do think the chair can really have an impact there. (S7 personal communication, March 28, 2008)

The subject's colleague at a different site and in a different discipline echoed comments about the chair's influence:

So, if the chair is truly committed to diversifying the faculty in their department, I really think they have, they can be the chair of the committee can be the sway [*sic*]. More than likely will have chairs who have been in the department a long time; they know the politics of the department. My guess, is that if they present it well, they can have the committee agree with one path or the other, as long as it is within the context of "We're trying to find the most qualified person," and not in the context that "We're trying to find somebody who fits this particular type." (S10 personal communication, March 31, 2010)

Role of administration. Nine subjects spoke of the role of administration in the faculty search process. However, the subjects referring of administration coincided with the degree of involvement the administration had in the college's faculty search process. At all sites,

subjects expressed a mixture of feelings about the role of administration. Subjects from the same site shared similar sentiments. The CCWV subjects spoke of the administration's direct involvement throughout the search process. At CCWV, administration was represented on the committee, and the college president made the final decision.

At CCSR, the college president was not involved nor did the administration participate in the committee decision making process until the final interview, at which time the administrator selected the hire. At CCSR, committees were characterized as being "faculty centric" (S5 personal communication, May 11, 2010) and the faculty as having had "a lot of decision power" (S7 personal communication, April 7, 2010). Those subjects who considered themselves strong advocates of diversity at CCSR expressed frustration at administration's lack of active involvement in and support of efforts to diversify the faculty at their college.

At CCGW, an administrator was on the committee and the college president interviewed and selected the final candidate. Study participants at CCGW did not specifically address administration's involvement in the search/selection process beyond the outlined participation. However, one subject described past distress with administration's failure to address injustices or abuses when communicated to senior college personnel.

The subjects who were administrators discussed the need to balance when and how to interact and engage in issues with faculty. One administrator participant described his position as one that "relies on

influence, not authority, and I'm reminded of that all the time; it is a position of influence." The subject further explained that an administrator is "only as successful as the support he or she has from his or her faculty" (S5 personal communication, May 11, 2010).

Both administrators expressed challenges in trying to discern when and how to be involved in faculty hiring processes. One articulated it as an exercise in balancing control and authority:

There is only so much control you can exercise because we are in an environment of shared governance. And you still have to give the folks on the search committee the room to do what they need to do, and certainly respect their qualifications as educated people looking for a good colleague to exercise their judgment. And so there's a balance that you have to strike in that regard. I think you have to help educate and give them the proper tools, so when they go off [to do the job], they know what to do and how to do it and you don't have to be so worried. (S3 personal communication, April 29, 2010)

The administrators referenced the need to be discerning and diplomatic. "You just don't go around picking battles, needlessly picking battles; you strategically pick your battles. I don't even know if they're battles" (S5 personal communication, May 11, 2010). One administrator explained that when engaging in efforts to bring about change at a college, an administrator may encounter unpleasant resistance:

In the institutions where they have very traditional faculty, rocking that boat is not a pretty picture. The thought of it will keep you up at night. You have to weigh what's more important, just going along for the sake of going along, or choosing to make a difference and knowing at the end of the day you could go to the guillotine for doing so. (S3 personal communication, April 29, 2010)

Another subject, who is not an administrator, attributed faculty challenges to diversity as being about a resistance to administration in addition to a resistance to change. She described one search committee's attitude:

You know, "this is how we've done things," and "this is what's familiar to us" and there is inertia there. There is not a desire to look at it differently even if you recognize that what you're doing is not working. There still is a strong sense of not wanting to change, of not wanting others to tell you how to change. (S11 personal communication, March 14, 2008)

The issue of time. Over half of the subjects across all three sites communicated that the hiring process was laborious and time consuming. Subjects whether they were administrators or faculty members echoed the same concerns about the time and energy search committees require. Search committee participation was described as taking "a lot of time and effort," requiring "whole weeks of time" (S10 personal communication, March 25, 2008). One subject explained that his department posted a position for only three weeks in an effort "to keep our numbers down...the total number of applications, you have to go through" (S7 personal communication, March 28, 2008). Another subject expressed how search committees for faculty are "outside of their normal employment expectations," explaining that committee members are "more or less not getting compensated for it; a lot of times they're taking time off" (S6 personal communication, March 24, 2010).

Administrators believed that some of search committee members' resistance to diversity was related to the belief that it would require "extra effort" (S3 personal communication, April 29, 2010) and be "inconvenient" (S6 personal communication, May 11, 2010). One administrator shared specific observations:

Usually I find most of the time what they're really concerned about is not finding diversity, but "I don't want to spend too much extra time. I don't want this committee to go past my days of accountability. I've got other work I want to do. I want to do this as fast as I can." That really, I think, is it—more so than actually looking for the diversity. The extra effort they feel it's going to take. (S3 personal communication, April 29, 2010)

The other administrator discussed how the value of diversity decreases when committees are pressed for time:

And when it does not become inconvenient, [search committees] will continue to extol the virtues of diversity, but if a deadline is coming up, if it calls for failing a search or extending a search or somehow delaying or impacting the ability to fill that position on a predetermined time frame, the virtues of diversity tend to diminish. (S5 personal communication, May 11, 2010)

Subjects' Observations, Values, and Beliefs

Subjects were asked to consider diversity as observed and expressed in faculty search committees. Eight of the 12 subjects acknowledged that the district, their college, and their colleagues could do better in terms of diversity, though they may have differed in their definitions, reasoning, and explanations. One subject described diversity's significance, yet implicit nature in search committees:

I am pretty sure that [diversity] plays a role in hiring committees. But once you get at the level of the hiring committee, I would say

that those things are implicit in there and nobody's going to explicitly say, "We need to discriminate" or "How are we going to hire a person that may not really be truly competent?" People will not say those things overtly, but I think that it can play a significant role. (S8 personal communication, March 31, 2010)

When sharing their observations about diversity in faculty search committees, a majority of subjects reported mostly negative connotations by colleagues regarding what diversity is and how it is discussed. A number of subjects recounted that some search committees expressed sentiments that "diversity results in less quality" (S8 personal communication, March 31, 2010), is a "charade" (S4 personal communication, April 5, 2010), and that it forces a committee "to chose someone of color as a kind of token... instead of the person best suited for the position" (S11 personal communication, March 14, 2010). Some subjects expressed views that considerations about diversity specific to ethnicity and race was "too narrow" (S6 personal communication, March 24, 2010; S11 personal communication, March 14, 2008) and that other types of diversity, other than ethnic/racial status, is considered "the wrong kind of diversity" (S9 personal communication, March 24, 2010).

Referencing departments where White males might be underrepresented, one subject questioned whether diversity in the search process was "designed to hire diverse people, period? Or, is it supposed to reflect the department?" (S12 personal communication, March 24, 2008).

Conflict. When discussing faculty search committee dynamics, eight of the 12 subjects from across all three research sites referenced

diversity's propensity to create conflict. Subjects described committees as being "team oriented" (S6 personal communication, March 24, 2010) and focused on the desire to "work for some sense of happiness" (S7 personal communication, March 28, 2008). They explained that discussing issues such as diversity could interfere with the committee's sense of harmony.

Subjects, regardless of ethnicity, study site, or employee status, acceded that diversity is "a difficult topic to approach" and can create "tension in the search committee" (S10 personal communication, March 31, 2010). Subjects attributed this to either the diverse makeup of the committee or personalities of the members as well as the topic of diversity itself. One subject acknowledged diversity's positive and negative connotations in the comments of fellow search committee members:

It's not always positive. I could think of one committee where, one person of this diverse nature actually was making derogatory remarks about a candidate of another diversity and another candidate, another committee member of the same diverse nature, saying something complimentary about a particular interviewee. (S4 personal communication, April 5, 2010)

Another study subject explained the discomfort committee members may have about diversity:

Sometimes I think when you're talking about issues of diversity...they're wrapped up in legal matters. It's wrapped up in political matters. It's not an easy conversation. There are a lot of snakes in the water. So people are afraid; they don't really know how to talk about it, how to discuss it. They don't know how to do it and feel okay with the conflict that comes with it. (S3 personal communication, April 29, 2010)

Subjects expressed how conversations about diversity, especially in the context of faculty hiring, are difficult and make people uncomfortable. Discussions around the topics and issues of diversity are complicated. As one subject explained, “I think there are so many issues connected with race that—historical, cultural, and otherwise—that it intimidates people” (S4 personal communication, April 15, 2010). Another subject shared his desire to engage committee members in discussions about privilege and unintentional biases; however, to avoid conflict, he chose not to initiate the discussion (S7 personal communication, April 7, 2010):

I think people like myself are afraid of hurting peoples’ feeling[s], afraid of the defensiveness, afraid of bringing it up. So I think often these things go unchallenged. It takes people who are more direct, more assertive, less worried about conflict to do it. (S7 personal communication, April 7, 2010)

As one subject observed, “there are very strong feelings about diversity where people take on a more political standpoint regarding things like affirmative action and what that means in the workplace as well” (S8 personal communication, March 31, 2010). Another subject explained how past issues of race impact present behavior:

When you bring up the issue of race in a hiring committee, you see people get pretty tense, because it’s a touchy issue because people think that back in the 80s when the buzz words were “quotas” and things like that. You know, I think that has resonated with folks and so they think that if you mention race in this kind of process that somehow you are going to be advocating for people as opposed to just looking at their strengths. (S10 personal communication, March 25, 2010)

Idea of a good fit. Throughout many of the interviews, subjects used the word “fit” to explain how search committees might describe prospective candidates. The terminology “a good fit” was often used to describe the compatibility of an applicant in relation to the department faculty hiring the position. “Fit” in the context of faculty search committees’ conversations in selecting prospective candidates was referenced by seven of the 12 subjects at all three sites.

So, that’s usually a good expression that’s used amongst faculty; we need to look for a good “fit.” I think good fit can be, as a concept, it can be appropriate if you’re talking about a goodness [*sic*] of fit in terms of philosophy or in terms of the mission or the vision of the college or in terms of an active involvement with the students. I guess people can have a good fit in terms of those things. But I think when people talk about a good fit in terms of those things, I think they also are thinking about, like you know, “Can I get along with you?” or “Would I be able to relate to this person?” (S8 personal communication, March 31, 2010)

Subjects often referenced “fit” as whether a prospective candidate’s personality would be harmonious with others serving on the committee and/or in the department within which the position resides:

I think that they [committee chairs] definitely choose members who think similarly and again, that organic piece, in terms of who gets on the committee; who gets on the committee is the people who are already in the department. People already in the department were hired by the people who were already in the department, and they were hired partly because we thought we could get along well with them. (S7 personal communication, April 7, 2010)

This idea of “fit” was also used in conjunction with the idea of finding faculty who would not disrupt the department’s or the faculty’s philosophy of diversity.

I think it's more complicated because people come with their set of expectations, their prior experience, their desire for tranquility, if you will. That's where that "fit" may come in. You don't want somebody who is going to, again using that cliché, "upset the apple cart." (S4 personal communication, April 5, 2010)

Some subjects described "fit" as a way to depict the identification of candidates with whom committee members share similar experiences. As one subject explained, "I still think that people have a tendency to look for similarities, almost a mirror image" (S4 personal communication, April 5, 2010). Describing colleagues' insistence on inclusion of the Ph.D. in the job announcement, another study subject referred to his questioning of the criterion because he believed that such insistence was a desire by committee members to have a pool of candidates with whom they shared the same credentials:

So what is the issue with the Ph.D.? They will come up with some excuse: "Well you know, they are more well rounded, blah blah blah." But I just think that they just see it as, you know, they had to go through their Ph.D., and they just don't respect people that don't have that kind of degree. (S10 personal communication, March 31, 2010)

One subject observed that having homogeneous committee members translates into the selection of candidates who also share those same characteristics. The subject described how "like-minded people" who share the same ideas, philosophies, and values tend to hire "like-minded," which resulted in a lack of diversity:

I also believe that people have a tendency to connect more easily and feel more of a comfort level with people who are like them.... [It] lends itself to the cliché of history repeating itself. So they like [minded people] hires like [minded people], and it's an ongoing

revolving door. There are some specific instances I could name, although I won't. I think a review of colleagues in various departments would bear witness to my belief, and that in any given department, if you have a number of, let's just say tall thin green people, there is a tendency for those to hire other tall thin green people. Occasionally this routine is disturbed for one reason or another. I think it is a pretty accurate generalization to say that like hires like. That's made it difficult I think to bring in people who are different. (S4 personal communication, April 5, 2010)

A colleague of color at the same study site described the same phenomenon as "internal, unspoken identity," explaining that "if a department is all White and has been for years, then those who got in know that's the thinking" (S2 personal communication, March 9, 2010).

Colorblindness. The most common theme discussed by subjects was the notion of being colorblind in the faculty search process. Colorblindness was described as an intentional effort to not attend to the racial/ethnic backgrounds of prospective candidates. Nine of the 12 subjects, regardless of ethnicity across all three study sites, discussed the idea of being colorblind in the review of applicants. One subject recounted hearing colleagues, both White and minority, commenting, "Well, we don't see color. We're very diverse as you can see" and "Color is not an issue for us at all" (S11 personal communication, March 14, 2008).

A few subjects shared that hiring the best could be considered in context with diversity, as one subject explained:

I think that both groups would essentially say that, [they] are saying to themselves that we are trying to hire the best. But one can be mindful, but the other can be purposefully trying not to even consider, to essentially, trying to look at the applicants in an objective manner. I just happen to believe that that is impossible,

that you can't be objective. There is no way to consider a candidate outside of a context. All the candidates are in a context, and so I think in some ways they end up fooling themselves, and I think at worst it is often just used as the rationalization for why we hired yet another White male or another White person, just in general whether it's male or female. Well, because we didn't even consider that. That wasn't something we thought was an important factor to consider because that doesn't reflect on their abilities or their qualifications. (S7 personal communication, April 17, 2010)

Another subject described how peers' dismissal of color in the search process served as a way to discount the positive influence an instructor's ethnicity can have on students and in the classroom. He characterized others' thinking:

[that] the very best regardless of color, which means that that's not a factor. That's not a plus. That can't be an advantage a faculty of color will [have] to the classroom. It discounts those advantages. They never say, they never articulate that, but I mean, that's the main result. (S5 personal communication, May 11, 2010)

Eight of the subjects discussed a search committee's desire to being colorblind when reviewing faculty applicants in order to "hire the best." One subject described a particular committee's concern that efforts to be more inclusive of diversity would "force" them to "to chose someone of color as a kind of token, uhm, instead of the person best suited for the position" (S11 personal communication, March 14, 2008). Some subjects acknowledged the existence of diversity, but did not believe it was relevant to the search process, as one subject explained:

Yeah, I think its disingenuous to [*sic*], yeah, you can't make this process color blind, you can't. And you shouldn't have to. I don't care what walks through the door, you know, you judge it on its human characteristics and whether it can teach and whether it can't teach and whether it understands its content or not, and you

choose. And I can't think of a person I know who would give a rat's rear if they were purple, pink, tall, short, rich, who cares. (S9 personal communication, March 24, 2010)

One of the subjects of color reported a difference among White faculty in comparison to minority faculty in the value diversity has when reviewing applicants' experience. He observed that "White folks tend to look more at the credentials" and "I just don't think that they give it [diversity] a higher score, so they don't see that as the highest priority; they are mostly looking at content" (S10 personal communication, March 24, 2010).

Six of the subjects explained that to not be colorblind would be employing the use of "quotas" and thus, would be "unfair." "It's...wanting to focus on the similarities, treat everyone the same kind of thing...singling out basically people racially or ethnically... that's not fair, because that is not treating everyone the same" (S7 personal communication, April 7, 2010).

Subjects expressed how not being colorblind and considering diversity in the faculty search process would be construed as discriminatory. This sentiment was expressed more by White subjects than minority subjects. One subject explained colleagues' rationale:

Then I think others can approach it more from the standpoint of "Let's not do this in terms of quotas. Let's not think about it. We're just going to hire the best applicants regardless of these things." I think, in some ways, it's almost more of, in some cases, it can be a justification for being colorblind, that we don't want to look at it because being color mindful would be discriminatory. (S7 personal communication, April 7, 2010)

Another subject, who is White, commented about the discomfort of diversity for White members of committees and the idea of discriminating against the majority:

So, I think it also makes the nondiverse, if there is such a term, people feel uncomfortable because they don't want to be caught supporting this one or that one. They want to look at the total picture, the totality of each candidate and base their decision on fact. Discrimination can go two ways. You can discriminate against the mainstream as well by saying "Okay, you're not this enough or that enough, so therefore we won't consider you." (S4 personal communication, April 5, 2010)

In discussing the competitiveness of the job market and finding quality faculty, another White subject shared that focusing on diversity could backfire:

We are looking for real cream-of-the-crop professional faculty that can really enhance the community; and, if you're not there, then we are going to recommend "No." Like we just have too many candidates to not to [sic]. Was ethnicity a factor? [It] wasn't salient to me, but I think it was just the overall big picture, what type of quality are they bringing. And I think that's the way it should be. 'Cause, you know, not that that's anything that's being proposed, but just like if there was a situation where its like, "Okay, we have this need, this feel to hire ethnic minorities" like in that kind of like [sic] affirmative action; I think that that can actually tend to backfire in many cases both because, you know, another faculty member might say, "They only got that job because they are a minority" or even the actual faculty member might think, "Oh, would I have gotten this job if I wasn't a minority?" I don't want that. That's divisive. That's not playing well in the sandbox. (S6 personal communication, March 24, 2010)

Two subjects described search committees' reluctance to receive blind demographic data about ethnicity whether the data are specific to faculty members in their own department or the applicant pools.

I think that's interesting and getting those back, it's good feedback, because it shocks a lot of committees. It's like "Dang, we only have 10% people of color? Wow." But, also, I think it's one of the areas where you're going to get a lot of flack because it's a number. It's not actually an idea anymore. (S7 personal communication, March 28, 2008)

Self-perception of having attained enlightenment about

diversity. Subjects had different views about the importance of diversity. Some White subjects characterized its importance in the hiring process as "a nonissue" (S9 personal communication, March 24, 2010) and a "moot point" (S12 personal communication, March 24, 2008). As one subject recounted, a "committee may feel, with some justification...that they are already thinking about these issues and feel like they are okay" (S5 personal communication, March 28, 2008). A subject of color explained the challenge of trying to educate White peers about diversity: "I think part of the problem is that people assume that if they are okay with people of color, then they are diverse, and I don't think that's it. Because it's not just about being okay" (S7 personal communication, March 14, 2008). Subjects reported that many of their peers consider themselves to be knowledgeable about and aware of diversity by nature of their education and their status as faculty working in higher education.

I think when you are at this level of education, I absolutely know that racism exists, I absolutely know that sexism exists...But I think that when you are dealing with people at this level of education, I think in academia, you have a different mindset by and large. If this were corporate, I would have to disagree. I am pretty sure that if you look at board rooms across America, they are still going to be pretty pasty and male. But most of the people I know, once you get to a certain level of education, I think you lose those kinds of biases

sometimes or you understand them better and compensate for them. (S9 personal communication, March 24, 2010)

One subject described the attitude of some of her colleagues from past experiences:

I remember years ago when we started with some of these diversity initiatives here, and we had these gatherings and people would be asked to partake or participate in some exercise; some people would just scoff, “This is so silly. Do educated people really need this?” And I’m talking about people who were not your entry level faculty or [administrative support staff] people. I’m talking about people in the hierarchy—former chairs, for example. (S4 personal communication, April 5, 2010)

Subjects of color held different views. One subject, who is a person of color, explained, “I’d like to think in academia we have enlightened people working to enlighten others in diverse ways of thinking and learning, but????” [subject shrugs and does not complete the sentence] (S2 personal communication, March 9, 2010). Another subject of color attributed it to a “lack of understanding and foresight” on diversity issues by her faculty peers (S11 personal communication, March 14, 2008).

Blaming applicant pools. Many of the White subjects acknowledged the homogeneity of the Anglo faculty on their campuses. One explained, “We acknowledge, ‘Hey we know we are pretty White.’ It sure would be nice if we weren’t...” (S9 personal communication, March 24, 2010). Both minority and White subjects expressed a need to diversify the pools; however, the level of responsibility in those efforts varied.

White subjects observed that part of the problem resided in a lack of ethnic diversity in the applicant pools. As one subject recounted, “so

much of the hiring, of course as you know, depends on the pools” (S4 personal communication, April 5, 2010). Another subject at a different site agreed:

The pool is the pool and as much progress as we’ve made in the United States, unfortunately there are only so many Native American [specific discipline] professors graduated [*sic*] out there, like what, five a year. I don’t think they are really looking to come to [DVCCD], oddly enough. (S9 personal communication, March 24, 2010)

Many of the White subjects believed that “that they go out of their way...doing all that could be done” (S9 personal communication, March 24, 2010) and engaging in “best efforts to get diverse pools” (S4 personal communication, April 5, 2010) and to advertise positions and attract minority applicants. However, they rarely provided specific examples of what those efforts were and often attributed the lack of diversity in the pools to external causes that were beyond their control, explaining that it is was “just fate, or serendipity” (S4 personal communication, April 5, 2010). One subject discussed the need for the district to take the lead regarding posting faculty positions:

I really liked the ideas about where to post. I think, we really, we would like the district to take the lead on where to post. I mean, you’re asking me about where should I post to attract [minority professors in a specific discipline]. Well, you’re asking a White female, and I don’t know...I don’t think it would necessarily be the committee chair’s failing if you did not post in places you were supposed to post, if you just didn’t know. (S12 personal communication, March 24, 2008)

Subjects of color provided examples and explained their own involvement in efforts to diversify the faculty applicant pools. One subject

who is a person of color recounted her attempts on a specific occasion to encourage colleagues in a search committee at her college to identify more diverse candidates for a particular position. The department asked her to identify where and how to advertise and recruit diverse applicants, even though she was not a member of the department and did not share the same discipline (S11 personal communication, March 14, 2008).

One subject of color observed that White committee members want to be inclusive, but they are more focused on objective qualities to measure a candidate's viability as a prospective colleague:

So, I'm not saying that the other faculty don't think that that's important; I just don't think that they don't. Maybe they just see that as a positive as opposed to being something as good as, you know, can they explain this content. (S10 personal communication, March 31, 2010)

Two White subjects explained that they attempt to be inclusive of diversity in their faculty searches; however, such efforts proved unsuccessful. One of the subjects described this lack of success:

The diverse candidates, of course, when they present themselves are somewhat of a delight because we don't know that they are diverse until they actually show up at the door. It was always very encouraging to me to find that, oh, we'd determine if this person's experience, credentials, and everything could be a potential fit for us. But for whatever reason, sometimes those interviews don't work out. (S4 personal communication, April 5, 2010)

Another subject at a different site concurred:

We're very open to being inclusive. We do everything we're required to do and beyond to make sure that our committees are, what are you going to call them, I don't want to say diverse, I want to say inclusive. You know our candidate pools. You know we do everything we are supposed to do, but I think the candidates

themselves sometimes feel uncomfortable. (S9 personal communication, March 24, 2010)

Explaining how diversity works in the faculty search process, one subject stated, “It was good to screen the applications with the idea that a good candidate was a diverse candidate. But again, it didn’t win them any points, you know. Whether it really counts for anything, I don’t know” (S12 personal communication, March 24, 2008). One of the subjects of color shared his belief that use of the rationale that “there is not many of them out there” is an “excuse” and referenced a department that has significant representation of both women and minorities in a field typically held by White men (S10 personal communication, March 31, 2010).

White subjects echoed the belief that the faculty would eventually become diverse due to the nature of the United States becoming more diverse. One of the younger subjects expressed his faith in such a probability being a natural outcome of time:

I want the best people to be in there, and I know a lot of those are going to be ethnic minorities. I’m not worried about it. At least in the 21st century at this point, maybe back in the 70s or something or earlier that might have been a real challenge. (S6 personal communications, March 24, 2010)

Summary

This chapter presented the three major themes found in the data: (a) the communication of diversity, (b) search committee dynamics, and (c) subjects’ observations, values, and beliefs. Within each of the major themes, categories emerged from which to explore and analyze how

diversity is perceived, manifested, and expressed in the faculty hiring process. Findings included variations and similarities in subjects' observations and experiences as members affiliated with various groups by specific identifiers (i.e., site, ethnicity, and employee status). Rather than addressing causation or making generalizations, the findings are presented as the descriptive experiences and insights of the study participants as a means of providing a holistic picture by which to better understand the phenomenon. Chapter five presents a discussion of the study results along with conclusions, implications for practice, and recommendations for future research.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to understand how ethnic/racial diversity is perceived, manifested, and expressed in the faculty hiring process by members of community college faculty search committees. Utilizing qualitative methodology, the researcher explored faculty search committee members' observations, values, and beliefs about ethnic/racial diversity as it relates to the hiring process.

The aim of this final chapter is to provide a discussion of the major themes found in the data. The discussion addresses each of the study's research questions by interpreting the findings specific to each question. The results and conclusions are presented as they relate to the study's theoretical framework of critical race theory. This chapter also addresses implications for practice and concludes with recommendations.

It is the researcher's belief that all the study subjects' comments about diversity were genuine and that they desired to be intentionally inclusive of others. However, variations existed in their degree of commitment and willingness to engage in practices that would allow and ultimately facilitate such inclusion. The researcher believes that these variations are best understood and through the framework of critical race theory.

Discussion of the Results and Conclusions

Discussion of the results and accompanying conclusions are based on the self-reported responses of the study subjects from Community

College of Water Valley (CCWV), Community College of Sunset Reef (CCSR), and Community College of Granite Way (CCGW). This section is organized according to the three research questions:

1. Are values and beliefs about ethnic/racial diversity commitment communicated to faculty search committees?
2. What observations do faculty search committee members have about their peers and college's values and beliefs about diversity?
3. What influence do values and beliefs have on the search committees and, if any, when is this influence evidenced in the selection process?

Research Question 1. Are values and beliefs about ethnic/racial diversity commitment communicated to faculty search committees?

The study participants reported that messages about ethnic/racial diversity were communicated to faculty search committees. The content of messages and the ways in which messages were communicated, however, varied. Subjects from CCWV reported very clear, consistent messages about diversity's value in the faculty search process from the committee chair, department chair, and the college's administration. Community College of Water Valley's communication of diversity's importance in the faculty search process coupled with the fact that CCWV has a higher representation of faculty of color appeared to parallel the literature's recommendations of the necessity of senior leadership's commitment to the institution becoming more inclusive of

underrepresented populations (de los Santos, 1994; Harvey, 1994; Kayes, 2006; Turner, 2002).

The CCWV subjects spoke of an institutional culture where diversity's value was publically affirmed. The subjects described their participation in explicit conversations about diversity's application to the faculty search process. This was not the case for subjects at CCSR and CCGW.

Community College of Sunset Reef and Community College of Granite Way subjects expressed confusion and uncertainty about the meaning of diversity, how it is defined at their institutions, and its relevancy in the faculty search process. The CCSR and CCGW subjects struggled to identify a diversity advocate from whom messages were communicated. The lack of clarity in diversity's value and the inability to identify a source from which messages originated led some subjects to describe their colleges as possessing only an "intellectual commitment" where diversity is claimed, but actions are passive. The idea of an "intellectual commitment" without any clear explanation of how such a commitment could be manifest into action exemplified how institutions can claim to value diversity but never engage in practice to actualize it. Kayes (2006) referred to such inconsistency as a myth of institutional diversity commitment.

For subjects from CCSR and CCGW, the definition of diversity was somewhat amorphous, making it difficult for them, as search committee

members, to ascertain its meaning and application. This lack of clarity resulted in diversity being open to interpretation and, ultimately, confusion as illustrated by subjects' inability to identify a specific source of the message or to articulate practical applications of diversity's value. In such a case, diversity and increasing the representation of minority faculty are not priorities, but additive in nature, described by White subjects at those sites as "nice" and a "delight" (S9 personal communication, March 24, 2010; S4 personal communication, April 5, 2010).

Critical race theory argues that failure to communicate a strong and explicit message about diversity and its value and application in the faculty search process supports these excuses as valid and thus allows the subtleties of racism to continue. A study subject of color described it as "finesse" racism, explaining how in search committees "people know what the rules are; they know the consequences of violating rules, so they finesse their ways around the rules" (S2 personal communication, March 9, 2010). By failing to be explicit about diversity's importance and application, CCSR and CCGW were complacent in allowing "finesse" racism to be exercised.

If community colleges are to address issues regarding diversity, administrators and faculty members must be willing to discuss it, and part of that discussion requires acknowledging ethnicity and race. Conversations related to topics of diversity are not new in the community college. The priority of diversity and reluctance to address it, however,

has waned as evidenced by the observations of subjects from CCSR and CCGW.

Addressing the underrepresentation of faculty of color in the community college means acknowledging that ethnicity and race are important and racism exists. Critical race theory recognizes that in order to participate in authentic discussions for the purpose of creating substantive change, community college personnel (administrators and faculty members) must first accept the existence of racism. However, acceptance of racism is extremely uncomfortable for people.

To commit to a discussion about race implies a willingness to deal with guilt, discomfort, and frustration, particularly among those who are privileged by their racial position on college and university campuses. Few White persons ...wish to be reminded that their Whiteness accrues unearned benefits and privileges. (Harper & Patton, 2007, p. 3)

The subjects reported that conversations about diversity and efforts to increase the representation of minority faculty at the community college were anxiety ridden and conflict producing. As a result, institutions appease diversity advocates with statements of inclusion, but such statements lack any significant, observable, measureable action to support it. Colleges' failure to communicate a strong message allows faculty to continue to engage in convenient, conventional, passive practices of the past. Failed practices that go unquestioned yield little change and result in things remaining the same. Institutions can publically claim to value diversity, but if no one understands what diversity means

and/or how it is applied, then it has no value. It is merely rhetoric. Such claims become, as CCSR and CCGW subjects described, only an intellectual commitment for which no one is responsible or accountable.

Research Question 2. What observations do faculty search committee members have about their peers and college's values and beliefs about diversity?

Subjects described significant level of anxiety on the part of their peers and other college personnel concerning discussions about ethnic/racial diversity in faculty search committees. This anxiety was expressed through negative connotations and a desire to avoid conflict. Because people were so uncomfortable discussing diversity among faculty, they seemingly preferred to discount and ignore the issue. Thus, claims of meritocracy and colorblindness emerged as appropriate and "fair" ways to review and "hire the best" candidates.

Critical race theory rejects liberalism's advocacy of colorblindness and its use of meritocracy, believing such beliefs fail to recognize the use of Whiteness, and the privilege that accompanies it, as internal, subjective biases within the system (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). Lewis (2007) defined meritocracy as being "based on the belief that individuals succeed or fail according to their own merit" (p. 32). McNamee and Miller (2008), however, asserted, "There is a gap between how people think the system works and how the system actually does work." Search committee members' continued belief in the validity of meritocracy absolves them of

responsibility in considering the possibility of racism in their outreach to and evaluation of prospective candidates of color.

Study subjects' negative connotations about diversity, specifically concerns that it would result in tokenism, quotas, and less qualified candidates, supports what Carter (1994) described as the dangers of personal subjective biases in the evaluation of prospective candidates of color. Like in society, the people in power—the White majority on the search committee—determine what activities, experiences, and credentials are worthwhile. Majority faculty members dictate the characteristics and values of the institutional culture and vice versa. The literature on community college search committees noted how the cultural practices (values, decision making) of a college influences its institutional practices (Harvey, 1994; Valadez, 1994).

Many study subjects focused on the idea of “qualified” in their search for prospective faculty in the applicant pools. Critical race theory challenges traditional measures of “qualified” as defined by faculty search committees. Writing about the power and the influence that the majority White faculty members and administrators possess, Moody (2004) explained:

The dominant majority group in an organization or society determines what customs, laws, language usage, and norms will be observed, saluted, and maintained. With its superior power and prestige, the dominant group can enforce these parameters and advance particular interests and needs. The dominant and privileged group determines the overall outlook of a society. (p. 8)

When citing structural barriers, such as blaming the applicant pools, committees perpetuate tacit negative assumptions (Townsend, 2006). Use of tacit negative assumptions allows one to ignore the possibility that institutional racism, privilege, and Whiteness might exist within the processes and practices of search committees. Furthermore, such assumptions place fault with the applicants of color for their own inability to achieve at the same rate and success as their White peers.

A claim of colorblindness serves as a tactic to ignore the use of Whiteness as the normative standard by which candidates are evaluated and to deny the power and privilege that accompanies it. By professing that race does not matter, one dismisses the unique experiences of people of color. By minimizing differences, emphasizing similarities, and desiring to treat everyone the same, search committees end up replicating themselves.

The lack of faculty of color demonstrates the system is flawed. Yet, even with its flaws, the system remains unchanged. Rather than address the existence of institutional racism in diversity policies and hiring practices, community college faculty search committees absolve themselves from responsibility by claiming the lack of a qualified and competent minority pool.

Research Question 3. What influence do values and beliefs have on the search committees and, if any, when is this influence evidenced in the selection process?

It was not the aim of this qualitative study to identify causation; thus it is difficult to ascertain what effects faculty search committee members' values and beliefs had on the outcomes of the faculty search process. However, subjects were able to describe observations about perceived influences on the faculty selection process. Subjects at all three research sites discussed "fit," often in conjunction with a prospective candidate's ability to mirror the qualifications, skills, and experience of the current faculty housed in the department and at the institution. Subjects reported the importance of "fit" and how often it resulted in search committees replicating themselves.

Harvey (1994) argued that the lack of faculty of color in community colleges is attributed to practices that seek to facilitate the hiring of people by people with whom they share similarities. "Faculty members, who operate at the core of the institution, tend to select others who share their academic and personal experience, their value orientations, and their outlooks, to join them" (Harvey, 1994, p.21). As a result, institutional practices and policies allow for the facilitation of privilege by those in power.

With no clear explanation of diversity, search committees were allowed to remove themselves from any sort of accountability and responsibility for diversity by blaming structural barriers as described by Opp and Smith (1994). Structural barriers were those things that were external, outside the search committee members' control. Subjects cited

structural barriers such as deficiencies in applicant pools (i.e., lack of qualified candidates of color). Their definitions of the term “qualified,” however, oftentimes utilized negative tacit assumptions. These subjects claimed that candidates of color were deficit in qualification criteria because the qualifications were defined using the “norms of White middle- and upper-class males” (Townsend, 2006).

Subjects illustrated such negative tacit assumptions, for example, when sharing observations about some committees’ insistence on the Ph.D. qualification. Despite being told by an administrator and others that inclusion of a Ph.D. as a desired qualifications could limit the diversity of the candidate pool, one White subject who has a Ph.D. insisted that screening applicants for a Ph.D. in that subject’s discipline: “We’re not that rare. There’s a hundred of us out there...Looking for a Ph.D. would be much more restrictive in the [another discipline], but [in the subject’s discipline], a Ph.D. is realistic” (S12 personal communication, March 24, 2008).

Critical race theory suggests that embedded into the faculty hiring process is the Whiteness standard as the norm by which all applicants are assessed. During the faculty hiring process, the evaluation of prospective candidates is conducted by the majority faculty, who are White. Having successfully negotiated these processes, the majority faculty invests in practices that validate their worth. Faculty members assert the practices are fair and just because their own success in acquiring positions in the

system confirms it and so they reject the idea that the current process does not work, despite an underrepresentation of faculty of color in the system. Choosing to be colorblind and treat everyone the same, search committee members select prospective faculty who look like themselves. Thus, meritocracy is legitimized and Whiteness is reinforced.

Implications for Practice

The critical research paradigm of the study, as well as the theoretical framework of critical race theory, advocate research for the purposes of challenging and transforming current practices. For these reasons, this study's findings and conclusions have implications for the hiring processes and practices of faculty search committees in community colleges.

The findings of this study support the literature's recognition that colleges and faculty search committees can publically claim to value diversity but engage in practices that are incongruent with such claims. Failure to address search committee members' values, beliefs, and behaviors despite the best institutional rhetoric will result in little change. Three implications ought to be considered by policy makers and community college administrators:

1. Institutions must communicate strong, clear, consistent messages about diversity's relevance as well as practical efforts to increase faculty of color representation. Ideally, diversity's value on the college campus should not have to be

communicated when hiring, rather it ought to be a message communicated at the institution throughout the year. This message should not be limited to specific months (e.g., Black history month, Hispanic heritage month). One of the subjects who is administrator who participated in this study explained the importance of the message:

That messaging [diversity's importance and value to the college] is happening throughout the environment all year long. When it comes time to setting a search committee, they're already thinking diversity is important. It is who we are, what we do, [and] we value it. When we get down to having the conversations with the search committee, it's not like a foreign conversation that's not connected to anything else. (S3 personal communication, April 29, 2010)

Passive communication and passive measures yield minimal, if any, positive results. Failure to communicate a strong message allows faculty to continue convenient, conventional practices of the past, which yield faculty with whom they share the same demographics—majority White faculty hiring majority White faculty.

2. Leadership is needed to advocate responsibility in diversity practices and hold people accountable for inclusive practices. People claim to desire equality in policies, yet inequities of practice exist. It is difficult to discern if the challenges lie in the lack of integrity in the claims or the behaviors. The current system is one of contradictions. It “applauds affording everyone

equality of opportunity, but resists programs that assure equality of results” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p. 24). Senior leadership and search committee chairs need to hold people accountable for inclusive practices and challenge the negative tacit assumptions committee members have about people of color.

3. Specific to the insistence of colorblindness and the effectiveness of meritocracy, faculty search committees’ definitions of “qualified” need to be challenged. There is a strong need to explain to faculty search committees the importance and the value of a diverse faculty and the barriers to such that exist in present practices and belief systems. The latter is very important. Committee members must recognize the inequities of the current system if there is any hope that practices will change and alternative strategies will be adopted. In order to transform the faculty search process, it is imperative to challenge and change the way community college faculty members think about the process.

Armed with liberalism’s belief that merit prevails, majority faculty defend the current system. The system empowers them to perpetuate it. An example of this is the prejudicial qualifiers used to evaluate prospective candidates of color. The assertion of quality fails to recognize the subjective nature of what defines “qualified.” Ethnic/racial diversity ought

to be considered in context because ethnicity and race do matter and have influence in the classroom, as one study subject described:

I just think that, I personally see them as relevant because your students have their own race and ethnicity and they, believe me, know the race and ethnicity of that professor they have; they know the gender of every professor they have and that has an effect. I mean, I can just think of the stereotype threat literature [referencing Steele & Aronson, 1995] that finds that you can just change the race or ethnicity of the person asking you the question, giving you the test to take and if they are somebody that essentially makes your race or ethnicity salient, then that's the stereotype that your group is going to do battle [with], and you will do worse. So, the race and ethnicity of your professors matter, and it may suddenly be effecting test scores (S7 personal communication, April 7, 2010).

The literature reports that colleges benefit from a diverse campus community and that faculty members of color have a positive impact on the achievement of minority students. The two study participants who are administrators acknowledged the importance of a diverse faculty to students, as one explained:

It's important because I know there are so few minorities on faculty, and our student population has always been a diverse student population. So I believe the faculty should be reflective of that student population because students have said to me point blank, "Why aren't there more people in faculty roles that look like me?" (S3 personal communication, April 29, 2010)

Issues and Challenges

A number of issues and challenges arose in this study relative to data collection, study participants, and the nature of qualitative methodology. The researcher believes that her successful negotiation of the research process and the cooperation and willingness of subjects to

participate was due to her intimate knowledge of the district processes and personnel. Doctoral peers of the researcher who lacked familiarity with the district expressed discouragement and frustration when trying to gain access to the same location for their respective studies.

The district's Institutional Review Board (IRB) process was complicated, confusing, and time-consuming. Submission of necessary paperwork and the ultimate IRB approval required two months, which did not include the time committed to completing all the necessary forms. Despite having attended workshops by IRB members, the researcher required the guidance and assistance of multiple reviewers and site personnel to assist her through the process.

The researcher encountered district and study site personnel's apprehension about this study. Institutional cultures are politically fueled by very strong personalities, opinions, and agendas. Furthermore, people do not speak freely regarding search committee processes due to the litigious nature and institutional climate of the hiring process within the district. The researcher was warned repeatedly by site and district personnel about recording the participant interviews and reminded of the need to maintain confidentiality of the subjects. She inferred that the district's IRB had some concerns approving this study due to its qualitative methodology of data collection (recording interviews) and the fact that faculty hiring can be controversial and litigious.

Gaining access to prospective subject information was challenging and bureaucratic. Upon receiving IRB approval, the researcher made numerous requests to the district human resources office seeking guidance and assistance, with little success. Information was eventually attained through the researcher's familiarity with the district's hierarchy, politics, and personnel.

Drawing names randomly to identify prospective subjects, the researcher found that only those subjects who knew the researcher responded to her request for participation. The degree of familiarity with which study participants and the researcher knew each other varied; however, all participating subjects were people with whom the researcher had at least been introduced on a previous occasion. As a result, it is important to recognize that the study subjects' responses may have been influenced by their desire to make a positive impression and/or provide a politically correct/socially acceptable response to the researcher. The researcher was unable to determine the degree to which that may have occurred but does believe that all subjects spoke honestly and authentically in describing their own experiences with and understanding of faculty search committees.

A final concern is related to the qualitative nature of the study. The focus of the study was not on identifying causation, and findings are not intended to be generalizable. The thick descriptions provided by the subjects when explaining the phenomenon may appear to be applicable to

other contexts; however, it is necessary to note that the findings are limited to the beliefs, values, and observations of the subjects at this study's three sites.

Recommendations for Future Research

The goal of this study was to investigate how values and beliefs about diversity may influence the hiring process for community college faculty. The research and analysis of findings of this study lead the researcher to make the following recommendations.

1. More research about community colleges and the faculty search process is needed. There is a lack of literature about community college efforts to diversify the faculty. The literature that exists is relevant, but more current research is needed that reflects present-day community college processes, practices, and rationales used to explain the failure of community colleges to reflect the ethnic/racial diversity of their students. It is difficult to address the challenges of diversifying the faculty in community colleges because little research exists about the problem.
2. It is recommended that future researchers utilize critical race theory (CRT) as an analytical and educational tool to examine, investigate, and challenge search committee processes and practices. The research literature recognizes racism and the underrepresentation of faculty of color in community colleges,

but institutions are doing little to remedy it. Resistance in acknowledging diversity and ethnicity and race on community college campuses is significant. Critical race theory can serve as a useful theoretical framework to identify the obstacles as well as analyze and address the policies and power structures that create and facilitate racism. Furthermore, CRT can provide a lens through which to reframe the diversity conversation.

Authentic address of racism and diversity within an institution is a difficult conversation to have. Political climates, personalities, and institutional agendas contribute to the fueling of resistance and conflict. It is easy to become distracted by competing "isms" as many underrepresented minority groups vie for majority privileges.

Although racism, the original –ism in American higher education, remains problematic and unresolved, it has declined in popularity as other –isms (i.e., sexism, ableism, ageism, heterosexism, classism) have taken their place in the diversity discussion. Moreover, conversations about cultural competence have replaced discussions about oppression and privilege. Although social justice on behalf of all groups is important, so, too, are the continual illumination of racial disadvantage and programs and services that focus on race. (Harper & Patton, 2007, pp. 3-4)

Summary

This chapter addressed the study's results and included the researcher's conclusions specific to each of the study's research questions. The discussion included references to findings in the literature and examination of the study's results utilizing the framework of critical race theory. Implications for practice were identified, and limitations—

issues and challenges—were presented. The chapter concluded with recommendations for future research.

“Teachers are at the heart of the community college mission and serve the learning needs of their communities in essential and unique ways” (Miller, 1997, p. 83). Community college faculty members are vital to facilitating student success. With increased enrollments of students of color, community colleges need to recognize the unique contributions that faculty have in affecting minority students’ persistence and retention. To truly address the depth of the issues and challenges associated with increasing the representation of faculty of color in community colleges, institutions must move beyond intellectual commitments and begin to engage in conversations and practices aimed at understanding why hiring practices for minority faculty fail to yield increased representation despite individual and institutional claims of inclusion.

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APPENDIX A
PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT EMAILS

First Email (#1): Invitation to Participate in Study

Sat, February 20, 2010 9:33:39 PM
Fujii Dissertation Request

Hello. My name is Stephanie Fujii. I am _____ at _____ and a doctoral student under the direction of Professor Caroline Turner in the division of [Educational Leadership & Policy Studies](#) in the [Graduate School of Education](#) at [Arizona State University](#). I am conducting a dissertation study investigating the perceptions about ethnic/racial diversity held by members participating on [community college faculty search committees](#).

I am recruiting individuals to participate in my study which would involve completion of a handwritten demographic survey and an [informational interview](#). It would last a total of 50 minutes (10 –survey; 40 for the interview) at a location which is most convenient to you (your office, my office, off campus). The survey asks general [demographic information](#). The interview will consist of questions that ask for your beliefs, perceptions and observations of diversity while participating on a [community college faculty search committee](#). You will not be asked questions about specific search committees and/or prospective candidates.

Your responses to the survey will be anonymous and all interviews will be kept confidential. Pseudonyms will be used for all institutions referenced in the study and aliases will be used for all participants. You have the right not to answer any question, and to stop the interview at any time.

I would like to audio tape the interviews for the purposes of data analysis. Interviews may be transcribed verbatim, but all references to college names or other people will also be anonymous employing use of a pseudonym. The interview tapes will be kept only for the purposes of transcription and afterwards will be destroyed. Tapes will be dismantled and transcripts shredded prior to disposal upon completion of the study.

Your participation in this study would be voluntary, and there is no payment for participation. **If you would be willing to participate, please respond to this email by Sunday, February 28** and I will follow up with the formal documents as approved by the IRB and scheduling of the interview.

Also, if you have any questions concerning the research study, please call me at xxx-xxx-xxxx (work)/602-954-1699 (home) or you can email me at sjf1912@yahoo.com. Thank you for your time and consider

Follow up Email (#2): Sent Upon Agreement to Participate

Sat, February 20, 2010 9:38:05 PM
Fujii Dissertation Request

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my research study for my dissertation. Attached is the [formal letter](#) of information and the [consent form](#) as approved by the IRB. Please read and review. Participation in my study involves completion of a handwritten demographic survey and an [informational interview](#). It would last a total of 50 minutes (10 –survey; 40 for the interview) at a location which is most convenient to you (your office, my office, off campus). The survey asks general [demographic information](#). The interview will consist of questions that ask for your beliefs, perceptions and observations of diversity while participating on a [community college faculty search committee](#). You will not be asked questions about specific search committees and/or prospective candidates. Your responses to the survey will be anonymous and all interviews will be kept confidential. Pseudonyms will be used for all institutions referenced in the study and aliases will be used for all participants. You have the right not to answer any question, and to stop the interview at any time. When you get a chance, could you please take a look at your calendar so that we could identify a time to meet and visit. Your assistance is ever so appreciated. Thank you.
Smiles, Stephanie

APPENDIX B
PARTICIPANT INFORMED CONSENT

February 20, 2010

Dear Faculty Search Committee Member:

My name is Stephanie Fujii. I am a doctoral student under the direction of Professors Caroline Turner and Alfredo de los Santos in the division of Educational Leadership & Policy Studies in the Graduate School of Education at Arizona State University. I am conducting a dissertation study investigating the perceptions about ethnic/racial diversity held by members participating on community college faculty search committees.

I am inviting your participation, which would involve completion of a handwritten demographic survey and an informational interview. It would last a total of 50 minutes (10 –survey; 40 for the interview) at a location which is most convenient to you (your office, my office, off campus). The survey asks general demographic information. The interview will consist of questions that ask for your beliefs, perceptions and observations of diversity while participating on a community college faculty search committee. Approximately 15 of subjects will be participating in this study. The study will run from December 2009 through December 2010. You will not be asked questions about specific search committees and/or prospective candidates.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. There is no payment for your participation. If you choose not to participate or to withdraw at any time, there will be no penalty. It is ok for you to say no. Even if you say yes now, you are free to say no later, and withdraw from the study at any time. Non participation or withdrawal from the study will not affect employment status, nor will your decision affect your relationship with the college/district or otherwise cause a loss of benefits to which you might otherwise be entitled. You have the right not to answer any of the questions (survey and interviews), skip it, and to stop the interview at any time. Should you choose to withdraw from the study, your interview tape/transcript will be destroyed immediately and not used in the data set.

There is very little research on search processes for community college faculty and what does exist is quantitative in nature. This is a qualitative study and so the information gathered is not generalizable. Rather this research seeks greater understanding for how “diversity” is defined, discussed and used (or not) in the search processes for community college faculty. Although there is no direct benefit to you, your participation enables contribution to the profession’s scholarship, and will help to inform future efforts and research on the topics of community college faculty hiring processes and diversity. There are no known foreseeable risks or discomforts to your participation in taking part in this

study, but in any research, there is some possibility that you may be subject to risks that have not yet been identified.

Your responses to the demographic survey will be anonymous and all interviews will be kept confidential. Pseudonyms will be used for all institutions referenced in the study and aliases will be used for all participants. The results of this study may be used in reports, presentations, or publications but your name and the college/district will not be known nor will it be used to reference any of the information. If applicable, results will only be shared in the aggregate form.

I would like to audio tape the interviews for the purposes of data analysis. The interview will not be recorded without your permission. If you give permission for the interview to be taped, you have the right to ask for the recording to be stopped. Interviews may be transcribed verbatim, but all references to college names or other people will also be anonymous employing use of a pseudonym. The interview tapes will be kept only for the purposes of transcription and afterwards will be destroyed. Audio tapes will be store in a locked file cabinet until they are destroyed. Tapes will be dismantled and transcripts shredded prior to disposal upon completion of the study. Please let me know if you do not want the interview to be taped; you also can change your mind after the interview starts, just let me know. Transcription of tapes will occur within three weeks from the time of the interview. After being transcribed, the tapes will be destroyed.

You are encouraged to ask questions at any time about the nature of the study and the methods. Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time, there will be no penalty. Please contact me with suggestions or concerns prior to or after the interview at the contact information listed below.

I thank you most sincerely for your time and consideration.

Sincerely

Stephanie J. Fujii,
Ph.D. Student, Educational Leadership & Policy Studies
Fulton Institute & Graduate School of Education
Arizona State University
sjf1912@yahoo.com
602-954-1699 (home)/xxx-xxx-xxxx (work)

CONSENT FORM

Respondent Name
(Print): _____

Respondent Title: _____

Contact Information:

Phone Number: _____

E-mail address _____

If you agree to participate in this project, please sign below:

I (do do not) grant permission to be quoted directly in the report.

I (do do not) grant permission to have the interviews audio taped.
The respondent has the right to preview the tapes upon request.

Respondent: _____ Date: _____

Researcher: _____
Date: _____

If you have any questions about your rights as a subject/participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the IRB Office, Diamond Vista Community College District (DVCCD) by email at _____ or by phone: (xxx) xxx-xxxx.

If you have any questions about your rights as a subject/participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board, through the ASU Research Compliance Office, at (480) 965-6788.

APPENDIX C
DEMOGRAPHIC SURVEY

Handout Prior to Interview

Please complete the following demographic information to provide information on your background for this project. Thank you

1. What is your position/title?
2. Department/Division:
3. College:
4. How many years have you been with
 - a) Division:
 - b) College:
 - b) District:
5. Approximately how many faculty search committees have you been on?
 - a) Which disciplines?
 - b) Have you ever chaired a faculty search committee? ____ yes
____ no
6. What is your racial ethnic background?
7. Indicate your gender _____ Male _____ Female _____
Transgendered
8. Age (check range):

22 - 30	
30 - 40	
40 - 50	

50 - 60	
60 - 70	
70+	

APPENDIX D
INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Introduction (personal background)

Overview of project and purpose of interview

1. Share with me about some of your general perceptions and observations regarding diversity and faculty search committees.
2. What kinds of values and beliefs about ethnic/racial diversity commitment are communicated to faculty search committees?
3. Where do they come from? Who communicates these values and beliefs?
4. When and what do you think might be their influence in the search committee and the selection process?
5. How do personalities come into play?
6. I am very interested in your experience and insight as one who has participated in faculty search committees. I have asked several questions, but is there anything else you would like to add? There may be areas that I did not ask about that are very important to address regarding your experience regarding facilitating inclusiveness of diverse applicants.

Thank you for your time and participation in my study and for your efforts to make a meaningful contribution to the diversity research about community college faculty.

APPENDIX E
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD EXEMPTION

To: Caroline Turner
ED

From: Mark Roosa, Chair
Soc Beh IRB

Date: 11/23/2009

Committee Action: **Exemption Granted**

IRB Action Date: 11/23/2009

IRB Protocol #: 0911004574

Study Title: Qualitative Investigation of Perceptions About Ethnic/Racial Diversity Held By
Members Participating On Community
College Faculty Search Committees

The above-referenced protocol is considered exempt after review by the Institutional Review Board pursuant to Federal regulations, 45 CFR Part 46.101(b)(2) .

This part of the federal regulations requires that the information be recorded by investigators in such a manner that subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects. It is necessary that the information obtained not be such that if disclosed outside the research, it could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability, or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

You should retain a copy of this letter for your records.

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