2012

An exploratory case study of racial climate in an academic unit at a predominantly white, southern institution

Mark A. Dochterman

Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/gradschool_dissertations

Recommended Citation

https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/gradschool_dissertations/1384

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School at LSU Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in LSU Doctoral Dissertations by an authorized graduate school editor of LSU Digital Commons. For more information, please contact gradetd@lsu.edu.
AN EXPLORATORY CASE STUDY OF RACIAL CLIMATE IN AN ACADEMIC UNIT AT A PREDOMINANTLY WHITE, SOUTHERN INSTITUTION

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

In

The Department of Educational Theory, Policy, and Practice

by

Mark A. Dochterman
B.A., Illinois College, 2002
M.A., Ball State University, 2004
May, 2012
Acknowledgements

The utmost gratitude and appreciation go out to my mother and father who taught me right from wrong, the value of a dollar, and the meaning of a day’s work. They have stood behind me at every close call and thin hour. They made the foundation of my existence so solid that I have been able step outside of myself and examine the workings of the world around me, knowing that I am safe no matter what the course. This is a privilege I have come to realize that I can never repay. At their moments of pride in my brother and me they play the song *Forever Young*. I would like to take this opportunity to play it back to them:

May the good Lord be with you down every road that you roam  
And may sunshine and happiness  
Surround you when you're far from home  
And may you grow to be proud, dignified, and true  
And do unto others as you'd have done to you  
Be courageous and be brave  
And in my heart you'll always stay  
Forever young

Dr. Glen Stamp my major professor at Ball State University, you believed in me and were tireless in your efforts to help me attain my first publication.

Dr. Marco Barker and Dr. Jennifer Loftin. Together were “The 04 cohort,” but during my time in Louisiana you were the best friends and colleagues I could ask for. Without your support and commiseration I would not have completed this process.

Dr. Marietta Del Favero, you actually read my application essay to LSU thoroughly and found me an assistantship in the field of student affairs. It was that GA position that led me to the most beneficial career experience I have had to date, working in the LSU Honors College. You will be missed

To the Honors College, Dr. Nancy Clark, Dean of the LSU Honors College, you took a chance on a GA that claimed he could work out the problems among the Honors College student
organizations; Dr. Granger Babcock, Cindy Seghers, and Jeremy Joiner, I learned so much from each of you professionally, but more than that you were like a family to me here in Louisiana. I am blessed and grateful to have colleagues and friends of this caliber.

Dr. Kim MacGregor, my dissertation committee chair, you were there when others left. You have given so much of yourself to help the Higher Education Administration students in our time of need. You prodded without pushing, and draft after draft you helped me make this work better. And to my dissertation committee members, Dr. Roland Mitchell, Dr. Brian Bourke, Dr. Earl Cheek, and Dr. Ruth Bowman for participating in this process.

Finally, to my wife Justine, your unquestioned belief and support have carried me through more times in this process than you know. For us, as always, we are finishing and just beginning at the same time.

Simply, honestly thank you.
Table of Contents

Acknowledgements ............................................................................................................. ii
List of Tables ........................................................................................................................ vii
List of Figures..................................................................................................................... viii
Abstract .............................................................................................................................. ix

Chapter 1: Introduction ........................................................................................................ 1
  Rationale and Significance ............................................................................................... 4
  Research Questions .......................................................................................................... 5
  Definition of Terms .......................................................................................................... 5
  Limitations ....................................................................................................................... 6

Chapter Two: Literature Review .......................................................................................... 8
  Critical Race Theory ......................................................................................................... 9
    A Definition of Critical Race Theory .............................................................................. 10
    Critical Race Theory in Education .............................................................................. 12
  Interest Convergence ..................................................................................................... 13
  Critique of Critical Race Theory .................................................................................... 14
  White Identity Development Theory ............................................................................. 15
    Contact ......................................................................................................................... 17
    Disintegration .............................................................................................................. 17
    Reintegration ............................................................................................................... 18
    Pseudoindependence ................................................................................................. 18
    Immersion/Emersion ................................................................................................. 18
    Autonomy .................................................................................................................... 19
  Critiques and Challenges of Helms .............................................................................. 19
  White Identity Research Since Helms ........................................................................... 21
  Whites, Inclusion, and Diversity in Organizations ......................................................... 23
  Faculty of Color .............................................................................................................. 26
    Work Environment ..................................................................................................... 27
    Intersections of University Mission, Departmental Goals and Individual Power ....... 28
    The ‘Pipeline Problem’ ............................................................................................... 29
  Doctoral Students of Color ............................................................................................ 29
  Whites, Inclusion, and Diversity in Higher Education: Campus Climate ...................... 31
    The Transformational Tapestry Model ...................................................................... 33

Chapter Three: Methodology ............................................................................................... 40
  Case Study Design ......................................................................................................... 41
  Case Selection ................................................................................................................ 42
  Case Description ............................................................................................................ 42
  Context of the Case: The University ............................................................................. 44
  Data Collection ............................................................................................................... 46
  Interviews ....................................................................................................................... 46
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White Identity and Social Identity</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toward a Transformational Tapestry Model of Academic Unit Climate</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest Convergence: A Source of Progress, an Obstacle to Success</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significance</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix A - Interview Protocols</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix B – Focus Group Interview Executive Summary</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix C – Coding Tables</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix D - IRB Consent Form</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vita</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
List of Tables

Table 3.1 - Faculty and Student Aggregate Demographics ..................................................44
Table 3.2 - Faculty by Rank, Sex, and Race/Ethnicity ..........................................................46
Table 3.3 - Doctoral Students by Sex and Race/Ethnicity .....................................................47
Table 3.4 - Coding Scheme ....................................................................................................51
Table 6.1 - Comparison of Relationships between Dimensions of Climate .........................122
List of Figures

Figure 2.1 - The Transformational Tapestry Model .................................................................36
Figure 5.1 - Comparison of the Original TTM to the Adapted TTM ........................................117
Figure 6.1 - Transformation Through Intervention....................................................................125
Abstract

Research describes faculty of color as a key to an equitable future for higher education. However, this approach problematically places the responsibility for multiculturalism on the shoulders of these individuals. This embedded, critical case study explored the racial climate of an academic unit in a southern, predominantly white institution. Through the lens of critical race theory I examined how the racial climate of the unit impacted the perceptions, roles, and relationships differently for faculty of color, doctoral students of color, white faculty, and white doctoral students and how the case in question exemplified Rankin and Reason’s (2008) six dimensions of campus climate within the Transformational Tapestry Model (TTM).

Data collection included twenty one-hour individual interviews with doctoral students, faculty, and administrators. This interview data was supplemented with a participant observation of a focus group interview, participant observation in a Diversity Team meeting, document analysis of the unit’s five-year diversity plan, course syllabi, learning outcomes, and publications of the unit.

The perceptions, roles and relationships within the unit were found to vary distinctly between white faculty, faculty of color as well as white students, and students of color. Specifically, the coalescence between the academic and social experiences within the unit exacerbated the formation of an in-groups and out-groups. This in turn impacted the academic experiences of the participants.

When compared to the TTM, findings from this study supported the existence of the six dimensions of climate within the unit but suggests that 1) these dimensions were expressed differently by the academic unit than they at the campus-wide level and 2) the relationships between the six dimensions in the academic unit diverged from those found in the original TTM.
Findings from this study have implications for the symbolic, fiscal, educational and administrative actions of academic units seeking to improve their racial climate. Future areas of research should consider further adapting the TTM to fit an academic unit, the impact of structural diversity within tenure and promotion committees on the tenure and promotion of faculty of color, the potential link between social identity and racial identity within a unit.
Chapter 1: Introduction

As I moved to the South from the Midwest to begin my doctoral studies I brought with me many stereotypical assumptions about race relations in my new place of residence. Some of these have been met and others have been challenged. Sparked by these experiences I soon found myself living with my first African American roommate and taking courses under feminist and black critical race theorists. Never before had the issue of race been so salient in my life, and never before had I desired to contribute to some process that would lead toward racial equality.

At the same time I found myself struggling to understand how a blonde haired, blue-eyed male with the ability to trace his heritage back to Europe could find a footing in the dialog surrounding race. In my first attempt to deal with this struggle in an academic setting, I was all but ignored by a group of black and latino/a scholars while giving a paper presentation at a professional conference. This may or may not have been justified, but after this experience I came to see and feel that many ways of thinking about race distrusts, silences, or precludes the existence of whites that hope and act to create an equitable future in education.

I do not assume that all members of a disenfranchised population experience and accept oppression the same way. I, in turn, refuse the notion that all members of a dominant population experience and accept privilege in the same way. Unfortunately, a considerable amount of research seeks only the dominant or minority voice and in doing so homogenizes the voice of those groups, precluding the possibility of dissention from within the group. Through this inquiry I hope to better understand how white doctoral students, doctoral students of color, white faculty, and faculty of color manage the current landscape of privilege and inequality together at a predominantly white, southern institution.
A growing body of research indicates that faculty of color are one of the keys to a more equitable future for higher education. Antonio (2002) describes faculty of color as integral mentors and role models to students of color. Hurtado (2001) posits that faculty of color prepare white students for a world that is consistently becoming a more multicultural world. Faculty of color are also noted for implementing a broader range of pedagogical techniques and having more interactions with students than their white counterparts (Astin, Antonio, & Astin, 1997; Umbach, 2006). However, characterizing faculty of color in this way is problematic because it places an unequal amount of responsibility for multiculturalism and curricular diversity on the shoulders of a few diverse individuals. A lack of acceptance, appreciation, and scholarly recognition, and high service loads (Williams & Williams, 2006) as well as a lacking critical mass within a department often leads faculty of color to a sense of isolation and low job satisfaction (Turner & Meyers, 2000; Neimann & Dovidio, 2005). These factors often lead faculty of color to indicate that their experiences represent what Sandler and Hall (1986) originally referred to as a chilly climate. Efforts to address diversity and climate are common at the university-wide level.

At the university level, the missions and agendas of most universities contain language suggesting that increased diversity is a priority for the institution, but a lack in diversity on predominantly white campuses prevails. Knowles and Harletson (1997) contend that one of the keys to changing the status quo in higher education lies in university-wide policy but in the units within universities that have the autonomy to enact, or avoid, policies related to diversity and equality irrespective of university initiatives. For example Quezada & Loque (2004) describe colleges, schools and departments within universities as the key influencers on the hiring and retention of faculty of color. Quezada & Loque call for an evaluation of the embedded processes
by which academic units recruit and retain faculty of color and suggest that successful
maintenance of diversity efforts requires engagement from all members of the department, not
just faculty of color.

Critical race theory (CRT) has sought to explain how current power structures impede
diversification of faculty. CRT research, focusing on the perspective of historically
underrepresented groups within higher education, supports the existing research on the
challenges facing faculty of color, but as the lack of diversity among faculty persists, the CRT
frame insists on generating actionable items and challenging the status quo (Villipalando &
Delgado Bernal, 2002). Villipalando and Delgado Bernal (2002) call for future research to make
use of “methods and theoretical frameworks that contribute new perspectives to old and
persisting problems” (p. 263).

In contrast, the roles of whites in higher education have been less clearly defined in the
research. The work of Janet Helms (1995) has sought to describe the process by which a whites
develop from this unawareness of racial implications associated with their beliefs attitudes and
values to an awareness of whiteness and the associated privileges and finally to the adoption of a
non-racist white identity. More recent research on white identity suggests that white identity is
more complex, fluid, and context specific than originally conceived (McDermott & Samson,
2005; Croll 2007). These researchers call for considerations of white identity as it is mitigated
within certain physical and social environments. Little research exists on white identity, or white
advocacy for diversity within higher education. The research that does exist focuses on the
experiences of white faculty as allies for diversity, but does not explain how those actions are
perceived by others or how they contribute to the local environment.
In response to the persistent lack of diversity on many campuses, Rankin and Reason (2008) created the Transformational Tapestry Model, a campus-wide approach to assessing and transforming campus climate. The Transformational Tapestry Model considers current relations within a university that includes a historical frame of reference, access and retention, research and scholarship, inter-group and intra-group relations, curriculum and pedagogy, university policies and services, and external forces as dimensions of campus climate. This research is primarily quantitative and survey based focusing on university-wide policy and approaches to diversity. This approach, while important, does little to explain the process of climate as it is constructed by individuals within the departmental hierarchy of the university.

**Rationale and Significance**

The current state of the literature is problematic for several reasons. First the existing literature homogenizes the perspectives of white members of the academic community as purveyors of the status quo. This in turn provides no means by which to recognize or provide voice to white academics who seek to promote diversity in the university. Second, research related to equality in higher education has considered the dominant perspective and the underrepresented perspective, but little has been done to examine the interplay between the two. Finally, the current literature has focused on campus-wide climate and individual identity, but no research looks at this phenomenon within specific academic units of a university. Units within the university have a much more direct influence on faculty hiring, curriculum of the unit, course content, student recruiting, and social events associated with the unit, and as such could potentially serve a key role in the efforts to improve racial climate. This research seeks to address these gaps by considering the climate of one academic unit that has been recognized for its efforts to move toward diversity. Rankin and Reason’s (2008) Transformational Tapestry
Model provides a framework for identifying dimensions of racial climate within an academic unit. Critical race theory provides a lens through which to consider that racial climate in terms of the dominant perspective, the underrepresented perspective, and the interplay between these two perspectives. The study is guided by the following research questions:

**Research Questions**

RQ1: How does the racial climate of the unit impact the perceptions, experiences, roles, and relationships differently for faculty of color, doctoral students of color, white faculty, and white doctoral students?

RQ2: How does the racial climate of the academic unit exemplify Rankin and Reason’s (2008) six dimensions of campus climate?

**Definition of Terms**

Southern - The term southern in this study refers to the five Gulf South states. These states include Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida. This definition was chosen because it represents commonalities in geography history and culture across those states as well as commonalities in the perceptions of these states based on that geography history and culture.

Predominantly White Institution (PWI) – For the purpose of this study the term PWI refers to public, research universities that did not openly admit students of color prior to the Brown v Board hearing, and currently enroll less than 30% of their student population from historically underrepresented groups.

Academic Unit – In this study the term academic unit refers to a degree granting school or college within a research university that has a dean, its own faculty, and both graduate and undergraduate programs.
Climate – This study implements Rankin and Reason’s (2008) definition of climate which they describe to be “attitudes, behaviors, and standards/practices that concern the access for, inclusion of, and level of respect for individual and group needs, abilities, and potential” (p. 264).

Faculty of Color/Students of Color – As the unit contains full/tenure-track faculty that are white, African American, and Asian American, this study uses the terms faculty of color to refer to African American and Asian American full/tenure-track faculty. Similarly as the unit contains doctoral students that are African American and Asian American, this study uses the term students of color to refer to African American and Asian American doctoral students.

Limitations

This study is a qualitative exploration of racial climate as it applies to an academic unit. The transferability of the findings is limited by the single case design and the grouping of both African American and Asian American participants into the same embedded unit. Transferring these findings to other cases should be done cautiously, considering these limitations and the specifics of the case.

This study takes an in-depth look at one critical case, chosen because the case exists in circumstances comparable to that required of an existing theory. This provides the study with a richer, thicker understanding of that case. However, considering a singular case limits the ability of this study to draw inferences beyond the case. Transferring findings of this study to other cases requires careful of the impact that the field of the unit has on the approach to diversity, its situation in a southern predominantly white institution, and its status as an autonomous academic unit within that institution.
Findings in the study are also limited by the choice to group all faculty of color into an embedded unit and all students of color into an embedded unit. This was useful to the study in that it provided a larger group of individuals to represent the voice of individuals of color. However it precludes the study’s ability to account for the differences in experience of different racial groups within that embedded unit. The embedded units of faculty of color and doctoral students of color include participants that self identify as African American and Asian American. Some responses from faculty and students of color suggested differences in the experiences of these two demographic groups within the embedded unit. For example Asian American doctoral students discussed issues that the African American students did not, such as speaking a language other than English in front of colleagues. Chapter two reviews the literature relevant to this study.
Chapter Two: Literature Review

There is consensus in the literature that a diverse faculty provides an important value to a university (Tierney, Minor, & Venegas, 2004; Umbach, 2006) making the persisting challenges to hiring and retention of faculty of color an ever more important issue in higher education (Turner, Gonzales, & Wood, 2008). However critical race theorists question the notion of seeking faculty and students of color based on a value that they bring to the institution rather than for the sake of equality. In this chapter I outline critical race theory and white identity development theory as conceptual frameworks for this study. I then examine literature on whites in organizations and literature on faculty of color and doctoral students of color in higher education. Finally, I examine campus climate, specifically Rankin and Reason’s (2008) Transformational Tapestry Model, and suggest the application of this model as a means by which to consider the roles relationships and experiences of faculty of color, white faculty, doctoral students of color, and white doctoral students within a specific academic unit.

Several studies have suggested best practices associated with success in hiring and retaining faculty of color (Antonio, 2002; Smith, Turner, Osei-Kofi, & Richards, 2004). Despite following such practices, campus climate continues to negatively affect the diversity efforts of predominantly white institutions (Jackson, 2004; Neimann & Dovidio, 2005). Research has sought the voice of disenfranchised faculty as a means by which to better understand the climate of university settings that perpetuate inequality (Dowdy, Givens, Murillo, Shenoy, & Villenas, 2000; Williams & Williams, 2006; Jackson, 2004; Villipalando & Delgado Bernal, 2002). However, research on white advocacy for diversity is “scarce at best” (Welp, 2004, p. 6). White identity development research and research on whites in organizations considers the varied roles that whites play in organizations and education (Loftin, 2010). Rankin and Reason’s (2008)
Transformational Tapestry Model provides several empirically based factors associated with campus-wide climate, but no research currently considers the racial climate of sub-units of a university as a part of the larger campus climate. As such, little is known about the roles and experiences of individual faculty and staff within that unit as it contributes to creating a school/college level climate within the university at large.

It is through the theoretical framework of critical race theory that this research will examine the factors that contribute to school/college climate. Delgado and Stefancic describe critical race theory as an outgrowth of critical legal studies that provided a theoretical means by which to discuss whiteness as the norm (Sheets, 2000). This body of research spans across multiple fields of study but maintains some common themes including “whites in opposition to others, deconstructing whiteness as the norm, and decreasing racism” (Sheets, 2000, p. 15). The increased interest in the study of people of color and the desire of some white scholars to redefine whiteness has created space for critical race theory in new fields and has promoted the use of new methodology. For example, in psychology, white racial identity development originated from investigations of black racial identity (Carter, 1995; Helms, 1990; Sheets, 2000).

**Critical Race Theory**

Critical race theory research spans across multiple fields but maintains common themes including: working class racism, racism in history (Roediger, 1991), the legal construction of whiteness (Lopez, 1996), white feminist racism (Frankenberg, 1993), whiteness as an identity associated with resources, power, and opportunity (Lipsitz, 1998), the struggle to be defined as white (Brodkin, 1998; Ignatiev, 1995), and race and class (Wray & Newitz, 1997).
A Definition of Critical Race Theory

Since Plessy v. Ferguson in 1896, the concept of colorblindness has been a part of the major discourse of American society (Tate, 1997). Advocates for race consciousness denote colorblindness as a specific value among whites, but argue that maintaining colorblindness is both nearly impossible (Aleinikoff, 1991) nor capable of supporting social justice in the long term (Crenshaw, Gotanda, Peller, & Thomas, 1995). In reaction to Plessy v. Ferguson’s rhetorical stance of equality through colorblindness and the concrete effects of the implementation of separate but equal policies, African American leaders in the early 1900s sought to increase the number and quality of African American litigators (Tate, 1997). From the 1930s to the 1950s, Charles Hamilton Houston, Dean of the Howard Law School and chief general counsel for the NAACP, and his colleagues used “carefully planned lawsuits to challenge the doctrine of separate but equal. This ‘social engineering’ strategy, led to the Brown v. Board lawsuit in 1954” (Tate, 1997, p.205). This social engineering approach would become the basis for critical legal studies.

In 1969 Derek Bell accepted a position on the law faculty of Harvard University. “Bell made it clear that he viewed teaching as an opportunity to continue his civil rights work in a new arena” (Tate, 1997, p. 206). Simultaneous to Derek Bell’s early work in applying Charles Houston’s social engineering strategy in the classroom, a post-civil rights retrenchment had begun. Many social justice agendas had slowed or were regressing (Tate, 1997). As a result many professors and scholars integral to civil rights reform began to question the refreshed discourse of colorblindness. Some of these scholars began building upon the legal and scholarly discourse of the civil rights era, beginning the legal movement of Critical Legal Studies and the parallel scholarly movement of Critical Race Theory (CRT) (Tate, 1997).
Without the courtroom to define success, CRT scholars sought to move beyond an abstract set of ideals and define the key elements of the CRT approach (Taylor, 2000). Various authors have contributed to the conversation about the definition and bounds of CRT, and as such various forms and implementations have arisen. Hurtado (2001) describes the Critical Race Theory as an interpretive framework consisting of six key components:

- assumes racism is endemic to American life
- expresses skepticism towards dominant claims of neutrality, objectivity, colorblindness, and meritocracy
- challenges ahistoricism and insists on contextual/historical analysis of institutional policies
- insists on recognizing the experiential knowledge of people of color and our communities of origin in analyzing society
- is interdisciplinary and crosses epistemological and methodological boundaries
- works toward the end of eliminating racial oppression as a part of the broader goal of ending all forms of oppression (p. 245)

Solórzano and Yosso (2002) extend these components arguing that CRT research itself should be transformative in that it must offer some solution or clear practical application towards ending some form of racial oppression.

As CRT insists on the recognition of the experiential knowledge of people of color, CRT scholars suggest that in order to appreciate the perspective of the oppressed the voice of a particular contributor must be understood in terms of that individual’s own narrative (Delgado & Sefancic, 1993). Tate (1997) posits that this emphasis on individuality in CRT makes it hard to define discreetly. This emphasis on voice has a direct correlation to the methods by which CRT scholars commonly conduct research. Narrative, storytelling, and allegory are three means by which Derek Bell (1994) provides meaning to the experiences of the disempowered. More recent CRT work has built upon these methods and included counter-stories, narratives, testimonies and oral history (Dillard, 2000) and others have included qualitative case studies, thematic analysis
of interviews and observations (Lapayese, 2007). As CRT has developed it has influenced more fields of scholarship including education (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) argue that the conception of race in the study of education offers the benefits of the explanatory power and that the transformative emphasis of CRT may move education closer to a place of racial equality.

**Critical Race Theory in Education**

Parker and Lynn (2002) position CRT in education as a “discourse of liberation” that can be used to advance research and methodology related to racism (p. 7). Several studies have since espoused Parker and Lynn’s CRT as a discourse of liberation approach. Alleman’s (2007) study implemented critical race policy analysis in a study that suggests majority-Mexican American school districts are disadvantaged by finance policy, calling for an educational policy reform in Texas. Iverson (2007) used a CRT framework to conduct a qualitative analysis of diversity action plans at 21 universities. Using the CRT lens Iverson’s work suggested that well intentioned diversity plans often reinforce exclusion by defining people of color as “outsiders, at-risk victims, commodities, and change agents” (p. 586). Lopez (2003) implemented CRT as a framework for a qualitative interview based study that highlighted how Latino immigrant parents hold high educational expectations for their children despite their low levels of traditionally defined parent involvement. The CRT approach helped highlight that these parents expressed concern for their children’s education, but less traditionally defined ways. Ovando’s (2001) combined CRT framework with case study analysis to study the disengagement of minority students in schools. Ovando’s (2001) case study noted that that school administrators used what they believed to be neutral policies to address disengagement problems, but that policies intended to be race neutral in environments with higher levels of structural diversity only worsen
racially charged tensions in schools and led to higher levels of disciplinary action against and eventually disengagement of students of color. Smith, Yosso, and Saloranzo (2007) implemented CRT methodology to create a counter-story to the popular notion of racial priming of blacks and whites, focusing on the marginalization of black males in higher education. The researcher’s counter-story offers an account of a university administrator who, while fully intending to protect the interests of the students, in response to an attack on a professor unintentionally marginalizes the black males within the campus community. Smith, Yosso, and Saloranzo offer this counter-story as a memorable indictment of how a negative racial climate contributes to the likelihood that campus administrators and students will unintentionally marginalize students of color based on preconceptions of race. Kailin’s (1999) study implemented case study analysis of ‘liberal’ schools. Using a CRT framework Kailin, states, “The study revealed a great deal of resentment and outward hostility of the teachers and administrators toward African American students and parents” (Parker & Villalpando, 2007, p.521). In addition to providing a lens to consider race within education, CRT also offers explanatory principles. Of specific note is Bell’s principle of interest convergence.

**Interest Convergence**

Pulling from legal and political history in order to better understand and explain the *Brown* decision, Bell (1980, 1987, & 1992) posits that movements toward equality for African Americans only occur when the goals or outcomes are in line with those of whites. In his own words Bell (1987) wrote, “The interest of blacks in achieving racial equality will only be accommodated when it converges with the interests of whites” (p. 523.). Dudziak’s (1988) study of the Brown case supported Bell’s interest convergence principle in that context.
Donnor (2005) argues that in addition to the alignment of interests, movements toward equality are often a ‘zero sum game’ where the dominant group must give up, or perceive giving up, some aspect of privilege or power in order for interests to converge and movement towards equality to be met. Those ascribing to CRT and Interest Convergence criticize dominant systems for actively slowing down the process of change towards equality (Milner, 2008). Taylor’s (2000) research applied the interest convergence principle in an explanation of the I-200 anti-affirmative action proposal in Washington State. In DeCuir and Dixon’s (2004) work on the differential treatment of black students the author’s call for the further application of interest convergence and CRT research to defend the advances of social justice initiatives in education. Cotsangolo and Lee (2007) heeded this call in their application of CRT and Interest Convergence to explain how universities promote policies that superficially broach race issues and save money and do not challenge the status quo, but are unwilling to create policies that face the costs and challenges of multicultural education. Delgado and Sefancic (2001) have labeled interest convergence as one of the hallmark themes of Critical Race Theory. Despite this endorsement, CRT is not without its critics.

**Critique of Critical Race Theory**

Critical race theory is criticized on several levels. Scholars criticize CRT’s use of storytelling, the most common CRT methodology, claiming that storytelling is too often anecdotal (Dixson & Rousseau, 2006) and personal rather than empirically bound (Kolchin, 2002). Additionally legal critics state that the storytelling method is difficult to evaluate or compare to other scholarship because of the way CRT scholars treat the constructs of objectivity and truth (Posner, 1995). Historical scholars criticize CRT for stripping racial conceptions of
their historical context or for choosing too brief of a historical context to capture the varied meanings and purposes of race over time (Kolchin, 2002).

While valued for its practical usages, the interest convergence principle is also criticized for its contradictory relationship to the foundations of CRT. Costango & Lee (2007) noted that interest convergence and CRT provide means by which to expose inequalities and a framework for how to bring about social change stating that CRT may “convince those with power that certain policies and practices that bring about greater equity are also in their own best interests” (Costango & Lee, 2007, p. 10). Costango and Lee laud the potential for practical application of CRT and Interest Convergence Research. However, these authors argue that this approach to social justice relies on current, liberal and incrementalistic ideas as to how social change takes place which, while potentially pragmatic, is contradictory to the origins of CRT and interest convergence as challenges to liberalism and colorblindness. In contrast, Janet Helms’ (1995) approach to the issue of colorblindness within individuals allows for the creation of a redefined white identity that goes beyond interest convergence allowing for the possibility of whites to act with awareness of the privileges associated with whiteness.

**White Identity Development Theory**

In 1984 Janet Helms introduced a model for white racial identity development. Originally based on Cross’ (1971) model of racial nigrescence, Helm’s model, while criticized, stands as the preeminent model for white racial identity development theory. Helms’ (1984, 1990, 1993, & 1995) model describes the racial identity development of whites as a six status process. According to Helms (1995) whites grow up learning that, as a normative, whites are privileged relative to other groups. As such, whites learn to distort race-related reality in ways that preserve the in-group’s privileged status quo. Therefore, according to Helms, racial identity development
for whites is a process of recognizing that the status quo is based on racial oppression and that they must abandon their normative strategies for dealing with race (Helms, 1995, p. 188). Helms’ model describes a process by which whites can develop and implement six increasingly informed and complex statuses to cope with racial material in their environment. The first three statuses consist of a movement away from a racist frame. The final three statuses describe the discovery of a nonracist white identity (Chavez & Guido-Dibrito, 1999).

Helms defines statuses as “the dynamic cognitive, emotional and behavioral processes that govern a person’s interpretation of racial information in her or his interpersonal environment” (Helms, 1995, p. 184). Statuses are developed in reaction to the need to cope with racial material within the environment; each status acts like a cognitive schema a person can use to interpret racial material. Individuals develop multiple statuses and use combinations of the statuses they have achieved to operate in the environment (Helms, 1995). The more statuses achieved the wider range of schemas that are available for a person to interpret material. The more complex and developed each schema is within the person the more complex the interpretation within that status can be.

Statuses can be strengthened or weakened and may become dominant or secondary. A status can be reinforced with successful use within an environment. Successful use will then lead to a dominating or default racial identity status. If a schema does not work in a given circumstance, it can weaken the status or cause the individual to use a secondary status. Secondary statuses are previously developed statuses that are still accessible to the individual. If the use of a secondary status is continually effective, then this secondary status may become the dominant status. If neither a dominant status nor a secondary status allows the person to cope with the racial issue, the individual may strengthen an achieved status or develop a new status.
Helms (1995) also states that pure statuses are uncommon, and that in the process of dealing with racial material it is common for an individual to use blends, elements of more than one status, as they cope while strengthening, weakening, or developing statuses. Helms’ six statuses are contact, disintegration, reintegration, pseudoinddependence, immersion/emersion, and autonomy. Each is described briefly below.

**Contact**

The contact status is described as general obliviousness to racism. In this status racial factors tend not to strongly influence a person’s life decisions. High levels of contact attitudes are associated with unawareness of whiteness and naivety about blackness (Tokar & Swanson, 1991). Individuals in this status generally find satisfaction with or unquestioned acquiescence to the status quo. When confronted with racial material, people using this status tend to trust in meritocracy and feel that racism is too commonly expressed as a source of blame for or explanation of black individuals’ lack of success (Helms, 1995).

**Disintegration**

This status is marked by the realization of an internal moral dilemma related to a racialized issue. Commonly the individual is forced to realize incongruence between adherence to in-group norms and their own moral beliefs about injustice (Helms, 1995; Tokar & Swanson, 1991). This dilemma marks the individual’s initial recognition, but not necessarily acceptance of, membership in the white racial group (Helms & Carter, 1991). If the dilemma becomes irresolvable, the individual experiences confusion and anxiety which may in turn lead to the disintegration of their ambivalence toward racial material and a questioning of the acceptance of own-group norms. The disintegration of these norms is associated with discomfort when interacting with own-group members.
Reintegration

This status is marked by the intentional reintegration of in-group norms. Reintegration is associated with the idealization of whiteness and intolerance of blacks (Helms & Carter, 1991). Reintegration also leads to the positive distortion of own-group factors and negative distortion of other groups. Individuals applying this status are likely to have racial factors play a large part in their life decisions. In Helm’s model reintegration is the final status of recognizing and moving away from a racist frame.

Pseudoindependence

Pseudoindependence is the first stage of creating a nonracist identity. This status is described as a curiosity in cross-race relations (Tokar & Swanson, 1991) and the beginning of a positive acceptance of one’s whiteness (Helms & Carter, 1991). Helms (1995) describes this status as “an intellectualized commitment to one’s own socioracial group and the deceptive tolerance of other groups” (p. 185). In this status individuals may seek out cross-race interactions and commonly act to help other racial groups. However, this is not a fully developed standpoint and their efforts often manifest themselves as a condescending standpoint of tolerance. Selective perception of racial material is common in this status (Helms, 1995).

Immersion/Emersion

This status is signified by a search for accurate information about what it means to be white (Tokar & Swanson, 1991) and the intentional creation of a personal definition of whiteness (Helms & Carter, 1991). This search for information includes realizations as to how racism affects the self and others on a daily basis and how, as a white person, they benefit from the systemic nature of racism. This status is also associated with a hyper-vigilant set of beliefs, and as such, people in this stage are likely to participate in racial activism (Helms, 1995).
**Autonomy**

The final stage of Helms’ model, autonomy, is described as an “internalized nonracist white identity” (Helms & Carter, 1991, p. 447). Helms describes this final stage as “a positive socioracial group commitment, use of internal standards for self-determination, [and] capacity to relinquish the privileges if racism” (Helms, 1995, 185). Individuals in this status actively seek a wider understanding of other groups, have a more complex understanding of racism, and avoid participating in or making decisions that acquiesce to racial oppression. These individuals will also seek extended cross-race interactions, relationships, and friendships (Tokar & Swanson, 1991).

**Critiques and Challenges of Helms**

While Helms’ model is the most widely used model of white identity development, it is not without criticism. Criticisms of the model are threefold. First, the model’s original conception consisted of five lock-step stages, in this form the model was not fully supported by follow-up research. Second, critics note that the samples for this research are small and that most research on white identity has been conducted on college students. Finally, critics question the assumption that white racial identity revolves around abandoning the normative strategies of white people for dealing with race.

Helms and Carter (1990) developed the white racial identity attitude scale (WRIAS) to assess development of white racial identity in relation to Helms’ model of white racial identity development. Initial tests on this scale upheld the scale’s reliability (Carter, 1990; Tokar & Swanson, 1991) while other research refuted it (Block, Roberson, & Neuger, 1995). Tokar & Swanson (1991) conducted tests on the scale and support Helms’ claims about the positive relationship between white identity development and self actualization. However, the research
does not support Helms’ model as mutually exclusive, lock-step stages (Tokar & Swanson, 1991). In response, Helms (1995) updated the original model consisting of lock-step stages to a model of dynamic interplay of achieved statuses.

Helms initial model was based on a pseudoscientific analysis of individuals the author was acquainted with. In 1990, Helms substantiated the model via empirical research, but that sample consisted of a relatively small group of white college students. This criticism has remained largely unaddressed since the origination of the model (Tokar & Swanson, 1991; Frable 1997; Phinney & Ong, 2007). Because of this limited sample it remains unclear how the experience of being white might differ among different populations in more complex social settings (McDermott & Samson, 2005).

The third criticism of Helms’ model stems from the assumption that white racial identity development is founded in abandoning the normative strategies of white people for dealing with race. Critics state that this approach limits the consideration of a development of white racial identity that is not formed in relation to underrepresented populations. Chavez, Guido-DiBrito (1999) state, “[Helms’] premise is that racial identity for whites is about their perceptions, feelings, and behaviors toward blacks rather than about the development and consciousness of an actual white racial identity” (p. 42). Croll’s (2007) research supports this possibility, suggesting that that the development of a strong white identity is not essentially linked to altruistic behaviors and attitudes toward race. Croll’s findings indicate that less educated, highly in-group supporting individuals have high levels of identification with whiteness while many highly educated and equality supporting individuals distance themselves from identifying as white, suggesting that white identity, racial consciousness, and its relationship to recognition and abandonment of white privilege may be more complex than as conceived in Helms’ model.
Helms' (1984, 1995) model of white racial identity development represents a noteworthy breakthrough in the literature because it acknowledged differences within the majority group (Tokar & Swanson, 1991). In this way the model provided a theoretical paradigm from which researchers and practitioners can examine the majority culture. Research since the inception of Helms model has done exactly that.

**White Identity Research Since Helms**

While Helms’ model has been criticized and reshaped, it remains integral to the literature on white identity; extending Helm’s work, research on white identity has advanced our conceptual understanding of the complexities of whiteness. McDermott and Samson's (2005) review of racial identity research in the United States suggests that, “white identity is a complex, situated identity rather than a monolithic one” (McDermott & Samson, 2005, p. 245). Over the last 20 years the various approaches in the research have highlighted variations in white identity across groups and social locations (Croll, 2007).

Much of the work considering whiteness in a specified context has focused on poor urban areas (Hartigan, 1999, 2005) working class whites (Royster, 2003; McDermott, 2006) the concept of ‘white trash’ (Wray 2006; Wray and Newitz 1997) and adolescent understandings of whiteness (Bettie 2003, Lewis 2003). However, some research has begun trying to tease out the interplay of privilege, racism, and social location. Branscombe, Schmitt and Schiffhauer (2007) found that levels of white racial identity mediate the effects of awareness of white privilege on racist beliefs. Knowles and Peng (2005) found that white identity is made salient and central to an individual’s identity via exposure to non-whites. Jackman (1994) suggests that whites' levels of education are an important factor in variation of white racial identity. Powell, Branscombe and Schmitt (2005) found that whites who think of racism in terms of white privilege rather than
Black disadvantage are more likely to feel both collective and personal guilt, and as such are less likely to strongly identify with whites as a racial group. Schmitt, Branscombe and Kappen (2003) found that, “how people orient themselves towards inequality results from specific attitudes and beliefs about specific forms of inequality that are salient in context” (180). Schmitt, Branscombe and Kappen suggest that privileged and disadvantaged groups tend to hold attitudes consistent with in-group interests, but that group-based inequality has very little meaning outside of the specific context in which the inequality is perceived to take place. McDermott & Samson (2005) review of white identity research echoes the importance of context, stating that there is consensus in the literature that context including historical, class, racial, situational contexts all influence the perceptions and experiences of being white. Helms herself states, “systematic analysis of the racial dynamics between persons could provide information about when where and what type of intervention is necessary to create a more healthy racial climate” (1995, p. 195).

Croll (2007) suggests that future research in whiteness should “consider group differences and the effects of social characteristics when exploring white racial identity” (615). Lamont & Molnar (2002) conclude that future research on white racial identity needs to consider this concept as a dynamic ongoing process not a static descriptive. McDermott & Samson (2005) conclude that too much of white identity research is based on theoretical reflection and not empirical research. McDermott & Samson (2005) renew Barrett’s (2001) call for the extension of white identity research via the implementation of empirically grounded methodology and studies that consider context, social group, orientation towards racism, and education level. Croll (2007) concludes his study of white identity salience and orientation toward racism with this call for future research:
Whites can be simultaneously aware of their white racial identity, and at the same time, take advantage of the privileges afforded them based on their white status. This raises important questions about our traditional American ideals. What are the implications when Americans still adhere to ideals of hard work, effort and opportunity for all, yet also are conscious and aware of systems of privilege afforded to some, but not others, based on the color of their skin? The "culture of poverty" argument and other explanations for low socioeconomic status and achievement have historically relied upon the assumption that it is possible for all Americans to succeed, provided they work hard enough and persevere. What happens to these traditional explanations for inequality when attention to whiteness increases? Despite the growing visibility of whiteness, these explanations have not gone away. Therefore, the power of whiteness may be shifting to one of choice. Decades ago, the power of whiteness was believed to be its invisibility. Now that the veil of invisibility is being slowly removed, the power of whiteness remains. Whiteness may be the luxury to choose when to see it and when to ignore it, an important shift from presumed unconsciousness. Future research should examine the choices afforded whites to further our understandings of race relations in America (635).

Some, but scant, exploratory research has been done that seeks to tease out the relationships between white identity and privilege within a given context, and more specifically higher education.

**Whites, Inclusion, and Diversity in Organizations**

Welp’s (2004) article *White Men as Advocates for Diversity*, and Welp’s (1997) unpublished dissertation, consider white advocacy for inclusion and diversity within the context of organizations and to an extent higher education. In reviewing the literature existing on white
advocates for diversity in organizations Welp (1997) suggests that the sheer scarcity of such research is a cause for more exploration of this topic area. Research that does exist suggests five themes common to white advocacy for equity.

First, white advocacy begins with an increased self awareness of personal strengths, weaknesses, beliefs, and impact on others (Neal, 1993). This increased self awareness requires a willingness and ability to deal with the emotions associated with understanding privilege (Spelman, 1993). Additionally Kochman (as cited in Welp, 2004) noted that these emotions commonly hinge on the cultural expectation of whites to have it all ‘figured out’. Hankins (1994) found that white males who expressed these emotions realized that they had few, if any, outlets for such emotions.

Second, successful white advocacy is associated with the belief that diversity issues pervade all aspects of American society (Welp, 2004). Spelman (1993) argues that whites must recognize the ubiquitous nature of racism and suggests that hearing real stories from real people of color is an important part of the process of coming to fully realize the dynamics of white privilege. Other scholars feel this approach potentially places burden on people of color to educate whites (Miller & Katz, 1993; Chesler, 1995).

Third, white advocates that desire to enact change commonly feel guilt and depression as a result of a realization of their contributions to oppression and privilege, causing white advocates to seek support systems through other white advocates (Spellman, 1993). Steele, (1990) argued that guilt, while important to the identity process, can often lead to an immobilization of whites resulting in inadequate and improper motivations for action. The ability to communicate these feelings openly with others is suggested as a major step in the direction of positively working through issues of guilt (Welp, 1997, p. 12).
Fourth, white advocates for diversity make use of models and frameworks to understand how others think and operate. By considering theoretical models and frameworks whites can begin to understand themselves as racial beings (Alderfer, 1994; Chesler, 1995; Welp 1997). This increased understanding can lead to a clearer sense of the previously invisible, individual, and group impact that the behavior and beliefs of white males has on the other interdependent groups and individuals within society (McIntosh, 1992).

Fifth, successful white advocates must consider diversity to be a core value and realize the personal benefits of equity (Neal, 1993). Neal suggests these advantages include authenticity of relationships, appreciation of difference, compassion, increased trust and respect from women and people of color, decreased guilt, and decreased need to fill traditional roles (Neal, 1993, pp. 20-21). Shelton (1995) argues that diversity as a core belief can lead to the benefit of “sustainable collaborative advantage” (p.4). For whites to be affective this value must go beyond a change in perspective and that change should be affirmed through action (Chesler, 1995; Welp, 1997).

Welp’s (1997, 2004) research suggests further commonalities among white advocates for diversity. Welp (1997) details the narratives of seven white advocates for diversity within various organizations. From this research several themes emerged. According to Welp (2004) the early context of white advocacy is important. Each of the participants in the study recalled specific manifestations of inequality during their childhood. Second, Welp (2004) notes that first hand exposure to racial and ethnic difference at a proper developmental time period sparks internal changes related to white advocacy; each interviewee indicated that exposure to ethnic/racial differences at a time when there was a readiness for learning. Welp (2004) also notes that all of the participants indicated acceptance of themselves as member of the category of
‘white’ as a crucial step toward understanding the systemic nature of race relations. Welp (2004) notes that the research participants uniformly indicated a lack of white role models and subsequently the participants valued an active building of networks of difference to reinforce advocacy as a core identity.

Of specific interest to this study is Welp’s (1997) account of Mark Chesler. Chesler at the time was a professor of sociology at the University of Michigan and a published author on the role of whites in diversity. Chesler describes his path to becoming an advocate for diversity and speaks to his experiences in higher education. Chesler describes a sense of alienation and a need to seek a support network beyond his department. He also notes a sense of validation and acceptance from the faculty of color in his department. Chesler describes the devaluing of his research by his department which led to a delay in his promotion at the university. Much of Chesler’s diversity work had been outside of the university, but he wished to bring this work into academe and to his students, so as to equip future generations with the tools to address social justice issues. Chesler describes this as a risk using the term “coming out” to invoke the risks associated with his advocacy for diversity as a white faculty member (Welp, 1997, p. 69). This is one example of how the impact of campus climate is not limited to faculty of color, but affects the university on the whole.

**Faculty of Color**

Erkut & Mokros (1984) notes, "a basic tenet of psychological theories of identification is that people emulate models who are perceived to be similar to themselves in terms of personality, characteristics, background, race, and sex" (p. 400). To succeed, under-represented students must have role models, mentors, representatives among the faculty as well as in university governance, and other less traditional areas of higher education (Antonio, 2002; De la
Luz Reyes & Halcón, 1991). Without such role models success rates of minority students will remain low, contributing to apathy towards higher education (Kirkpatrick, 2001).

Beyond serving students of color, scholars consider a diverse faculty integral in the process of finding ways to prepare all students for a multicultural world (Antionio, 2002; Hurtado, 2001; Turner & Myers, 2000;). Hurtado (2001) states that increased structural diversity, the number of faculty of color, result in a university with a more balanced approach to the responsibilities of teaching, research, and service. Umbach (2006) found that faculty of color implement a wider range of pedagogical techniques and have more frequent interactions with students outside of the classroom; both factors associated with undergraduate success. Antonio (2002) supported these findings at a departmental level stating that faculty of color balance these responsibilities while keeping high standards for civic duty and positive societal change. However, literature suggests several persistent barriers to increased diversity among the faculty ranks (Knowles & Harletson, 1997). Research on hiring and retention of faculty consistently refers to several barriers that persistently prevent the diversification of faculty. These barriers include work environment, departmental vs. university power, and chilly institutional climate. Each of these areas is detailed in the following sections.

**Work Environment**

Faculty members of color are commonly the singular minority represented in any particular department. This singularity leads to an isolating work environment (De la Luz Reyes & Halcón, 1991; Frierson, 1990; Gurin, Dey, Hurtado, & Gurin, 2002; Tack & Patitu, 1992; Turner & Myers, 1999, 2000). This isolation creates work environments that have a high likelihood of propagating racist perceptions that cripple the potential for success of faculty of color (Turner & Myers, 2000). Without a critical mass of faculty of color within a department the
experience and perceptions of that faculty of color are generally not positive and the possibility of pre-tenure departure is high.

In addition to de facto isolation, faculty of color are commonly given high workloads, poor support, and find their efforts not valued in the tenure and promotion process (Turner & Meyers, 2000). Faculty of color are often provided with poor mentoring and given inadequate advising (Antonio, 2002). Faculty of color are often asked to do unequal service loads including committee membership, diversity initiative work, advising student organizations, and mentoring students of color, all of which are not commonly valued in the tenure and promotion process (Hurtado, 2001). Scholarly work done in the field of diversity is commonly undervalued by tenure and promotion review boards (Fenlon, 2003; Hurtado, 2001; Turner & Meyers, 2000).

**Intersections of University Mission, Departmental Goals and Individual Power**

Knowles and Harletson (1997) argue that the increasing disparity in diversification of students in relation to faculty is a manifestation of the power disconnect between university administrators and departmental faculty and staff. Knowles and Harletson contend that upper level administrators are unable to affect faculty hiring committees and departmental policies to the same degree that they can influence admissions staff recruiting initiatives and umbrella policies for the entire campus. For this reason Knowles and Harletson suggest that student diversity has increased due to programmatic efforts on the part of the university, but faculty diversity has stagnated due to the level of individual departments’ autonomy. In an unfortunate way stagnation in hiring faculty of color highlights current faculty members’ unwillingness to support both the goals of the university in general and specifically those related to diversity (Knowles and Harletson, 1997). As university initiatives are generally ineffective in managing
departmental level Knowles and Harleston suggest that sustained change must be considered from a departmental or even individual faculty level.

**The ‘Pipeline Problem’**

The pipeline problem is a perception among current faculty of a lack in high quality faculty candidates of color combined with the belief that highly qualified candidates of color have many options for employment because of their race (Antonio, 2002; Turner, & Myers, 1999). One study showed that administrators at research universities consider the ‘pool problem’ or the ‘pipeline problem’ to be the most important factor related to the prevention of a more diverse faculty at their respective universities (Knowles & Harleston, 1997). Mickelson and Oliver’s (1991) research supported the claim that minority faculty candidates coming from schools other than the most prestigious universities were commonly devalued in terms of their qualifications and ability to succeed as a professor while white male students coming from the same, non-elite schools were seen as more qualified and competent. These beliefs allow faculty hiring committees to pass over adequate candidates as inferior and pass off highly qualified candidates as unattainable (Hurtado, 2001). Similar barriers facing faculty of color are reflected in the experiences and perceptions of doctoral students of color.

**Doctoral Students of Color**

“A hostile racial climate for doctoral students may originate within or outside the classroom and may be overt or covert between students and faculty” (Barker, 2010, p. 41). Research considering the experiences of doctoral students of color in PWI’s indicates that these students are commonly socially isolated (Robinson, 1999). This social isolation results from and is aided by subtle discrimination on the part of faculty and students (Johnson-Bailey, Valentine, Cervero, & Bowles, 2009) as well as from differences in perception, with doctoral students of color.
commonly perceiving a negative climate in situations where white students feel a positive or neutral climate (Miller, Anderson, Cannon, Perez, & Moore, 1998; Chang, 2003). As a result doctoral students of color indicate comparatively fewer teaching and research opportunities because of social discomfort among white faculty members (Willie, Grady, & Hope, 1991). These microagressions and disparities in perception can lead doctoral students of color to feel separate from their colleagues and cohorts creating a belief that their local academic community is fragmented (Robinson, 1999; Chang, 2003). Studies suggest that this isolation and fragmentation outside of the coursework contributes to increased time to completion and decreased retention of students of color (Rogers & Molina, 2006). Yosso (2000) found that in reaction to this alienation students of color create their own academic and social counterspaces.

Doctoral students of color face additional challenges inside the classroom as well. In classes with low numbers of students of color where the normative ideology is colorblindness, doctoral students of color are often asked to represent their entire race or culture (Milner; 2004; Cleveland, 2004; Gurin & Nagda, 2006; Johnson-Bailey, Valentine, Cervero, & Bowles, 2009). Milner (2004) also reported that doctoral students of color felt under-valued and disrespected in the classroom. This in-turn led these doctoral students of color to feel less welcome to speak up in class and be less inclined to raise issues of interest to them. Additionally, students of color are less likely perceive instructors as making quality efforts to include multiple viewpoints in the curriculum than their white counterparts (Miller, Anderson, Cannon, Perez, and Moore; 1998) and white students are more likely to agree with the statement that racial discrimination is no longer a problem than are students of color (Chang, 2003).

These classroom factors contribute to the insecurities of doctoral students of color. Literature also suggests that graduate students of color perceive an underestimation of their
academic ability by faculty and peers (Johnson-Bailey, Valentine, Cervero, & Bowles, 2009). “The sense of feeling undervalued is exacerbated by black students’ perceptions of peers and faculty having negative stereotypes of black student performance” (Barker, 2010, p. 42). In reaction to feeling less able to perform at the level of their colleagues, students of color feel that their efforts are not equal to that of their white counterparts (Bonilla et al.) and commonly attempt to over-perform (Bonilla, Pickron, & Tatum, 1994; Milner, 2004). Despite these extra efforts, Engberg (2004) found that graduate students of color commonly believe there to be bias in grading.

However, not all experiences of doctoral students of color are negative. Patterson-Stewart, Ritchie, and Sanders (1997) suggest that doctoral students of color often develop positive relationships with other students that attempt to empathize and understand their experience. Chang (1996) found that students of color reported higher satisfaction with their college experiences when multicultural educational programming accompanied increases in structural diversity. Yet the reality remains that many institutions are not supportive of diversity efforts (Feagin et al., 1996; Watson et al., 2002).

**Whites, Inclusion, and Diversity in Higher Education: Campus Climate**

Research indicates that even when special funding for diversity initiatives and special hiring programs exist, the climate of workplace is unlikely to change; in fact, such programs can even lead to negative feelings towards the beneficiaries of such programs (Jackson, 2004). Jackson’s study (2004) states that the climate and socialization of faculty of color is a crucial factor to diversity levels a university will be able to achieve and maintain.

Since the early 1980s many colleges and universities seeking to understand diversity issues on their respective campuses have engaged in campus climate research (Hurtado, Milem,
Clayton-Pederson, & Allen, 1998). Consistent among this research are three themes 1) there are individual and university-wide benefits associated with campus climates that promote cross-racial interactions, 2) historically advantaged group members tend to hold neutral or positive views of campus climate, and 3) historically oppressed group members tend to hold negative views of campus climate (Harper & Hurtado, 2007; Worthington, 2008). Rankin and Reason (2005) conducted a study considering the differences between students of color and white students in their perceptions of the racial/ethnic campus climate. This study supported the previous three themes, and extended the validity and transportability of these findings by using a standardized quantitative instrument across multiple campuses.

Campus climate research is criticized for a lack of consensus in definitions and methodologies related to campus climate (Hart & Fellebaum, 2008). Peterson and Spencer (1990) defined campus climate to include three major categories: the objective climate, the perceived climate, and the psychological or felt climate. Hurtado, Griffin, Arellano, and Cuellar (2008) extended this definition stating, “Campus climate is part of an intricate web of relations, socially constructed by individuals in an environment” (p. 204). According to Hurtado, Griffin, Arellano, and Cuellar (2008) this web of relations consists of four major dimensions, structural diversity, the psychological climate, behavioral climate, and the institutions’ history of inclusion or exclusion. Structural diversity refers to the presence and percentage of under-represented groups. The psychological climate refers to individual perceptions of racially motivated conflict and discrimination. The behavioral dimension refers to the level and quality of intergroup and cross race interactions on campus. The institutional history refers to the institutions’ legacy of openness or closedness on racial terms, and the institutional memory of that legacy.
Campus climate research is also criticized for a lack of attention to all members of the campus community. To better understand the state campus climate research, Hart & Fellebaum (2008) conducted a content analysis of 155 campus climate studies posted on the National Association of Scholars website. Only ten percent of the studies considered included faculty, staff, and/or administrators. Hurtado, Griffin, Arellano, and Cuellar (2008) also argue that greater attention to the development of studies that can increase our “understanding of the climate for other community members such as faculty, administrators, and staff is certainly warranted and needed” (p. 217). Harper & Hurtado (2007) suggest that consensus of definitions and best practices for research are important to advancing the research but that climate research must additionally include action items for both transforming and sustaining improvement of academic climates. One model for such change is Rankin and Reason’s (2008) transformational tapestry model.

The Transformational Tapestry Model

Smith’s (1997) work on campus diversity delineates four major dimensions of diversity including campus climate. Extending Smith’s work, Reason (2003) began developing a standardized approach to campus climate for gay, lesbian, and transgender people. Using these foundations Rankin and Reason developed a national campus climate research project that considered various aspects of campus climate; this research resulted in the basis for the dimensions of the Transformational Tapestry Model (TTM). According to Rankin and Reason (2008) campus climate transformation starts with the systems that maintain the power imbalance. Utilizing this premise, the TTM is designed to assist the campus community in actualizing a community of difference through the use of specific assessment and intervention strategies. The TTM is currently implemented at 70 higher education institutions. According to Rankin and
Reason (2008) the model serves as both a comprehensive assessment tool and a means by which to initiate improvements in campus climate. The model is comprised of four phases: the pre-TTM campus climate, climate assessment phase, transformational interventions based on the assessment, and the resulting transformed climate.

Rankin and Reason (2008) describe six dimensions of campus climate to be assessed and potentially transformed as a part of the TTM: access/retention, research/scholarship, inter-group and intra-group relations, curriculum and pedagogy, university policies and services, and external forces. As defined in the study, access refers to structural diversity but goes further in suggesting that the physical presence of underrepresented groups is not enough and that support for the maintenance and success of these groups is essential. Rankin and Reason’s (2008) notion of research/scholarship refers to the level to which systems and administrators support the diversity of perspectives within research. The authors state “institutional policies that recognize the importance of scholarly advocacy, civic engagement, or public scholarship around issues of social justice, and provide rewards for such activities in the promotion and tenure process, would increase the possibility of faculty members engaging in these activities” (Rankin & Reason, 2008, p. 266). According to Rankin and Reason inter- and intra-group relations should include formal and informal programming that encourages inter-group interactions and supports underrepresented groups by going beyond traditional programmatic efforts and focusing on cultural maturity, interpersonal skills and conflict resolution. Ranking and Reason (2008) define the dimension of curriculum and pedagogy as both strong diversity studies programs and the inclusion of curricula that educate students on issues of power, privilege, and harassment 267).
dimensions of campus climate. Finally, Rankin and Reason suggest the importance of noting forces external to the university including local and state political agendas, influential alumnae, and trustees.

The instrument developed to assess the six aspects of campus climate takes a mixed quantitative and qualitative approach. The quantitative instrument was originally administered to over 15,000 participants on ten campuses. Exploratory factor analyses were conducted and 55 items were retained which accounted for 62.5% of the variance; the six dimensions within the items all held coefficients of reliability above .8 (Rankin & Reason, 2008, p. 268). Thematic analysis of the qualitative data was used to support the quantitative results. The instrument has since been modified to reduce bias and allow for flexible and customization appropriate to the contexts of different institutions.

To implement the TTM, a university must first create a social equity team. Interviews are conducted with the equity team to aid in the contextualization of the instrument as and gain support for the process from key constituents. Ranking and Reason (2008) suggest that this approach results in both campus specific assessment and action items as well as awareness among members of the campus community able to affect change in these areas. The contextualized instrument is administered to as many members of the campus community as possible and the results are analyzed and presented to the social equity team and the campus community. The social equity team then creates a plan consisting of symbolic actions, educational actions, administrative actions, and fiscal actions to address the dimensions of campus climate shown to be challenges for that particular institution. This plan is then presented to the campus community via a marketing plan that includes steps to set goals informed by the TTM, processes for creating and implementing action items associated with the goals, strategies
for maintain these actions, and means by which to assess movement toward the established goal. The phases of the TTM are shown in figure 2.1.

Rankin and Reason (2008) suggest that more research needs to be done to assess the TTM itself. Follow up studies need to be conducted with participating institutions to determine the TTM’s longitudinal effectiveness in changing campus climate. Additionally, Ranking and Reason suggest a need for “qualitative inquiry examining institutional agents’ perceptions of the efficacy of the process, the achievement of specific goals and objectives arising from creating strategic initiatives dimension, and the institutionalization of changes are potential areas of inquiry” (p. 272). While the TTM provides a framework for considering campus wide climate, research on the experiences of faculty of color suggests that the sub units of a university may be equally or more important in generating and maintaining diversity among faculty ranks.

![Figure 2.1 – The Transformational Tapestry Model](image-url)
Despite the efforts of universities to promote diversity on their respective campuses the number of faculty of color at predominantly white institutions remains low, and the achievements of these faculty members goes nearly unrecognized (Turner, Gonzales, & Wood, 2008). Critical race theory provides a lens through which research can consider the issues of race and racism in higher education. Bell’s (1980) principle of interest convergence would suggest that the stagnation in campus diversity as least partly a result of loss of white interest in diversity due to a lack in perception of possible gains in participating in diversity indicatives. However, studies in whiteness and white identity development suggest that some individuals develop a positive white identity that is willing and able to give up the privileges associated with whiteness. Little research exists that teases out how whiteness plays out in specific contexts and social locations. Campus climate research attempts to provide universities with a means to transform the campus wide climate. In doing so, the Transformational Tapestry Model provides insight as to the factors that affect racial climates on campus. However, research on both white identity and experiences of faculty of color suggest that the school and departmental levels are strong mediators of climate for individual faculty members. Some gaps and inconsistencies among these bodies of literature remain largely unexamined.

When the tenets of Critical Race Theory are compared to findings in white identity development theory, three unresolved perspectives remain. Derik Bell’s (1980) concept of interest convergence is noted for its explanatory power in the stagnation of the white support for diversity initiatives, explaining that whites will support diversity to a point at which they feel it infringes upon whites privilege. However, Croll (2007) suggests that awareness of privilege manifests itself on an individualized level that allows whites to consciously or unconsciously pick and choose when and where to accept privilege or refute systems of inequality regardless of
its impact on whites as a whole. While Helms model of white identity development suggests that with awareness whites will develop an identity associated with race that actively refutes accepting the privileges associated with whiteness. To address these disparities, contextualized, empirical research is needed to further our understanding of how individual whites act, perceive themselves, and how they are perceived by others in the process of moving toward equality. This study directly considers the roles and relationships of white faculty, faculty of color, white doctoral students, and doctoral students of color.

There is consensus in the literature that white identity is a complex, fluid, and situated process, but much of the work on white identity development has been confined to college students as samples. As such, researchers have encouraged white identity research that considers specific social groups, within specific contexts. Research in this vein has focused on poor whites in urban areas, the concept of white trash, and white youth. A small amount of literature considers white faculty members in the context of higher education (Loftin, 2010). This study will extend that research by examining doctoral students and by contextualizing climate within a specific academic unit.

The research on white members of organizations that does exist suggests that Helm’s model may not account for the experiences of white advocates for diversity within organizations, and that white allies for diversity may have similar experiences as faculty of color including: devalued research initiatives, a sense of isolation, and a realization of inconsistencies among individual, departmental, and university goals. These findings suggest the identity development of white faculty members as well as the experiences of faculty of color within the context of higher education, specifically at the school or departmental level, may have implications in campus climate research and campus approaches to diversity.
Campus Climate research provides a framework to consider the individual within the context of a university. Helms herself draws out the link between individual identity development and group climate stating, “systematic analysis of the racial dynamics between persons could provide information about, when, where, and what type of intervention is necessary to create a more healthy racial climate” (1995, p. 195). Specifically the Transformational Tapestry Model provides a framework to consider current relations within a university. These factors include: a historical frame of reference, access and retention, research and scholarship, inter-group and intra-group relations, curriculum and pedagogy, university policies and services, and external forces. However, campus climate research, most of which is survey research focused on university-wide policy and shifts in university wide approaches to diversity, does little to tell us how the factors associated with campus climate relate to the experiences of both white faculty and faculty of color as the school or department, which they report to daily, seeks to develop and maintain a positive racial climate.
Chapter Three: Methodology

This study considers the Rankin and Reason (2008) Transformational Tapestry Model’s (TTM) six dimensions of racial climate through the lens of critical race theory. The purpose of the study was twofold, first, to consider how the racial climate of the unit impacts the perceptions, experiences, roles, and relationships differently for faculty of color, doctoral students of color, white faculty, and white doctoral students and second, to examine how the racial climate of the academic unit exemplifies Rankin and Reason’s six dimensions of campus climate. To address these purposes I implemented a qualitative case study design.

As described by Denzin & Lincoln, qualitative research, “involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials – case study; personal experience; introspection; life story; interview; artifacts; cultural texts and productions; observational, historical, interactional, and visual texts – that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individuals’ lives” (2005, p.3). Specifically, Lincoln and Denzin describe the nature of case study research stating, “The case study strategy relies on interviewing, observing, and document analysis. Such research strategies anchor paradigms in specific empirical sites or in specific methodological practices, such as making a case an object of study” (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005, p. 25). This study implemented case study methodology within the tradition of Robert K. Yin. According to Yin, “a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real life context especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context are not clearly evident” (2009, p.18).

Case study methodology was selected for this study in alignment with, Yin’s (2009) criteria for choosing a case study design. According to Yin, case studies may include historical accounts but are concerned with contemporary phenomena, they include a high number of
variables, a low level of ability to control and manipulate those variables, the use of multiple sources of data, triangulating of data, and the use of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis. Additionally, Yin suggests that the form of the research questions for case studies should be ‘how or why’ questions, and that a case study is appropriate when the study cannot isolate or control the variables. This study is in line with these three criteria. In this study I considered racial climate, a historically rooted but ongoing, contemporary phenomenon where the variables are multiple, difficult to isolate, and linked closely to the context of the case. In congruence with Yin’s approach this study considered two ‘how or why’ questions. As this study followed the exploratory case study paradigm in order to clarify and improve the current understanding of the relevant variables within the case.

**Case Study Design**

The exploratory case study design provided information about the appropriateness of existing research on campus climate when applied to smaller units within the university as well as an empirical basis for the relevance of aspects, characteristics, and variables related to racial climate within this context. As such, this study explored campus climate within the specific context of an academic unit within a southern, predominantly white university. The specific academic unit considered in this study will heretofore be referred to as the unit. The term southern in this study refers to the five Gulf South states. These states include Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida. Rankin and Reason’s (2008) Transformational Tapestry Model informed the data collection and analysis. Findings were compared to the Transformational Tapestry Model as well as current literature related to white identity research, research on experiences of faculty of color, and research on experiences of doctoral students of
color. The aim was to corroborate, extend, and provide contextualized implications to previous research.

A single case, embedded design provided the framework for the study. An academic unit which was considered as a critical case (Yin, 2009) was chosen as the focus. Yin describes a critical case as one that has circumstances comparable to that required of an existing theory. The Transformational Tapestry Model is a theory that can be applied to circumstances where universities have made a significant effort to improve campus climate. Since approximately 1999 the academic unit considered here has made significant efforts in relationship to the racial climate within the unit. This intentional effort on the part of the unit is comparable to the circumstances under which the TTM would be applied on a campus-wide level. These comparable circumstances made the unit critical in its ability to be compared to the TTM. As such, the TTM guided this study by providing the operational definition of climate, an initial guide for the data collection process, and an initial frame for the data analysis. As an embedded case study, this research examined four sub-units or embedded units within the case including: faculty of color, white faculty, doctoral students of color, and white doctoral students.

Case Selection

This study examined one unit within the larger university. The unit was an autonomous college of communication within the larger university. The unit was purposively selected due to its qualities as a critical case as defined by Yin (2009). While this case is not specifically critical in terms of the levels of structural diversity that has been achieved, it is critical in that the unit has made significant efforts to promote diversity and transform the racial climate within the school. Within the past 10 years, the unit was recognized with the National Diversity Award given by The Accrediting Agency (TAA). According to the unit’s web site, 60% of the faculty
members have conducted research related to diversity. The school has been awarded multiple major grants associated with its diversity initiatives, is active in creating seminars and workshops on diversity related to their field of study, and hosts, Diversity Matters, a resource library dedicated to research on diversity within the field. The unit also houses two nationally recognized student organizations for students of color, and the unit has sought money to fund a chair of diversity. This initial information contributes to the justification of the selection of the case. In line with Hurdato’s (2001) call for critical race theorists to insist upon longer historical contextualization, in the following sections I provide a brief historical account of the unit and the university it resides within.

**Case Description**

The unit began in the early 1900s as a program within the English Department. In 1930, it became an accredited program. The program gradually grew and over the next several decades, and was named after a major donor in the 1980s. Shortly after this event the program became an autonomous unit on the heels of a major curriculum shift. Currently, the unit occupies two buildings. The administration and the majority of the classroom spaces are located in one of the oldest buildings on campus. This building has recently seen a full renovation. This opulent renovation, which contrasts the age of the building with modern design, intentionally serves as a metaphor for the feeling of tradition and progress that the unit tries to embody. For example, all of the hallways are lined with traditional wood molding and intricate inlays accompanied by modern art, and the impressive art deco lobby is equipped with state of the art televisions and projectors. In the adjacent building, faculty, student media, and more classrooms are located on one floor of a brick WPA building. This space has also seen full renovations, but unlike the administrative building these renovations strike a much more utilitarian feel. Two off-white,
masonry block hallways containing faculty offices are arranged in a u-shape that is connected by two well-equipped but purely functional 20 seat classrooms.

The school currently offers bachelors’ degrees in four concentrations. Undergraduate entrance into the school is selective requiring 30 hours of completed coursework including, a grade point average of 3.0 and a 250 word essay. Total numbers and percentages of students and faculty within the unit for the 2010-2011 academic year can be seen in table 3.1

Table 3.1 – Faculty and Student Aggregate Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Undergraduate Students</th>
<th>Master’s Students</th>
<th>Doctoral Students</th>
<th>Full-time Faculty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>512 (82%)</td>
<td>45 (76%)</td>
<td>25 (80%)</td>
<td>28 (82%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minority</td>
<td>113 (18%)</td>
<td>11 (24%)</td>
<td>5 (20%)</td>
<td>5 (18%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The school also employs nine adjunct instructors, seven administrators, and sixteen staff members. Five of these professors hold joint appointments in both the unit and another department in the university. The unit also houses the student newspaper, student TV station, student radio station, student magazine and the yearbook. Most recently the unit opened its residential college to 100 freshmen and sophomores. When compared to the larger context of the university that the unit resides within, the context of the unit described here appears to in many ways defy the trends of the campus at large.

Context of the Case: The University

The University opened in the mid-1800s. The original building was erected by slaves. Two of these original stones are currently enshrined in front of the campus. The school was damaged, repaired and reopened after the civil war. Many of the students that remained during the war were members of a predecessor to the Ku Klux Clan, causing tension between the students and local African Americans. This came to a head when a student killed a local African American. The student was imprisoned but later set free. The day he was set free the main
building of the campus burnt to the ground. Speculation remains as to the cause of the fire, but by many accounts it was arson set in place in reaction to the murder.

During reconstruction The University struggled due to lack of state funds because of the school’s unwillingness to integrate. The state legislature demanded integration and for four years the school did not formally admit new students. Struggling financially The University attempted to gain federal funds under the Morrill Act, but failed. Instead, that money went toward opening the integrated school in the state capitol. After The Reconstruction, the two schools were combined and The University became a land-grant institution. However, no black students attended the newly named school. It would not be until the 1950s that a series of students of color would apply and eventually integrate The University.

After the school was integrated by a few individuals, The University’s admissions policies remained drastically unequal. A series of lawsuits over the desegregation of the school came via the civil rights movement. These lawsuits continued into the 1980s and 1990s until a federal judge approved a plan to increase integration in all of the state’s colleges. This plan remained in effect at The University until after the turn of the millennium.

In 2000, the University named its first chief diversity officer. Under pressure from a federal judge and the desegregation settlement plan The University created a university-wide Diversity Committee and developed a plan to increase black student enrollment by 20% and to increase full-time black instructional faculty by 40%. These numbers were never reached but the desegregation suit was eventually dropped.

The most recent major racial incident came in reaction to the display of the Confederate flag in university colors at sports events. A student activism group repeatedly called for a ban on the flag. The university defended its position on the grounds of First Amendment rights, but
asked fans not to fly the flag at sports events. Student protests garnered local and national press coverage with protesters being spat on and called racial slurs. Despite the efforts of these students, the flag is still commonplace at university sports events. With these deep historical roots and current tensions on campus bubbling to the surface, it would appear that the efforts of the unit are unique within the context of this university.

**Data Collection**

This study gathered data from three sources common to case study research: interviews, direct observations, and documents (Yin, 2009). Data collection was informed by the TTM’s six aspects of campus climate: access/retention, research/scholarship, inter-group and intra-group relations, curriculum and pedagogy, university policies and services, and external forces. Each data source and its relation to TTM is described briefly below.

**Interviews**

The primary source of data for this case study was interviews with tenure track faculty and doctoral students. The four embedded units for this study were faculty of color, white faculty, doctoral students of color, and white doctoral students. A breakdown of faculty of color and white faculty within the unit is provided in table 3.2.

Table 3.2 – Faculty by Rank, Sex, and Race/Ethnicity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professorship</th>
<th>Assistant</th>
<th>Associate</th>
<th>Full</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty of Color</td>
<td>1 (5%)</td>
<td>2 (10%)</td>
<td>1 (5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Faculty</td>
<td>3 (15%)</td>
<td>4 (20%)</td>
<td>1 (5%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ten individual interviews were conducted with faculty. I interviewed five faculty members of color. One faculty member of color was not able to be interviewed and was replaced with an
instructor with the most similar demographic background. I also interviewed five white faculty members. White faculty participants were purposefully selected to match the gender and seniority breakdown of the faculty of color interviewed. A white full professor was included so as to take account of all faculty ranks. A breakdown of white doctoral students and students of color within the unit is provided in table 3.3.

Table 3.3 – Doctoral Students by Sex and Race/Ethnicity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White Doctoral Students</td>
<td>12 (48%)</td>
<td>8 (32%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral Students of Color</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>5 (20%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Eight individual interviews were conducted with doctoral students. I interviewed two female and two male doctoral students of color and two male and two female white doctoral students. I also conducted two individual interviews with administrators in the unit. Individual interviews with faculty, students and administrators lasted approximately one hour, were recorded, transcribed, and coded.

In addition to the twenty individual interviews with students, faculty, and staff, I conducted one focus group interview with a group of five doctoral students. The focus group interview was conducted as a participant observation in conjunction with an ongoing project within the unit. The unit’s impetus for this focus group was to let graduate students voice their concerns in a safe environment and to provide the Diversity Team with a baseline understanding of these concerns. The focus group consisted of five graduate students, one white male, three white females, and an African American female, all recruited by the chair of the Diversity Committee to participate. Two of these five participants were interviewed individually. The focus group lasted approximately one hour, was videotaped, transcribed, and coded. Upon completion of the focus group interview, I was invited by the Diversity Committee to present an
executive summary of the focus group results at the team’s final meeting of the semester (see Appendix B).

Interview protocols for all interviews were guided by the six aspects of climate described in the TTM (see Appendix A). Follow-up questions and clarifications were conducted via email. In addition to interviews with doctoral students and faculty, two interviews were conducted with administrators. The decision to conduct these interviews was based on the suggestion of several interview participants that indicated these two individuals as integral to the diversity efforts of the school. One interview was conducted with the associate dean of undergraduate studies, and the other with the interim dean of the school. These interviews were also recorded, transcribed, and coded.

Observations

To familiarize myself with the racial climate and the operational workings of the school, I conducted direct observations within the unit, as well as participant observations at a Diversity Team meeting. Direct observations were conducted in the two adjacent hallways where faculty and doctoral students have offices. Six one hour observations were conducted. I conducted one morning and one afternoon observation on a Monday, a Tuesday, and a Wednesday, each on different weeks of the same semester. Special attention was given to the physical layout of the space, who held an open door policy, and where doctoral students spent their time. As a participant observer in the Diversity Team meeting I took field notes which were included in the analysis.

Documents

This study considered several documents generated by the unit that relate to diversity and racial climate. These documents initially included the unit’s official web pages and web content
related to diversity, the school’s five year diversity plan, and the school’s 2008 publication that resulted from the Diversity Matters mini-conference. I asked interview participants as well as key contacts within the school if there were any additional documents that should be considered in this study. This inquiry resulted in additional documents including several course syllabi, the discipline specific accrediting agency’s diversity standard and the unit’s 2010 publication that resulted from the Diversity Matters mini-conference

**Pilot Study**

Pilot interviews were conducted in a separate academic unit at the same institution. Four faculty members, two faculty of color and two white faculty, and two student interviews, one student of color and one white student, were conducted. These interviews were recorded, transcribed and coded. Initial analysis of pilot interview data led to revisions of the interview protocol. This analysis also provided a set of initial codes that were later compared to the open coding structure of the main data analysis.

**Data Analysis**

Interviews were transcribed, coded, and the constant comparison method as described by Strauss and Corbin (1998) was implemented as an analysis tool. Constant comparison is the process of comparing data throughout the coding process. As multiple data points are coded similarly, the researcher compared those data to see if they have similar properties and thus could become a category. Coding is the process of abstracting and conceptualizing data with labels or codes that can be further analyzed by the researcher. The type of coding implemented in this research included the following: open coding, selective coding, and theoretical coding (Holton, 2007). Open coding, is the process by which the researcher identifies phenomena within the data. At this phase, line by line analysis of the collected interview data was conducted. I open coded
each statement and thus broke each interview up into units. As the analysis moved forward and categories and relationships within the data began to emerge selective coding, coding focusing on concepts integral to the emerging analysis, was implemented by revisiting existing data and memos and proceeding with coding in light of the emergent analysis. Finally, I used theoretical coding, a process of drawing out meta-codes. These codes will represent concepts and relationships between codes and categories emerging from constant comparison and may or may not contain open coded data (Holton, 2007).

The use of a priori coding structure aided the analysis, however, a level of creativity and willingness to consider alternate coding schemes was necessary for the analysis to remain grounded in the data (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). I began with six a priori codes adopted from the six dimensions of climate in the TTM as an initial structure for coding. This structure was altered as the analysis progressed and theoretical codes emerged. Categories were compared and combined or separated into subcategories of larger categories. Individual codes and data were compared to the emergent structure for appropriate fit and vice versa. This led to recoding or reconceptualization of certain data and emerging categories. Emergent sub-categories, and major categories were compared to see what relationships they had to each other, and if theoretical codes could appropriately define that relationship (Kelle, 2007). Open coding resulted in 1503 units in 96 categories. The constant comparison process continued at all levels of the analysis and collection until the data was organized in a coherent order that was not altered as new data was introduced. The final coding structure resulted the 1503 units within 7 categories that contain a total of 27 subcategories. Table 3.4 provides an overview of the coding structure. Refer to Appendix C for a detailed coding table containing open code frequencies and example quotations.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major Category</th>
<th>Sub-Categories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Perceptions of School Climate</td>
<td>Majority opinion, Comparisons, Commitment to Diversity, Unawareness, Coalescence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceptions of Climate Situated in Settings</td>
<td>Classroom, Formal Settings, Informal Settings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roles</td>
<td>Student Roles, Faculty Roles, Administrator Roles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships</td>
<td>Faculty Relationships; Student Relationships; Coping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External Forces</td>
<td>Accrediting, Context, Recognition, Current Events, External Funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal Dimensions of Climate</td>
<td>Access and Retention: Students, Access and Retention: Faculty, Access and Retention: Structural Diversity, Policies and Services, Curriculum and Pedagogy, Research and Scholarship, Inter/Intra Group Relations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Trustworthiness**

Denzin and Lincoln (2005) describe the term trustworthiness, in relation to a qualitative work, not as a form of validation but as an alternative to the concept of validity stating, “the combination of multiple methodological practices, empirical materials, perspectives, and observers in a single study … adds rigor, breadth, complexity, richness, and depth to an inquiry” (p. 5). Lincoln and Guba (1985) describe credibility and dependability as two standards for determining the trustworthiness of a qualitative study. In this study I implement four approaches to maintaining credibility and dependability. To establish credibility 1) I maintain three forms of triangulation and 2) establish referential adequacy; to establish dependability 3) I implement intercoder reliability and 4) present the data using the concept of thick description.
Credibility

Following Yin’s (2009) paradigm for case study research, the use of multiple sources allowed me to consider a wide range of issues, develop converging lines of inquiry, and strengthened the chain of evidence through triangulation. Three forms of triangulation were established in this study, triangulation of method, triangulation of data sources, and triangulation of theory. Triangulation of method refers to the use of multiple means of gathering data. The primary source of data for this study came from individual interviews. This method was supplemented with a focus group interview data, direct observation data, participant observation data, and document analysis. Triangulation of sources refers to the gathering of data across multiple individuals and settings. This study considers the perspectives of 18 participants across four embedded units. This is supplemented by the inclusion of interviews with 2 administrators, a participant observation of a focus group interview with 5 graduate students, a participant observation of a diversity team meeting, direct observation of hallway activity and the analysis of diversity related documents produced by the unit. Triangulation of theory refers to the process of comparing the emerging analysis to competing perspectives conceived by the researcher as well as theoretical perspectives from related research. Following Yin’s (2009) approach to triangulation of theory, I operationalized the construct under consideration within the six dimensions of the Transformational Tapestry Model. The relevance of other perspectives grounded in the literature, including white identity research and research on experiences of faculty and students of color were realized as the analysis progressed. Including these perspectives in the analysis of this study increased the ability of the findings of this study to be discussed in relation to the related literature which provides credibility to this study. I also borrow the strategy of reflexive data analysis and data collection from the grounded theory
tradition in an effort to increase the referential adequacy of the analysis and findings. As the categories in the analysis emerged, I checked preliminary findings against all of the forms of data in this study and refined the analysis based on these referential checks. This allowed for the emerging analysis of interview data to inform the proceeding inquiry and vice versa, helping to confirm and sharpen initial findings and clarify when new data no longer changed the coding structure.

Dependability

The use of a systematic categorization and constant comparison method of analyzing interview data ensured that the inferences drawn were grounded in the data itself; to ensure dependability in this process this study checked the emergent analysis against an independent coder. The use of multiple coders and analyzing the agreements and discrepancies of individual coders, intercoder reliability, is an accepted way of ensuring a consistency in the analysis. Munoz, Montero Rios, and Martinez (2006) describe intercoder reliability as “the quality of the research quantified through formulae or numerical indices based on the level of agreement between [coders]” (p. 551). After preparing a sample of categories and units of analysis, the judges established a level of agreement on the classification. One of the common assessments of this agreement is Cohen’s Kappa (1960).

\[ K = \frac{F_o - F_c}{N - F_c} \]

In this formula \( F_o \) is equal the total number of coinciding decisions, \( F_c \) is equal to the number of coinciding decisions due to chance and \( N \) is equal to the total number of decisions. Among the tests for intercoder reliability, Cohen’s Kappa is considered one of the more conservative measures, as it accounts for the number of decisions that would naturally be made by chance.
According to Munoz, Montero Rios, and Martinez (2006) a Kappa of coefficient of .4 - .6 is considered moderate reliability, .6 - .8 good reliability, and .8 - 1 very good reliability.

To test for K in this study a second coder was included. This coder is an African American male with a Doctoral degree in Higher Education Administration. He was identified as an appropriate second coder based on his knowledge of the constant comparative method and relative expertise in the topic area as well as holding a viewpoint as an African American student and scholar that varies from that of mine. After I completed the initial coding, two sample transcripts were prepared to test intercoder reliability. One fourth of a transcript was taken from a participant from each sub-group (white doctoral student, doctoral student of color, white faculty, and faculty member of color) and amalgamated into one sample transcript. Using this approach the two amalgamated transcripts accounted for 11% of the total data and included responses from 44% of the participants. Using The QSR software package NVivo 9 the secondary coder and I independently coded the two transcripts using (Richards, 1999). Via this program a Cohen’s Kappa value was calculated for each code in each of the two transcripts. The Kappa values for the individual codes ranged from .24 to 1. An aggregated Kappa across all codes and sources was calculated. The final calculation across all sources and codes was .74 which falls within the good consistency range (Munoz, Montero Rios, and Martinez, 2006).

In addition to intercoder reliability, I implement Geertz (1973) approach of thick description to provide the reader with the information needed to make a determination about the transferability of the findings in this study. Ponterotto (2006) describes the need for the reader of a qualitative work to determine the credibility and transferability of that work stating that, “the context under which these interpretations were made must be richly and thickly described” (p. 539). The concept of thick description is attributed to Geertz’s 1973 work *The Interpretation of
Cultures. This concept has been adapted and updated since 1973. This study operates under Denzin’s (1989) definition:

A thick description … presents detail, context, emotion, and the webs of social relationships that join persons to one another. Thick description evokes emotionality and self-feelings. It inserts history into experience. It establishes the significance of an experience, or the sequence of events, for the person or persons in question. In thick description, the voices, feelings, actions, and meanings of interacting individuals are heard. (Denzin, 1989, p. 83)

I implemented the concept of thick description in this study by generating vignettes of real occurrences that provide context to the findings and the use of direct quotation to provide voice to the participants’ experiences as they relate to the emergent analysis. The vignettes are presented at the beginning of sub-sections in chapters four and five and are followed by a discussion of the topic at hand and supplemented with quotations from participants. The careful selection and description of this specific case, and the purposeful sampling of individual participants, the context provided through thick description and the voice provided to the participants via direct quotation serve to provide the reader with the information needed to make their own judgments about the credibility of this study and the applicability of findings in this case to other similar cases.

Research Ethics

Stake (1995) explains that the case study researcher inherently takes on certain roles related to the research that impact the design, study, and write-up of the case. According to Stake these roles manifest themselves in both conscious and unconscious ways and the researcher’s awareness of his or her own position in relation to these roles can improve the quality of the
research, combat criticisms, and free the researcher from prescriptive and restrictive aspects of conducting the research. Stake (1995) suggests multiple roles that the researcher can embody in the case study process including: teacher, evaluator, biographer, interpreter, and advocate. In describing the role of advocate Stake (1995) states, “qualitative research champions the interaction of the researcher and the phenomenon….Research is not helped by making it appear value free. It is better to give the reader a good look at the researcher” (p. 95). In this study I embody Stake’s role of advocate. I am interested in how racial climate can be improved within departments and colleges and how both majority and minority group members experience that process; as such this study focused on improvements in the context and the roles of whites and individuals of color. As a researcher, I remain aware of this position and keep a watchful eye for negative currents within the context. In a broader sense, I am an advocate for the notion that white campus community members can and do contribute to equality efforts on campus. This stance is important to recognize within myself as the researcher and I have worked intentionally in this research to balance this position with a level of dispassionate objectivity that allowed for a more credible analysis of the data.

**Permissions and Confidentiality**

Permission to conduct this study was granted via the Associate Dean of the unit. In order to protect the identity of the academic unit, the university, and the individual participants, and to ensure that participants felt comfortable speaking about the racial climate, the names of each have been changed and certain facts that would identify the university, unit, or individuals have been altered or omitted. A submission to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) was drafted and approved. A participant agreement form stating the purpose of the study, the terms of confidentiality, and limitations of the use of the data was provided to and signed by each
participant prior to the interview or focus group (see Appendix D). The researcher also reviewed this form with each participant prior to the interview and provided the participant with an opportunity to ask questions or remove themselves from the study at any time. Permission from the Associate Dean was also sought for the use of non-public documents and the observation of any non-public meetings.
Chapter Four: Perceptions, Roles, Relationships, and Coping with Climate

This chapter describes how the perceptions and roles of individuals within the unit differ across faculty of color, white faculty, students of color and white students. The perceptions and roles considered in this chapter are the general perceptions of climate, situated perceptions of climate, roles and relationships among participants within the unit, and the ways that individuals cope with the racial climate. Each of these topics is discussed in the sections below. Key data from the study are discussed and relevant literature is presented at the end of each section. To avoid repetition, I use the terms students and doctoral students interchangeably and commonly leave out the term unit as discussion here is in reference to the unit unless stated otherwise.

When referring to date or quotations, the use of a pseudonym to introduce the data indicates the source to be an individual interview, and use of a demographic referent (i.e. African American Student) indicates the data source of that comment to be the focus group interview. Each major sub-section provides the reader with context by beginning with vignette culled from multiple data sources relevant to that sub-section. These vignettes, denoted by being single spaced, describe relevant aspects or critical incidents within the case.

General Perceptions of Unit Climate

Like many other doctoral students Linda Howard, an African American graduate of a northeastern master’s program, came to the program because she received full funding to attend via an assistantship. Upon entering the program Linda, unlike some of her minority status peers, did her best to stay out of any racially motivated situations by taking on the role of observer rather than activist. In doing this, Linda observes that the students of color intentionally avoid congregating together on the unit’s historic back patio or sitting together on the modern sofas in the lobby’s seating areas like other students do. She also notices that the desire of some of her colleagues of color to delve into controversial topics in the classroom is not reciprocated by her peers or professors, and that the students initiating these conversations seem to be absent from the social gatherings associated with the program. At the beginning of her second year Linda recognize that the group of close knit students organizing and attending these social events with faculty were the same students being assigned assistantships with faculty and administrators to work on specific research. Meanwhile, some of her other friends express frustration in trying to find professors willing to work with them on their research agenda. Linda was able to establish a
major professor. She continues to keep to herself socially and academically independent, but each year she spends some time outside of the unit helping the new students of color get their bearings within the landscape of the school.

The vignette above describes the process Linda went through in forming the perceptions that she has come to hold about the unit. Participants in the study indicated four general perceptions of the climate of the school. First, participants described a value placed on remaining in line with the majority opinion. Second, doctoral students described an inevitable coalescence between academic and social aspects of their experience. Third, some participants expressed unawareness of race-related issues. Finally, faculty indicated a sense of unit-wide commitment to diversity. Each of these perceptions is discussed below.

**Majority Opinion**

Both faculty and doctoral students indicated that the climate of the school encourages following the majority opinion and discourages disrupting the social norm. Descriptors relevant to this category included the terms overly civil, very professional, and walking on eggshells. Analysis of the data showed twice as many open codes in this category from doctoral students of color than white students in relation to this topic. Students of color were more likely to describe actively choosing to break away from the majority opinion. White students on the other hand were more likely to describe a preference to not upset the status quo. For example, a white student described her perception of the social norm and why she values following it:

I mean if people are not being sensitive to other’s perspectives and issues of diversity … if we are not being PC in our discussion it could really offend somebody and I’d rather be in an academic climate where people are at least politically correct and not risk being offensive.
In contrast, comments from doctoral students of color suggested that in their experience the pressure to follow the majority opinion had a negative impact on the level of discourse within the school. Kendis Hopwell, doctoral student of color, describes how not disrupting the status quo often precludes conversations with depth:

Because nobody is addressing the issue underneath everything, the core problem, everybody is trying to act like it’s not happening, act like, ‘We’re good. Everybody’s happy. Nobody’s upset. Nobody has a problem with the way things are going.’ Then you end up with folks who really are afraid to say anything or interact with anybody.

Doctoral students of color also indicated that people who break decorum often find themselves separated from the majority social group. Kendis Hopwell goes on to say:

If the topic was race or sexual orientation or religion, we could engage and we could have intense debate that didn’t carry over into professional likes and dislikes, and petty kind of high school cliquish stuff happens very directly here…It happens with faculty and it happens with students. There is this sense of people walking on eggshells, and if you dare to upset the balance, it’s taken as a personal attack and you are going to be ostracized and alienated because of it. And I have felt that way on various occasions here.

The process of ostracizing and alienating students from the majority group also occurred for the few white students that choose not to follow the majority opinion. A white student described this happening to a white friend of hers:

Here nobody wants to hear each other’s opinion, people, you can’t even express yourself and have a healthy debate… what I see happening, for instance to Brandon Mancini who is brutally honest, and when he talks everybody gets really critical like “oh my God I
can’t believe he just said that” but I think it’s good and I think people should recognize that, but then he is later criticized both among faculty and students … when people do speak up they are judged and criticized.

This process was not limited to students; faculty who spoke out against the majority opinion experienced a similar response among their faculty colleagues. As an African American participant relates:

Faculty who do address these issues [race, class, sexual orientation] are often ostracized and alienated… and I think that’s something that has to be addressed, because those faculty members who are willing to intervene when there are student concerns end up being really, I think, punished for doing so, by their colleagues.

The pressure to follow the majority opinion was exacerbated by the fact that dialog in the unit cuts across all levels of the faculty and student experience.

Coalescence

Doctoral students described an unavoidable coalescence between the social, academic, and personal experiences. Both white doctoral students and doctoral students of color described this coalescence as thoroughgoing. A white participant stated, “I mean but this is your life. This is your work…this is where your friends are I mean [the unit] is your social life and your work life, so I think that bleed over is natural.” John Frankel, a white doctoral student described this comparison to his previous work experiences, “In my previous employment I liked to keep my personal life and my professional life separate. That is just not possible here.” While white doctoral students and doctoral students of color both perceived an inseparable link between the social and academic portions of their experience; data suggested that this perception did not impact all students in the same way. Students of color were more likely to describe the impact of
coalescing experiences in negative terms. For example, Chris Jones, doctoral student of color, described her perception of that link and its impact, “Whatever happens outside the class, affects the class and what happens in the classroom affects outside the class and I think we all lose.”

Doctoral students indicated that the major impact of this bleed over is that it drives the formation of two social groups within the student population, 1) a relatively powerful, predominantly white in-group and 2) a de facto out-group of students from historically marginalized backgrounds and white students that do not follow the majority opinion. This in-group and out-group arrangement is discussed in more detail in chapter five.

Unawareness

Despite the close-knit nature of the program, one doctoral student and one faculty member described their perception of the racial climate in terms of unawareness. Stephanie Dalyell, white doctoral student, described her lack in recognition of racially sensitive topics, “I feel a little ignorant talking about this because I don’t pick up on things that other people might pick up on just because I’m not in that situation.” While this is a small percentage of the participants, it is noteworthy that it is even possible for individuals to act from a position of unawareness within a unit that has a stated diversity initiative, has won a diversity award, and is amidst concerted efforts to improve graduate student relations along racial lines.

The faculty member that suggested that she operates from a position of unawareness is an Asian American faculty member. Melody Liu described herself as focused on her research and her family and as a result avoids getting involved in issues, describing herself as unaware of such happenings in general. In this way Melody Liu’s approach differed from that of Stephanie Dalyell’s described above. Stephanie as a white doctoral student describes a fleeting awareness of a power imbalance drawn on racial lines and appears to act from a genuine inability to even
perceive racialized incidents as they happen. Melody Liu on the other hand described a fuller awareness of the issues in her interview; she knows that challenges related to race exist on a systematic level. She has the capacity to perceive subtle inequalities, but Melody chose to selectively not expose herself to these issues. Melody’s approach appears to be the exception. Most faculty described the unit has having a strong commitment to diversity.

**Commitment to Diversity**

Faculty generally perceived the unit to have a strong unit-wide commitment to diversity. This sentiment was supported by both white faculty and faculty of color. Erika Dickerson, faculty member of color, stated, “I will say about this department that everyone cares about the students. And everyone cares about diversity. I believe there is a genuine interest coming from the faculty as a whole.” Maxine Fontineau, white faculty member, stated, “It’s become so much a part of what we do, and it isn’t just the dean. Anyone in a position of responsibility thinks about those things.” When asked where the impetus for this commitment to diversity comes from, faculty all replied that it was started with Dean Macpherson and is carried on by Interim Dean Harry Tristham and Associate Dean Dan Cooper.

General perceptions of the climate indicated differences across the experiences of the participants from different demographic groups. White students were more likely to support the majority opinion, where students of color were more likely to choose to break from the majority opinion. Students of color expressed frustration with how this desire to follow the majority opinion, precludes in depth academic debate. This is confirmatory of Rogers and Molina (2006) findings that doctoral students of color experienced such frustrations. Rogers and Molina went on to state that these frustrations contribute to decreased retention.
In combination with the coalescence of the social and academic aspects of the student experience, as students of color broke from the majority opinion they found themselves socially alienated. This finding is congruent with research on the experiences of doctoral students of color which indicated that these students are commonly socially isolated as a result of subtle discrimination on the part of faculty and students (Robinson, 1999; Johnson-Bailey, Valentine, Cervero, & Bowles, 2009). This isolation was described in a similar manner for faculty, which is congruent with Turner & Myers (2000) findings.

White students on the other hand expressed perceptions that ranged from active breaking from the majority opinion, to unawareness, to support of the majority opinion. White students like John Frankel and Brandon Mancini that broke from the majority opinion experienced similar social isolation as students of color and found themselves grouping with students of color in social settings. This is congruent with Welp’s (1997) finding that whites who act as advocates for diversity experience many of the same negative social implications as individuals of color. One white student, Stephanie Dalyell indicated total unawareness of racial issues in the unit, while Emily Smolkin expresses awareness, but retained support for the majority opinion. Helms’ (1995) Model of white identity development describes the first phase of white identity, the contact phase, as general obliviousness to racism and an unquestioned acquiescence to the status quo. By this definition, it would appear that Stephanie would fall into Helms’ (1995) stage of contact. Helms notes that the disintegration phase is marked by the individual’s initial recognition, but not necessarily acceptance of, membership in the white racial group. Emily’s awareness of racial issues and active decision to adhere to the majority opinion would suggest that she is in the contact phase of Helm’s model.
Perceptions of Situated Climate

In addition to general perception of the racial climate, participants indicated many perceptions situated in specific settings. These settings included the classroom, formal settings besides the classroom and informal settings. Each section below begins with a vignette and describes key data pertaining to racial climate in that setting.

Classroom

After getting a feel for the climate of the school outside of the classroom, Kendis Hopwell had her first definitive moment inside the classroom. Kendis recalls a public affairs course where students chose from several potential presentation topics; she chose tolerance. Kendis, interested in this topic because of her legal background, read the assigned documents and having done research in this area before, sought out additional sources to supplement her presentation. On the day of her presentation the students aligned the twenty two shiny chrome and desks with wooden seats and tops into neat rows, as opposed to the circling of desks that signified a discussion day. Kendis stood at the oak lectern and began with a powerpoint slide on the ceiling mounded classroom projector which outlined what she intended to cover in her presentation, including examples of public affairs scenarios related to race, class, gender, and sexual preference. At this point the white professor leading the class stopped Kendis and indicated that the class would not discuss “contemporary divisive conceptualizations of tolerance.” Rather, the class would approach the topic from a broader conceptual standpoint. Kendis did her best to adjust in the moment, but the professor cut in and redirected the presentation on several occasions and directly objected to her use of outside readings. The tension in the room was high and what was ordinarily an active, discussion-based class became an uncomfortable silence. Kendis received a grade for the presentation that was below the standard she set for herself and left the course believing that the professor’s discomfort with the topics of race, class and gender and her status as an African American female led the professor to preclude potentially controversial topics within the classroom and that this ultimately led to her receiving a lower grade on the project.

Within the classroom setting, Kendis’ example above is one of many examples provided by doctoral students of color about how the classroom environment closes off certain avenues of dialog. Students of color also explained that this classroom climate impacts their grades in certain scenarios. Faculty, on the other hand, provided examples of managing the classroom discussion and seeking teachable moments, and setting ground rules that encourage an open
dialog in the classroom. Faculty members of color also described how some students respond to their courses in their course evaluations.

**Student Perceptions of the Classroom**

Doctoral students of color provided a list of classroom examples where they felt they were told not to bring up certain issues, they were singled out or encouraged not to do projects on certain issues, and where topics were avoided all together. Chris Jones, for example, recalled how the one book on the syllabus by an author of color was handled in one of her classes:

I was so excited, ok, what a great book, we’re going to talk about it in the same way that we had done every single other book in the class, and that’s not what happened… so we go into class that day and instead of having the intense discussion that we did on all the other books – oh, let’s put on a video. And, ok, I’m thinking when are we going to talk about the book, I’m ready, and we didn’t.

In contrast, white doctoral students did not relate examples of how diversity issues were handled in the classroom, positively or negatively.

Three of the five doctoral students of color also made comments about how they felt the racial climate impacted their grades. Kendis Hopwell for example was accused of plagiarism. Kendis brought the issue before the dean and it was determined to be a false accusation. Kendis talked about how that experience affected her perceptions of the climate in the school in turn affecting her grades for the entire semester:

I assumed that one faculty member had been a part of the gossipy little network, and so I was overcompensating in my other classes. I had a horrible semester, not because of anything [the professor in the other course] did, but because I was worried about what may have been said. And that there was no reconciliation, no closure on the plagiarism
problem I had with this faculty member. And instead, now, I walk into a meeting, I sit down, she gets up and leaves and everybody can see that. Is anything being done on that? Does anybody care?

Another African American participant confirmed having such experiences:

I had conversations with a professor and with the administration about a situation that was happening and well let’s just say there was clear retaliation [from the professor] and all of [the African American students in the class] received some type of lower grade.

White doctoral students, while aware of the occasional tension in the classroom, did not indicate that the climate had an impact on their grades. Faculty perceptions of the classroom environment were incongruent with student perceptions.

**Faculty Perceptions of the Classroom**

Faculty described several approaches they implemented to create a positive climate for open discussion. White faculty described their classroom approaches in terms of managing discomfort, making statements like “I will represent a viewpoint that I think the majority of students have but aren’t comfortable representing” or “I won’t just call on a student blindly, because I think that’s unfair” and “I try to say ‘what I hear you saying is this’ and then maybe re-articulate it in less passionate terms.” These terms suggest white faculty come from a stance of recognizing potential sources of discomfort in the classroom and attempting to mitigate it.

Faculty of color, on the other hand, described intentionally causing discomfort in the classroom, making statements like, “it’s intentional…I push the envelope” and “when I see an opportunity that if left undone can continue to perpetuate a stereotype I take that opportunity to teach students something that can be learned in reaction to that” and “actually going through point by point and really talking about these different aspects of privilege and power and how that puts
you at this comparative advantage.” In addition to intentionally causing discomfort faculty of
color intentionally sought to discuss and demystify common stereotypes.

Faculty of color described their efforts to break up students stereotypes by intentionally
bringing up topics like the Confederate flag or the meaning of the term “cracker” as ways to
engage in conversations that will make students deal with issues they may not have to broach
otherwise. Dee Dee Guillory described these situations as teachable moments:

A teachable moment was when my students did a campaign for a drug treatment
program. The students that had that particular client told me at the end of the semester
that course and their interactions changed their whole perception of who a drug addict
was. They just thought it was blacks and poor people and most of the people at this
facility were white and from a privileged background. So it’s not an in your face
approach it’s what I just described to you and weaving that into everything that I teach.

This suggests that faculty of color take very different approaches to dealing with difficult issues
in the classroom.

All faculty members in the unit promoted a safe environment in the classroom by setting
ground rules. Both faculty of color and white faculty indicated that it is common for them to
include a statement about diversity in their syllabus. Sarah Daenfeld’s syllabi all include the
following statement:

One of the goals of the college pursuit should be not only to obtain a career but an
education. Based on that premise, I expect you to leave your stereotypes at the door.
This is an inclusive course in which you are open to express your thoughts, ideas and
feelings in a respectful manner and a relevant situation. Conversely, I expect you to be a
respectful listener and a thoughtful colleague.
Faculty members also indicated that they remind their students of this policy at the beginning of a class or a discussion they think may be controversial. In general, faculty believed this approach kept the classroom conversations appropriate; this wasn’t always the case during end of course evaluations.

Faculty of color indicated that student evaluations were one place where they felt like they got a glimpse into the unspoken tension in the unit. Faculty of color described this process as a place where the students can ‘get’ you. Erika Dickerson recalls some past experiences with evaluations:

I’ve had students on evaluations say that they wish I would just go away or that I had never been born. You know, just really derogatory things. I’ve been called names on evaluations, with racial implications, which I will decline to say what those names were. Faculty of color expressed concern over such evaluations because student evaluations are a part of the tenure and promotion process. White faculty did not indicate any such experiences or implications associated with student evaluations.

Perceptions of the classroom as they relate to racial climate within the unit indicated differences in experiences between white student and students of color. Doctoral students believed that certain topics were avoided in the classroom and that the racial climate had a negative impact on their grades. This finding is congruent with Wing Sue, Torino, Capodilupo, Riviera, & Lin’s (2009) study citing avoidance as a common reaction for white professors faced with difficult classroom conversations and Engberg’s (2004) findings that doctoral students of color commonly perceived their race to have a negative impact on their grades.

Perceptions of the classroom as they relate to racial climate also indicated differences in experiences between white faculty and faculty of color. White faculty described managing
comfort and minimizing discomfort, while faculty of color described causing discomfort and intentionally break up stereotypes. This is congruent with Umbach’s (2006) research which notes that faculty of color implement a wide range of teaching techniques and address issues of diversity directly. Faculty of color also described racially motivated experiences with evaluations, where white faculty did not. This is congruent with several studies that indicate faculty of color to perceive themselves to be negatively impacted by student evaluations (Bower, 2002; Delgado Bernal & Villalpando, 2002; McGowan, 2000).

Formal Settings

The unit’s Diversity Team was founded in response to The Accrediting Agency’s 1998 report on the school. The team was initially charged with the task of creating a diversity plan that emphasized attracting minority faculty and students. To this end, the diversity team generated the school’s original diversity plan. The diversity team is led by African American Assistant Professor Erika Dickerson. Maxine Fontineau a white full professor, Dee Dee Guillory, a black associate professor, Bobby Stara, a white assistant professor, Jenny Hill, a white administrator, Interim Dean Harry Tristham, and three African American doctoral students Chris Jones, Kendis Hopwell, and Linda Howard currently serve on the Diversity Team. The team meets monthly in the Dean’s conference room, an impressive room that overlooks the entry to the building and is decorated with awards the unit has won as well as original modern art purchased by former Dean Macpherson. The team is presently focused on two issues: 1) the desire to create and require a diversity related course at the graduate level and 2) how to address the concerns of graduate students that have been raised over the past two academic years.

Beyond the classroom, faculty and doctoral students made comments about other formal settings in which the racial climate manifested itself. These responses dealt with two formal settings, the Diversity Team and the ongoing dean’s search committee. Both are discussed below.

The Diversity Team

The formal meetings and actions of the Diversity Team are another setting in the unit where the participants in this study perceive and experience the racial climate differently. Three of the five faculty of color served on the Diversity Team and three of the five doctoral students
of color actively serve on the Diversity Team as well. Meanwhile three of the five white doctoral students interviewed in this study did not know the Diversity Team existed. This was also true of the focus group participants. A white student stated, “I feel like I am super involved in this school. I know most things that are going on. I knew nothing about the Diversity Team. Is it just because I am white people think I don’t care about diversity?” To which another white student replied, “This may be a dumb question but what exactly is a diversity team?”

During participant observations of the Diversity Team meeting, I learned that the team was working to create professional development workshops for faculty and doctoral students. During that meeting, Erika Dickerson, the African American leader of the team, and the three African American doctoral students on the team were assigned all of the action items for planning and implementing these workshops. Interviews with administrators Harry Tristham and Dan Cooper indicated that the Diversity Team is responsible for most of the diversity related efforts. While white students were unaware of the Diversity Team and faculty and students of color disproportionately represented on the team, faculty and students of color became primarily responsible for the implementation of such diversity efforts.

**Dean’s Search Committee**

At the time of this study the unit was in the final stages of selecting a new dean. Two participants in this study, Jason Bailey and Sarah Daanfeld were serving on the committee; both indicated a conscious effort to recruit diverse candidates for the position. The committee reached out through personal networks to invite applicants of color. Each of these potential applicants declined. According to Bailey and Daanfeld, one candidate declined out of the belief that there was an internal candidate, another declined because of personal differences with the previous dean, and a third declined because the school wasn’t able to also hire their spouse.
As the process continued, faculty and students had conversations about the difficulties that the committee was experiencing. Jason Bailey recalled a conversation with a colleague of color as the committee was about to announce the five final candidates:

Well one of my colleagues who is black came up to me as we were going through the process and said half-jokingly, ‘I am going to blow this place up if you don’t have at least one vagina on that final list’.

In the end, the committee recommended five white males. At the meeting where the committee announced the candidates, several faculty members expressed displeasure and intimated that the committee had not tried hard enough to identify a diverse pool of applicants. Jason Bailey explained that several of the committee members took offense to this but refused to address the issue directly and openly at the announcement meeting. One of the five white males was hired. This individual had extensive professional experience but does not have a PhD, another source of controversy. Members of the committee retained that they put every effort forward to seek candidates of color. Other faculty believed that the process was closed, and that more effort could have been made to have at least one candidate that was not a white male, especially if they were willing to entertain candidates without a doctoral degree.

Perceptions of the Diversity Team as they relate to racial climate also indicate differences in experience between the individuals within the embedded units in this study. White students were relatively unaware of the existence of the Diversity Team while faculty and students of color were overrepresented in this setting, which led to the burden of much of the formal diversity efforts being placed on faculty and students of color. This is congruent with the literature which suggests that faculty and students often experience higher workloads due to
being asked to serve in capacities such as diversity committees (Turner & Meyers, 2000; Hurtado, 2001).

Perceptions of the dean’s search as they relate to racial climate also indicated differences in experience between individuals in the embedded units in this study. The white search committee participants in this study described similar challenges as noted in the literature on hiring faculty of color (Antonio, 2002; Turner, & Myers, 1999; Knowles & Harleston, 1997). Jason Bailey and Sarah Daanfeld described seeking out the top candidates of color and perceiving that these individuals had a lot of options and as such chose not to come to the unit. Meanwhile the conversation about the white candidate that was selected focused on his career experience, and the fact that he did not have a PhD was not seen as a direct barrier to hiring him. This is in line with Oliver’s (1991) finding that white candidates with less prestigious credentials are commonly seen as equally or more competent than candidates of color with more prestigious credentials.

**Informal Settings**

Many doctoral students participate in an online discussion forum on Facebook. The forum is not formally organized by the unit. However, both students and faculty view and post on the forum. Last year, a doctoral student was posting under a profile picture that included a Confederate flag. No comments were made on the forum about the picture itself, however, the student using the profile picture was asked to speak with the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies. After that conversation the student changed the profile picture. Some students contend that the administration directly requested the change; other students believe that the student was simply made aware of the controversy and the student changed it out of a desire to not offend anyone. Equally as divisive as why the student changed the picture is who brought the image to the attention of the administration. Some students feel that one outspoken African American student was directly responsible. That student argues that she had nothing to do with the incident, reminding everyone that several faculty members participate in the forum.

In addition to certain formal settings, participants indicated certain informal settings where the racial climate of the school was salient. Specifically, participants described the impact of social events associated with the school and a social media forum used by doctoral students.
and faculty. Participants also described the role of informal conversations not directly associable
with a particular setting.

**Social Events**

Social events associated with the school were noted as an informal setting where the
racial climate of the school was defined and brought back into the formal settings of the school.
A specific group of doctoral students (this grouping of students is discussed further in chapter 5)
create these social events and some faculty members attend them putting this group at a benefit
in terms of developing personal relationships with faculty. However, this group is perceived by
some as being less welcoming to students of color, and as such students of color are less likely to
attend these events. Bobby Stara recalled walking into a recent graduate student social event:

> They did a pub crawl and it was great. I walked in, and looked around and the place is
packed. And then I go to tap one of the students on the shoulder, and I’m like, ‘Um,
John, how come there are no black people here?’ And he was just like, ‘Huh? What?’

And all of a sudden he looked around and was like, ‘Oh my god, you’re right.’

An incident like this is likely to trigger informal conversations, or gossip, among students and
faculty. Faculty attendance at these events also provided a feedback loop directly back into the
formal aspects of the school; in some more severe cases, students have been called into a formal
meeting with faculty or administration based on the occurrences in social events. This process
occurred in a similar manner via social media.

**Social Media**

Social media was another informal setting that is linked back to the formal aspects of the
unit via faculty involvement. Doctoral students and faculty informally participated in a
Facebook forum established by students. As a white participant stated, “There are situations
where people will post something online … there will be a debate and it will go from Facebook and the faculty gets involved and then it’s a whole nother thing.” John Frankel, white doctoral student, described this further, “People have certainly been called into the office because of Facebook issues. They are [Facebook] friends with faculty members, and the sometimes faculty members think that it’s something that needs to be discussed with those students.” More commonly, such Facebook posts generated informal conversations, or gossip, among students and faculty. As a result of such incidents, students began creating a second Facebook account for personal use.

As described above, holding informal conversations, or gossip, is a common response among faculty and students to racialized incidents. This gossip affected the participants from each demographic group in this study differently. Specifically, students of color believed that when they participated in the gossip or express dissatisfaction when hearing about racially motivated incidents at social events or on Facebook that the dialog quickly turned on them. An African American student recalled this process, “A number of us experienced the backlash of [an incident at a social setting] being the gossip topic, so we were seen as the confrontational angry black women.”

The strength of gossip in the school is linked to the cohort nature of the program. Because all doctoral students were from out of state and on assistantships the students knew very few people outside of the program. Also, the faculty became part of the student gossip chain. John Frankel noted:

Some faculty are part of it because certain students; some of their social life is with the faculty. They will go to social settings with some of the faculty and like to gossip. They
will talk about things that have happened in the classroom or another social setting. So there is somewhat of a feedback loop there.

Faculty involvement in social events and social media created a link between the informal and the formal aspects of the unit. However, the ways in which these events were talked about afterwards was different for white students and students of color. Specifically students of color perceived a backlash associated with being critical of racially charged incidents that occur online or at social events. Studies consider the socialization (Gardner, 2008) social satisfaction (Harper & Hurtado, 2007), faculty-student interaction (Kim & Sax, 2009) and peer interactions (Pike & Kuh, 2006) of graduate students. However, little research delves into how specific social settings of the graduate experience influence the experiences of students. Additionally, research in this area focuses on campus climate not an academic unit within a university.

**Roles of Faculty, Doctoral Students, and Administrators**

In a course required for doctoral students, the professor requires a project that involved designing a research study. During this course Sarah Daenfeld, a white assistant professor, asked the students to brainstorm potential topics. One student suggested the topic ‘depictions of African American women film.’ Dr. Daenfeld assigned the topics to groups of students based on the way students had organized themselves within the circle of desks in the classroom. There were five African American students in the class; three of the African American students, and a white female were assigned the group studying African American portrayals in film. Shortly after the assignment was given, the white group member dropped from the entire program for personal reasons not related to the course.

Dr. Daenfeld was concerned about the topic because she knew that as master’s students their approach may lack a strong methodological foundation. During a feedback session, all of the topics were discussed at length except the African American women in film topic. The doctoral students provided very little feedback, Dr. Daenfeld was uncertain about their approach, and there was a clear sense of unease in the room. The group of three stayed after class to talk to the professor, and the other two black students in the class stayed late to support them and express their concerns about the class session.

In that meeting Dr. Daenfeld expressed her continued concerns about methodology, and suggested that the students consider changing topics. The students did not change the topic, and the tension in the class continued. When the class ended Dr. Daenfeld received several negative evaluations stating that she was uncomfortable with the topic and the students. Dr. Daenfeld was struck by these happenings and sought out her faculty mentor, Dr. Guillory. Dr. Daenfeld has since had several conversations with Dr. Guillory about how to handle such situations and
invited Associate Dean Cooper to visit her classroom and provide her with additional feedback on her approach.

This vignette touches on the roles that students of color have in relation to each other and white students as well as the roles that faculty and administrators have in relation to classroom instruction. Interview data indicates that the roles faculty of color and the roles of students of color are more clearly defined than the roles of white faculty and white students. Additionally, administrators are most commonly described as having an intervention role in racially related incidents.

**Student Roles**

When faculty and students in the school said or did things that were racially insensitive, students of color were most often the individuals to bring attention to the situation. Emily Smolkin described this phenomenon from the white perspective, “I won’t even realize that we’re talking about a racialized issue, and then another student, maybe an African American student will say, ‘But that’s being prejudiced towards African Americans.’ So then we talk about it in that context.” An African American student provided her perspective on being a signpost for diversity, “If I think someone is wrong or I think they are saying something racist and I will say ‘well don’t you think that’s racist’ rather than sitting back and being politically correct.”

Doctoral students of color expressed fatigue resulting from taking on the role of signposting diversity; they also experienced fatigue from representing the entirety of their race.

Students of color were often asked to serve as representatives of their entire race or culture in both conversation and action. Doctoral students of color described their minority status as something that was valued for its symbolic meaning in statistics or recruiting materials. Chris Jones recalled seeing herself in such recruiting materials, “Whenever there is an event and me and her go somehow on the webpage the pictures will always be with us (laughter) you know
what I mean.” An African American student stated it clearly, “The problem in most institutions is that often the racial or gender representatives get saddled with all the responsibility for creating diversity in the institution. In this situation I think it’s the same.”

In addition to symbolic representation, students of color described themselves as serving as a representative of the race in both conversation and action. Huong Lee described the feeling of representing her culture of origin, “There are few international students, and so many people consider us kind of representative of our countries. So when I act, I feel like I have to do the right thing because they tend to think of me of kind of as a representative of my country.” These types of roles were not described as salient concerns of white doctoral students.

When the roles of signposting diversity and representing their race were considered in combination with the value placed on following the majority opinion, doctoral students of color found themselves in a difficult situation. On one hand students of color felt the need to point out inequality and are asked in many cases to represent their race. On the other hand, serving these roles was likely to cause them to diverge from the majority opinion and put themselves at risk of being ostracized. This in turn contributed to the fatigue associated with filling these roles, and they relied on each other to handle this fatigue.

As described in the vignette at the beginning of this section, doctoral students of color took on a role of protecting or looking out for each other in certain circumstances. Linda Howard described doing this for younger students, “I help first year students [of color] navigate the process a little better. We are here for each other, even though like I said we’re not all best friends, we may not all hang out but we do help each other.” While these roles of doctoral students of color are clear, the roles of white doctoral students were much less clearly defined.
Where doctoral students of color articulated clear examples of roles they take on within the school, white doctoral students made few comments about their own roles. Two white doctoral students described situations where other white students made racially charged statements in front of them that they did not agree with. Brandon Mancini described his perceptions of some white students’ interactions with students of color:

So they would talk about something and not give the black students any agency. Only kind of saying, ‘Oh, they’re just being retarded. That’s not how it happened.’ And I would always just be thinking to myself, well, maybe from your perspective. You have no idea how they feel being here with no other person who looks like them.

John Frankel described a similar situation and his perception led to his breaking from the social group associated with the majority opinion:

We were talking and one of the students got drunk and said some very offensive things about Native Americans and that was my first exposure to the clique that I was going to be spending the next three years of my life with. And any time after that when we wanted to go out… that was always something that stuck in my mind.

In their interviews both John Frankel and Brandon Mancini described finding themselves actively disassociating with these students and associating with doctoral students of color and other students that did not share in the majority opinion.

The data indicated differences in the roles that students of color and white students took on within the unit. Students of color served as signposts for diversity and were commonly asked to represent their entire race. This led to fatigue, which was exacerbated by the fact that filling these roles attributed to their social isolation. To help mitigate these negative experiences, students of color took on the role of supporting each other. This is congruent with Yosso’s
(2000) finding that in reaction to negative experiences with the dominant ideology, students of color create their own academic and social counterspaces.

The roles of white students were much less clearly defined. Some white students took on the role of disagreeing with the majority opinion and face a similar social isolation. These students found themselves gravitating towards the counterspaces created by their peers of color. This suggests a further role of students of color as acceptors of whites defecting from the majority opinion.

**Faculty Roles**

Faculty of color articulated several roles that they fulfill within the school. Faculty of color described instances where they act as signposts for diversity and act as representatives of their race. Faculty of color indicated an acceptance of these roles that students of color did not. Both white faculty and faculty of color indicated satisfaction with the mentoring they receive from senior faculty members.

In a similar way that students of color serve as signposts for diversity, faculty of color also described taking the role of signposting diversity. Dee Dee Guillory recalled taking this role at a recent faculty retreat, “So I told them that I noticed the three black people in the room were the ones asking the questions and this retreat supposed to be about diversity.” Also congruent to the doctoral student experiences, faculty of color were often asked to serve as representatives of their race.

Faculty of color also described serving symbolic roles in recruiting and acting as a representative of their race. Faculty of color were asked to participate in high school recruiting visits to schools with large populations of historically underrepresented groups. Erika Dickerson recalled her perception of these recruiting visits, “There were times when I felt like I was
primarily used to recruit the African American students. Put a black face in front of black faces and you’ll get the black people.” Faculty of color described acting as a representative of their race as an acceptable role and in many cases intentionality sought out this role. Melody Liu talked about taking this approach with students in order to discuss topics that students tend to avoid, “I try to focus it on me, which is, you know, I can take responsibility. I’m not going to be threatened with whatever anyone says. I’m the only one there, that if they want to ask me, I’m fine with it. I know I can deal with that.” Congruent with findings on white doctoral students, the data on roles of white faculty was less clearly defined than those of faculty of color.

White faculty members themselves provided few comments about the roles that they play in relationship to the racial climate. Students of color provided both positive and negative examples of the roles that white faculty play in their experience. Erika Dickerson, for example, described her perceptions of how some of her white colleagues unintentionally create a negative classroom environment:

Some students [of color] felt alienated by certain faculty members. These faculty members just weren’t aware. They just didn’t quite understand how their comments were being taken by the students. It seemed that these faculty members were harder on [the students of color] than some of the white students.

However, doctoral students of color also indicated positive interactions with certain white faculty members. While Kendis Hopwell, an African American doctoral student, recalled a positive anecdote related to her dissertation committee:

I started telling [a colleague] about the people on my committee. And she said, ‘You didn’t say what their races were.’ And I said, ‘Oh, they’re all white.’ She said, ‘You don’t have one black person on your committee?’ I said, ‘No. These are people with
whom I can work and I can learn from, people whose opinion’s I respect and who seem to respect my skill set coming into this.

Students of color described positive relationships with white faculty in situations where they were able to seek out professors that they felt comfortable with, such as dissertation committees. Students of color described negative relationships with white faculty in settings where there was a limited ability to be selective, such as a classroom.

A special role that senior faculty played was the role of formal mentors. Junior faculty described this relationship with appreciation, indicating that they would come to their mentors for advice on how to navigate the racial landscape of the school. Erika Dickerson recalled going to her mentor when she became aware of the recent discontent among doctoral students of color:

[My mentor] was actually the first person I went to when students started to come to me about the issues going on with the grad. students and I encouraged the students to go talk to her as well. And so at that point, she became actively involved in trying to fix the situation, too.

Faculty mentors conducted class visits, help junior faculty develop courses, and in some cases mentors and mentees collaborated on research. When the mentor was active, these relationships are described as highly helpful by junior faculty.

The data suggests that there were differences in the roles that faculty of color and white faculty take on. The roles that faculty of color fulfill were similar to the roles that doctoral students fulfill in the unit. They acted as signposts for diversity, and served as representatives of their race. Unlike doctoral students, faculty of color indicated an acceptance of these roles and in some cases an intentional seeking out of fulfilling these roles. This contrasts Kim, & Sax (2009) finding that faculty felt a sense of powerlessness in acting to highlight and address issues of
inequality. Faculty of color also indicated satisfaction with the mentoring they have received from senior faculty. This contrasts with findings in the literature, which suggests that faculty of color commonly experience inadequate mentoring (Meyers, 2000; Antonio, 2002).

Roles of white faculty were much less clearly defined. White faculty themselves did not describe roles that they take in relation to the racial climate. Faculty of color described the role of white faculty as creators of negative classroom environment as a result of ignorance. And students of color indicated positive interactions with white faculty when given the opportunity to be selective of which individual faculty members they would work with. This suggests that there is a divide or continuum of acceptance/non-acceptance within the white faculty ranks.

**Administrator Roles**

In addition to students and faculty, the administration of the school served important roles in terms of racial climate. The administration was noted as filling the roles of assigning graduate assistants, mentors, instructors of record, and office spaces. Administrators also audited diversity measures, hired adjunct instructors, helped recruit faculty, supported faculty research, set diversity initiatives, and touched base with members of the school about diversity issues. However, the function of the administration that yielded the most open codes was that of dealing with racialized incidents that occurred within the school; the only comments related to the role of administration made by doctoral students of color were in relationship to dealing with racialized issues. Doctoral students of color described the administration as one place they felt comfortable bringing up issues of race, diversity, and equality. An African American student described going to administrators on several instances when she felt racialized issues needed to be addressed, “I have always had a very welcome response from the administrators in discussing these issues and in trying to put together solutions to address the concerns.” White students, on the other hand,
perceived the role of the administration in relation to racialized issues as punitive. When asked about her interactions with the administration, Stephanie Dalyell, a white doctoral student stated, “That’s the type of interaction I try to avoid as much as possible.” The role of administration in handling racialized incidents was perceived to result from the administration’s direct role in creating the stated diversity initiatives. Maxine Fontineau described diversity initiatives in the unit as a top down effort:

Because our school itself, our previous dean and our current interim dean, started the focus on trying to examine this more closely. And I think when you think about improving diversity efforts, you have to start at the top and that’s where we examine things as they arise.

Findings in this study indicate that the administration actively sought a different relationship with students of color than it does with white students. In an interview Associate Dean, Dan Cooper described his special efforts in hiring students of color as student workers and talking to the families of students of color in order to build a relationship with them. Interim Dean Harry Tristham described how he and the previous dean would occasionally invite students of color to lunch simply to check in with them. Doctoral student of color, Chris Jones, recalled this happening after a particular incident, “After we had that issue, he would ask me on occasion what I thought about things. He would invite me to his office and ask what I thought, we had one of those conversations and it turned into lunch.” White students on the other hand occasionally perceived this as unfair. For example, when it came up in the focus group interview that certain students of color were invited by the administration to participate in the Diversity Team, one white participant suggested that it was her skin color preventing her from being on the team, touching her forearm and asking “And why can’t I be on the diversity committee?” In addition to
the roles that faculty, students and administrators fill, the relationships that these groups hold with one another both shape the racial climate and affect participants from each demographic group in this study in different ways.

**Relationships of Faculty and Students**

Chris Jones, an African American doctoral student, recalls her first semester as a rough transition. During the second week of class a black doctoral student caught her in the undecorated painted masonry block hallway outside of the graduate student and faculty offices after class and mentioned that she needed to stop in at the offices of the black faculty members and introduce herself. When she visited the black faculty members moderately sized but well-appointed offices she believed the interaction recognize an unspoken acceptance of an apology. After this Chris went about the business of being a student. At a social event in a nearby sports bar frequented by students from the unit, Chris began interacting with Jerry Moore, a white male graduate student in another program at the university. Due to common friendships from undergraduate studies, Jerry had become part of the “in-group”. The friendship between Chris and Jerry grew through Christmas break while the majority of the “in-group” students were away from the campus. Shortly into the second semester Jerry was called to what Chris describes as a meeting at the townhouse of one of the “in-group” students. At this meeting Jerry was questioned by the other white students as to why he was spending so much time with Chris, what his intentions were, and if he saw it as something more than friendly. Jerry related this information to Chris. The incident upset Chris and a friction built between the two which quickly led to the demise of the relationship. Chris considered leaving the program. The white advisor assigned to her encouraged her to consider this as an option. After some soul searching, Chris decided to stay in what she now considers a broken environment, focusing on academics and putting the social aspect of the experience aside.

The vignette above describes the expectation of a relationship between faculty of color and students of color that may not exist between white students and faculty. The vignette also provides another example of how the breaking of a social expectation results in a sense of social alienation. All faculty described their relationships with other faculty members as being similar, regardless of race, but white faculty describe a special appreciation for their cross race relationships. Faculty of color and white faculty differed in their approaches to their relationships with students. This may have led to a mixture of messages that was difficult for students of color and not experienced by white doctoral students. White students defined their relationships with
faculty in terms other than race, and occasionally benefited from social relationships with faculty not indicated by students of color.

When asked, all faculty members described their relationships with faculty of color as being no different than their relationships with white faculty; some faculty indicated a special appreciation for their cross race relationships. Sarah Daenfeld described it, “I appreciate and I certainly would count among my closest work friends some people who are of color. Which is neat. I really like that opportunity because it does give you a different perspective.” This description from white faculty is congruent with previously described role of faculty of color as signposts of diversity. While faculty described their relationships with each other as not varying based on race, this was not the case for faculty relationships with students.

When talking about their relationships with students, white faculty and faculty of color described taking different approaches. White faculty did not speak in specific terms about their relationships with white students, but made several comments about ‘going the extra mile’ or putting out ‘an extra effort’ to help out the students of color. As Bobby Stara put it, “Am I going out of my way to work harder with African American students? My answer is yes, and I’ll tell you why. Because they need it.” This approach may have been helpful to students of color but it may have contributed to the sense that their efforts are somehow not equal to those of white students.

Contrastingly, faculty of color indicated that they make equal efforts with students of all races but do it in different ways depending on the student’s background. Dee Dee Guillory described her approach, “I don’t process race when I decide to give special attention. If it’s a white student who is not doing well I am going to give that student a kick in the pants.” However
faculty of color did take a more direct approach with students of color. Dee Dee Guillory continued:

My terminology might be a little bit different. I might tell the black student, ‘what do you think you are doing not taking advantage of this opportunity.’ I don’t know if I would use that approach with white students … I am a little more cautious … I would sit them down and ask, ‘what’s the problem?’ A black student I am saying “you don’t have an excuse for a problem because I grew up on a plantation and I had to hitchhike my ride to the university so don’t come here and tell me you don’t feel comfortable in my class.

While both faculty of color and white faculty described their relationships with white students and students of color as being the same, some white faculty directly sought to support students of color that they feel need a little extra help, while faculty of color spoke to students of color frankly and challenged them to perform, potentially indicating to students of color that they are a special case that needs special consideration and at the same time that they have no excuse for not making the most of the opportunities before them. Both of these scenarios depicted faculty student relationships that were likely to result in a mixture of pressures and expectations not experienced by white doctoral students.

Faculty of color also indicated that they did not have positive interactions with all white students. In certain cases faculty of color describe white students as mildly to extensively disrespectful. Jung Kim recalled his interactions with white students his first semester, “Some of my [white] students were really tough. They didn’t listen to me, and they were disrespectful, they treated me as if I wasn’t a professor.” Students of color perceived white students being disrespectful to faculty of color. When asked what reasons caused the recent departure of an African American faculty member Chris Jones recalled white students directly referring to that
professor by her first name, as opposed to her title, despite that faculty member’s indication that they would prefer to be referred to by doctor followed by their surname. Faculty of color described an opposite type of relationship with students of color.

Faculty of color indicated that students of color were more likely to seek them out. Melody Liu illustrated her students of color’s propensity to gravitate towards her:

In terms of who I work with, I do find that in my interactions with graduate students are mainly the graduate students of color. I haven’t put much thought into why that happens, but it happens, and I don’t fully embrace that.

Individual white student’s descriptions of their relationships with faculty as varied from only having close relationships with faculty of color to only having close relationships with white faculty, to having no relationships with faculty. Brandon Mancini, who as described earlier is a white student that socially identifies with students of color, indicated that he also had closer relationships with faculty of color. However, Brandon’s response was unique in that he has positioned his relationships with faculty in terms of race. Most white students described their relationships with faculty in terms other than race. For example one white doctoral student described an initial fear of senior faculty as a determinant of her relationships with younger faculty, and another described seeking out faculty strictly by research interest. Two of the white doctoral student participants described having social relationships with faculty. These students were both assigned directly to faculty members as graduate assistants. These two students described engaging with faculty in informal settings. Students of color did not indicate a social relationship with faculty of color beyond the formal settings. The impact of these interactions is discussed further in chapter five.
Data in this study suggest that the relationships that faculty participate in had different impacts on white faculty and faculty of color. Both faculty of color and white faculty described their relationships with each other as being equal, but white faculty described benefiting from these cross-race relationships by gaining glimpses into different perspectives. This is congruent with Hurtado’s (2001) depictions of the benefits of a diverse faculty. However, this perception was not reciprocated by faculty of color. Through the lens of critical race theory, relying on relationships with faculty of color as a means by which to enlighten white faculty, places yet another burden on the shoulders of faculty of color (Villapalando, & Delgado Bernal, 2002).

Some white faculty sought to directly support students of color that they thought needed a little extra help. This intention to support students of color may have contributed to what Johnson-Bailey, Valentine, Cervero, & Bowles (2009) refer to as a perceived underestimation by students of color of their academic ability by faculty and peers. Simultaneously, faculty of color spoke to students of color frankly and challenged them to perform. The combination of these scenarios may have resulted in a mixture of pressures and expectations not experienced by white doctoral students. Meanwhile certain white students benefited from social relationships with faculty outside of the formal settings of the unit. To this point this chapter has focused on the differences in the perceptions and experiences of students and faculty in relation to the racial climate. This chapter now examines the strategies that individuals use to manage these perceptions and experiences within the climate of the unit.

Coping with Climate

In the fall of 2009 a student organization associated with the school, the Organization of Graduate Student Communicators (OGSC), sponsored an intramural sports team. As it happened, all of the players on the team were white. One African American student noticing this, engaged in informal hallway conversations with both faculty and students about the situation, suggesting that the students on the intramural team had not invited the students of color to join, creating a perception that they were not welcome to join the team. The members of the team felt that they
had openly created the team and invited all of the OGSC members to join and that the resulting make up of the team was based on who signed up and routinely came to the games. At this same time a public, unsportsmanlike exchange was occurring between the captain of the OGSC soccer team and a member of another intramural team. Because the team carried the unit’s name, the Facebook postings and hallway conversations about racial inclusion were brought to the attention of Dean Macpherson. The captain of the team was told that if the OGCS intramural teams were going to carry the unit’s name that they had to adhere to certain standards which included making a specific effort to include students of color and to not engage in unsportsmanlike conversations on Facebook. Ultimately the members of the soccer team decided to change the name of the soccer team and end its direct association with the unit and continued to play with the same membership under a new name.

Data suggests that individuals commonly used two strategies to manage their comfort in dealing with racialized issues, avoidance and homophily. The vignette above provides an example of both of these strategies. The students on the sports team represent a group of like-minded individuals. The grouping of like-minded individuals, referred to here as homophily, prevents the introduction of racial material incongruent to the beliefs and attitudes of individual group members. When confronted with racial material incongruent to their beliefs and attitude, the sports team members took a course of action, changing the team name, which allowed them to avoid directly dealing with the racialized nature of the incident. Participants from all four demographic groups expressed the same concern for their comfort level, others’ comfort level, and a perceived desire of individuals to maintain that level of comfort.

White faculty described their comfort level in terms of managing situations and preventing hard feelings. When confronted with issues perceived to be controversial white faculty experience a sense of nervousness or concern. As Jason Bailey, white faculty member, noted, “I think, probably I am more nervous than the students are when we talk about it.” Sarah Daenfeld stated:

You know, I’ve had some concerns potentially that I don’t always tackle or handle racial conflicts well because, you know, as a white female, I’ve never had some of those
personal experiences dealing, you know, being in that situation myself. So my concern is always that I’m addressing these issues to my African American students or other races in an adequate way.

An African American student recalled sensing this discomfort, “The professor was a white female and there was a sensitivity in the room in large part I think because people didn’t want to offend me.” This is congruent with Wing Sue, Torino, Capodilupo, Riviera, and Lin’s (2009) finding that white faculty fear revealing personal biases and prejudices as well as losing classroom control, express inability to recognize the causes of difficult dialogues, and lack in ability to properly intervene. As a result faculty commonly avoided such dialog by leaving these topics out of the syllabus, stopping conversations that get spirited, disallowing certain research topics, or assigning students as discussion leaders and placing and assigning students of color topics related to race, class, and diversity.

One white student serving as a teaching assistant recalled being told directly to avoid diversity issues by a faculty member she was working under while developing the syllabus for an undergraduate course:

When we were talking about my syllabus I said ‘I don’t have anything really dealing with race or gender, I didn’t include it because I didn’t think I could do it justice in a day, do you have any thoughts?’ the professor said ‘I agree, and in all the previous syllabi it wasn’t part of their syllabus either.

Doctoral students of color also experienced this strategy. An African American student recalled an office conversation with a white faculty member after a class where she felt diversity issues were intentionally avoided:
In particular this faculty member said very directly that she was not comfortable addressing issues of race, gender, ability, and so forth. She said it very directly to me in her office when I addressed the issues with her and she said that she didn’t have the background necessary to mediate any conflict that could come up and she didn’t want for anybody to be offended.

Faculty of color described a higher level of comfort with racialized material and intentionality in broaching uncomfortable subjects. Edward Green captured this saying:

I make it intentional, and I make it uncomfortable for some people. Some people are uncomfortable, some people say they didn’t like the class because I made them really think about it, made them feel uncomfortable, which is part of my course, part of what I do.

As Erika Dickerson put it, “For all intents and purposes, our students pretty much live in a bubble, and I think this is the perfect time for them to get out of that bubble.” This is congruent with Umbach’s (2006) finding that faculty of color use a wider range of approaches to topics related to diversity and equality.

This suggests a difference in approach between white faculty and faculty of color in coping with climate. White faculty sought to manage their own comfort with controversial issues using avoidance as a strategy to manage their own comfort. Faculty members of color, more comfortable with these topics themselves, sought to manage the comfort, or discomfort, of others in dealing with controversial topics. When considering this approach in light of identity development, Helms white identity development model suggests that it is contact with racial material that an individual is unable to reconcile with current cognitive structures that drives identity development. In this light it is likely that the discomfort causing strategies of faculty of
color encouraged white identity development in ways that the avoidance strategies of white faculty do not. As faculty managed their experiences within the climate so do doctoral students. In conjunction with avoidance, individuals also implemented the coping strategy of homophily, preventing uncomfortable interactions by grouping with like-minded others. This evidenced itself in several ways. Certain groups of students sit together in classes. Brandon Mancini described himself as sitting with the other students from historically marginalized groups, “I think you will find that the minorities sit together…look around, and you’ll see me, the two gay guys, the Muslims, and the black chick, sitting right there, so I think you do find that the minorities sit together.” Beyond sitting together, certain groups of students do or do not enroll in certain classes together. Melody Liu described students of color collectively agreeing to take a course on race and gender. Erika Dickerson explained that certain groups of students avoid taking classes under certain faculty members of color where possible. This is also evident in who gets together socially and who gets invited to what events. Kendis Hopwell, an African American doctoral student, speculated as to why she was not a part of the social larger group, “I wanted to be invited to parties or outings. I would have loved to participate. But, well I wasn’t invited….maybe because I’m [African American] or whether because I’m older and I have a family.” White students did not perceive their gathering with like-minded others as exclusionary, but students of color described the formation of these social groups as an expression of power, where the in-group set themselves as the smarter group and the other students were left to either abandon the social aspects of the program, like Kendis Hopwell and Chris Jones, or join with the other out-group students and most students of color.

In summary, the perceptions, roles and relationships within the unit varied distinctly between white faculty, faculty of color as well as white students, and students of color. General
perceptions, most significantly the combination of the alienation associated with not following the majority opinion and the coalescence of the social and academic aspects of the student experience, commonly led students of color to become socially alienated. White students that broke from the majority opinion also experienced social isolation as students of color and found themselves grouping with students of color in social settings. In the classroom, Doctoral students of color felt that certain topics were avoided and that the racial climate had a negative impact on their grades. White faculty described managing comfort and minimizing discomfort, while faculty of color described causing discomfort and intentionally breaking up stereotypes. In terms of other formal settings, white students were comparatively unaware of the existence of the Diversity Team while faculty and students of color were overrepresented in that capacity. During the dean’s search, white search committee participants in this study described challenges associated with the pipeline problem described in the literature on hiring faculty of color. Faculty involvement in social events and social media created a link between the informal and the formal aspects of the unit. However, the ways in which these events are talked about afterwards was different for white students and students of color. Students of color perceived a backlash associated with being critical of the racial climate. In terms of faculty relationships, white faculty described benefitting from cross-race relationships with faculty of color, but this perception was not reciprocated by faculty of color. When working with students, faculty of color spoke to students of color frankly and challenged them to perform while white faculty treated them as a special case. This mixture of pressures and expectations was not experienced by white doctoral students. In reaction to the racial climate, individuals used the strategies of avoidance and homophily to cope. Homophily among white students exacerbated the formation of in-groups
and out-groups. This grouping process is described further in chapter five, which examines the exemplars of Rankin and Reason’s (2008) six dimensions of campus climate within the unit.
Chapter 5: Exemplars of the Six Dimensions of Climate

Rankin and Reason’s (2008) Transformational Tapestry Model includes six dimensions of campus climate. As defined by Rankin and Reason these six dimensions are external relations, access and retention, research and scholarship, policies and services, curriculum and pedagogy, and inter/intra group relations. Rankin and Reason describe external relations as forces external to the university including local and state political agendas, influential alumnae, and trustees as well as external forces less able to be controlled by the unit, such as context and current events. Access and retention includes aspects related to structural diversity including efforts to recruit and retain minority students and faculty. The dimension of research and scholarship refers to the level to which systems and administrators support the diversity of perspectives within research. The dimension of policies and services includes documents like diversity statements and mission statements as well as formal and informal protocol for handling issues. Rankin and Reason define the dimension of curriculum and pedagogy including strong diversity studies courses and the inclusion of curricula that educate students on issues of power, privilege, and harassment. According to Rankin and Reason inter- and intra-group relations deals with the ways in which the unit supports underrepresented groups by going beyond traditional programmatic efforts and focusing on cultural maturity, interpersonal skills and conflict resolution. The following six sections describe the results related to each of the six dimensions of climate and how that dimension is exemplified in the unit. This chapter begins with the dimension focused on factors outside of the unit, external relations, and then focuses on the dimensions within the unit, access and retention, research and scholarship, policies and services, curriculum and pedagogy, and inter/intra group relations. This chapter concludes with a discussion of the appropriateness of the
Transformational Tapestry Model (TTM) in terms of considering the climate of the unit, rather than an entire campus.

**External Relations**

Despite an initial positive response from discipline specific accrediting body (TAA) in 1992, the organization denied the unit full accreditation citing a lack of diversity and collegiality among faculty. In the midst of the bad news, the director of the program stepped down and Dr. John Macpherson, a white male educated in the northeast and having spent his professional career in the Midwest, took on the role of program director. Through directed efforts over the next twelve months, and in great part due to a well written appeal by Dr. Macpherson, the unit was able to regain accreditation for the program in early 1993. After five years of curriculum expansion and revision, the raising of private funds, and adding of staff, academic advisors, and administrators, the unit was again visited by TAA in 1998. Due in part to negative feedback from graduate students, TAA indicated that faculty diversity still remained lacking and granted the school a sub-standard status of provisional accreditation. With another effort from Macpherson the school was able to appeal the decision and retain full status. From 1998 to 2003 Macpherson hired two assistant deans, Dan Cooper and Harry Tristham, both white professionals with backgrounds in diversity in communications. Cooper created the school’s first class on diversity in communications. Tristham launched Diversity in Communications (DinC), an online resource that gathers all publications in the field of communications that relate to a broadly defined set of diversity issues. Macpherson also called for the creation of a diversity team and hired several faculty of color. In 2003 the school passed with full accreditation and in 2008 the school won TAA’s Communication and Diversity Award.

Congruent to Rankin and Reason’s campus climate model, forces external to the unit had a significant impact on the racial climate within it. The vignette above focuses on the role that accrediting has played in shaping the racial climate; interview data indicated that the primary external forces that impact racial climate within include accrediting, the context in which the unit is situated, current local and national events, and external funding sources.

Faculty noted that accrediting has two direct affects. First, the certification process causes the school to seek out and encourage documentable forms of diversity. Not all faculty perceived this as legitimate diversity. Bobby Stara, white faculty member, described the unit’s attempts to find diversity within existing courses and research with a sense of sarcasm, “Oh, everybody’s diverse when the accreditation comes.” Second, the diversity standards set by TAA shaped the
learning outcomes for courses. As Sara Daenfeld stated, “We’re nationally accredited by [TAA] and one of the standards is diversity. So that’s something that we’ve built into our communication curriculum.” These learning outcomes, developed and evaluated in relation to TAA’s diversity standard, were then implemented by the faculty that taught the courses; this was accomplished in varying degrees depending on the faculty member.

The accrediting agency subsequently awarded the unit with a diversity award. Some faculty indicated that winning the award has diminished the sense of need to continue improving diversity efforts. As Grace Bailey, a white faculty member stated, “I think it’s easy when you have received recognition to feel like ok well now we’ve got it, we know how to do it.” Other faculty members felt winning the award had the opposite effect, encouraging people to work harder. As Erika Dickerson, faculty of color, noted, “I think that there are feelings that we need to live up to the expectation that comes along with having received the diversity award.”

Students also had differing opinions on the impact of the award. A white doctoral student asked, “How the heck did we win that, and what did we win it for?” To which another white doctoral student replied, “It’s had no effect other than it looks nice and I point it out to students when I am selling the school.” An African American student disagreed stating, “No, no, no I think it’s had a huge effect because obviously it draws people in and you don’t get what you came for, so I think it’s had a negative effect that’s not really talked about much.” In general, faculty believed the award helped or advanced race relations in the program, while white students felt it had little impact and graduate students of color indicated skepticism towards the winning of the award stating that it “raised a red flag” for them.

The context of the school, how the school is situated within the university, as well as within the city, had a direct impact on the school’s ability to recruit faculty and students of color.
Faculty of color indicated that the context of the school was a negative factor in their decision to come to the unit. Jung Kim recalled his friends’ reactions to his decision, “Before I came here, my friends told me, ‘That’s deep south. Why you are going there? Can you survive there?’ Maybe because of that, I was afraid of coming down here.” White faculty members and white doctoral students congruently described the context as an impediment to recruiting faculty and students of color. As Emily Smolkin stated, “The African American population that aren’t from this state, they are moving here and feel very threatened by the racial culture that’s down here. They see all of us as having that same racial culture, that typical southern racial culture.” Despite perceiving the context as a barrier to recruitment white students and faculty did not describe the context as a barrier in their own decision to come to the unit, but described the context as a non-factor in their decision. In addition to the static context of the school within the university and state, ongoing events outside of the unit also had an impact on the climate within the school.

Current events in local and national news affect the climate within the unit. Students of color commented specifically on the impact of the 2008 presidential election. Linda Howard described coming to class that next day:

> It felt like death here. The day after, that’s the best way I can describe the environment. It felt like death. I had class the day after the election and I remember just getting out of my car and walking to the building and the feeling of somberness when I walked into to the classroom.

This feeling was consistent across all students of color to the extent that all comments from students of color about current events dealt with the 2008 election and all described them in terms like death and dread. In contrast, white doctoral students described the impact of current events in much less passionate terms and in relation to various topics including the 2008 election,
and death of Osama Bin Laden, and a recent local confederate flag incident. In short, doctoral students of color perceived a strong influence on the racial climate in relation to the election that white students did not.

Rankin and Reason (2008) as well Millem and Chang (2005) describe external relations for campus climate as having a focus on governmental policy, legislative agendas, and influential alumni. This study suggests that when considering an academic unit, different eternal forces apply. In combination the factors of accrediting, context, and current events had direct impacts on the ability to recruit faculty and students of color, how the school developed and implemented its curriculum, and how white students and students of color perceived the day to day environment. These external forces are parallel to Rankin and Reason’s (2008) and Millem and Chang’s (2005) notions of external relations, but on a more local level. In a similar way that external forces impacted the climate, the features within the unit itself also had a direct impact on the climate of the school and relate to the dimensions of campus climate in a more local way.

Dimensions within the Unit

After the 1998 accreditation, Dean Macpherson also began seeking faculty members of color. Most notably, he began reaching out to Dee Dee Guillory. Dr. Guillory was the first African American graduate of the unit. Guillory went on to become nationally prominent in political communication and became a faculty member at an HBCU. Dr. Guillory felt that she served an important role at the HBCU and had some trepidation about working with the white students. However, in 2001 she accepted a joint appointment in the unit and at the HBCU where she was already working. After several years in the joint appointment and through continued efforts by Dean Macpherson, Dr. Guillory accepted a full appointment in the unit in 2005. The highlights of her story of humble beginnings, her struggles as the first student of color in the program, her rise to national prominence, and her returning to her alma matter are passed along by word-of-mouth to everyone in the unit. Yet, there is a sense that the details of that story are held in much greater confidence; it is thought of as her story to tell.

As is highlighted in the vignette above, several factors within the unit, such as recruiting faculty like Dee Dee Guillory, impact the racial climate. These factors include access and retention of faculty and students, research and scholarship conducted, policies and services for
dealing with situations that have racial implications, curriculum and pedagogy, and inter/intra
group relationships within the unit. Each of these dimensions is addressed and its relationship to
the unit in light of the TTM campus climate model is discussed.

**Access and Retention**

One of the major challenges that all four groups of participants indicated was the
recruitment and retention of faculty of color. Faculty described how faculty members of color are
commonly recruited by networking via existing relationships while white faculty applicants were
more likely to be recruited via conference presentations or cold applications. Jason Bailey
described the process of seeking black faculty, “It is all a matter of connections and people that
we know in the field. We would call them personally and say ‘you seem like a very good
candidate’ would you apply.” Dee Dee Guillory described being recruited in a similar fashion:

I will tell you that I am here as a faculty member at the university because we had a dean
who talked to me for no less than 8 years about joining the faculty before he convinced
me to leave my prior institution where I felt I was filling a much needed role because it
was an HBCU. It took about 8 years of asking at least once in the fall and once in the
spring.” White faculty described being recruited or seeking employment through more
traditional means.

White faculty members on the other hand perceived the impetus for their recruitment as a
stemming from a personal characteristic other than their race. For example Jason Bailey
described working for Pixar when describing his recruitment and Maxine Fontineau recalled her
degree from Yale and her work at Rutgers when describing her recruitment.

Once a faculty member had been recruited, barriers remain to their retention. Faculty of
color shared a level of concern with the tenure and promotion process. Edward Green, African
American Instructor, stated this concern simply, “It is a perception that it’s difficult to get tenure here if you’re African American.” Melody Liu, Asian American Assistant Professor, described a realization she had after joining the faculty, “When you look at the faculty and you look at the people of color, apart from Dee Dee, we’re all at the assistant level.” Some white faculty members shared this perception with the faculty of color. Bobby Stara described the recent departure of an African American female assistant professor:

The [professor] who was here for one year couldn’t believe that people ‘still live like this.’ She said it was just a nightmare for her. And the tenure and promotion committee screwed her around, even in the first year.

The recent departures of faculty members of color remained controversial issues among faculty. Some, like Bobby Stara, believed that these departures were due to a negative racial climate, citing disrespect from students, issues with tenure, and being asked to teach classes that were not that person’s particular expertise. While other faculty members pointed out that the departing faculty members left and were quickly working at other esteemed universities, suggesting that these individuals never intended to stay in the unit. Despite a lack of consensus there were a comparatively high number of open codes pertaining to why the faculty members of color had left the unit, but not a single comment was made about the white faculty member that also left the school that year. Unlike the departure of faculty members of color, this appears to have gone unquestioned.

In terms of recruiting students, faculty unanimously described the undergraduate student recruiting efforts of Dan Cooper. Dan headed up an aggressive minority student recruiting initiative including visits to high schools with large numbers of historically underrepresented students, hosting a multicultural day on campus, working to create work study opportunities for
students of color, personally checking on the progress of students of color, and when possible keeping in contact with their families. In a supplemental interview with Dan Cooper, white associate dean, he noted diversity as his top undergraduate recruiting priority:

My priorities in recruiting are diversity, high performing, out of state, political communication. So I go to high performing minority schools regionally for sure but nationally as well…I help them solve the problems that come their way I make sure they get attention for scholarships…I can’t promise them a scholarship but you know I am going to go advocate.

Through Dan Cooper’s efforts the number of minority students has increased steadily over the past few years. Cooper said he won’t be satisfied until he creates enough diversity that all of the minority students can’t possibly know all of the other undergraduate minority students. The process of recruiting graduate students, on the other hand, relied much less on the recruiting efforts of the school.

Doctoral student participants in the study stated that they were not recruited per se, but that they sought out the school at conferences, had personal affiliations with the school or the area, were recommended by their previous advisor, or that financial assistance was a major reason they decided to come to the unit. White doctoral students and doctoral students of color both indicated that the information they gathered by looking online and visiting the school was starkly different than the actual experience in the school. Focus group data corroborated this point. An African American participant stated, “I came here because I bought it. I really thought that there was a greater sense of diversity among the faculty than what I really experienced.” Both white students and students of color suggested that the difference between the recruiting materials and their campus visit and the actual environment they experienced led them to be less
likely to trust information provided by the school, and more likely to ‘look into’ these things themselves before accepting them. After coming to the unit and having this initial realization, it was the structural diversity that was most commonly described in terms of graduate students remaining in the unit.

In terms of retaining graduate students, the structural diversity was perceived to be a challenge. Faculty noted that it is common to only have one student of color in a given class, and how that situation demanded that faculty be more intentional and supportive of that student. Despite such efforts students of color described how being the only minority voice in a class can be. Kendis Hopwell described her experience related to low structural diversity:

I find myself being the only African American in the majority of my classes. That presents a major problem in terms of the perspectives that are shared, questions that arise and that are validated. There are often times when I just don’t feel like being the black voice.

An African American participant echoed this sentiment, “I was the only black person in the class. Everybody else was white and most white females. There was not a real diversity of perspectives.” The focus group participants went further to describe how they felt the conversation in that particular class changed noticeably on days when that the lone African American student in the class was not present, and how that was discouraging to each of them.

Similar issues arose when considering the low structural diversity in the faculty ranks. Faculty members of color described being disproportionately sought out by students of color. Faculty of color were also more commonly asked to be involved in diversity initiatives; this became clear in the participant observation of the unit’s diversity team meeting. Each time an idea was suggested for ways to improve the diversity efforts, it was common for a faculty
member of color to be suggested as the person that would be ‘good for that.’ Faculty of color were also asked to participate in the minority recruiting efforts. Because there are so few faculty members of color, these additional duties placed disproportionate burden on the individual faculty members of color, where these same duties are less commonly asked of white faculty and spread across a larger number of individuals.

Rankin and Reason (2008) discuss access and retention as a dimension of campus climate in terms of the inclusion and the success of underrepresented groups. When describing this dimension, Rankin and Reason focus on the broad issues of undergraduate student recruitment, affirmative admissions processes, and campus wide support initiatives for underrepresented groups. This study suggests that when considering this academic unit, considerations for recruitment and retention of faculty, undergraduate students, and graduate students are defined at a level local to the unit, rather than in relation to the campus a whole. There were clear differences in the approach to recruitment of white faculty as compared to recruiting faculty of color, the latter relying heavily on personal relationship and networks. The departure of a faculty member of color was a common informal discussion, or gossip, topic while the departure of a white faculty member was a non-issue. In terms of recruiting students, undergraduate recruiting was attributed to the concerted efforts of one administrator, while graduate students were attracted to the unit via its reputation, recruiting materials, and online presence as opposed to being directly recruited the way undergraduates are. This suggests a link between the dimensions of access and retention and policies and services, which includes websites and documents. When considering structural diversity, the additional pressures put on individuals became evident, specifically for students of color having to act as the voice for their race and faculty of color becoming responsible for diversity initiatives. In terms of retention of faculty, faculty of color
perceived challenges with the tenure process that white faculty did not; this also suggests a direct link between the dimensions of access and retention and research and scholarship. This is confirmatory of Uma, Howard, Allen, and Han’s (2009) findings that tenure and promotion are the largest racial climate factor associated with the retention or departure of faculty of color.

**Research and Scholarship**

This dimension refers to the research being conducted by students and faculty. In terms of faculty research, white faculty and faculty of color both perceived that diversity related research was not valued any differently than any other type of research. All faculty indicated that the only concerns were how much and in what journals the research was published. Faculty of color did not indicate any sense that their own research was more or less valued in the tenure and promotion process. However, as noted above there was a perception among faculty of color and white faculty that it is difficult to gain tenure as a faculty member of color. When asked why this is difficult Bobby Stara, white faculty member, provided one reason, “You know there’s no diversity on that tenure and promotion committee.” However faculty of color made no comments as to why there may be a bias in the tenure process. This suggests that faculty of color perceived a bias in the tenure and promotion process for others, but they did not perceive this bias as working against them specifically.

The unit does offer small grants to support the research efforts of faculty. These grants were not specifically written as diversity grants, but faculty shared the perception that research involving diversity had a better chance of being awarded that grant money. Associate Dean, Dan Cooper and Dean Harry Tristham both corroborated this in their interviews. Cooper put it as follows, “I wouldn’t say there is anything targeted about diversity [in the grants] … but we use [the grants] for valued research projects and we have faculty doing that kind of work.”
contrast to faculty perceptions that different research topics are judged equally, doctoral students suggested that certain types of student research are valued over others.

Doctoral students indicated that there was a preference within the school for students to conduct research related to politics. As Stephanie Dalyell, white doctoral student, expressed it:

People perceive the political research to be much more intellectual, which drives me crazy because I think it’s fine research whether you’re researching race or researching presidential campaign ads. But, I do think that there is a tendency to perceive the earlier as not very contributing.

A few white doctoral students were conducting race related research, but the majority of this category of research was initiated by doctoral students of color. Because this research is perceived to be less valued, doctoral students of color had a harder time finding faculty to support such research agendas. Doctoral students of color described extra effort required to find faculty committee members to work with on research related to race, class, gender, or sexual preference. Kendis Hopwell recalled how this affected her perceptions of the climate as well as her research agenda:

I came in with a clear idea of what I wanted to research, and that having to do with media diversity. I came in and I received no real encouragement other than one faculty member, but I witnessed how other students were celebrated for doing these so called objective studies. And I started really wondering, maybe I should just do something that has nothing to do with race and raises no eyebrows and then I can get out of this program quickly and be done with it. And for a while, I really tried to water down my research interests to be more universal so that I could just get done and get out. And I recently just decided, no. This is my dissertation, my research interest, this is my choice. And no
matter what anybody else thinks, I have to be authentic. But certain students are praised for not ruffling feathers and that’s a part of what creates that climate that I’ve been talking about.

Kendis and other doctoral students of color described seeking out faculty members and other students willing to work on this type of research with them.

Rankin and Reason (2008) describe the campus climate dimension of research and scholarship as including the recognition of diversity in the scholarly function of the university. This includes the recognition of advocacy, civic engagement and public scholarship as well as means by which to encourage this type of research through the tenure and promotion process. When considered at the unit level, two specific considerations emerge. First, the actual diversity representation on the tenure and promotion committee, this is a facet of research and scholarship that campus wide policies have little and indirect control over but in which the unit can express a higher level of direct control. This fact is also noted in Watson’s (2001) chapter on the politics of promotion for faculty of color. Second, considering climate at the unit level allows for the consideration of student research. In this case student research was a polarizing factor that caused students, who were more commonly students of color, researching topics perceived to be less valued by faculty, to have to exert extra effort to find faculty and students to work with. This also causes the students who are doing this type of research to seek each other’s support, suggests a link between the dimensions of research and scholarship, and inter/intra group relations. This is congruent with Gregerman, Lerner, Hippel, William Jonides, and Nagda’s (1998) finding that students of color are at a higher risk of attrition as a result of limited faculty-student research partnerships. The next dimension considered here is that of policies and services related to diversity.
Policies and Services

When asked about policies or services that impact the racial climate of the school most faculty referred to diversity statements in their syllabi and the five year diversity plan. In reviewing these documents it is apparent that the diversity statements in faculty syllabi and the five year diversity plan are directly impacted by the diversity standard set by TAA. For example, the following is the TAA diversity standard related to diversity in the classroom:

The unit fosters a climate that promotes understanding of issues and perspectives that are inclusive in terms of gender, race, ethnicity and sexual orientation, including instruction in issues and perspectives in a range of diverse cultures in a global society in relation to the field.

The five year diversity plan read, “The unit will create, maintain and/or enhance a supportive climate for learning and working among faculty, students and staff who are diverse with respect to ability, age, ethnicity, gender, national origin, race, religion, and sexual orientation.” While an excerpt chosen from a syllabus in a graduate level course read, “This course aims to create an inclusive, respectful, intellectually challenging climate that embraces individual difference in race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, and sexual orientation.” This similarity or direct citation is seen throughout the documents and policies related to diversity.

In addition to syllabi and the five year plan, faculty also mentioned other services that the school supports. Under the direction of Interim Dean Harry Tristham, the unit hosted a diversity website that gathers diversity related publication in the field. This website also hosted mini-conferences of individuals doing such research and publishes the papers presented at those mini-conferences. These publications were distributed to faculty and graduate students. Graduate students jokingly referred to this text as their ‘diversity manual.’ However, when asked, only one
graduate student had actually read the text. Tristham and the website additionally invited regional business people running minority focused business ventures to participate in faculty led workshops and seminars to help support their practical efforts. It was the work of the diversity website, its mini-conferences, and these workshops that were specifically cited when the unit won the diversity award from TAA. In contrast to faculty, doctoral students were comparatively unaware of the documents and services the unit supports in terms of diversity. More than half of the doctoral students indicated that they were not aware of any documents, websites, or services that influenced racial climate, and the doctoral students that did express awareness of such documents and services were students of color that were active on the diversity team which works in partnership with the diversity website.

In addition to written policies, like the five year diversity plan, the school created unwritten policies via precedents as it handled racially charged incidents within the school. There were several such incidents over the two years prior to this study. Interview participants indicated that there is very little consistency in how these incidents were brought to the attention of the unit. In some cases students took the issue directly to the dean. In other instances a student took the issue up with the associate dean of graduate studies, and in some cases the students approached their advisor or a faculty member they trust. When not comfortable talking to a representative of the unit directly, students would intentionally bring the issue up during informal conversations with students that socialize with faculty, knowing that faculty members would then find out. In a few cases it was faculty members rather than the students that brought the incident forward.

Participants also indicated a low level of consistency in the ways these issues were handled. In some cases the dean was aware of the situation and called the students in
individually. In other cases the associate deans took this role and the dean was not notified and in other cases it was handled by faculty. Sometimes this information was brought to faculty or administration via a concerned student directly involved in the situation, sometimes it was brought by a student who overheard what was going on, and occasionally it was brought to the attention of the faculty or administration via Facebook or word of mouth gossip. In general the response to these issues was “a firm talking to.” No formal action had been taken in any of these incidents, and there is no means by which the school clarifies what happened. This left the details to be spread by word of mouth, resulting in a wide range of beliefs about what transpired.

Rankin and Reason (2008) describe the dimension of university policies and services in terms of generating institutional diversity statements, policies, and codes of conduct defining acceptable behavior within the campus. Sciame-Giesecke, Roden, and Parkison (2009) found the creating of such policies to be the most common approach taken by departmental faculty. Congruently, the unit has developed a five year diversity plan, put a diversity statement on its website, and developed learning outcomes for courses all of which had a direct impact on the climate. The borrowing of language from TAA in generating diversity statements suggests a link between the dimensions of external relations and policies and services. Also the fact that the unit does not issue a formal statement after handling a diversity related incident, leaves the dissemination of this information to word of mouth, indicating a link between the dimensions of policies and services and inter/intra group relations. The fifth dimension of climate in the TTM is curriculum and pedagogy.

Curriculum and Pedagogy

When asked about the school’s curriculum in relationship to racial climate, faculty specifically discussed the ongoing efforts to create a graduate level diversity course. Faculty
members generally favored the idea of offering the course, but the faculty member that created
the course proposal listed the course as a requirement for attaining a degree. This forced a
discussion about the value of the course in direct comparison with the value of other required
courses. Melody Liu described the conversations surrounding requiring the course:

When people talk about the graduate course and whether it should be something that is
required, or not required, people in favor of the required option, they’ve said, “What
happens, if you offer that course, is you’re preaching to the choir, right? You’ve got your
black graduate students taking that course, which is great right, but, quite frankly, it’s
those other students, that aren’t interested in it, that need to be in that class to be having
that conversation.” But that idea creates this hot house, right, and it’s not very useful.
That’s when people that say, ‘well, it shouldn’t be required because we have all these
other requirements already.’ That’s always the problem, the tension it seems. So I suspect
that the people who will end up taking that class will tend to be people of color, which,
from my personal experience isn’t surprising.

The conversation about the development of this course has been active in the Diversity Team
meetings for years. The conversation about requiring the course has stalled when it is proposed
to the administration that has to consider the requirement of the course in conjunction with the
availability of faculty and other competing interests. Maxine Fontineau, white faculty member
and former associate dean of graduate studies, recalled her consideration of the course proposal,
“At the same time, we had a demand for other elective courses. New technology courses of all
kinds, more methods courses and things like that. And when we could get in and who we could
get to effectively teach that. So I don’t recall any notion that no one supported that. It was a
matter of timing and class size.” The proposal has stopped each year at the associate dean for graduate studies and has not been discussed in the faculty curriculum committee meeting.

This past year the associate dean for graduate studies did allow a course on race and gender to be taught as an elective, but assigned the course to an African American faculty member that did not have expertise in the topic, rather than assigning it to Bobby Stara, the white professor that has submitted the proposal for this class each year. An African American participant recalled having a negative experience in that course:

The curriculum really wasn’t incredibly diverse…I mean that the sources were primarily white scholars in a race and gender class. It was race and gender and I think only one and there was only one, only one by an African American or even by somebody that was not white…The course seemed to have gotten thrown in her lap at the last minute and she tried her best to put something together. Which is a problem as I see it … this course became the new idea, well let’s do a course in race and gender and it was just sort of half heartedly done and it was not a whole lot of effort put into how do we do a class on race and …a lot of students dropped the course … I know [the professor] tried her best to put together a course that was good with the resources and the time limitations that she had but I think it’s just very sad to be in a school that doesn’t prioritize diversity in such a manner that the resources and time and effort are really put into creating a good course and not just a symbolic gesture.

The professor assigned to this course last year has departed the unit, and there were no plans to offer a race and gender course in the future.

In addition to the creation of this course, the unit hosts diversity related workshops. In general these workshops were held as a part of the yearly faculty retreat. In a supplemental
interview with Interim Dean Harry Tristham, he described these workshops as limited in their usefulness because the guest speakers lectured rather than engaging the faculty in the discussion. As was noted in the previous chapter, faculty of color indicated that in these retreats that they commonly carry the burden of asking questions and advancing the conversation. Most recently the Diversity Team began planning the implementation of professional development workshops for faculty and doctoral students. Through participant observation in this discussion I learned that the Diversity Team wants to avoid the sense of negativity associated with diversity focused workshops and will try to position diversity issues within other professional development topics. For example, the first workshop being planned by the diversity committee will cover the topic of dealing with difficult topics in classroom discussion.

Rankin and Reason (2008) describe the campus climate dimension of curriculum and pedagogy to include campus-wide educational initiatives and programs focused on diversity as well as the inclusion of diversity focused coursework in curricula. Milem (2001) found curricular inclusion of diversity and diversity workshops to be two key aspects of maximizing the benefits of racial diversity on campus. Rankin and Reason’s description is congruent with the findings in this study; the unit has ongoing initiatives to develop related coursework and educational programs. However, in comparison to campus-wide administration, the unit has a more direct ability to impact the curriculum. Data related to this dimension did not suggest any direct links with other dimensions of climate. The final dimension of climate delineated by Rankin and Reason is inter/intra group relations.

**Inter/Intra Group Relations**

During a class in the spring of 2009 an instructor breached the topic of Nietzsche’s description of the term philistine. As defined by Nietzsche a philistine lacks the individual ability to affirmatively define style in art and culture. After this class session a group of doctoral students jokingly began referring to another group of students as philistines. This act had a polarizing
effect and in many ways formalized the cliques that had already been developing among the students. This quickly led to an in-group and out-group divide within the doctoral student cohort. Two years later some students that had use the term light heartedly describe the term philistine as a thing of the past that was simply the joke du jour. Students that had been labeled as a philistine physically tensed when asked about the term and described the word as a more permanent concept that was both offensive and, whether intentional or unintentional, an act that set a clear power balance between one group and the other. Out-group students felt a sense of disappointment that even in this unit the groups were formed based on inaccurate perceptions of intelligence and described the term philistines as a living term, in use very recently. The term Philistine was most commonly used to describe white students that did not ‘fit’ into the in-group. However, students of color observed that in-group students generally had assistantships with administrators and were also very like-minded politically and socially, and the out-group whites were seen as having views tending to be more in line with the views with themselves as students of color and to some extent as outcasts.

As can be seen in the vignette above, there are two distinct groups within the doctoral student population. For the purpose of this discussion I will refer to the students that call other students philistines as the in-group and the de facto remainder of the student population as the out-group. In-group and out-group students described the formation of these two groups in very different ways. In-group members described these groups as forming in relationship to personal interests. For example, Emily Smolkin, white doctoral student, and user of the term Philistine, stated, “I should emphasize, it’s not that we don’t like each other. It’s just that we all have different interests and things that we like to do. So we’ve just kind of split up in those ways.” On the other hand out-group members described the cliques to be formed based on a perception of intelligence. As Chris Jones, African American doctoral student recalled:

There was time period where certain students suggested that other students also in the program were not worthy of the program. They did not perceive that they were worthy of being in the program because they were not as smart and therefore the students who decided this referred to the unworthy students as philistines.

These groups were loosely divided by racial lines. Students of color noted that white students dubbed philistines tended to share a similar world view to students of color and GLBT
students, creating a de facto out-group consisting of students of color, GLBT students, and white students dubbed philistines. A white student was generally considered to be part of the in-group until that student or the in-group members decided otherwise, while students of color start in the de facto out-group and have to make a concerted effort to be a part of the in-group. One master’ student of color associated with the in-group and is seen by her peers of color as acting in this way in order to make every effort to get herself ahead academically and professionally.

Rankin and Reason (2008) describe inter/intra group relations as the way that formal and informal functions of the campus relate to social identities and support traditionally underrepresented groups. Rankin and Reason consider this from the approach of traditionally marginalized demographics such as race or sexual orientation noting that positive inter/intra group relations can help prevent subtle forms of harassment and racism. Worthington, Navarro, Loewy and Hart (2008) found that, “perceptions of campus climate were found to be more positive when participants tended to deny the existence of racial privilege within intergroup relations” (16). Considering this dimension on a unit level allows a more detailed look as how social identities potentially deny the race-related implications of social dominance and ascribe these differences in social power to other perceptions, which serves as masks for subtle aggressions. In this case the perception of intelligence is seen as the defining factor in in-group/out-group identity, but this appears in many ways to be a mask for justifying in-group/out-group divisions between whites and students that identify with traditionally marginalized groups.

**TTM and Unit Level Climate**

This study considers how the racial climate of the academic unit exemplified Rankin and Reason’s (2008) six dimensions of campus climate. Campus climate is a well studied construct that is seen to have a direct impact on the experiences and outcomes of students and faculty
(Worthington, 2008). It is a logical proposition that as students interact with a unit on a larger campus the climate of that unit will also impact on student and faculty experiences and outcomes. Qualitative data in this study generally supports this proposition. This study implemented the six dimensions of TTM to guide the inquiry of unit level climate. Data in this study supported the existence and impact of these six dimensions within the unit but suggests that the relationship between these dimensions in the case diverged from the original TTM. Figure 5.1 provides a side by side comparison of the original TTM’s six dimensions of climate, and a version of the model updated to represent the data in this study.

![Figure 5.1 – Comparison of the Original TTM to the Adapted TTM](image)

When the unit’s climate was compared to the theoretical model of campus climate, the six dimensions of campus climate were all found within the unit. However, these dimensions were expressed in different ways by the academic unit than they generally are at the campus-wide level. Both are influenced by external forces. Campuses are influenced by governmental policy,
legislative agendas, and influential alumni. The unit was influenced by accrediting, context, and current events. Both make direct efforts to recruit and retain faculty. Campus efforts focus on affirmative admissions processes and broad support initiatives for recruiting faculty. Recruiting efforts of the unit were focused on reaching out to faculty through existing networks, and the recruiting of undergraduates was solely attributed to the efforts of one administrator. Both seek to guide and support research efforts. Campus efforts focus on the recognition of diversity within in the scholarly function of the university, specifically faculty research. Efforts of the unit highlighted specific challenges associated with perceptions of faculty tenure and promotion, as well as limited ability for students to find appropriate research committee members. Both generate policies related to diversity. Campuses commonly generate diversity statements, policies, and codes of conduct defining acceptable behavior within the campus. The unit developed a five year diversity plan, put a diversity statement on its website, and developed learning outcomes for courses. However, much of this language was drawn from the accrediting agency’s diversity standard. Both develop curricula. Campus curriculum efforts generally focus on campus-wide educational initiatives and programs focused on diversity. The unit’s efforts were focused around the creation of a specific course and a series of professional development workshops. Both are places where inter/intra group relationships are formed. Campus efforts in terms of such relationships focus on informal functions of the campus relate to social identities and support traditionally underrepresented groups. In the unit, two social groups formed the dominant of these two defined the majority opinion and both intentionally and unintentionally committed microagressions toward the de facto out-group.

In many ways a unit is better situated to affect change in these areas than a campus on the whole. Units have direct control over their curriculum and a curricular change coming from
within the unit is much more likely to be carried through. Units hire faculty and seat tenure and promotion committees allowing the unit to have much more influence on structural diversity and retention of faculty as well as the ways in which research is valued. Units are in a more local and finite position to generate their own diversity initiatives and enforce behavioral presidents, and because they are much smaller than the campus at large they are more likely to be able to identify and combat subtle aggressions between social groups within the unit.
Chapter 6: Conclusions

In this study, I have examined the perceptions, roles and relationships of four groups of individuals within an academic unit at a southern, predominantly white institution and considered how the unit is exemplary of Rankin and Reason’s (2008) six dimensions of campus climate. Since 1999, the academic unit considered here has made significant, intentional efforts to improve the racial climate of the program by developing a five year diversity plan, making diversity hires, creating a diversity team, and hosting diversity related symposia. These efforts culminated in the recent winning of a national diversity award. This intentional effort on the part of the unit is comparable to the circumstances under which the Transformational Tapestry Model (TTM) would apply on a campus-wide level, making this unit critical (Yin, 2009) in its ability to be compared to the TTM. This comparison has shown that despite these efforts the experiences in relation to racial climate of different groups of individuals within the case vary based on several factors one of which is race.

In summary, the perceptions, roles and relationships within the unit vary distinctly between white faculty, faculty of color as well as white students, and students of color. Two of these differences are of specific note. First is the formation of in-groups and out-groups in a racially motivated way. Second are the dissonant messages that students of color receive from faculty. In terms of the formation of in-groups and out-groups, faculty involvement in social settings was shown to link the informal and the formal aspects of the unit contributing to coalescence between the academic and social experiences of students in the unit. This makes the social aspects of the student experience both intense and directly tied to the academic experience within the unit. As students navigate these experiences friend groups and cliques naturally form. However, in this unit that formation is in part a manifestation of a power imbalance between
certain groups of students. Homophily among some white students exacerbates the formation of an in-group that represents the majority opinion and results in a de facto out-group of students that dissent from the majority opinion. As a result, students of color, whom commonly resist acquiescing to the in-group’s majority opinion, are alienated from the in-group in both academic and social settings leading to a sense of social isolation. In the classroom, white faculty describe minimizing discomfort, while faculty of color describe causing discomfort. Doctoral students of color found the avoidance approach of white faculty to preclude important conversation and to have a negative impact on their grades. White students expressed their discontent with the discomfort causing approaches of faculty of color via end of course evaluations. Faculty of color described challenging students of color to perform while white faculty described treating students of color as a special case. This is congruent with Thomas’ (2001) study on cross-race faculty student relationships. Thomas, found that even when white mentors actively engage in race-related issues, that African American students were likely to find their African American mentors to be more psychologically supportive.

This study also considers how the racial climate of the academic unit exemplified Rankin and Reason’s (2008) six dimensions of campus climate. Data in this study supported the existence and exemplification of these six dimensions and the appropriateness of considering the TTM in relation to the climate of an academic unit within a university. However, the relationship between these dimensions in the case diverged from the original TTM. As shown in bold in table 6.1 only one relationship from the original TTM coincided with the relationships from the model adapted to the unit.
Table 6.1 - Comparison of Relationships between Dimensions of Climate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension of Climate</th>
<th>Related Dimensions in the original TTM</th>
<th>Related Dimensions in the model adapted to this study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Access &amp; Retention</td>
<td>Curriculum &amp; Pedagogy Inter/Intra Group Relations</td>
<td>External Forces Policies and Services Research &amp; Scholarship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research &amp; Scholarship</td>
<td>Policies and Services Curriculum &amp; Pedagogy</td>
<td>Access &amp; Retention Inter/Intra Group Relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inter/Intra Group Relations</td>
<td>Access &amp; Retention Policies and Services</td>
<td>Research &amp; Scholarship External Forces Policies and Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External Forces</td>
<td></td>
<td>Inter/Intra Group Relations Access &amp; Retention Curriculum &amp; Pedagogy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum &amp; Pedagogy</td>
<td>Research &amp; Scholarship Access &amp; Retention</td>
<td>External Forces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policies and Services</td>
<td><strong>Inter/Intra Group Relations</strong> Research &amp; Scholarship</td>
<td><strong>Inter/Intra Group Relations</strong> External Forces Access &amp; Retention</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to the differences in the relationships themselves, the dimensions were also actualized in different qualitative ways within this academic unit than in Rankin and Reason’s (2008) TTM. For example, external forces in the TTM refer to governmental policy and legislative agendas, while the external forces that impacted the unit were accrediting, context, and current events. Access and retention in the TTM refers to efforts such as affirmative action plans and campus wide hiring initiatives. Access and retention efforts in the unit were focused on the use of existing professional and personal networks and the recruiting of undergraduates under the direction of the administration. Research and Scholarship in the TTM refers to large-scale support for faculty research on diversity, while research and scholarship efforts of the unit were described in terms of specific challenges associated with perceptions of faculty with respect to tenure and promotion. Additionally within the unit there was concern expressed by both faculty and students in relation to the limited ability for students, specifically students of color, to find appropriate research committee members. Policies and services in the TTM refer to campus wide
diversity statements and codes of conduct. Of the six, this dimension in the TTM is the most closely reflected in the unit. Policies and services within the unit included a five year diversity plan, a diversity statement on its website, and learning outcomes for courses. Curriculum in the TTM refers to supporting whole units like African American Studies and Women’s Studies. Curricular efforts within the unit were focused on the creation of a specific course and a series of professional development workshops. Inter/intra group relations in the TTM refers to encouraging interaction of groups through large-scale diversity programming efforts. Inter/intra group relations within the unit were described in terms of the formation of two social groups. In general these differences reflect the smaller scale, local nature of the unit in comparison to the campus. It is my opinion that these local issues are more easily addressable than those associated with campus-wide climate efforts.

In many ways a unit is better situated to affect change in these localized issues than a university is to affect change across an entire campus. Units have direct control over their curriculum and a curricular change coming from within the unit is much more likely to be implemented and sustained. Units hire faculty and seat tenure and promotion committees allowing the unit to have much more influence on structural diversity and retention of faculty as well as the ways in which research is valued. Units are in a more finite position to generate their own diversity initiatives and enforce behavioral precedents, and because they are much smaller than the campus at large they are more likely to be able to identify and ameliorate subtle aggressions between social groups within the unit. For example, it is unlikely that the Chancellor’s Office would have the capacity to even know that an intramural sports team was being discriminatory in its means of recruiting players.
The above conclusions are all grounded in the data that provide an in-depth look at one case. This study tells a story of both success and struggle in the unit’s efforts to intentionally transform its own racial climate. In concluding this discussion of racial climate, I offer some implications that this research may have for practice, the implications that this research has for future research and the significance of this study.

**Implications for Practice**

The Transformational Tapestry Model is a multiphase process model that includes the existing campus climate, assessment of that climate, intervention with the intention of transforming the climate, and a new campus climate resulting from that intervention. Phase three of the TTM, intervention, provides a framework for improving climate through symbolic actions, fiscal actions, educational actions, and administrative actions (see figure 6.1). In this study I sought to examine how the racial climate of the academic unit was exemplified in Rankin and Reason’s (2008) six dimensions of campus climate. While this study was not a formal assessment of the climate, a depiction of the climate was provided in the previous two chapters. Chapter five reveals that the dimensions of climate in the TTM are represented in the data and thus appropriate to the case. According to Rankin and Reason (2008) specific planning with short term and long term action items in the areas of symbolic actions, fiscal actions, educational actions, and administrative actions can in combination transform the climate of an institution (see figure 6.1). As the TTM is generally applicable to the case in this study, the TTM may guide a discussion of appropriate actions that a unit may take in an effort to transform its racial climate.
When considered under the framework of the TTM action items conducted by the unit within each of these categories may be applicable to other units seeking to transform their climate. In terms of symbolic actions, units should seek to maintain a visible diversity component on their website, supporting diversity related mini-conferences or workshops. In terms of fiscal actions, units can seek money from the university or donors for diversity hiring initiatives, fund diversity based assistantships for graduate students, provide faculty and students with mini-grants to support diversity related faculty research, and create an endowed diversity chair position. In terms of educational actions, units should include the creation of courses related to diversity, generate diversity centered learning outcomes for courses, and audit syllabi for diversity related content. In terms of administrative actions, units can promote diversity in undergraduate and graduate recruitment through direct recruiting efforts directed by the administration of the unit, including visits to targeted high schools and hosting multicultural recruiting events on campus. Units can improve relationships with local and regional businesses.
by networking with outside professionals from minority based businesses. Units that do not already have a diversity plan, a faculty mentoring program, or a diversity committee should consider these administrative actions.

The question that proceeds from this line of thinking is whether an academic unit can accomplish these actions? Several factors would play into the relative ability of a unit to enact such actions, some of which are beyond the control of that unit. Two key factors would be the relative autonomy or power of the unit and the fiscal situation of the unit. Not all units in a given university have equal administrative power. For example some units are larger or have positioned themselves as integral to the successful attainment of the university mission, or have deans that are adept in navigating the bureaucratic systems within the university. The case in this study benefits from these three factors. This has allowed the unit to make decisions about diversity of the unit that are more or less irrespective of the campus’ diversity initiatives, contributing to its uniqueness within the context of the university.

Similar to the relative power of academic units, not all units within a campus have equal funding. For example, some units may receive a large portion of money from private sources and other units may have faculty that write large grants. Additionally, adept administrators and units seen as integral to the core mission of the university may be able to better avoid and mitigate the cutting of budgets that has hit campuses over the past decade. The case in question benefits from significant private funding and a relative ability to minimize budget cuts. This has allowed the unit to again be unique within the context of the campus in that is has been able to sustain many of its initiatives where other units may have had to choose between funding diversity initiatives or other initiatives within the unit. In sum, units seeking to affect the climate within their program need to evaluate the ability and willingness of the unit to commit the resources
necessary to implement symbolic actions, fiscal actions, educational actions, and administrative actions within their specific context.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

**Structural Diversity of Tenure and Promotion Committees**

One finding in this study that is congruent with the findings in other studies is that faculty of color perceive challenges to the tenure and promotion process that white faculty do not. According to the literature, faculty of color are often given more work and types of work that are not valued by tenure committees (Turner & Meyers, 2000; Hurtado, 2001). Research also suggests that faculty of color are more likely to receive poor mentoring (Antonio, 2002) and that faculty of color commonly perceive their scholarly efforts to be undervalued by tenure and promotion review boards (Fenlon, 2003; Hurtado, 2001; Turner & Meyers, 2000). This perception is partially based on the low level of diversity on the tenure and promotion committee. This underrepresentation is congruent with the low level of structural diversity at the associate professor and full professor ranks, as was noted in the case in this study. However, little or no research directly considers the impact of diversity within tenure and promotion committees in relation to retention of faculty of color. Future research should consider the impact that low or high structural diversity on tenure and promotion committees has on both the perception of difficulty for faculty of color in attaining tenure and the actual attainment of tenure of faculty of color.

**White Identity and Social Identity**

According to Helms (1995), the development of racial identity for whites is a process of recognizing that the status quo is based on racial oppression and that they must abandon their normative strategies for dealing with racial material in their environment. When Helms’ model is
compared to the experiences of white doctoral students in this case two concepts emerge. It appears that development of identity for white students may be related to the navigation of social identity within the unit. When a white student disassociates from the in-group, for racialized reasons, it is likely that their identity development is in the process of being pushed forward. Still seeking homophily these former in-group students formed social bonds with other students in the de facto out-group, many of which are students of color. This, in turn, increased the number of positive interactions with doctoral students of color and negative interactions with in-group members. This suggests a link between individual identity and social identity of individuals within the case of this doctoral program. Specifically, white membership in the out-group appears to be associated with higher phases of white identity development. This finding is congruent with Worthington, Navarro, Loewy, & Hart’s (2008) work on dominance orientation, racial-ethnic group membership and student perceptions of campus climate. Future research should examine this link explicitly.

**Toward a Transformational Tapestry Model of Academic Unit Climate**

This study explored the ways in which the unit exemplified Rankin and Reason’s (2008) six dimensions of campus climate as a means by which to consider the applicability of the TTM to the consideration of an academic unit. As described in chapter 5, this study explores how the six dimensions of campus climate are exemplified within an academic unit. However, as described earlier in this chapter, data in this study suggests that the relationships between these dimensions may differ from the campus wide model, when considered at the unit level. Further research is needed to examine these relationships in greater detail. This line of inquiry could be considered as a part of the adaptation and implementation the TTM in an academic unit. Future research is required in order to consider implementing the full TTM as a five phase process for
transforming an academic unit’s climate. Adapting this to a unit would involve adapting the quantitative surveys to apply to the unit, assessing the climate, working with the unit to create a team dedicated to developing a plan related to the results of that assessment, and implementing the specific actions within that unit.

**Interest Convergence: A Source of Progress, an Obstacle to Success**

By considering a broader brush stroke across all of the findings in this study, I have been able to draw some inferences as to why the case in question operates in the way that it does, and what implications that may have for the future of the unit. When talking to individuals in the unit and conducting interviews, the leadership of a former dean is cited repeatedly as the impetus for the initiation of nearly every aspect of the program and specifically the diversity initiatives within the unit. I posit that the drive for diversity was a result of interest convergence as described by Derrik Bell (1969). It was after an accreditation review that the diversity efforts noted throughout this study were created and accelerated. This investigation reveals that the facets of the unit that came under scrutiny in the accreditation process were also the facets of the unit that saw direct actions from the administration in order to address the racial climate of the unit, suggesting that the accreditation process was the initial impetus for the changes.

From a critical race perspective, diversity efforts founded in a state of interest convergence are likely to benefit the unit in certain ways, but remain incomplete in their ability to functionally improve the daily experiences of people of color. Checking syllabi against learning outcomes influenced by an accrediting agency does not prevent students of color from feeling that their work is evaluated unfairly. Diversity conferences are unlikely to prevent in-group and out-group behavior associated with the social isolation of students of color. In short,
actions motivated by the convergence of interest between the unit and the accrediting agency may lead to measurable changes in the environment, but this approach will not lead the unit to what might be described as a group of scholars that considers diversity a means to achieve excellence in a field of study. Rather than placing diversity as a way to avoid negative accreditation review, future research in the area of campus climate should position diversity as a value associated with excellence in any given field of inquiry.

**Significance**

The significance of the study is two-fold. First, previous research related to campus climate in higher education generally focuses on the underrepresented perspective. This study contributes to the smaller pool of literature that examines the interplay between the dominant and underrepresented perspectives. Secondly, previous campus climate literature has focused on campus-wide impact, but not the impact of academic units of a university. Academic units within a university typically have a more direct influence on faculty hiring, curriculum development, course content, student recruiting, and social events associated with the unit, and as such can serve a key role in the efforts to improve racial climate. This study contributes to that dialog by exploring what factors contribute to the climate of an academic unit, and how the implementation of one established conceptualization of campus climate corresponds to the actuality of a specific unit within a predominantly white southern institution.
References


Appendix A - Interview Protocols

Faculty Interview Protocol

1. How long have you been affiliated with unit? During this time what events or actions have contributed to the racial climate? What understanding do you have about the racial climate of this place prior to your association with it? (HS)

2. I have some specific questions about how the racial climate manifests itself in the various settings of the department and I’m interested in any specific examples you might be able to provide from:
   Your classroom? (CP)
   Recruitment of students (AR/CP)
   Formal meetings (faculty meeting, planning meeting, etc.)? (GR)
   Informal settings within the school (lunch, informal conversations, etc.)? (GR)
   Hiring, retention, or departure of a faculty member? (AR)

3. How do you (if you do) expose students in your courses to the concepts of power, privilege, diversity, harassment? If so, is that a personal decision or prescribed by departmental goals? (CP)

4. Are you aware of any instances when the racial climate of the school was impacted by an external force? If so, what? (EF)

5. What differences, if any, do you perceive when comparing this department with the university at large or other campus units you might be familiar with? What do you think accounts for these similarities or differences? (EF)

6. How would you characterize your relationships
   a. With faculty of color? With white faculty? (GR)
   b. With students of color? With white students? (GR)
   c. With the administration of the unit? (GR)
   d. Do you feel that the way you have characterized these relationships is typical within this department or do you feel that other faculty have different levels/types of/approaches to these relationships? (GR)

7. How is research with a focus on diversity perceived within the unit? What, if anything, has impacted the inclusion of diversity issues in the unit’s research? To what extent do you feel that diversity related research is valued in the tenure and promotion process? (RS)

8. What departmental/university/professional organization policies or documents have influenced your understanding of diversity issues? In what ways have these impacted your actions/decisions? (PS)
Doctoral Student Interview Protocol

1. How long have you been a student in the unit? During this time what events or actions have contributed to the racial climate? What understanding do you have about the racial climate of this place prior to your association with it? (HS)

2. I have some specific questions about how the racial climate manifests itself in the various settings of the department and I’m interested in any specific examples you might be able to provide from:
   - Your experiences in the classroom? (CP)
   - Your recruitment (AR/CP)
   - Formal meetings (meetings with faculty, student org. meetings, etc.)? (GR)
   - Informal settings within the school (lunch, informal conversations, etc.)? (GR)

3. As a student how have you (if you have) been exposed, in your courses, to the concepts of power, privilege, diversity, harassment?

4. Are you aware of any instances when the racial climate of the school was impacted by an external force? If so, what? (EF)

5. What differences, if any, do you perceive when comparing this department with the university at large or other campus units you might be familiar with? What do you think accounts for these similarities or differences? (EF)

6. How would you characterize your relationships
   a. With faculty of color? With white faculty? (GR)
   b. With students of color? With white students? (GR)
   c. With the administration of the unit? (GR)
   d. Do you feel that the way you have characterized these relationships is typical within this department or do you feel that other students have different levels/types of/approaches to these relationships? (GR)

7. How is doctoral student research with a focus on diversity perceived within the unit? What, if anything, has impacted the inclusion of diversity issues in your research? (RS)

8. What departmental/university/professional organization policies or documents have influenced your understanding of diversity issues? In what ways have these impacted your actions/decisions? (PS)
Appendix B – Focus Group Interview Executive Summary

Presented to the unit’s Diversity Team - 5/9/11

The following report was generated via focus group interview conducted with five doctoral and master’s students in the unit. The focus group was held at the request of Dr. Erica Dickerson, chair of the Diversity Committee and was conducted by Mark Dochterman. The session and this report adhere to IRB guidelines for confidentiality; as such, the participants were not named in this report.

To the extent that the participants provided suggestions for approaching the issues highlighted by the conversation, this report does include suggestions and potential action items. However, the primary purpose of this report is to document the discussion in the focus group session, not to serve as a specific guide for addressing the issues discussed in that session.

The major sub-sections of this report represent topics in which multiple or all participants contributed to the discussion. These sub-sections are: classroom culture; blurring of academic, social, and private selves; doctoral student preparation for teaching; program is marketing vs. program reality; the XXXX level race and gender course; and the diversity committee. The report concludes with a section of miscellaneous topics that were broached in addition to the main subsections.

Classroom Culture
The focus group students indicated that in many cases the classroom environment is not supportive of open dialog and vigorous academic discussion of diversity related topics or controversial issues. These comments came in two major categories: interactions among students and interactions between students and faculty.

Classroom interactions among students
When describing classroom conversations and the interactions among students, the focus group students indicated that ‘the heart of issues’ are rarely addressed and that students are too concerned about saying what is socially acceptable at the expense of valuable academic debate.

- “We should be able to learn from each other and grow and expand and open our minds, but I don’t feel like the unit promotes that at all.”
- “There is a lot of political correctness in the classroom.”
- “We are always being hyper-sensitive and never really getting to the core issues.”
- “We don’t have a vigorous debate, people soft-shoe around the issues.”
- “You can be both honest and politically correct, but I don’t see it happening here.”

The focus group participants suggested that there are ways to have debate and not be offensive to peers, but that there is a lack in a understanding among students as to how to actually do that. The following sections also suggest that this is exacerbated by a classroom environment that does not embrace uncomfortable issues, and a social
environment that criticizes people who engage in controversial topics both inside and outside the classroom.

**Classroom interactions between students and faculty**

When describing classroom interactions between faculty and students, there was a consensus that several, but not all, faculty members have difficulties moderating conversations about diversity related topics. It was also suggested that the main approach these faculty use for dealing with uncomfortable topics is avoidance.

- “Some of the faculty are uncomfortable and worried about offending.”
- “The professor said ‘we are not going to discuss issues of race, gender, or sexuality’ this was during a discussion of tolerance.”
- “One faculty member told me very directly that they were not comfortable discussing issues of race, gender, ability, and so forth and that they didn’t have the background to deal with conflicts that might come up so they wouldn’t.”
- “There were a number of issues that came up and a level of candor in the class sessions when the one African-American student in the class was not present, and that concerned me.”
- “There was a clear insecurity [from the faculty member] and a need to be defensive.”

The focus group suggested that some of the most successful conversations on difficult issues occurred when the subject was brought out of the theoretical realm and placed into issues of practice. The group also indicated that there is a specific and difficult dynamic when the class contains a single minority status student.

**The Blurring of the Academic, Social, and Private Selves**

The focus group students indicated that there is a significant bleed-over in graduate student experiences among the academic, social, and personal realms which has a direct impact on the academic portion of the experience. This topic fostered the most comments.

- “I don’t think there is a division between academic and personal here.”
- “This is your life; this is your work; this is where your friends are.”
- “Inside the classroom faculty do a pretty good job of promoting discussion, but then outside the classroom it seems there is some judgment.”
- “There were conversations outside the classroom about the [racial] dynamics that were occurring in that class and it was happening on a regular basis.”
- “A number of us have experienced the backlash of being the gossip topic…and we end up in a lot of conversations with other faculty members who hear what is going on…it creates a very difficult environment.”
- “Last year the faculty got involved and were trying to deal with some big [diversity related] situations and trying to keep the dean and associate dean out of it. Instead of it getting resolved it got very gossipy.”
- “Someone will post something on Facebook, then there will be a debate, then the faculty get involved… it quickly gets blown out of proportion.”
• “When a person is brutally honest, I think it’s good for the discussion, but later I hear that person being criticized by both faculty and students. I hear people saying ‘we need to do this, we need to do that,’ but the people that do it get judged and criticized.”
• “Faculty that do deal with these issues are also sometimes criticized the same way that students that talk about the issues do.”
• “Stuff in the social domain affects stuff in the classroom domain.”

The focus group students indicated that the way discussions outside of the academic setting often come back to the academic setting contributes to the feeling that people cannot speak freely or participate in contested debate in any setting without causing both social and academic ripples of some sort. The focus group students also indicated that the administration provides a useful alternative to the direct faculty involvement in the resolution of issues among the very students they must ultimately evaluate.

• “I have always had a very welcome response from administrators in discussing issues and trying to put together solutions to address concerns.”
• “Not just one administrator, several, are very open to listening and constructing solutions.”

**Doctoral Students’ Preparation to Teach**
The doctoral students that instruct courses indicated that they feel ill prepared, and in some cases discouraged from introducing diversity issues into their classes.

• “I taught a class last semester, but wasn’t comfortable enough to introduce that into my lecture.”
• “I was discouraged from introducing diversity issues because as I was told ‘there’s just too much to cover.’”
• “I didn’t include it because I didn’t think I could do it justice.”
• “I looked at the previous syllabi for the course and it wasn’t in there, so….”
• “I wish there was something in place to teach us how to teach and diversity needs to be a part of that.”
• “I think we should be doing workshops to prepare graduate students to be professors.”

The doctoral students indicated that they want to learn how to become better teachers and have a better grasp on how diversity related topics can be a part of their class discussions. They also indicated an awareness of a pipeline issue - the professors don’t encourage the inclusion of diversity in the curriculum; the graduate students take their cue from the professors; undergraduates take their cue from the graduate student instructors. This creates a pipeline effect that results in the exclusion of diversity related topics on multiple levels within the school. It also indicates that while a workshop for doctoral students teaching courses is a good place to start, this issue is complex and requires buy-in at all levels.

**The Marketing of the Program vs. the Reality of the Program**
The focus group students indicated a disparity between how the program is marketed and their actual experiences in the program. This leads to a high likelihood for feelings of being misled.
• “I came here because I thought there was a greater sense of diversity than what I really experienced…and I have been disappointed, really.”
• “Things are promoted by the school that don’t really exist. I think there is some false advertising…for me it was that they marketed the program as built for people interested in advertising, but it is really focused on political communication.”
• “We don’t talk about diversity enough. We claim to, but we don’t really do it”
• “Winning the diversity award has had a huge impact. It draws people in, but they don’t get what they came for, so I think it’s had a negative effect.

The college website was indicated as a large piece of this puzzle because it serves as the face of the program for students researching programs, especially students from out of state.

**The XXXXX Level Race and Gender Course**
The focus group students appreciated the existence of a course focused on race and gender and thought the instructor had the best intentions, but they also had some concerns about its implementation.

• They felt the course was developed on a short timeline and thus may not have been as well thought out as it should have been.
• The course was specifically focused in political communication, which limited student interest and resulted in a number of people dropping the course.
• “The sources were from primarily white scholars.”
• “There was only one reading from a non-white scholar.”
• Because the course was perceived to have been created in reaction to student concern, there was a feeling that the course was partly a “symbolic gesture” as opposed to an integrated part of the curriculum.

**The Diversity Committee**
When discussing the role of the diversity committee it became apparent that the focus group students knew very little about the diversity committee and its efforts.

• “This may be a dumb question but what exactly is a diversity committee?”
• “I am pretty involved in this school. I know what’s going on. I didn’t even know we had a diversity committee.”
• “I only knew about it because I knew somebody that was assigned to it.”
• “What are the goals? Does it have a mission statement? How do you become a part of it?”

Recognizing the lack of understanding the students in the focus group then expressed concern about how people come to be on the committee. There seemed to be an assumption that being “diverse” led to an invitation/assignment to the committee, in which case the students were concerned that diversity issues may be saddled on the backs of diverse individuals. There was also a sentiment that if membership in the committee was by assignment or invitation only that it may not garner the most motivated members and that the invitation/assignment process may be perceived as a barrier to non-minority status students potentially interested in getting involved.
**Miscellaneous Topics**
The sections above represent topics that 1) garnered active discussion with multiple participants, and 2) had clear implications and categorizations. Over the course of the session several other points were made that were focused on solutions, were not or did not require corroboration from more than one student in the group, or do not fit neatly into the organization of the above portion of this report. These ideas are presented below.

*The best intentions* - Throughout the interview, I never got a sense that any of the participants felt that any students, faculty or staff had bad intentions. In fact there were many statements to the contrary.

*Individual responsibility vs. community* - The students feel that there needs to be more student community and individual concern for diversity if any real change is going to come.
- “It’s an individualistic culture, people collaborate, but not to the extent of other colleges and that is part of the culture.”
- “Everyone says diversity is so important, but there are five people here.”

*What is Diversity in Communications?* - The students in this focus group do not know much if anything about DinC, how to use it, or where to find it on the internet.

*Address Diversity Creatively* - The focus group students wanted to convey that sitting down at a table and having a conversation about diversity is important, but will only go so far. Diversity as a topic unto its own is often seen in a negative light, but being creative and tying it to other topics can help diffuse that connotation. For example one student described “Diversity Training” as sounding like a punishment, but a workshop called “Teaching Diversity in the Classroom” as sounding more interesting. Being creative is important in garnering participation.

*Be proactive* - The focus group students expressed that the school often takes a reactive approach to diversity and that there must be an effort to take a broader more proactive approach.
- “Isn’t that how we have always been treating it, there are problems, so we have to have meetings like this. Why not be proactive?”

*Plan further ahead* - People need more notice in order to attend events like the focus group.
# Appendix C – Coding Tables

## Open Code Frequency Key

WF = White Faculty; FC = Faculty of Color; WS = White Students; SC = Students of color

## Perceptions, roles, relationships, and coping with climate

### General Perceptions of School Climate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Majority opinion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I think it’s terrible that I just said “That’s the party line.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>– Emily Smolkin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparisons</td>
<td>WF – 8 FC – 6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I felt very comfortable when discussing things there, but here, I did not feel comfortable compared to that school because they look like they feel familiar with foreign information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>WS – 7 SC – 15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>– Huong Lee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment to Diversity</td>
<td>WF – 11 FC – 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The school has very clearly articulated that there is a commitment to diversity and wanting that to be something that is integrated into not just our curriculum but what we do and … that is sort of permeated throughout the school. It has made a commitment to that.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>WS – 0 SC – 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>– Grace Beasley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unawareness</td>
<td>WF – 0 FC – 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I understand that. And I feel a little ignorant talking about this because, of course, I don’t pick up on things that other people might pick up on things, just because I’m not in that situation, you know what I mean?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>WS – 2 SC – 0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>– Stephanie Dalyell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coalescence</td>
<td>WF – 0 FC – 0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Whatever happens outside the class, affects the class and what happens in the classroom affects outside the class and I think we all lose.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>WS – 7 SC – 16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>– Chris Jones</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Perceptions of Climate Situated in Settings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting</th>
<th>WF – 51 FC – 46</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classroom</td>
<td></td>
<td>I think there were four of us, four African American women in this class, which is a rarity. But this was my</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
first semester so I thought it was normal. Ok. So, this is great, this is diverse, four African American women in the class, this is lovely. The class was 20, maybe 25. But when I started recognizing that when we presented our ideas, there was a certain type of push back that we received that other students did not receive. It was something I noticed. I didn’t discuss it with anyone; I just took note of it.

– Kendis Hopwell

| Formal Settings | WS – 19 SC – 30 | The dean’s search right now that we had five white males for candidates. And being on this inside of that process, we really worked hard to try to get a diverse group. Deans are, it’s a very narrow skill set and it was hard to find someone that was qualified that was of color or even female… it created some tension for us when we went to the larger faculty to say “here are the candidates” and people questioned us on it, both in the hallways and in the open meeting and certain members of the committee were very offended by the fact that we were being questioned on about that because we had worked so hard to try to make it happen but it didn’t.

– Jason Bailey

| Informal Settings | WS – 10 SC – 4 | Certain students, their social life is with the faculty. They will go to social settings with some of the faculty and are likely to gossip. They will talk about things that have happened in the classroom or another social setting. So there is for some of the professors there is somewhat of a feedback loop there.

– John Frankel

Roles

| Student Roles | WS – 12 SC – 39 | We might talk about racial issues if it comes up I will say something they expect me to say something and I always will cuz I think if we don’t talk about these things the people get too comfortable and accept things the way they are.

- Chris Jones

| Faculty Roles | WS – 17 SC – 45 | At the end of these discussions we had the chance to ask a question and Erika Dickerson asked a question and all...
the other faculty of color asked a question… and I said I noticed the three black people in the room are asking the questions and this about diversity

- Dee Dee Guillory

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Roles</th>
<th>WS – 5 SC – 14</th>
<th>the other faculty of color asked a question… and I noticed the three black people in the room are asking the questions and this about diversity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td>WF – 27 FC – 20 WS – 9 SC – 13</td>
<td>So you get called in, you have no idea what for, and they’re like, “We’re concerned about the lack of diversity on the unit’s intramural team.” And I apologized profusely, and I explained that it wasn’t done intentionally. And then they say, “Perhaps next time you can make sure to let all graduate students know they’re invited to participate.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Emily Smolkin</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationships</th>
<th>WF – 3 FC – 4 WS – 6 SC – 3</th>
<th>For the most part, it’s been positive. Dean Macpherson’s been nice to me….He’s been up front with me. I think Cooper is … doing all he can do but he says one thing, and he kind of backs off…. let me say it like this, if I was drowning and two people had the opportunity to save me, I think the Dean would help me first….The other guy would probably let me drown. That’s the reality.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relationships with Administration</td>
<td>WF – 6 FC – 6 WS – 6 SC – 11</td>
<td>I feel more comfortable with African American faculty. I don’t know why. It’s just a feeling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Edward Green</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationships with Faculty</th>
<th>WF – 11 FC – 11 WS – 4 SC – 6</th>
<th>If it’s a white student who is not doing well I am going to give that student a kick in the pants too, my terminology might be a little bit different. I might tell the black student, “what do you think you are doing not taking advantage of this opportunity.” I don’t know if I would use that approach with white students … I am a little more cautious … I would sit them down and ask, “what’s the problem?” A black student I am saying “you don’t have an excuse for a problem because I grew up on a plantation and I had to hitch hike my ride to the university so don’t come here and tell me you don’t feel comfortable in my class.”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relationships with Students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

152
You will have hard time convincing them that their end product will be better if they diversify and actually have experiences with people who are in that situation that you are reading about, you will be hard pressed because that’s uncomfortable.

– Dee Dee Guillory

---

**Exemplars of the Six Dimensions of Climate**

**External Relations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>WF – 28 FC – 22</th>
<th>WS – 33 SC – 45</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coping</td>
<td>You will have hard time convincing them that their end product will be better if they diversify and actually have experiences with people who are in that situation that you are reading about, you will be hard pressed because that’s uncomfortable.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>– Chris Jones</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Accrediting**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WF – 18 FC – 6</th>
<th>WF – 2 SC – 0</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Well, we’re accredited, so we get looked at for diversity. Oh, everybody’s diverse when the accreditation comes.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Bobby Stara</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Context**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WF – 19 FC – 14</th>
<th>WS – 11 SC – 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Before I came here, some of my friends told me, “That’s deep south. Why you are going there? Can you survive there?” But, maybe because of that, I was afraid of the coming down here.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Jung Kim</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Recognition**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WF – 5 FC – 5</th>
<th>WS – 2 SC – 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The fact that we got that [diversity] award, in some ways, may have made some focus on it even more as a result. “My gosh, you’ve got this award, but look, what about this problem, this problem, and this problem?” … just taking a magnifying glass, because of that award, and saying, ok, should we have received that award? I think it made some of our students more conscious about the problems.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Maxine Fontineau</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Current Events**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WF – 3 FC – 2</th>
<th>WS – 5 SC – 10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The 2008 presidential election – it felt like death here. The day after - that’s the best way I can describe the environment. It felt like death.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Linda Howard</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**External Funding**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WF – 3 FC – 2</th>
<th>WS – 1 SC – 0</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>That’s why a lot of these scholarships exist, it’s trying to change that and move people of color into those positions and give them opportunities … I have had a lot</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>–</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
of conversations with those students when I nominate them for scholarships we have that conversation again that they have a big opportunity.

- Jason Bailey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Internal Dimensions of Climate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

| Access and Retention: Students | WF – 21 FC – 15  
WS – 9 SC – 12 | There were times when I felt like I was primarily used to recruit the African American students. Put a Black face in front of Black faces and you’ll get the Black people, kind of thing.  
– Erica Dickerson |

| Access and Retention: Faculty | WF – 34 FC – 46  
WS – 4 SC – 1 | If was a matter of connections and people that we know that are prominent in the field. WE would call them personally and say “you seem like a very good candidate, would you apply?”  
– Jason Bailey |

| Access and Retention: Structural Diversity | WF – 10 FC – 9  
WS – 13 SC – 13 | I already told you I have one Black person in my class. So I feel very cognizant of her because she is a crazy minority in that class. So I find myself paying more attention to her. Because I want her to be comfortable, I want her to succeed. And she sits way at the very, very end, alone. So, no other White students sit next to her. I don’t know if there’s a reason for that. I don’t know if it’s because she sits all the way up front and nobody wants to sit all the way up front. So if you were to come into my classroom, you’d go, “Oh, how interesting. The one Black girl is sitting all the way up here by herself.” But I definitely find myself being cognizant of where she is in the classroom, so that way I try to make her as comfortable as possible.  
– Brandon Mancini |

| Policies and Services | WF – 11 FC – 7  
WS – 4 SC – 4 | Mainly from the syllabus audit. I think that’s the most salient one because each class had that grid that we had to fill out, to check out whether we were being diverse, covering diversity. And because each course that I teach had to get assessed, we went through that exercise. I think that has put that little seed in my mind. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Start</th>
<th>End</th>
<th>Melody Liu</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum and Pedagogy</td>
<td>WF</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>FC</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Ok, here we go, you ready for a fight? I’m gonna give you a fight. For four freaking years now, I have tried to get on the books a masters course in race, class and gender…Most colleges in our field have a race, class, and gender. For some dumb reason, they keep putting it off. “Oh, you’re right!” But they never do anything about it. “Give us the syllabi.” I gave them the syllabi. Give them this …. “Oh we teach that in the undergrad. Maybe grads can take it.” And I’m like, “You don’t know, it’s not right.” The fact that we are not teaching a race, class, and gender in the media course is a scandal of epic proportions. Especially here in this state. But there just doesn’t seem to be people caring about it. And to me, that is a major issue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>WS</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>SC</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>– Bobby Stara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research and Scholarship</td>
<td>WF</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>FC</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>I think there are certain faculty members…who are uncomfortable with certain research topics and they will not approve them. ..If it’s a class paper, you basically have to pick another paper to get a grade in the class… if it’s dissertation or thesis, I think the options are here for you to research those diversity type topics, but there are certain people who won’t deal with it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>WS</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>SC</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>– Linda Howard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inter/Intra Group Relations</td>
<td>WF</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>FC</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>There was this one little incidents, and it wasn’t an incident it was kind of a little time period where certain students suggested that other students also in the program were not worthy of the program. They did not perceive that they were worthy of being in the program because they were not as smart and therefore the students who decided this referred to the unworthy students as philistines.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>WS</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>SC</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>– Chris Jones</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix D - IRB Consent Form

1. Study Title: An exploratory case study of school level racial climate within a predominantly white, southern university.

2. Performance Site:

3. Investigators: The following investigators are available for questions about this study, M 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.; TH 12:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.; F 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
   a. Mark A. Dochterman, 578-1318
   b. Dr. S. Kim MacGregor, 578-2150

4. Purpose of the Study: The purpose of this research project is to explore the beliefs and attitudes of both faculty and doctoral students as they relate to the racial climate of the school/college.

5. Subject Inclusion: faculty and doctoral students

6. Number of subjects: 18

7. Study Procedures: The study will consist of interview data, documents, and direct observations. This consent form concerns the interview portion of the data collection. Interviews will last approximately one hour, and will be guided by a protocol. A follow-up interview may be requested to clarify or ascertain more detail about key aspects that emerge from the study as it progresses.

8. Benefits: The study may yield valuable information about higher education diversity initiatives at the senior college level.

9. Risks: The only study risk is the inadvertent release of sensitive information provided in the interview. Every effort will be made to maintain the confidentiality of your study records. Files will be kept in secure cabinets to which only the investigator has access. The name of the university, college, and individual participants will be removed from the collected data sets once they are collected.

10. Right to Refuse: Subjects may choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty or loss of any benefit to which they might otherwise be entitled.

11. Privacy: Results of the study may be published, but no names or identifying information will be included in the publication. Subject identity will remain confidential unless disclosure is required by law.

12. Signatures: The study has been discussed with me and all my questions have been answered. I may direct additional questions regarding study specifics to the investigators. If I have questions about subjects' rights or other concerns, I can contact Robert C. Mathews, Institutional Review Board, (225) 578-8692, irb@lsu.edu, www.lsu.edu/irb. I agree to participate in the study described above and acknowledge the investigator's obligation to provide me with a signed copy of this consent form.

Participant Signature: ________________________________ Date: ______________

Institutional Review Board
Dr. Robert Mathews, Chair
irb@lsu.edu
203 B-1 David Boyd Hall
P: 225.578.8692
Baton Rouge, LA 70803
F: 225.578.6792
Vita

Mark Dochterman was born in Chicago and raised in Marengo, Illinois. He graduated from Marengo Community High School in 1998 and subsequently attended Illinois College in Jacksonville, Illinois earning a Bachelor of Arts degree in business administration in the spring of 2002. He accepted the Ely Lilly ICOM Assistantship at Ball State University and earned a Master of Arts degree in communication studies in 2004. His thesis, on internet credibility, was published via two articles in *Qualitative Research Reports in Communication* in 2010. From 2004 to 2011, Dochterman worked at the Louisiana State University Honors College as a graduate assistant, Coordinator of Student Activities, and finally as Director of Student Activities. During this time he was awarded the Robert “Doc” Amborksi teaching award, and the student organization Focusing on College and Unlimited Success (FOCUS) won the LSU Chancellor’s Sesquicentennial Service Award under his direction. In 2011, he accepted positions as Director of the Volunteer and Civic Engagement Center and adjunct faculty in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at the University of Illinois Springfield. Dochterman earned a doctorate in higher education administration from Louisiana State University in May of 2012, completing a dissertation that examined the racial climate of an academic unit within a southern, predominantly white institution of higher education.