FROM FIRST LADY TO MADAM PRESIDENT: A STUDY ON WOMEN LEADERS OF PUBLIC FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

Though collegiate environments were initially closed off to women, women have held the majority on most coeducational college campuses for decades (Schwartz, 1997). Yet, they are still less likely to serve as presidents of large, public, four-year research institutions. The college presidency has become more diverse in recent years. According to a 2017 American Council of Education report, only 23% of public doctoral degree-granting four-year institutions were led by women as of 2016 (2017). The impacts of the delayed entry of women as active participants in the field of higher education have continued to yield gender discrepancies in leadership. In the beginning of higher education in America, women were participants in higher education in order to support of their husbands (Williams, 2007). As first ladies, or spouses to college presidents and leaders, women were granted power solely by way of their connections and access to men in power. Women have continued to establish their own professional and academic credibility while achieving leadership positions in higher education. Yet, there is still a need to gain a better understanding of ways women can be seen as effective leaders in the field of public higher education, particularly given the rarity of a woman serving as president of public, four-year institutions.

A constructivist case study methodology was used in this study to explore the careers of women who have served as presidents of public, four-year, research focused, institutions. This research examined how women have overcome the double binds associated with serving in leadership positions at public post-secondary institutions to become presidents of public, four-year institutions. This case study also examined the experiences of women who have served in

the role of college president and their personal narratives detailing how they have navigated their careers to reach the position.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my grandfather “Daddy”, Oliver Ferguson. At 99, you are my heart. This is all because you and grandma created a family that believes in hard work and dedication. All of us are who we are because of your love.

There is a Bible verse that has followed me throughout my life, “To whom much is given, much is required” (Luke 12:48). My life has been filled with so many blessings and I will forever try to use my gifts to give honor to God. This dissertation is not just mine, but it belongs to my family, friends, coworkers and encouragers, all of who have contributed this work.

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CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

Diversity in higher education leadership has increased over time. However, the tempered speed of that evolution has allowed White males to maintain power at public four-year research universities. White males have largely held power over research in higher education; therefore their perspectives are predominately prevalent, as are perceptions about what college presidents look like (Oikelome, 2017). Though women college presidents are no longer uncommon, the problem is that they are also not common enough, based on the world's general population and the population of college campuses. Women are rarely selected as leaders of large, public institutions.

According to the American Council of Education (2017), women hold 32% of presidential posts in higher education. Penney, Brown and Oliveria (2007) highlighted that the number of women leaders in public higher education has increased, but the number of women who serve as presidents of large, public, four-year research universities is still disproportionally low in comparison to men and to women students in public higher education. Data provided by a study entitled *Women Presidents*, by the American Council on Education (2019), showcases discrepancies in gender leadership at varying types of institutions. While the percentage of women who hold presidential posts at post-secondary institutions may seem relatively on par with representation of women in America, only 8% of doctoral degree granting universities are led by women (2019). In fact, the number of women severing as president and doctoral degree granting universities remained unchanged between 2011 and 2016 (2019).

For nearly 150 years, women have been student participants in postsecondary, higher education environments. Women students at post-secondary institutions hold the majority in both undergraduate and graduate school environments, and women also hold the majority of the general public (The Chronicle of Higher Education, 2018). Since being allowed access to colleges and universities, women have increased in number, assumed student leadership positions, and, in some fields, they have consistently outnumbered their male counterparts over the past few decades. In contrast, women are rarely seen as having the ability to lead institutions of higher education, particularly doctoral degree granting four-year institutions, as evidenced by the fact that women still do not hold even half of college presidencies at these types of institutions. Women arguably have equal access to higher education. However, the lack of women college presidents at public four-year doctoral degree granting research universities is representative of a lack of equality in professional opportunities for women in the field.

The historical baggage that can be associated with gender continues to impact the careers of women within higher education. The impact of societal norms and historical precedent that has often hindered women from advancing in their careers, or gaining access to educational opportunities also impacts the number of women who seek to lead public, four-year research focused institutions. Analyzing the journeys of women who have risen to the highest offices at public universities and how they have seemingly defied the odds is an important next step for research on diversity in leadership in public higher education. Researching gender disparities in higher education leadership provides opportunities for new ideas, strategies, and perspectives to be considered, while also helping leadership become more reflective of those they serve (Oikelome, 2017). Understanding factors that have contributed to the lack of women in leadership at public four-year institutions, as well as ways that women have navigated their

professional careers to assume leadership positions is crucial to the advancement of the field of higher education and to gender equity in society.

Purpose of the Study

Women are a part of both the history and the foundation of higher education in America. They have been members of undergraduate student populations for generations but although women have been a part of higher education for over a century, their opportunities to assume administrative leadership roles have not been plentiful (Ross, 2000). Women outnumber men at the majority of levels in higher education (American Council on Higher Education, 2017). As students, lectures, instructors, and assistant professors, women hold strong majorities in post-secondary environments (ACHE, 2017). In addition, women hold the majority of presidencies at the lowest level of higher education, associate's degree granting institutions (ACHE, 2017). The fact that women are given more access at lower levels within the hierarchy of higher education highlights the fact that women are active participants in this work environment, but they are also in the minority where leadership is concerned.

Understanding the real-life experiences of women who have held presidencies at public four-year research universities can assist us in producing knowledge about how women can prepare themselves to lead public four-year institutions and how the academy can support more women in reaching the college presidency. Explorations of the personal experiences of women who have been selected to lead public four-year institutions can shed light on how existing prejudices and biases often perpetrated by society at large are also at work in higher education. Any biases based on gendered norms or expectations may also impact leadership opportunities for women. Understanding the hurdles that women face either because higher education has long been a male-dominated field or, because societal norms lead to women not being seen as equal to

men is necessary step towards identifying ways to increase the number of women in leadership positions and ultimately presidencies at public, four-year research universities. This study used qualitative inquiry to explore how women who have served as college presidents at public four-year research institutions have achieved that rank.

Information collected through semi-structured interviews with women leaders in higher education will focus on identifying key experiences or opportunities that helped the participants become leaders of public, four-year research institutions. Examining the lived experiences of women who have served as college presidents will help to identify ways to overcome challenges in leadership for women (Nakitende, 2019). This research aims to make contributions to existing scholarship on women in higher education leadership and to provide women in higher education and those who seek future careers in the field with information that will support them in negotiating their career experiences to be best equipped to assume an executive leadership position and the role of college president within public higher education.

Research Questions

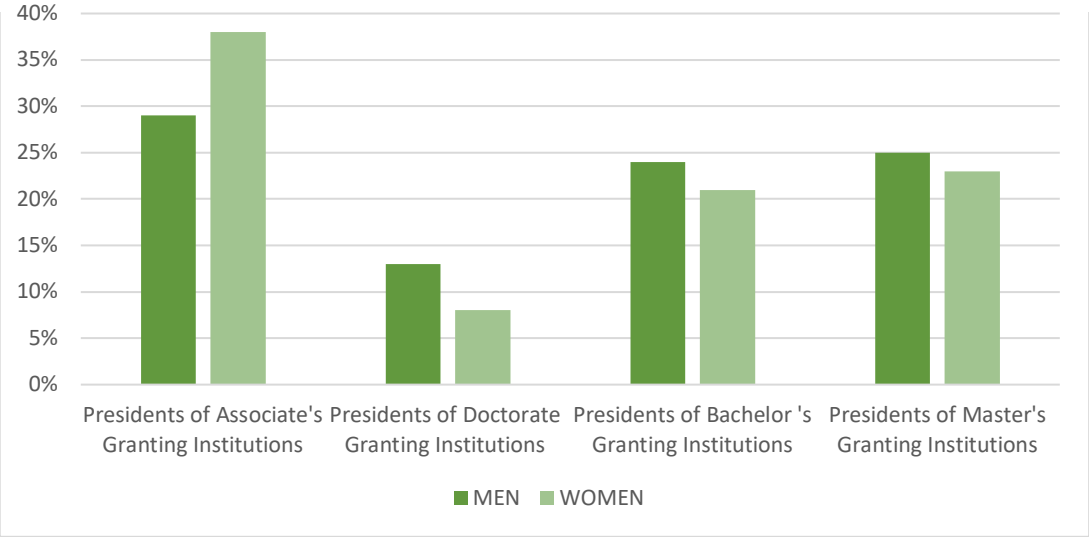
This study aims to identify and examine the experiences of women leaders in administrative positions at public, four-year, research focused, and doctoral degree granting institutions of higher education. As mentioned above, women continue to make career advances in higher education administrative positions; they are still disproportionally underrepresented in presidencies and cabinet-level leadership positions on public, large, doctoral degree, and research-based institutions of higher education. The questions below helped to guide the research that was conducted:

1. How do women who become presidents of public, four-year, research institutions overcome double binds throughout their careers to rise to the presidency at public, four-year institutions?
2. What careers or experiences help women prepare to lead a public, four-year, doctoral degree granting college or university?
3. What do presidents of public four-year institutions who are women believe that they bring to the institutions that they serve?

History of Women in Higher Education

According to the American Council on Education, women have earned more than 50 percent of doctoral degrees conferred since 2006 (ACE, 2017). That same report noted that women have earned more than 50% of all bachelor's degrees every year since 1982. Yet, women hold only an estimated 32% of full professor positions at postsecondary institutions and hold 30% of presidencies in higher education, including all postsecondary institutions. The percentage of women college presidents is largely inflated by the number of women presidents at two-year institutions (ACE, 2017). According to the American Council on Education, the percentage of four-year institutions led by women is quite small. Of doctoral degree granting four-year institutions, only 8% were led by women as of 2016 (ACE, 2017). The following graph reflects a break down of leaders by gender and institution. The 100% total for each gender is represented.

Figure 1 - *Presidents by Institution Type and Gender*



(ACE, 2019)

The current data on leadership at institutions of higher education warrants a more in-depth look at the history of women within this area of study. Examining how women entered higher education settings and how that history may still be influencing the perceptions of women in leadership today is important to set the context for the research questions guiding this study.

Women have been a part of higher education almost since its inception; however, without the right to adequate schooling or the opportunity to obtain a college or post-secondary degree, women filled other roles. Paramount among those roles was being a wife of a college president. As spouses of college presidents, women were and are often expected to contribute to their husband's success and to the overall mission of the university (Hendel, Kaler, & Freed, 2016). Although it is rarely deemed worthy of being a paid position, the life of a college president's spouse comes with access, but also with hurdles. Often subject to media interpretations of their job or expectations, first ladies of colleges and universities have the responsibility of being an ambassador of a college or university, but that rarely translates to their role being seen as a position of leadership (Hendel et al., 2016). According to a piece written by Laurie Burns

McRobbie—the first lady of Indiana University—first ladies of that institution were seen as "hostesses," "ambassadors," and "parents" (McRobbie, 2010). With the majority of college presidencies throughout history and even today being held by men, their spouses were often relegated to the "first lady" role. The position was modeled after the hostess role of the first lady of the United States of America. In sum, women have not always been considered equal in the academy; instead, they were initially a part of the academy as support to their husbands (Reid, Cole, & Kern 2011). In addition to being the official host for the institution, they may also be responsible for community projects, fundraising, and may have to travel substantially to support their spouse (Cotton, 2014). Although the functions provided by presidential spouses are important, they can also be limiting, particular when place in the context of gender norms and expectations.

Due to the historical limitations initially placed on women that barred them from receiving post-secondary degrees or limited how far they could go, women still struggle with establishing leadership and identity within the academy. Though a president's spouse was likely the most powerful or most prominent woman on campus, from the onset of the creation of higher education in America women were seen as hostesses or nurturers, but not as leaders. The status of a college presidential spouse has for the large part remained unchanged (Reid et al., 2011). A college or university president's wife is seen as very powerful, in large part, if not solely, due to her connection to a powerful man (Reid et al., 2011). However, the complexity of seeing women in the role of powerful first ladies and having the ability to also see women in the role of president provides a first glance at the complex double bind that exists for women seeking this position.

In this research, the double bind is used to express experiences or challenges that are unique to women in leadership (Jamieson, 1995). Binds often place additional burdens on women who aim to serve as presidents or leaders at public four-year institutions. Interpretations of the celebrated qualities that are attributed to women often differ from the celebrated qualities of men (Dunn, Gerlach, & Hyle, 2014). Qualities that are often attributed to women have contributed to barriers, which lead to the lack of women in top positions at public four-year institutions of higher education and to the ideology that first and foremost, women must be caretakers (Dunn et al., 2014). The fact that in 2019 the residual impacts from generations of male domination and control continues to influence the perception of what it takes to lead a public institution of postsecondary education is baffling, but also follows from the history of women's involvement in higher education.

Prior to America's Civil War, college education was more concerned with the classical education of society's privileged. Alberg Graham's *Expansion and Exclusion: A History of Women in American Higher Education* chronicles the change in higher education and how that change affected women. After the Civil War, higher education as an industry was no longer concerned with just providing a liberal arts education, but began to diversify institutional goals (Graham, 1978). In 1840, Catherine Brewer became the first woman to receive a bachelor's degree, when she graduated from Wesleyan College. Over 20 years later in 1862, Mary Jane Patterson became the first African American woman to do the same when she graduated from Oberlin College. As men went off to fight the wars it is worth noting that colleges were more accepting of women as tuition paying consumers (Graham, 1978).

For example, World War II presented the opportunity for women to become increasingly involved in the workforce and therefore educational institutions (Glazer-Raymo, 1999). As

colleges began offering course work that could be seen as useful to women, often in the form of "state teacher colleges" and "normal schools," women were able to gradually infiltrate higher education spaces (Eisenmann, 2001), but not without cost. Noting, "women are seen as consumers of education rather than supplicants for it" Eisenmann makes a connection between money and education and how the two often worked together to hinder some women from entering postsecondary education (Eisenmann, 2001). Some institutions, such as Harvard University, raised their tuition once women were able to raise funds to attend, and some colleges that are now coeducational did not begin to accept women until the 1960s and 1970s. For context, please see Table 1, below, outlining some key years related to women's historical admittance to higher education.

Table 1 - ***History of Women being admitted into Colleges and Universities***

Oberlin College allows women to enroll	1837
Catherine Brewer becomes the first woman to earn a bachelor's degree (Wesleyan College)	1840
Seven Sister Colleges (Mount Holyoke, Vassar, Wellesley, Smith, Radcliffe, Bryn Mawr, Barnard) were created to offer elite educational opportunities specifically for women.	1888-1894
Frances Elizabeth Willard becomes the first female college president (Evanston College for Ladies)	1871
Yale University and Princeton University began to admit women	1969
Harvard University allowed women to enroll	1977

Eventually, educational providers tried to adapt to embracing women in higher education as the result of women being organized enough to raise funds to support their education and subsequent professional development (Eisenmann, 2001). In small increments, the field of higher

education has adapted based on the needs of society and the needs of the industry and it should continue to adapt to support gender equality for sake of sustainability.

Given that women entered higher education later than men as students, it is understandable that they also entered into faculty and administrative positions after men. From the beginning of public higher education, women have been granted access only after men

In *U.S. Women's Education History: Lessons from Historical Lexicography,* Linda Eisenmann (2001) analyzes just how different the educational experiences of men and women have been. There has seemingly been a constant battle for women to gain access to education at any level (Eisenmann, 2001). Eisenmann references a *Historical Dictionary* and how experiences differ among women and women who are also racial minorities. As America began educating students in collegiate environments similar to those found in Great Britain and European cultures, the educational opportunities open to women were limited in comparison to those that were open to men. As "the female academy" became more popular, that gap began to close (Schwager, 1987, p. 340). Identifying and comprehending the history of women in higher education is essential to being able to identify productive ways to move forward within the field to increase diversity in chief executive positions on college campuses and aid the career development of women in the field (Toman, 2008).

The emergence of deans of women

Historically, even as women moved to professional positions within the field, women were often thought to only be able to hold one administrative position in higher education--dean of women (Schwartz, 1997) Deans of Women allowed women in higher education to enter into the realm of administrative leadership; therefore, they often entered into leadership within the academy primarily as leaders of women, not leaders of their respective campuses (Schwartz,

1997). This role was primarily put in place to addresses societal concerns of undergraduate women by allowing a woman to be an advocate for their concerns (Coomes & Gerda, 2016). The primary purpose of having women in higher education administration was to help interpret concerns of women undergraduate students to other college administrators, particularly college and university presidents (Graham, 1978). As a result, from the beginning of their participation in higher education and postsecondary administration women were not viewed as equals, instead they were present as administrators solely to serve as the representative voice for a particular set of students as opposed to the entire student body. Representation is important, but it could be argued that women were not placed in positions of leadership when they achieved the title of deans of women. Instead, they were still in a position of servitude to their male counterparts and occupational superiors. As leaders within much prescribed positions, women therefore had limited opportunity for advancement in the field of higher education administration beyond the role of dean of women.

For decades now, women have outnumbered men in every sector of higher education, with the exception of administrative leadership. This was highlighted by Schwartz (1997) in *How Deans of Women Became Men*. The article provided an analysis on the complexity of women reaching leadership positions at institutions of higher education. Representation based on population in the majority of postsecondary environments would mean women would be in administrative positions more often than not. Emily Taylor, former dean of women at the University of Kansas, Grace S.M. Zorbaugh, dean of women at Ohio State University, and Kate Heyner Mueller, at Indiana University understood that their roles included mentoring women students (Kaiser, 2016). Without deans of women at public four-year universities and with

gender discrepancies in leadership continuing to be issues of concern, there is a gap in both leadership and advocacy for diversity.

Residual effects of women being seen primarily as leaders of women can still be seen. For example, in 2013, The University of Alabama was immersed in a battle fueled by segregation of some of its student organizations. Although, at the time the university was celebrating the 50th anniversary of its desegregation, its Greek system, both sororities and fraternities, had continually failed to integrate (Lohr, September 2013). There were, arguably, a number of reasons why sorority integration became a hot topic at the university in 2013. The most interesting reason for the sake of the analysis presented here, is the fact that Dr. Judy Bonner, the first woman to serve as The University of Alabama's president, had been recently installed and faced an issue that had been largely swept under the rug for generations. In fact, Dr. Bonner set out to change the entire organizational structure of the Greek system at the university, although most people are only aware of her stance on sorority integration. In reference to the Greek system, then President Bonner made the following statement:

> [The University is working to help the] Greek system embrace the diversity that is represented at The University of Alabama. We are focusing clearly on the steps this university must take in order to make progress. We have outstanding students. We will support them, and they will once again provide the leadership to make the changes this university needs. (Noch, 2013, September 17)

Paradoxically, gender played a role in sensationalizing the events. Furthermore, outside of the university, the issue seemed to become the seminal priority of her administration. Higher education and society in general have held on to the ideals that women should deal with women's issues. Although there may be times when women have the capacity and ability to

advocate for other women in ways men do not, Dr. Bonner was leading a major state institution. She was not the dean of women, but she was leading the state of Alabama's flagship institution. Her administration encountered a host of other issues including the integration of the university's fraternal organizations, a campus expansion, new facilities, and expanded research, and all of those accomplishments should have spoken to the totality of her leadership. In fact, for over five decades, the integration of the university's Greek system was talked about, but with a woman at the administrative helm of the university, the conversation suddenly focused solely on sororities. As a college president, she is likely to be most remembered, at least in the media, for her role in the desegregation of sororities, as dictated by her gender, and not the sum of her contributions as a leader in public higher education.

Mentorship and connectivity in The Academy

Throughout the history of women in higher education, women have found strength in connectivity through organization. As educational institutions for women became a necessity, they were created with three purposes or goals in mind (Eisenmann, 2001, p. 457): (1) to provide the basics of education to women, (2) to support their career needs, and (3) to advance social reform (Eisenmann, 2001, p. 457). As women entered the academy these three areas shaped how they were treated and the opportunities and fields that were available to them. Adding to complexity of advocating for the education of women was the fact that many professions were not open to women even if they had an education. As women expanded their education through travel and obtaining terminal degrees, many women were not able to get jobs once they returned back to the U.S. (Eisenmann, 2001). These important facts made it necessary for women to form alliances that promoted their interest and that could help their cause. The Association of Collegiate Alumnae (ACA), the organization that preceded the American Association of

University Women (AAUW), was formed by Emily and Marion Talbot to lobby for opportunities associated with women's collegiate education (Eisenmann, 2001). Later, the Bureau of Educational Experiments (BEE) was formed to study education for children.

Acknowledging that opportunities were even harder for women of color with a collegiate education, Mary McLeod Bethune founded the National Council of Negro Women in 1935, and Dean of Women at Howard University, Lucy Diggs Slowe and others founded the Association of Deans of Women and Advisers to Girls in Negro Schools. The Chicago Teachers' Federation was founded in 1897 as one of the first teachers' unions (Eisenmann, 2001). These groups allowed women to expand their networks and express educational needs that were important to them. Various organizations also allowed women the ability to mentor each other. Mentorship continues to be seen as a key component in the advancement of women in higher education (Penny & Gaillard, 2006).

Women Leaders in Public Higher Education

Women have made significant advancements in public higher education administrative positions; simply put, women college presidents can be found at community colleges (ACE, 2017). The number of women in leadership positions, particularly presidencies, has greatly increased at public institutions, in large part because of community colleges (Gardner, 2019). If community colleges and minority serving institutions were not counted, women would make up less than 15% of college presidents. The average college or university president is a White male and the average age is 61.7 years old (Seltzer, June 2017). The disparities between the percentage of women and men in both educational level and job opportunities within higher education would not be so alarming if it were not for the fact that women are more educated and often equally qualified to lead than men (Napolitano, 2018). Women lead more public

institutions than private institutions, but that number sharply declines when those associate degree institutions are eliminated from the data (*Women Presidents*, aceacps.org).

Community colleges or trade schools have been more likely to have a woman at the helm of leadership, but those institutions are arguably less respected than research-focused, doctoral degree granting institutions (Gardner, 2019). Although community colleges and training-focused institutions are essential to American higher education, they also are likely to have limited resources and less funding. Without the research and graduate programming, which allow four-year doctoral degree granting institutions to increase their funds and endowments, some community colleges do not have the social or actual capital to compete with four-year institutions for students. An institution's prestige can be open to interpretation, but for the sake of comparison *The Times Higher Education World University Rankings* (2019) stated only 34 of the top 200 colleges and universities are led by women.

Women at public four-year institutions have a different battle when seeking leadership positions. Additional barriers are present in this context that distinguish them from community colleges (Johnson, 2017). This becomes an important fact when analyzing the lack of women in leadership at public four-year, doctoral degree granting universities (Johnson, 2017). *In Pipelines, Pathways, and Institutional Leadership: An Update on the Status of Women in Higher Education*, Heather Johnson (2017) highlights the discrepancies between men and women in higher education, but most notable and unexpected was the difference in chief academic officers at public institutions. In 2008, women held 40% of chief academic officer positions at public doctoral degree granting institutions. In contrast, in 2013 women held only 25.3% of those positions (Johnson, 2017). This provides a window into how far gender equality still has to go in public higher education.

Presidential qualifications

It is important that research also acknowledge the criteria thought to be most helpful to individuals seeking the presidency. The preparation and previous experience deemed necessary for college presidents are additional reasons why women continue to struggle to reach the office of the president at large, four-year institutions. Previous job experiences, educational backgrounds, mentors, and professional networks may all impact the outcome of presidential searches. Preparation for the college presidency is another reason why women may often be excluded from the top role. "One thing that every presidential search committee seems to want is a "proven track record" in fund-raising" (McDade, Dowdall, & Marchese, 2009). The proven track record qualification can be interpreted to mean that an institution is seeking someone who has held the highest executive office or presidency at another institution. This qualification alone continues to predispose women to being in the minority because if most college presidents are men, then more men have the necessary experience in the role than women. It is growing increasingly likely that a college president may have even been in the role of president at another institution (Travis & Price, 2013). *The American Council on Education's American College President Study* analyzed data up to 2016 found that 25% of college presidents had already served as a college president. This reality could diminish the number of women who could have otherwise been a part of the competitive applicant pool. Having a previous leadership position, particularly at a research institution, may also often mean that a person is somewhat seasoned in their career. Certain fields and degrees may not be necessary to become a college president, but there are some that seem to lead more often than others to the highest administrative offices at an institution. For example, many presidents have served as Chief Academic Officers or as Dean of an academic unit. Presidents may also be chosen from the fields of business and law, depending on the institution's goals or current standings.

The Impacts of the Board of Trustees

The importance of diversity in presidential roles and diversity in thought in higher education leadership is only matched by the need for diversity on college and university boards of trustees. Two 2019 presidential searches at public four-year, research institutions highlight the need for boards of trustees to consider the importance of diversity when reviewing presidential candidates. Students, faculty, and staff at the University of South Carolina expressed frustration in the lack of women and racial minorities chosen to be finalists for the presidency (Kelderman, May 2019). That frustration was seemingly exacerbated by the lack of women on the university's board of trustees and as members of the presidential search committee (Kelderman, 2019). Of the 21 members of the board of directors, most of who were appointed by members of the state legislators or the governor, three were women and eighteen were White males (Kelderman, 2019). The presidential search committee was made up of eleven people who were appointed by the trustees. Of the eleven, only two were women (Kelderman, 2019). Similarly, the University of Colorado experienced unrest as the result of the appointment of a former Republican congressman, opposed to same-sex marriage and abortion, as their president. That appointment was made even more controversial by the political makeup of members of the University's board of regents. Republicans carried a small majority on the board, but political affiliations were said to be to blame for the critique of the candidate and the board's decision (Kelderman, 2019). According to a survey on governing boards of public colleges and universities, 28.4 % of board members at public institutions are women, in comparison to 71.6 % who were men (Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges, 2010; Wilson, 2016). Jeffery Wilson (2016) studied the power and influence of governing boards at public institutions to address gaps in understanding between boards and members of college campus communities (Wilson, 2016).

Wilson's research identified the need for additional research on college and university governing boards.

Gender diversity in candidates seeking presidential posts has increased and student populations are more diverse as well (Wilson, 2016). However, diverse representation on college and university boards has not mirrored the diversity in student populations and administrators. Governing boards are often responsible for selecting search committees that go on to select presidents at public institutions. Even when they are not involved in the search committee process, presidential candidates are often subject to approval prior to an appointment (Wilson, 2016). These are important facts because it establishes a connection between existing organizational structures in public higher education that may be contributing factors to the lack of women in leadership at public four-year, research-focused institutions.

Gendered Perceptions in Higher Education Leadership

The historical connections that still help determine gendered roles and expectations have created an environment that requires women to be both nurturers and leaders, feminine and competent, and the same, yet different, from their male counterparts (Eklund, Barry, & Grunberg, 2017). The double standards associated with being a woman while also possessing masculine traits, which are thought to be best for leadership, can be taxing and in higher education administrative leadership positions, those complex standards, or binds are even stronger (Jenkins, 2014). This presents a subconscious dichotomy between gender and ability when the leader of the institution is a woman. Women who are college presidents are more likely than men to be single and without children than men who are college presidents (Johnson, 2017). Women have also been 16% more likely than men to alter their careers to care for a child, parent, or spouse (Johnson, 2017).

The gender biases that women encounter, more often than not, in the academy also contribute to the difficulties women have in seeking leadership positions at institutions of higher education (Oikelome, 2017). This is applicable to the workforce as a whole. As a group, women are more educated than men and enter the workforce in large numbers, yet they are less likely to be represented at the top executive levels of their respective fields (Bierema, 2016). As women are asked to work for less, while being equally or more educated and prepared, the challenges women must overcome to advance in their careers increases (Bierema, 2016). Women are thought to have the ability to show compassion and engage with others. These qualities may be good, but they will also likely limit their ability to be seen as potentially successful in a leadership role (Brescoll, 2016). The strong, assertive, and aggressive characteristics that are often associated with men and with leadership are normally not as readily associated with women (Frechette, 2009). Effective leadership has been tied to a masculine leadership style and that has contributed to gender bias where positions of leadership and authority are concerned (Switzer, 2006).

Gender discrimination in the workplace is not unique to higher education administration. However, most women in the field have felt gender discrimination during their professional careers (Oikelome, 2017). The fact discrimination is experienced by most women in higher education makes their experiences different than their male counterparts. The known discrimination on the basis of gender is not the only thing that can make it difficult for women to be considered contenders for presidential posts. Aside from the opportunity to hold a leadership position prior to holding their first presidential post, women face another barrier that is not often discussed, age coupled with past leadership experience. As age and greater experience continue to be viewed as a value, women may not be given a fair opportunity. For perspective, people

currently live and work longer and with a higher life expectancy people may move from presidential post to presidential post for years. This could prove problematic for women because it provides even fewer opportunities for true openings in leadership positions in the field of higher education administration. *The American Council on Education's American College President Study* found that experienced presidents are preferred in higher education. If preference is given to age and experience, these qualities do not reflect enough women. Placing increased amounts of importance on the fact that women and minorities will be represented in fewer numbers because fewer have had leadership experience in comparison to White males is important if the pipeline to the presidency is to become more diverse (Seltzer, 2018). As the average age of college presidents gets older, women will continue to be less likely to hold leadership positions. Prior presidential experience is also playing an increased role in searches. With more presidents historically being men, they will hold the majority of positions simply by moving from institution to institution. Another interesting point is that college presidents are serving shorter tenures at individual institutions and are changing institutions more frequently (Seltzer, June 2017).

Even with some desirable experiences, there is no clear occupational road map to the college presidency. Though women college students hold a strong majority in collegiate environments as undergraduates and graduate school students, college presidents are still likely to be middle aged White males (Samsel, June 2017). The theory that men can be less prepared, yet confident in their abilities often leads them to seek positions for which they may not be completely prepared. In comparison, women almost feel as if they have to be over qualified for positions. Based on that fact alone, they are less likely to apply for a presidential position. The need to have more than enough experience can also lead them to search positions that provide

leadership opportunities prior to assuming the presidency (Tunheim, McLean, & Goldschmidt, 2015). The barriers of perception coupled with the historic baggage of the limited opportunities for mobility within the field has had long lasting impacts in both the confidence women have in their abilities to lead and what people view as acceptable behavior and experience. Without confidence in ability to lead, it is more likely that one may not seek a top position. This thought process automatically places women at a disadvantage in the presidential search process. On the road to seeking presidential positions, particularly at a large, four-year institution, confidence in ability to lead can make a difference in closing the gap between men and women.

As more women become faculty members, deans, cabinet members, and even leaders in sectors outside of higher education, they are helping women to be seen as potential leaders of major universities. This does not change the fact that attention should be paid to preparing women occupationally for leadership in the academy to expedite the closing of the gender gap in leadership. This is relevant to the overall discussion about women in leadership in higher education, because women have always been in the minority as it relates to power and that has led to systemic disadvantages that seemingly became the status quo at all levels in the field.

Conclusion

This chapter provided an overview of the history of women in higher education and how that history is linked to conditional access to spaces of higher education based on their gender. Women have moved from being presidential spouses and first ladies to being the leader of women on college campuses as deans of women, to being increasingly in the running for the top position. The roles, experiences, and training that can be used to create a pathway to the presidency will differ from person to person, but the convolutions of being a woman in a male dominated field are still present.

This dissertation will connect research that highlights certain educational and professional experiences that are thought to prepare an individual for the college presidency and how those experiences may be different for women. Lastly, to gain context, this research presents trends in higher education that show how far women have come and far society and higher education still must go to have equal representation at the top levels of leadership at public four-year institutions.

CHAPTER 2 - LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter is centrally focused on a review of the conceptual and theoretical literature within higher education that highlights barriers women face in seeking leadership roles and career progression. The purpose of this study is to gain a detailed understanding of the career and personal experiences of women who are, or who have been, presidents of public, four-year, doctoral degree granting institutions. The literature review is shaped around key concepts and theories that are key to understanding and framing the issue and research questions of this study. Specifically, this chapter begins by exploring the double bind theory and subsequent issues and theories that are connected to understanding the lack of women serving as presidents of public, four-year institutions. As more women strive to reach the highest levels of leadership in their respective fields, the complexities that contribute to the double standard that women often fall victim to become even more important to examine.

Higher education continues to be a male-dominated field (ACE, 2017). Therefore, increased awareness should be paid to the double binds that become barriers to women becoming presidents at public, four-year, research universities and how women who have served as presidents of such institutions have achieved the positions. Women who are presidents of public, four-year, doctoral degree granting institutions must possess the qualities associated with leadership, but many of those qualities are often in direct contradiction with gendered qualities associated with women. Presenting an image of a strong leader is often a must for presidents of public, four-year institutions. That image however, is complicated when met with the contrasting

views of how women have historically been viewed. The need for women to personify societal gender norms is frequently in conflict with the need to exemplify strength and competence (Oakley, 2000). The dual expectations that women face while pursuing career goals and climbing the ladder that may lead to becoming a president of a public, four-year institution often presents double binds that hinder women from being able to be seen as powerful, competent, and vocal leaders. This research investigated uses the framework of double binds to address the following questions:

1. How do women who become presidents of public, four-year, research institutions overcome double binds throughout their careers to rise to the presidency at public, four-year institutions?
2. What careers or experiences help women prepare to lead a public, four-year, doctoral degree granting college or university?
3. What do presidents of public four-year institutions who are women believe that they bring to the institutions that they serve?

As stated, the lack of women leaders on American college campuses is reflective of the power of representation. Women students have been long been the majority gender at most colleges and universities, but that has not translated to similar opportunities for leadership (Samsel, June 2017).

The double binds that women face may not always manifest themselves the same way. Whether they are referred to as binds, barriers, or some double standards, the dual expectations that are encountered by women are not always verbalized (Oakley, 2000). How women in positions of influence or leadership are judged and portrayed through media outlets and public perception can encourage the double binds that impact how they are viewed (Sisco & Lucas,

2008). Ponder and Coleman (2002) found that the combination of gender norms and stereotyping often lead to the perception of how a leader should perform. Understanding that there are a number of ways to lead and leadership styles can be different and still be effective requires a rejection of gender-based norms (Ponder & Coleman, 2002).

Conceptual Framework

Understanding existing scholarship on the impact of career barriers that women encounter and how those barriers have been nurtured or cultivated by society is essential to examining the reasons there are so few women who serve as presidents of public, four-year, doctoral degree granting institutions. The double bind, as a feminist theory is the primary focus of this research. It provides a lens through which both the lived experiences of women leaders in higher education and the historical gender-based norms can be viewed in order to assess the impact the norms have on lived experiences. As women continue to be underrepresented at the highest executive levels of leadership, particularly the presidency, in public higher education, there is a need to study why that underrepresentation continues to exist and how women who have reached the college presidency have managed to do so (Gardner, 2019). Specifically, this chapter begins with an exploration of the double bind theory, given that the double binds women encounter in professional settings help to set the context for the research presented. The literature addresss additional key issues and theories: the glass-ceiling effect, intersectionality, and critical race theory to provide context for this research. The issues, concepts, and theories presented in this chapter are necessary to address l the issue of the lack of women serving as presidents of public, four-year institutions.

The Double Bind

Initially viewed as communication style associated with schizophrenia, the double bind focuses on the contrasts between human thinking or assumptions and the behavior they exhibit (Bateson, Jackson, Haley, & Weakland, 1956). Double bind theory has been used to help articulate the complex binaries women encounter and helped to create a way to define the experiences that women, who do not fit into stereotypical roles, often endure. The theory's creator, Gregory Bateson, identified the focus on power as what ultimately creates a bind. 'Bateson expressed that double bind involves a powerful individual and a powerless individual, and as it relates to this research, social and institutional norms and a vulnerable class-women' (Jamieson, 1995). Bateson's concept, although not unique to women, established double binds as situations that involve one individual or group who are considered powerful and one individual or group who are considered powerless (Bateson et al., 1956; Jamieson, 1995). Situations through which binds are cultivated reflect conflicts between the power of societal norms and the lack of power people have who work against those norms. Feminists have been able to apply the theory of the double bind because of the juxtaposition of gender and power. Environments where the power is still seemingly held by one gender are ripe for the development of binds. Women in fields that have been historically dominated by men are navigating spaces where positions of leadership were historically not created for them (Bulick & Frey, 2017). Higher education has become more diverse, but executive level leadership is still associated with white men, rendering women to be seen as the less powerful in higher education settings.

Identifying and refuting the problem that women often struggle to be seen as both feminine while holding positions of authority for example, serving as a college president, is often referred to as the "double bind". Even when women have earned the right to lead, they are

measured by masculine traits in order to quantify their ability to lead (Appelbaum, et. al., 2002). Women in higher education administrative leadership roles are prime examples of the double bind (Jenkins, 2014). Therefore, understanding how women conduct themselves and navigate their careers around double binds and barriers has an increased importance. For example, competence and the ability to be seen as likable both impact influence (Eklund et. al., 2019). Women are often seen as likable, but competence is often reserved for men (2019). This is just one illustration of how double binds that exists can impact women in leadership positions. Gender stereotypes function to support double binds that hinder women from being seen as leaders and assuming positions of leadership (Ibarra, et.al, 2013). The gender stereotypes that in some cases have become normal practices are often hard to recognize because they endorse actions or behaviors that are deemed normal. However, when those actions are recognized and people are made to address them there can be positive results (2013).

In *Beyond the Double Bind* Kathleen Hall Jamieson offers an analysis of the complexity of qualities that women in leadership must often possess. The double bind theory was in existence long before Jamieson's work and the understanding that women were held to a different set of standards was not a new one, but thinking beyond the double binds that exist for women was a different concept that Jamieson's work explored. Conventional ideologies that preserve subservient traits as desirable traits for women to possess, strengthen the binds that women are often work to overcome. Jamieson (1995) explains five "binds" to address the additional hurdles that women often have to overcome that men do not. The double binds referenced by Jamieson are: Womb and Brain, Silence and Shame, Sameness and Difference, Femininity and Competences, and Aging and Invisibility. These binds will be explained in detail in this chapter to provide context and background. Jamieson's research provides a lens through

which gender discrepancies in leadership and misconceptions can be viewed. It also provides a way to look beyond existing binds to find solutions to overcoming them.

Double binds help to nurture gender stereotypes, regardless of how they manifest themselves, and they are collectively one of the greatest barriers to the career progression of women (Bierema, 2016). Because gendered stereotypes are in constant conflict with the leadership development and career growth of women in executive positions, the map of career progressions of women and men are very different (Bierema, 2016). The upward trajectory of career growth for men can be comprised of a series of steps, which build on one another in a threaded straight fashion. In contrast, women are thought to have breaks in their career progressions in order for them to perform gendered roles such as motherhood or caretaker (Bierema, 2016). These gendered expectations can lead others to question the abilities of women leaders and this can have negative effects on career development and opportunities.

Competence and ability are measured differently for men and women. By being judged or assessed differently, women are often subject to harsher or more negative opinions than men (Jamieson, 1995). The dualism of the experiences of professional women developing in their academic and professional careers, while also performing traditional gendered roles, often allow people to judge them differently than men (Heward, 1996). The additional layer of judgment based on the competing themes of leadership characteristics and gender norms for women also creates additional work for women. The standards of femininity in the work place are linked to nurturing others, not asserting self (Frechette, 2009); women in positions of leadership in higher education are not immune to this expectation. Even with major accomplishments and after achieving progressive strides towards gender equality, women often struggle with being seen as feminine and competent (Jamieson, 1995). This is explored in more detail below.

Femininity and competence

"Women who are considered feminine will be seen as incompetent and those who are competent will be seen as unfeminine" (Anderson, 2017, p. 526; Jamieson, 1995).

Though all of the double binds addressed by Jamieson (1995) will be discussed in this chapter, particular attention is paid to the bind of femininity and competence. It encompasses the other binds and is specifically applicable to women serving in leadership positions that are typically held by men. All [gender-focused] binds that prevent women from progressing in their careers are worth analyzing, but the bind of femininity and competence is the most active against women seeking executive leadership opportunities (Anderson, 2017). According to Anderson (Anderson, 2017), the bind of femininity and competence is most prevalent in politics, but for the sake of the research presented this specific double bind will be applied to analyze how women in public higher education leadership positions are viewed.

Women often face uncharted territory when seeking the highest levels of executive offices. As women increasingly enter leadership positions in fields where they are either underrepresented or less likely to serve in leadership, expectations of what they should or should not do have dissuaded women from seeking leadership roles (Fox & Lawless, 2014). This has contributed to the continuation of women being underrepresented in the public sphere and in other professions (Fox & Lawless, 2014). For similar reasons, presidents of public four-year institutions hold the highest executive posts on their campus, which makes the bind of femininity and competence particularly applicable to the public higher education context. The opposite of the demureness that is often associated with femininity is assertiveness. In the organizational structures and positions of leadership, assertiveness is directly associated with competence and is a valued quality for men to have, but not women (Jamieson, 1995). Similarly, being

approachable and accessible is associated with being a woman, but those characteristics are not considered to be qualifications for competence or leadership (Jamieson, 1995). This comparison between women in elected or public positions and women in public higher education is important. Women in academia who are responsive and approachable are not given gold stars. In contrast, men are considered to be doing increased work if they are responsive (Jamieson, 1995). The expectations traditionally associated with being a woman do not come with additional benefit for women, but are considered additional good qualities for men to possess.

Many organizational structures, including higher education have failed at trying to overcome the concept of the double bind of femininity and competence. As a result, women have had to approach leadership roles and career advancement strategically and often differently than men. Women must not only do their jobs, but they often must work harder to adopt behaviors traditional associated with men while also adapting to pressure the require them to cultivate gender norms (Eddy & Ward, 2015). The opposing themes or "pressures" that women leaders must comprehend and maneuver, come from the need for women convey certain masculine qualities while also continuing to uphold feminine ideals (Eklund, et. al., 2017). According to Bierema (2016), the concept of the ideal worker is rooted in male hegemony. Meaning, from the beginning, women were not even considered to have the ability or skills (competence) that were necessary to lead. The connection between ideal worker and male power stems from historical periods when women could not work and were thought to only be supporters of their husbands or fathers (Williams, 2007). The foundation of workplace ideals were not created with representation of women in the workforce, so the fact that the concept of the superiority of men in the workplace continues means that it has not been adapted to account for women in the workforce (Bierema, 2016).

As mentioned previously, women now make up a large portion of the workplace and individual industry sectors. According to the most recent statistics published by Women's Bureau of the U.S. Department of Labor women make up an estimated 43% of full and part-time workers (U.S. Department of Labor, 2019). However, gender equality is still a concern in many fields, particularly when examining leadership positions. Be it intentionally or unintentionally, when women are considered less powerful simply because of their gender, the influence of stereotypes that are repeatedly promoted in society becomes increasingly impactful. Women presidents at public institutions of higher education directly undermine the stereotype that women should be submissive and subservient to men, a stance associated with femininity. The impact of stereotypes at the societal or institutional level is not the only potentially hindering factors that are important to examine for women in higher education. Interactions with colleagues can also influence the careers of professional women. If a woman's colleagues respond to her more negatively because she uses assertive strategies, presenting characteristics that are interpreted as aggressive places the woman in a negative light (Jenkins, 2014).

The double bind of femininity and competence directly addresses how gender expectations impact women in the workplace and their potential to be viewed as competent leaders (Jamieson, 1995). However, the other four binds mentioned by Jamieson (1995) are also important in understanding the totality of the impact that binds have on women in leadership positions in higher education. Gendering processes and expectations establish work environments that are unequal (Maxwell, Connolly, & Ní Laoire, 2019). Universities are structured in ways that make career advancement for women particularly challenging and those challenges are heightened when familial expectations become a concern (Maxwell et al., 2019).

Womb and brain

The connection between women and their pursuit of higher education is complex for a number of reasons. One of those reasons is that prior to women entering post-secondary environments in large numbers women were thought to be giving up their opportunity to start a family if they opted for college in their late teens and early twenties.

> "Eleanor Roosevelt's daughter recalled, for example, that her grandmother believed that 'Girls who went to college were very apt to be old maids and becoming book worms…a dire threat of any girls chance of attracting a husband' " (Jamieson, 1995).

The bind of womb and brain asserts that a woman must either focus on using her mind or her body to progress through life (Hobbs et al., 2007). In her 2009 research, Julie Frechette explored the connection between the binds women face and academia as a profession establishing the need to examine the two together. Referencing Caplan's 1995 research, Frechette (2009) highlighted the fact that women in academia are subject to the same objectification as women who are not in the field, further establishing the impact of gender norms and expectations within the field of higher education.

Women in the academy who have children are seen as being not as serious about their careers as women who do not have children (Frechette, 2009). Furthermore, even women who do not have children, but who could have them, may be treated differently because they could potentially have them one day (Frechette, 2009). Institutional rules and practices surrounding maternity leave and family planning further complicate the womb and brain bind. Women must navigate the demands of their personal research and career interests within their academic institution, as well as the institution's demands (Ward & Wolf- Wendel, 2012; Burkinshaw & White, 2017). Maternity leave is often thought to place a burden on organizations (Maxwell et al., 2019). As research and funding play large roles in career advancement in the academy,

women who have breaks in their careers for maternity leave may risk the loss of funding or increased hurdles in the research process (Maxwell et al., 2019).

> Concerns about likely negative career repercussions due to pregnancy and maternity leave are interlaced with acutely felt perceptions that women who take maternity leave are relegated to the institutions sidelines and have to 'compensate' for their absence due to maternity leave (Maxwell et al., 2019, p. 151)

The understanding that administrative positions present a different level of work for women that does not often allow for familial accommodations supports the gendered division within higher education. Women who decide to delay having children could still face this bind in caring for other family members including parents and spouses. This binds seems to expand beyond women having children to also encompass women as caretakers of other family members.

Silence and shame

The impact that women have had on the world is irrefutable. Those impacts have led to increased gender equity in a number of fields, including higher education. Although there is still progress to be made in higher education, the strength of women who helped to impact change within higher education throughout history continues to be felt today. As women began to play more active roles in higher education, particularly in the mid 1900s after World War II, they had to learn how to navigate demands that were often in conflict with one another (Eisenmann, 2005). During the post war era of the 1940's through the early 1960's opportunities for advocacy for women arose, but it required a quiet finesse that was not in competition with gender expectations that were considered norms during that time (Eisenmann, 2005).

As women increasingly gained access to education and began to advocate for more causes, their voices were no longer silenced, but there continue to be challenges with accepting

the vocalized opinions of women. Women using their voices to assert authority is not a foreign concept, however women constantly face a different set of expectations from men in higher education (Sapiro, 2008). While using their voice may be important to establish credibility and authority, women may also experience negative responses to their authority (Sapiro, 2008). History gives credit to the voices of women for helping to equalize opportunities. By creating spaces where they could use their voices to express knowledge and intellect, women have been able to advance various agendas that benefitted women and humanity as a whole (Jamieson, 1995). There seems to be a need to discuss the other side of this double bind—shame—before moving on to the next section.

Sameness and difference

The differences between men and women are often dependent on an individual's perspective (Jamieson, 1995). However, the "othering" of women places more limitations on one gender over another. Gaining access to voting, education, or other areas within the public sphere was never an issue for white men. Women on the other hand had to gain access to those areas and then had to fight to be seen as equal. As women began to infiltrate leadership positions in the public sphere, gender norms continued to limit how they are viewed and subsequently how successful they are able to be in achieving their career aspirations. Jamieson (1995) notes that even as women began to seek and obtain political offices to "clean up" government, they were thought to actually be cleaning up after men.

In order to perpetuate normed behaviors, societies often implement practices to help establish order (Burkinshaw & White, 2017). The order or structure provides power to some, but not all. As a result, the "othering" of the less powerful individual or group of individuals places some people in positions that are marginalized relative to the general population or the more

powerful (Burkinshaw & White, 2017). As masculine traits and expectations are emphasized in the higher education, women are placed in the position of "other," highlighting the perceived differences between men and women (Burkinshaw & White, 2017). Though performance expectations remain the same, the treatment of and respect for women is different because of gender-based marginalization (Burkinshaw & White, 2017). The field of higher education may allow opportunities for women to excel, but organizational cultures that emphasize gendered differences often focus on changing women as opposed to adapting their culture to be more gender equitable (Burkinshaw & White, 2017). A connecting sentence between this subsection and the next would be helpful.

Aging and invisibility

Age forms the basis for a unique dichotomy in career growth and workplace leadership opportunities. The characteristics associated with aging men and those associated with aging women impact higher education and potential leadership opportunities within the field. Jamieson (1995) explains why the complexity associated with gender and age exist by highlighting that "wisdom and power" are often associated with men as they age, in contrast to the visible aging or wrinkling that is often associated with women (Jamieson, 1995, p.16). Whether knowingly or unknowingly, aging impacts the perceptions of both genders, and has particular negative consequences for women. As women age, particularly in their careers, age may signal a change for how women are perceived and how they portray themselves (Isopahkala-Bouret, 2017). The fact that as women age and their appearance changes results in perceptions that they are increasingly less desirable and less visible (Isopahkala-Bouret, 2017). The perceived decrease in attractiveness has been thought to contribute to midcareer women feeling invisible (Isopahkala-Bouret, 2017). Although the bind has a negative connotation, many women have found increased

power through gaining confidence in their ability while also challenging themselves to conquer new tasks as they age (Isopahkala-Bouret, 2017). Therefore, this bind may be as helpful as it is hurtful to women seeking leadership positions in higher education. For example, the issue of aging can be applied to also signal a shift in university leadership in the future. As more presidents enter retirement age the door could be opened for more women and more diversity in the presidency (Oikelome, 2017). Overall the bind of aging and invisibility may prove beneficial to women who are seeking to rise to the college presidency.

Women as Leaders in Higher Education: Overcoming the Double Bind

Jamieson's (1995) work in scrutinizing the double bind from a feminist perspective is pertinent because it offers an analysis of the complex nature through which women must navigate their professional and personal lives. The binaries that exist for women leaders, particularly in fields where they are the minority, are evidenced in sites where gender expectations are in constant battle with perceptions of ability (Frechette, 2009). Overcoming the double bind is a complex process, particularly in areas where there has not been a woman in the highest or most respected position.

There are qualities that are often associated with leaders: Strength, assertiveness and independence, for example, but these are also qualities most often associated with men (Meeks, 2012). The evaluations of the work performed by individuals are known as appraisals. These evaluations could potentially be responsible for changes in wages and career promotions. However, even if the same metrics of evaluation are used for women and men, once they are applied they are evaluated differently (Chin, 2011). In explaining how women are assessed differently than men, Chin (2011), addresses the dichotomy that exists in performance appraisals by noting that, "women are evaluated more negatively compared to men, when performing the

same behaviors". This implies that what women, as minorities in leadership, may do to assert leadership is not the major difference, but instead the expectations that women face when they are in leadership are the difference (Chin, 2011).

As leaders in higher education, women are expected to combine sensitivity with the strength and competence needed to be an effective leader. This establishes a double bind preventing women from being seen solely as leaders, but instead as women leaders. How a woman dresses or speaks, does not have to be mentioned to be detrimental to her career progression and they can still come with consequences (Oakley, 2000). Therefore, even if dressing femininely or speaking in an authoritative tone are not mentioned to women as negative traits for leaders to have, they could still impact their careers.

Women are challenged with navigating both the binds and expectations that they can see, and those that they cannot (Oakley, 2000) Implied binds, or binds that are known barriers, can be equally as challenging to overcome. Oakley (2000) refers to the additional work associated with the need to prepare for silent binds as "needless self-monitoring and self-consciousness". Instead, binds can manifest themselves as "challenges" that arise because of not dressing professionally or not adopting gendered communication norms (Oakley, 2000).

As the double bind theory itself evolved, Gregory Bateson and his research partners produced literature to explain or clarify their findings (1963). The nature of how society has portrayed women for generations is in direct conflict with women in leadership positions. Whether individuals realize it or not the paradoxical effect of seeing women struggle to gain the rights to education, voting, and leadership positions in various fields has helped to create a world where it seems as if women leaders are competing against societal norms. The process through which an individual overcomes one or multiple double binds may be unique and complex. As

women steer through unchartered territories where a woman has never held the highest-ranking position, the significance of the impact of the binds can truly be assessed.

Consequently, the roadmap for overcoming double binds becomes imperative to the growth of knowledge in all fields, but could have specific implications in the field of higher education because of the discrepancy of women in leadership at public four-year institutions. The compounding effects of being able to manage dueling personality and leadership straits can place the qualities women are expected to possess in competition with the qualities leaders are expected to possess. Women in higher education leadership positions and in leadership in general, must be seen as both authoritative figures in order to be successful (Jamieson, 1995). The roles of women in society continue to adapt to societal changes, however the complexity of the roles women are expected to play in the work place has not changed a great deal. As a result, there is still a need for women to prove their ability in areas that have been previously, or are currently dominated by men (Ibarra, Ely, & Kolb, 2013).

The lack of women in leadership positions at public, four-year institutions is a part of the culture of higher education. The double binds that women must endure reflect the patriarchal system that higher education has always been. Higher education has promoted and supported the dominance of one race and one gender and that has been a part of America's educational system throughout history (Nixon, 2017; Mertz, 2011; Montoya, 1994). Other contextual realities may further complicate the path to the presidency women in higher education may pursue. The effects of historical societal norms may be even greater in some locations. The impact of geography on the number of binds women can encounter is another area that is key to understanding the experiences of women who are leaders in higher education. The history of what is acceptable in any market or location may continue to influence how women are assessed in that area. In *The*

Education of the Southern Belle: Higher Education and Student Socialization in the Antebellum South, Farnham chronicles the development of higher education opportunities for women in the South. The complexity of the perceived experiences of a southern woman crossed over into all aspects of life (Farnham, 1994). The limited educational opportunities that were initially available to women likely contributed to barriers that impacted their careers after completing their education. Women often encounter a barrier to career progression. The double bind is not the only theory that explains the barriers that appear that are specific to women. The glass ceiling is a concept that explains a barrier that may prevent women to ascending to the highest levels of leadership (Jackson & O'Callaghan, 2009).

The Glass Ceiling

There are some ways of framing the experience of women seeking leadership positions that transcend geography. One such term, the glass ceiling, has become a household phrase. More prevalent than the term double bind, the glass ceiling also references the barriers women face when aiming to achieve progression in an activity or field. With the growing popularity of movements such as Me Too, Times Up, and others, the process of women assuming leadership positions in their respective fields and workplaces is now a concern of society, the media, and the academy. The term is often used to describe the invisible ceiling that women frequently encounter when they are trying to ascend to the higher levels of leadership or responsibility in their chosen fields. Popular culture has become inundated with references to the fictional glass ceiling that has allowed women to see positions of authority, but not grasp them. Simply put, the glass is a way of referencing any perceived or actual barriers that prevent the career or social advancement of individuals based on their gender or color (Jackson & O'Callaghan, 2009, p. 460).

Women have and will continue to break barriers in their chosen fields. Through additional opportunities, increased representation, and education, women have made professional advancements, however the highest public elected position, the President of the United States and relatedly, presidencies at public four-year research focused institutions in America have remained out of reach. Since 1920, women have legally had the right to vote, but the country has yet to elect woman president. Comparably, women have increasingly held leadership positions at public four-year institutions of higher education, but women are still frequently not considered for or appointed to presidential posts to lead those institutions. The lack of women in higher education leadership positions in higher education is often discussed, but there has not been a clear path to resolving this issue. Research has continued to investigate the gender gap in higher education and the issues that can result from the lack of diversity in leadership. Even though research has identified that the gap exists, it is important that research also identify how women who have achieved those positions defined the odds that are presumably still against them.

Historical context is important to gain a further understanding of the term, the glass ceiling. By providing a historical overview of the glass ceiling, Jackson and O'Callaghan (2009) show how the glass ceiling has limited women from progressing in a number of career fields, including higher education. Attention is also paid to how persons of color break through the glass ceiling that often bars them from achieving certain positions. The textual analysis of literature, which was the primary research method for the article, provides an in-depth analysis of the experiences of women in mid-level leadership positions at universities. Even after analyzing diverse types of research and identifying contradictory conclusions about how the glass ceiling impacts leadership in education, the research concluded that it does exist (Jackson & O'Callaghan, 2009). In their research, Jackson and O'Callaghan (2009) searched databases and

analyzed 66 articles. Initially, the search sought to identify abstracts that referred to the glass ceiling as a type of discrimination (Jackson & O'Callaghan, 2009, p. 466). The findings were then separated by business, education and social sciences. Their research also identified the glass ceiling as a phenomenon that affects throughout their careers (Jackson & O'Callaghan, 2009). Even after working numerous jobs and likely holding leadership positions with authority, prior to holding a presidential post at a college or university, the authors provided evidence that women still experience the glass-ceiling. In fact, the negative effects on career opportunities that women experience will increase over the course of a woman's career (Jackson & O'Callaghan, 2009).

The experiences that women have prior to assuming the position of president can shed light on how they approach leadership and how they may have been able to overcome barriers. The demands of the field of higher education have always been influenced by gender, as have most executive positions in fields that are deemed to be corporate or "white collar" (Mitchell & Eddy, p. 68, 2015). Through a large-scale qualitative studied using hermeneutic phenomenology, Mitchell and Eddy help to uncover the experiences of women in mid-level university leadership positions. These experiences may, in some cases, be precursors to presidential leadership or seeking cabinet level positions. Mid-level positions in higher education such as department chairs or deans can result in a variety of perspectives from mid-level professionals.

Four themes emerged from Mitchell and Eddy's (2015) study: department chairs had a variety of career goals; the career paths were not seen as planned and were largely influenced by others, gender was something males believed belonged to women and women believed that gender made an impact on their ability to function in leadership roles; and there were no formal structures to cultivate leadership skills (Mitchell & Eddy, 2015, p.69-70). The study used phenomenology to place a spotlight on the experiences of individuals and to explain how

participants navigated those experiences (Creswell, 2006; Mitchell & Eddy, 2015). The study found that many associate deans and deans had no desire to become provost; similarly, many chairs had no desire to become a dean (Mitchell & Eddy, 2015). For some participants, once rejection for career advancement through promotion was not granted they had no desire to apply for other similar positions. For others, the need to move to progress in their career presented different challenges. Study participants who were women felt as if their gender impacted their career (Mitchell & Eddy, 2015). “I think men are allowed to be themselves more than women are in hiring… (Mitchell & Eddy, 2015). This comment was made by a participant who went on to mention her need to be concerned with her choice of clothing and temperament (Mitchell & Eddy, 2015).

Regardless of research method there is a consensus that opportunity and leadership are influenced in some way by gender. By analyzing research that utilizes varying types of methods additional context can be gained because of the justification provided through each method. In combination with the qualitative research that explains possible reasons for the why gender discrepancies in career advancement still exists, those explanations are amplified by quantitative data that is irrefutable. By only using qualitative information to research a concept, researchers limit what can be justified. Quantitative facts help present necessary information. The fact that a “glass ceiling” exists is particularly important in framing higher education leadership at public four-year institutions. Even though the theory has been challenged and refuted, there is statistical support for why it exists. Women earn more professional degrees than men and outnumber them at every level of higher education, with the exception of leadership positions (Ford & Cavanaugh, 2017). This supports the need for continued examination of why the glass ceiling exists and ways that it can be eliminated. Belinda Probert attributed the lack of women in

leadership positions to hindering differences, norms and household environments (Probert, 2005). By being relocated to roles of servitude or support within household contributed to women not being seen as leaders (Probert, 2005). Therefore, the "glass ceiling", that is thought to encompass all of the reasons that women are less likely to hold leadership positions and placing them into one term is not the problem. How household norms and practices affect men and women may play a role in how men and women approach opportunities and the opportunities that are made available to them in the academy and elsewhere, and this should be included in the components that create the glass ceiling. For example, it is evident that the household environment is a critical sphere that helps to create the ideals and structures of understanding which in turn impact a number of areas in an individual's life. The glass ceiling is a general enough term to account for all of the many reasons that have contributed to the marginalization of women in certain career fields.

Research on the glass ceiling has identified that barriers to leadership that effect women in higher education do not only appear towards the apex of a woman's career. Instead, numerous glass ceilings appear throughout a woman's career, thus slowly hurting her career from beginning to end, making it increasingly unlikely for her to reach a pinnacle that is comparable to men at similar career stages (AAUW, 2016). Although it has widened substantially in recent years, within the pipeline that helps to prepare women for leadership in higher education and the workforce in general, forms of bias and discrimination still impact women more than men. Recent generations of women, beginning with those who are considered to be late baby boomers (born after 1955), have had longer periods in the workforce that generations of their predecessors (AAUW, 2016). Therefore, the pool of women who have had a sustained presence in the workforce and who are now prepared to lead has grown, but due to existing barriers it has not led

to large or comparable gains in women in leadership (AAUW, 2016). In a study on differing expectations of women and men in higher education leadership, two barriers were found to be the most prevalent (Oguntoyinbo, 2014). First, institutions of higher education often are void of targeted efforts to help women overcome barriers at various stages of their careers. Secondly, discouragement and sabotage were mentioned as the barriers most often encountered by women (Oguntoyinbo, 2014). These barriers are not internal to the workplace and can come from many places, including a woman's family. In this way, the glass ceiling is a reminder of the extent to which gender norms are pervasive and have been internalized within and outside of the workplace. In addition to various theories that classify the experience that women often have when ascending to leadership positions, the historical impacts of legal discrimination and segregation are impactful.

The Impacts of Legal Discrimination

The first woman to receive a college degree in the United States received her degree in 1840. Her name was Catherine Brewer and she was a graduate of Wesleyan College. However, it was not until 1972 with the enactment of Title IX that women were guaranteed the right to education free from discrimination because of their sex (ACLU, 2019). The Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education argued for separate educational tracks for women (Madigan, 2009). As late as 1918, the commission advocated for one track that would steer students to college preparatory work and another that would steer students to vocational training (Madigan, 2009). The college preparatory track was largely reserved for White males (Madigan, 2009).

The varying or discrepancies in opportunities available to men and women can become increasingly complicated when race and gender intersect. The combination of race and gender

increases the amounts of discrimination that a woman, who is also a racial minority, will likely endure. Historically racial minorities have also often lacked educational and professional opportunities. Plessy v. Ferguson was a landmark case decided by the United States Supreme Court. The court's decision upheld segregation based on race as long as public institutions and facilities were deemed equal. Legal precedent that was established, such as Plessy v. Ferguson and numerous Jim Crow laws, along with societal norms were targeted at making sure that racial minorities did not receive educational opportunities (2007). It was not until 1954 that Brown v. Board of Education (Topeka, Kansas) partially overturned the separate but equal doctrine established by Plessy v. Ferguson. In *Brown* the United States Supreme Court decided that state laws in support of segregation by race in public schools violated the constitution. Even after Brown v. Board of Education the systemic disadvantages and lack of resources still separated youth in the United States by race. Though not officially law, the effects of the institutionalized segregation in public education have undoubtedly influenced the number of African American students who were able to get a quality education for generations. For African American women who for years were marginalized based on race and gender, the struggle is arguably still harder than that of their counterparts.

> *Indeed, the patterns of participation in postsecondary education are very much shaped by race and sex. Underrepresented minorities and women are more heavily concentrated in community colleges and less selective comprehensive master's colleges and universities than their White and male counterparts, and racial/ethnic minorities are also significantly more likely to attend for-profit institutions* (Snyder & Dillow, 2010; Malcom & Malcom, 2011, p. 165).

Public higher education, particularly doctoral degree granting institutions were not designed with women of color in mind, as legislation has demonstrated. Building on the treatment of race and gender in legal scholarship, Crenshaw's 1991 work does an excellent job at laying a foundation for analysis, through her explanation of intersectionality based in legal reasoning.

Intersectionality

To gain a comprehensive understanding of the impact of gender, sexism, and race together impact women's careers, the theoretical concept of intersectionality must be explored. Intersectionality results from the intersecting of multiple marginalized identities such as race and gender (Crenshaw, 1991). The experiences of women who are also racial minorities also introduce additional double binds. Intersectionality provides a framework for the combination of racial and gender discrimination (Crenshaw, 1991). Women of color and their experiences are complex and extraordinary for a number of reasons. Their mere existence in the workforce has challenged the foundation of America and those challenges have undoubtedly helped to create more opportunities and better experiences for all human beings. In an effort to deeply explain and examine the experiences of women of color in the academy, particularly African American women, intersectionality will be used along with Black Feminist Thought, Critical Race Theory, and Bowman Role Strain Adaptation Theory to illustrate how, as members of a marginalized group, their path to leadership can be increasingly challenging. These theories explain the connection between the lack of African American women and women in color who are serving as presidents of public, four-year, institutions.

Coined to express the complexities of being a double minority, intersectionality provides a viewpoint that could be beneficial to all fields that are aiming to increase diversity in leadership, including higher education (Crenshaw, 1991). African American women must

address both racism and sexism at the same time (Patitu & Hinton, 2003, p. 81). The duality of racism and sexism create an intersection of two methods of discrimination that make the career development experiences of African American women more complex. Race and gender have been found to have an impact on the success of African American women in higher education administrative positions (Oikelome, 2017). Existing research on the impact of intersectionality on the careers of African American women in higher education administration leadership roles found that there are challenges to career progressions and competence is more important than identity (Oikelome, 2017). Identifying strategies for navigating organizational pipelines is also a key theme from studies on intersectionality within higher education (Oikelome, 2017).

The connection between race and gender is important for a number of reasons; paramount among them is how the two work in tandem to influence the educational trajectory of an individual's life. Intersectionality creates a voice and theoretical framework for African American by linking race, gender and social class to one another, (Davis & Maldonado, 2015, p. 55). Understanding that intersectionality creates experiences for African American women that are very different than those of other women makes having leaders who can understand those varying experiences very important. Higher education leaders would benefit from understanding the influence of intersectionality. In order to increase diversity in leadership, higher education has to establish a pipeline for members of minoritized groups (Patitu & Hinton, 2003). Having representation in leadership positions is one way to combat the negative impacts of the career disadvantages associated with intersectionality (Patitu & Hinton, 2003).

The intersecting discrimination associated with racism and sexism create an environment for Black women that may be starkly different than that of those who are members of the majority race or gender (Crenshaw, 1991). Using semi-structured interviews to gather the

experiences of Black women with professional positions within higher education, Davis and Maldonado's (2015) qualitative research on the experiences of Black women in higher education used semi-structured interviews to gather the experiences of Black women in the academy. Although both Crenshaw and Davis and Maldonado have produced work describing the unique experiences of Black or African American women, Davis and Maldonado actually apply the research to provide context on issues that are unique to African American women. Both Crenshaw and Davis and Maldonado provide beginning points for understanding intersectionality in higher education, but to develop further research on the topic, specific sources that identify how intersectionality appears in higher education is essential.

Intersectionality provides a theoretical framework that can provide context for how systems of race, gender and social class join together to create what could be deemed as an alternate reality for Black women (Davis & Maldonado, 2015, p. 55). That framework is arguably most impactful in higher education due to the gender and racial discrepancies within this context, particularly in large, research focused, doctoral degree granting institutions. Through qualitative research, Davis and Maldonado identified five themes: predisposition for success, sponsorship from an unexpected source, double jeopardy of race and gender, learning how to play the game, and paying it forward as contributing factors to the success of women in higher education leadership positions (Davis & Maldonado, 2015). Placing a spotlight on the intersection of race and gender and how that connection impacts the lives of those who are members of two or more marginalized groups provides a lens for understanding the lack of women of color in leadership positions at public four-year institutions. It also can provide a rationale for increasing educational and professional opportunities that may initially seem out of reach for those who are marginalized. Having representative leadership is tied to the recruitment

and retention of students, faculty, and administrators (Patitu & Hinton, 2003). In an effort to create a more sustainable pipeline of leaders, representation must become a part of the discussion.

Acknowledging how race, gender, and class intersect to create varying experiences that can often have a direct effect on impact individual success is critical to understanding how women in higher education can possibly ascend to leadership positions. However, intersectionality can also be used more broadly in connection with professional development to articulate the experiences that women of color face. Women of color, particularly African American women must approach their career trajectories within public higher education from the standpoint of both race and gender (Jean-Marie, Williams, & Sherman, 2009). African American women often experience both racial and gender discrimination when seeking educational and career advancement (Jean-Marie, et al., 2009).

Intersectionality and Black feminist thought specifically relate to the lived experiences of Black women and are used in a number of fields to express events and experiences that are often unique to Black women and both are present in higher education (Nixon, 2017). By using intersectionality to understand the binds that women face when seeking leadership positions in higher education, credence is given to the experiences of women who are also racial minorities and who may be victimized by binds of gender that are strengthened by barriers of race. Often tasked with doing more with less, women of color often have a unique drive that is evident across the occupational spectrum and higher education is no exception. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, Black women hold the majority of post-secondary degrees conferred on all Black students. However, identifying Black women in leadership at institutions of higher education, particularly predominately white institutions (PWIs), is not an

easy task. As double minorities women of color face pressures that result from feeling underrepresented and underappreciated and the intersections of race and gender combine to create a unique and often challenging road to success in a chosen field (Crenshaw, 1991).

Black feminist thought

Black feminist thought provides scholars with a lens through which the experiences of Black women can be viewed and expressed. As the intersections of race and gender combine to push those already marginalized to the outer edges of opportunity, Black feminist thought gives voice to the unique marginalization that is only be felt by Black women. College presidents and four-year public institutions often have more credibility than their counterparts at two-year institutions or smaller colleges. But even for the few Black women who reach the presidency at large research institutions, their authority may be compromised by continued marginalization in spite of their assumed authority (Hooks, 1984). Black feminist thought suggests that when African American women are able to share experiences that are able to develop information that is pertinent to the survival of African American women (Collins, 1989).

Even though a historical perspective on how African American women have had to navigate society is missing from the definition of Black feminist thought, Collins does include it in the discussion about another concept of Black feminist thought, the interlocking nature of oppression (Collins, 1986). She briefly presents a timeline of how the concept may have changed from the 1800s (Collins, 1986, p. S19). In doing so she established that the concept could be different in another one hundred years and that is important to continue to keep in mind. The last key concept referenced by Collins, the importance of Afro-American Women's Culture, connects Black feminist thought to the overall oppression of African American women. The connection between the history of women of color and their oppression is connected to their need

to identify a unique train of thought that can assist with the interpretation of the world around them. Black feminist thought and the history of African American women has played a role in the development of women of color and American culture. The victimization of African American women on collegiate campuses has been well established (Bell-Scott, 1997).

The most interesting element of Black feminist thought is that it has changed very little over time. The impact of oppression is arguably as relative now as it was in 1986. The "othering" of people of color referenced in Black feminist thought, is the result of colonization and having African American women in positions of leadership is the only way to change how they are viewed in higher education (Collins, 1986). Women of color have only recently begun to have a significant presence in mainstream administrative positions within higher education (Penny and Gaillard, 2006). Leading African American women leaders in higher education to potentially feel as if they are outsiders in their own environment, particularly at predominately white institutions. According to bell Hooks, understanding what it feels like to be an outsider even in your own environment is the essence of the foundation of Black feminism (Hooks, 1984). This means research has not done enough to close the gap on how Black women view the impact of oppression, and that is problematic. Wilder, Jones, and Osborne-Lampkin (2013), expand on the research of Black feminist thought while acknowledging the implied current and future evolutions of the experiences of African American women. The article does not seem to form a conclusion that can help shed light on new concepts under Black feminist thought. It does provide helpful instructions for where research on the theory needs to go to help advance the efforts of African American women in the academy, but until that is done it will continue to be difficult to truly understand how Black feminist thought applies to women who hold leadership positions in the academy and its supporting fields (Wilder, Jones, and Osborne-Lampkin, 2013).

Intersectionality and Black feminist thought both rely on representation and shared experiences to help women of color deal with and overcome the additional barriers that African American women and women of color endure in connection to race. Intersectionality and Black feminist thought can be used together to shed more light on the necessity of conducting research that can support African American women who seek careers in higher education administration. Understanding any differences in the experiences that African American women encounter as faculty or staff at public four-year institutions to their peers can help provide context that will assist African American women and other women of color advance in their careers in higher education. Interpreting existing research that addresses the roles of intersectionality and Black feminist thought along with the importance of sharing lived experiences through networking and mentoring helps to frame our understanding of the individual experiences of women of color who have also held administrative leadership positions in higher education. The literature examined and the information gathered through informal interviews will help to provide recommendations for the tools and skills that will help Black women obtain and retain positions of leadership within the academy.

According to an article in *U.S. News & World Report* that outlines Historic First in Women's Education in the United States (2009), it would take over a decade after the first woman graduated from college, for the first African American woman to have the opportunity to achieve a bachelor's degree. That is when Mary Jane Patterson received a bachelor's degree from Oberlin College in 1862 (2009). This fact alone places a spotlight on the gendered and racially segregated environment of public higher education. For additional context, the first African American person to receive a bachelor's degree from a public, state flagship institution was Isaiah G. DeGrasses; in 1836 he graduated from Newark College, which is now known as

the University of Delaware. African American women must navigate higher education marginalized in more ways than one. Without being members of the "dominate" race or gender, African American women and women of color have very specific experiences in the academy (Louis, Russell, Jackson, Blanchard, & Louis, 2014, p. 234) Of course, there were public historically Black colleges and universities that began to host doctoral studies, but major state institutions lagged in accepting students of color and women for generations. Though gender oppression and racial segregation are supposed to be concepts of the past, they still play a vital and unfortunate role in higher education bureaucracy (Louis, et al., 2014).

Gaining a heightened awareness of the lasting effects of segregation and gender discrimination and oppression can be garnered through exploring intersectionality. The complexity of the experiences of women who are double minorities, influences their career opportunities and support within the workplace. Although this research is about all women assuming leadership positions at public four-year institutions, it would do this research a disservice to address the discrepancy of women in leadership without showcasing the rarity of African American women or women of color who hold leadership positions at public four-year institutions of higher education. Racism and sexism are not new topics in higher education so their examination should in this study should not be considered to be revolutionary (Jean-Marie, et al., 2009). However, the combination of how racism and sexism manifest themselves to impact women presidents in higher education and how the media is contributory in that impact could change how women approach career growth in higher education. The institutional barriers that have hindered students who are racial and gender minorities still exist because they were a part of the foundation of higher education and power in general, in the United States (Allen, McLewis, Jones, & Harris, 2018).

The “anti-blackness” that can be experienced within the academy has had centuries to grow and develop (Allen, et al., 2018). The gender and race barriers that were created by powerful white men are a part of the America’s fabric. Lingering effects of slavery, segregation and the oppression of women have influenced the current experiences of African American women within the academy because they have been nurtured and sustained since the creation of the academy (Dancy, Edwards, & Davis, 2018).

In general, the experiences of women and members of racial minorities have not been adequately addressed, and funding and opportunity discrepancies are made more problematic for women and racial minorities when their voices are been silenced (Dancy et al., 2018). The impact of socioeconomic status, funding and public sector contributions can negatively impact students prior to post-secondary education (Dancy et al., 2018, p. 197). Therefore, women of color not only inherit the complex history of women in higher education, but they also receive the disadvantages that have historically plagued racial minorities in higher education. Historically, citizenship and landownership determined the value of public education, as well as the education that was available to specific individuals (Dancy et al., 2018, p. 87). The power and resources often linked to land ownership impacted what individuals have access to educational opportunities. Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU’s) were created to provide quality postsecondary options for students of color, but their resources were often drastically different than those of public, White institutions. The gaps between minority serving institutions and others were also widened by discrepancies that existed in the experiences of student prior to their post-secondary careers. With an unequal distribution of wealth and resources between HBCU’s and PWIs along with lack of devotion to eradicating inequality

within education, higher education has continued to promote white supremacy (Allen, McLewis, Jones, & Harris, 2018).

Critical Race Theory

Racism and sexism, as well as the assumptions associated with both of them are a part of America's history and its foundations (Ladson-Billings, 1998). Not only have they influenced educational opportunities, but also they have influenced everything in American culture. Intersectionality is used in CRT to refute racial supremacy in support of equity (Harris, 2016). How CRT uses intersectionality helps in the quest for identifying leadership opportunities for women of color Harris, (2016). Critical race theory (CRT) provides a framework that explains the marginalization that occurs because of race (Ladson-Billings, 1998). CRT claims that racial marginalization is a part of what has created the societal structures that rule in the United States (Delgado, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1998). The theory directly connects the problems that marginalized groups encounter to issues that stem from race. "Critical race theorists, Black feminists, and transnational feminists all agree that in higher education, the curricula and pedagogies of white people are normalized, rendering the experience of women and people of color as Other" (Baldwin & Johnson, 2018; Alexander & Mohanty, 2010; Collins, 2000; Solorazano, Ceja & Yosso, 2000).

As racial minorities, particularly those who are women are "othered" as a result of the residual effects of colonization, having African American women in positions of authority is likely the only way that can be changed. Black feminism is based on understanding what it feels like to be an outsider in a familiar environment (Hooks, 1984). The outsider complex, even in an environment that is familiar, can only be understood by those who have also experienced it. Elements of CRT can be used in the academy to critique administrative leadership structures that

are still largely closed off to African American women (Nixon, 2017). Addressing gender and racial discrepancies that exist within higher education cannot be accomplished by using one theory for analysis or one theory to propose a solution. Theories that investigate these discrepancies build on one another to help create new questions and new solutions. As a result of the intersection of gender in CRT, Critical race feminism (CRF) was created to provide a space for the narratives of women of color (Nixon, 2017). CRT and CRF help to explains the microaggressions that women of color face, and continued exploration of how those microaggressions materialized in various settings can help to develop increased awareness on how to address them (Harris, 2016).

Mentoring and shared experiences

Mentorship and the importance of understanding shared experiences will also be examined to offer perspective on how shared experiences and inclusion can impact an individual's professional success and trajectory. Penny and Galliard (2006) suggest that Black women are in increased need of mentorship and mentoring opportunities due to their increasing presence in higher education leadership positions. According to Penny and Galliard (2006) mentoring networks include a duality of participation. A mentor partnership includes support for self-empowering behavior, communication, respect and goal setting (Penny & Galliard, 2006). The problem with the information Penny and Galliard present is that it is not a sustainable program and does not seem to address deficits that could contribute to lack of participation. Their research addresses the "good old boy" system or the network that men have enjoyed for generations, that has often been seen as a contributing factor to the career advancement of men. The research stops short of addressing why a similar network may be difficult for women to implement.

However, mentoring should still be considered as a way to address the barriers that Black women encounter in higher education. The problem with Penny and Galliard's (2006) research is not the rationale, but their proposed execution and value. Tasking the mentor with the sole responsibility of a mentee does not always help the mentee advance in their career. In contrast, Baldwin and Johnson suggest a more modern approach to mentoring that is less hierarchical than traditional mentoring relationships where the senior person, or mentor takes ownership in the development of the mentee (Penny & Galliard, 2006). In the co-mentoring program suggested by Baldwin and Johnson, transnational feminist pedagogical practices are used to dismantle hierarchical structures (Baldwin & Johnson, 2006). In addition to the incorporation of critical race theory (CRT), Baldwin and Johnson's program is developed with the experiences of Black women in mind. This is critical in developing a mentorship program that is not solely modeled after what has worked for men, but is rooted in the needs and goals of black women in the academy. That is the only way to ensure that a mentorship program can be beneficial to both participants and that Black women can gain a greater understanding of ways they can overcome barriers, why those barriers exist and how the intersections of race and gender contribute to them, if their development can have a foundation that is unique to them.

A subset or extension of intersectionality that specifically relates to the experiences of African American women is Black feminist thought. As a theory, Black feminist thought provides a method through which African American women can express and identify the ways in which their voices have been marginalized and how their voices might be better heard and qualified through academic scholarship (Wilder, Jones, & Osborne-Lampkin, 2013, p.28). Wilder, Jones, and Osborne-Lampkin seem to build on previous research on Black feminist thought, established by Patricia Hill Collins. As African American women have gained the skill

of being able to turn isolation or marginalization into creative opportunities for advancement or survival, their experiences warrant a deeper examination (Collins, 1986).

Collins (1986) references how African American women have dealt with being an "outsider within", highlighting that experience in the field of higher education. Collins paints a picture that examines the experiences African American women as a marginalized group. That examination presents a holistic view of how African American women are viewed and how they cope with these perceptions while in the academy. However, as more women of color have assumed leadership positions at public institutions of higher education, Black feminist thought as a theory does not address the evolution of African American women. Even in 1986 when Collins published her theory, African American women were not solely accepting the status quo to define their lives or experiences. Her analysis of self-definition does not consider that self-definition, particularly of someone who is marginalized may change as the result of societal evolutions (1986, p. S17).

Bowman Role Strain and Adaptation Model

The "othering" that effects women of color in higher education administration also has the potential to lead to feelings of marginalization and the need to find ways to deal with the strains that results from that marginalization. Whether or not women feel marginalized at any point in their academic and professional careers is important because how they feel may influence the experiences that have and how they are able to navigate their environments. The Bowman Role Strain and Adaptation Model (BRSAM) examines how marginalized groups attain success. Often used to refer to student experiences, BRSAM is relevant to the experiences of women of color because it presents two strengths, etic and emic strengths that could be helpful in understanding how women address and overcome barriers in higher education.

From personal resilience to community support, BRSAM provides a multi-layered approach that could help women attain success in administrative careers in higher education (Bowman, 2006). Etic strengths are perceived as universal strengths, and emic strengths focus on how specific ethnic strengths aid the coping process (Bowman, 2006, p. 119). As African American women obtain the highest levels of leadership, public opinion and societal norms must be accounted for to truly understand what they had to encounter. BRSAM discusses how social stratification can play a role in structured inequalities (Bowman, 2006). These inequalities become a part of the fabric that comprises institutions, organizations, and communities. Therefore, they influence how institutions, including colleges and university, operate and how marginalized groups navigate college and university environments, even as professionals (Bowman, 2006). That is evident in how institutions of higher education, particularly four-year research-based institutions have operated and addressed gendered barriers to leadership. Higher education environments should be where diverse scholars have the opportunity to engage diverse perspective while exploring meaningful interactions. That should not be solely limited to students, but should also be the case for administrators and educators (Squire, et. al, 2018). BRSAM focuses on the nature, context, and consequences of strains faced by individuals and responses to these strains (Bowman, 2006). BRSAM has been adapted from its original form to be applied to outcomes in the field of education. BRSAM creates a framework that supports reflection and evaluation while addressing both the positive and negative results of experiences (Bowman, 2006).

Women college presidents encounter “harsher standards” relating to their physical appearance (Ford & Cavanaugh, 2017). From noting powerful women wearing pantsuits, to being distracted by equally powerful women wearing short or sleeveless dresses, the media

provides additional evidence of the barriers women in positions of power face. The focus on gender in the media is simple; all frames that could be used to be applied to women are not applied to men. The "double standard" of how men and women are framed in the media only further supports the segregation of genders when leadership is at stake.

Benefits of Women in Leadership - the Ideal Worker

The double binds that impact the careers of women in higher education should be examined from a number of perspectives including how the media can be used to diminish or strengthen those binds. The glass ceiling at public, four-year institutions and in higher education as a whole may be slowly breaking, but women must still navigate leadership roles and paths to leadership and power differently. Dr. Judith White, former president and executive director of HERS (Higher Education Resource Services) was quoted in Oguntoyinbo's research (2014) stating, "People have a sense that women have to justify why they would go for a leadership role, which puts them in a bind". The glass ceiling and the double bind are connected by their goals of assessing women differently than men. "Any woman who rises to senior leadership at a college has trod a narrow path in the face of second guesses that their male counterparts don't face, and that can help make any leader stronger" (Gardner, June 2019).

Understanding how women leaders are portrayed, assessed, and viewed in comparison to leaders who are men is key to gaining a better understanding of how more women can assume leadership positions within the academy. It is also important to understand leadership qualities that are deemed important in higher education. In *Leading Ladies: Women University and College Presidents: What They Say about Effective Leadership,* authors Wolverton, Bower, and Maldonado reference "Nine Tenets of Effective Leadership", the tenets referenced are: (1) Effective leaders are passionate about their organization; (2) effective leaders are reflective; (3)

effective leaders are competent; (4) effective leaders are great communicators; (5) effective leaders understand the role that culture plays in shaping the way they lead; (6) effective leaders possess the physical and emotional stamina, energy and resilience needed to persevere in the long run; (7) effective leaders are focused yet forward thinking; (8) effective leaders respect and value individuality; (9) effective leaders possess credibility. The study found that three themes were of increased importance for participants who were women presidents at various types of higher education institutions. Those three themes were competence, credibility, and communication (Wolverton, Bower, & Maldonado, 2006).

A leader's competence should be essential in any presidential search and subsequent evaluation. The consideration of competence may be heightened if the leader is a woman. The credibility which stems from competence is associated with leadership because means that those who are being led are more likely to want to follow a leader who credible. Women college leaders view being a good communicator as "essential for an effective leader" (Wolverton, et al., 2006). In an article entitled What Happens When Women Run Colleges? By Lee Gardner (June 2019), former and current women leaders of American colleges and universities were asked to provide their opinions on women in leadership in the academy.

"With male-dominated leadership there's often a focus on the big idea or star quality. With women-dominated leadership, I often see a focus less on the individual and more on the institution"- Mary B. Marcy, President of Dominican University of California

Conclusion

Women are increasingly taking the helm of leadership at public four-year colleges and universities, however that growth is slowed by a number of factors. As women balance being caretakers, mothers, wives, supporters they are also strong, decisive leaders and should be valued

for how these roles complement one another. This chapter provided a review of scholarship that can help us understand the challenges that women face when seeking leadership positions in higher education. Beginning with the double bind, the chapter covered theories and concepts that present a framework for addressing the research questions of the present study. The binds that women often encounter were described in the beginning of the chapter to provide context for the theories that followed. As conceptual bookends, the double bind and the glass ceiling provide a way to quickly summarize barriers that may account for why so few women have been able to assume leadership positions at public, four-year institutions of higher education.

The literature in this chapter was focused on the examination of the barriers that women in leadership and women in the academy face. Particular attention was paid to how double binds impact the careers of women in higher education, and how those binds potentially prevent them from being seen as effective leaders at public, four-year institutions. The importance of examining the barriers that gender can potentially place on leadership opportunities is critical, but should also be examined side by side with race. The marginalization of women based on their gender is the overarching concern of this research, but the lack of women of color in leadership positions at public four-year institutions highlights the need to also critically examine how, when combined, race and gender place additional constraints on women in the field of higher education. Intersectionality combined with Black Feminist Thought and Critical Race Theory highlights the challenges unique to women of color and how those challenges are viewed in the academy. The importance of representation was mentioned throughout this chapter to provide additional support chronicling the experiences of women who have served as presidents of four-year, public institutions. Gaining a better understanding of their experiences can potentially help increase the number of women in college presidential posts.

The complexity of gender issues within leadership will likely produce a double bind for women leaders (Eklund, Barry and Grunberg, 2017). Understanding ways to overcome those double binds are key in helping to reduce the impact of current and future binds. The research presented provided a scholarly review of the barriers that women face in seeking and obtaining leadership positions in public higher education. Save the last sentence deleted for Chapter Five; it's more appropriate there, since you'll be giving recommendations.

CHAPTER 3 - METHODOLOGY

The goal of this chapter is to articulate the connections between the research questions of this study and the methodological approach used to address those questions. Understanding the individual experiences of women college presidents at public four-year universities is essential to being able to understand why women are underrepresented in the highest levels of leadership in public higher education. The stories of each of the participants in this study are instrumental in gaining insights into the skills and experiences that have helped women to overcome barriers to leadership in public higher education. In addition, it is equally important to understand how and if double binds were present during the careers of women who eventually rose to become presidents of public four-year, doctoral degree granting institutions. The purpose of this study is to gain a detailed understanding of the career and personal experiences and opportunities of women who are or who have been, presidents of public, four-year, doctoral degree granting institutions.

Research Questions

1. How do women who become presidents of public, four-year, research institutions overcome double binds throughout their careers to rise to the presidency at public, four-year institutions?
2. What careers or experiences help women prepare to lead a public, four-year, doctoral degree granting college or university?

3. What do presidents of public, four-year institutions who are women believe that they bring to the institutions that they serve?

This chapter begins by outlining how the positionality of the researcher is considered within the study. Next, the chapter outlines the rationale for the use of case studies, the data collection procedures used, and the process that was used to analyze this data. The chapter concludes with an explanation of the gaps, benefits and limitations associated with this study.

As discussed in previous chapters, very few women are serving or have served as presidents of public, four-year institutions. The importance of studying women in leadership positions in higher education administration is magnified by the specific lack of women presidents at public four-year, doctoral degree granting institutions. Women are often faced with navigating their careers while understanding that they will encounter barriers associated with their gender and potentially their race, if they are a racial minority. However, understanding how double binds may potentially manifest themselves and how the women featured in this study have managed to achieve the statistically rare college presidency at public four-year, doctoral degree granting institutions will open new doors for women who aspire to become presidents at institutions of higher education. Gaining an understanding of the experience's women have encountered and how those experiences have impacted their carriers and how they lead, will help to provide a roadmap that can assist women in overcoming barriers to seeking presidential posts at public, four-year institutions.

Positionality

Qualitative research provides the opportunity to gain in-depth knowledge on the experiences of others. Knowing how women who have achieved the rank of college president at a public, four-year institution reached the office and identifying key connections and experiences

that they have in common can advance research on women in leadership and higher education as a whole. As an African American woman working in an administrative role at a public, four-year, research university, I have both a unique interest in and vantage point of women in higher education leadership positions. I understand the experiences of women in higher education leadership positions cannot be solely understood by numbers or statistics. Qualitative inquiry allows for deeper and richer understanding of the experiences of women who serve or who have served as college presidents. My research on gender discrepancies in leadership in the public sphere combined with my own experiences places me in a space of constant reflexivity. I have researched the history of women in higher education and women leaders in higher education. In addition, I have also conducted research on aspiring women political leaders. Having work experiences in the public or political sphere and in higher education made this research important to me.

My interest in the lack of women in public higher education originally stemmed from studying how women are viewed in the political sphere. Large, research-focused public four-year institutions in many ways represent society. They function as small governments of their own and often have influence on state and federal resources and politics. Therefore, if women are prevented from leading those institutions, a hypothesis could be formed that they will continue to be less likely to lead state and federal governments in executive roles. Twenty-two states have yet to elect a woman governor (Cassidy, 2018). Political offices are not at issue in this research, but as public institutions often carry a significant connections to elected officials through either funding or leadership boards, there is a correlation between the two. There has yet to be a woman president of the United States and politics is still largely dominated by men (Paxton & Hughes, 2017). The tie to the political arena is relevant to this study because it sparked my

interest in gaining a deeper understanding of why women often struggle to be seen as viable candidates for leadership in the public sphere. I am seeking to understand how women navigated their careers to eventually become presidents of public, four-year doctoral degree granting institutions. Given the rarity of who have been selected to lead public, four-year institutions the individual accounts of women who have been in those positions is of increased importance. Further, my interest in looking specifically at each woman's experience is rooted in a curiosity about the paths of women who have been able to achieve the presidency. What makes each woman unique? In what ways might there be similarities across their experiences? By hearing and analyzing each woman's personal narrative, I was able to explore how their experiences may have been similar and different, while also detailing the contexts within which their stories take place. The case study method was an appropriate route to achieving this objective.

Rationale for Use of Case Study Methodology

In an effort to understand how women successfully navigate careers in public higher education, this study utilized the case study method of qualitative inquiry. In order to study women who have achieved the rank of college president and gain an understanding on how and if they encountered or overcome any barriers connected to gender, and their experiences and backgrounds theories that focused on individual experiences were essential. Through the lens of constructivism, each individual experience is given credibility (Baxter & Jack, 2008). The barriers that women face and any opportunities and experiences that may have made an impact on women who have become presidents of public four-year institutions, can be best understood by examining the experiences of those women.

Having the perspectives of women who have seemingly cracked the glass ceiling in higher education will be essential to helping create clearer potential paths for other women to

serve as presidents at public, four-year research institutions. Case studies, such as the one proposed here, examine socially constructed phenomenon by allowing researchers to understand how or why something happened from the perspectives of those who have experienced it (Baxter & Jack, 2008). The examination of biographical information as well as institutional statements on the hiring and or dismissal of participants provided additional artifacts for the analysis and added to the study's rigor. By utilizing the case study methodology for this research, the experiences of each participant can be used to help form a deeper understanding of how more women can achieve the rank of president at public, four-year institutions.

Based on the research questions of this study, case study methodology is an appropriate approach. Case studies are preferable when seeking to gain in-depth knowledge (Crowe, Cresswell, Robertson, Huby, Avery, Sheikh, 2011). The justification for using the case study methodology was provided by Yin (2003). This study aimed to identify how women, who have become presidents of public, four-year, doctoral degree granting institutions have accomplished what is still seen as improbable. The fact that this study explores the process by which this group of women accomplished becoming presidents of public, four-year, doctoral degree granting institutions, is one of the reasons a case study was used (Yin, 2003; Baxter & Jack, 2008). To understand if women have encountered and how women have overcome double binds while on career trajectories that led to them becoming presidents of public, four-year institutions, data from personal experiences is essential. As women college presidents continue to be in the minority - particularly at public four-year, doctoral degree-granting institutions - understanding when and how they experience double binds and how they have sought to overcome them is particularly important.

By presenting and analyzing instrumental cases (research citations, maybe a couple here), this study aimed to identify and analyze possible career trajectories, experiences, and opportunities that could produce more women college presidents at public four-year institutions based on how women, who have become presidents of public four-year institutions, have accomplished reaching the presidency. There are two components that make utilizing the case study method the best way to execute this study. This study examined (1) the contextual conditions within a phenomenon (Yin, 2003) and (2) the phenomenon of women who have risen to the presidency within these contexts. In order to understand how some women have defied the odds to become college or university presidents, it is imperative that research explore personal narratives of women in the field of higher education, who have been chosen to lead such institutions. The case study approach allows for real life experiences to be used to explain a particular phenomenon (Yin, 2009). The extensive data that comes from using a case study approach helps to identify themes that may be similar among participants, while also allowing for individual experiences to be account for (Merriam, 2009). The personal stories of current and former women college presidents, who are leaders in public higher education should be appreciated separately. In addition, the combination of the experiences is critical to developing suggestions for developing conclusions for how women overcame any barriers during their careers.

Qualitative research evolves and expands, meaning that it does not stay stagnate, but instead often opens the door for additional discovery and questions as the result of data gathered during inquiry (Creswell, 2007). The individual and collective data is also important to crafting what the research on the subject should address next to help continue to create opportunities for gender equity in the field. Data was collected from semi-structured interviews and examined the

narratives presented by each participant to determine if there were any similarities in their careers and how they became college or university presidents.

Participants

Dr. Judy Bonner	(Former) President, University of Alabama
Dr. Nancy Cantor	Chancellor Rutgers University-Newark
Dr. Carol Christ	Chancellor, University of California-Berkeley
Dr. Janet Cunningham	President, North Western Oklahoma State
Dr. Shirley Raines	(Former) President, University of Memphis
Dr. Patti Neuhold-Ravikumar	President, University of Central Oklahoma
Dr. Martha Saunders	President, University of West Florida
Dr. A. Zee (pseudonym)	President of a mid size research institution

Current or former four-year college presidents, who identify as women were interviewed for this study. The participants had varied experiences and backgrounds, including experience working at other types of post-secondary institutions and careers outside of higher education. The number of women college presidents of public four-year institutions interviewed for this study was based the most recent number available of women who are presidents of public, four-year institutions. As of 2017, *The Chronicle of Higher Education* listed 31 women as leaders of public four-year institutions. Although the total number of women who are living and who have served as presidents of public, four-year institutions was not available, using the most recent number of women serving as presidents of public four-year institutions is a guide that can help to insure a significant portion of the potential population is represented. This study interviewed eight women who have served or are serving as presidents of public, four-year institutions. Of the participants two of them were retired from higher education and one of them represented an institutions that awarded terminal and graduate degrees, but not doctoral degrees. Based on the number used to shape the necessary sample size, this study was able to interview an estimated 25 percent of the potential population.

Prior to interviews being conducted a brief biographical overview of each participant was used to help conduct additional research on each participant. Additional research included: popular press or news articles, scholarly publications and information on their respective institutions' websites. Participants were selected after an initial electronic, online search of a list of women university presidents. The American Council on Education's 2017 report on Women college presidents provided a percentage breakdown on leadership, based on gender that helped to determine the pool of participants. The report cited 8% of doctoral degree granting institutions as being led by women (ACE, 2017). From there, a recent report by Lee Gardner (2019) that utilized a database from *The Chronicle of Education* executive-compensation survey, was used to help determine what public institutions have or have had a woman as their president (Gardner, 2019). The online database provided information over a seven-year period, from 2010 to 2017. The database was segmented by year, type of institution, and size of institution and was the best tool to identify how many women were currently serving as presidents of public, four-year institutions, given that the segmentation helped identify a list of candidates for participation in this research study. Although the only requirements were that the individuals represented public, four-year, doctoral degree granting institutions, there was also a desire to make sure that Historically Black Colleges and Universities were represented and that all of the individuals were not from the same geographic region.

One of the first challenges with conducting the research was gaining access to presidents of four-year, public universities. College presidents are deemed "elites" for research purposes. Elite participants are often easy to identify and contact information may even be more accessible, but actually getting to speak with an elite can be difficult (Mikecz, 2012). Prior to conducting interviews it was necessary to gain some level of trust, address any potential concerns the

participants may have that could be barriers to participating, and eliminate barriers that could be placed on the interview by location (Mikecz, 2012).

Data Collection

Email correspondence was sent to potential participants to introduce the study and request their participation. The initial email contained the title and purpose of the study and notification of my university's Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval. Email addresses that were available on the institutions' websites were used and assistants were also copied when their contact information was available. For one of the participants who was retired, her university email address was still active and was used to contact her. For the other participant who was retired, a former colleague was contacted to obtain her current email address. Some of the participants requested additional information after receiving the first email and prior to committing to participating. After receiving confirmation of participation a consent form was sent to each participate and a time for the interview was scheduled. All of the forms and subsequent documentation and recordings were stored in a digital file on a secure, encrypted server provided by the university.

All of the interviews were conducted via Zoom or telephone. Seven of the interviews were recorded digitally to preserve the integrity of the data. This study did not require disclosure of identity and one of the participants elected to not be recorded. The protocol approved by IRB was used to conduct all of the interviews. The interviews that were recorded were first transcribed. Each transcript was then read and compared against recordings to ensure accuracy. The manuscripts were stored in an electronic folder. Interviews ranged from 44 to 75 minutes.

In addition to the interviews that allowed each participant the opportunity to provide narratives of their experiences, a historical analysis of each of the women and their presidencies

was constructed for analysis along with the primary data. This allowed for a closer examination of specific experiences and biographical information related to each participant. Included in the biographical information were statements on their educational and occupational backgrounds and quotes that were made by each participant. The biographical information and background on the participants and institutions also helped to provide a connection to the phenomenon of the college or university presidency.

In an effort to adequately prepare to conduct the interviews, I have reviewed interview techniques that assisted in helping to ensure that time was used effectively and that the richest data was obtained through the interview process for this study (Corbin & Morse, 2003). Through the interview transcripts, I identified and examined the experiences and careers of women college presidents at public four-year institutions from a holistic and thematic perspective, gaining insight on both positive and negative experiences. The interview questions were geared towards exploring career experiences of the participants and how they achieved the position of college president at a public, four-year institution. Semi-structured interviews are a common method of collecting qualitative data that supports the case study methodology. The data from the qualitative interviews highlighted individual experiences and produced data that helped to identify common threads that characterized the experiences of participants during their careers. In addition to focusing on personal experiences related to any potential double binds or barriers based on gender, the questions also aimed at gaining insight into how and if the participants dealt with public perceptions. Public perceptions have always played a role in shaping opportunities and challenges for women who have been trailblazers within their professions.

The information provided through this research provided perspective on how women who have become presidents of public, four-year institutions have navigated their careers to defy

the current odds that are not in favor of women who seek to become leaders of public, four-year institutions. Understanding of the skills that women need to possess in order to lead effectively can provide a roadmap for women hoping to advance in administrative careers in higher education. Through providing detailed descriptions of actual lived experiences through the interview process, a greater comprehension of the career paths of women in leadership positions who ascend to presidential posts at public four-year institutions was obtained. To be able to fully dissect the experiences of women in leadership positions, it was important to gather their personal accounts and identify common themes and even themes specific to individuals. In order to establish concrete suggestions that can help to increase the percentage of women who serve as presidents of public, four-year, doctoral degree granting institutions the lived experiences of women who have actually reached the office is key. It was anticipated that although there were similarities in participant experiences, those experiences would vary given other educational and occupational factors.

This study is designed to help gain a better understanding of the individual experiences of each participant, to provide varying recommendations for how women who seek to become presidents at public, four-year, doctoral degree granting institutions can overcome double binds that are associated with gender if they encounter them, in order to increase the number of women who are prepared to seek the position. The perspectives of the participants identified double binds associated with leadership in higher education administration. The personal accounts of participants who have been college presidents at public, four-year institutions went beyond current reasoning, established in literature review for this study, on the barriers that are uniquely related to gender that hinder women from becoming presidents of public, four-year, doctoral

degree granting institutions. The data gathered through the semi-structured interviews is authentic and unique to this study, which is another benefit of qualitative research.

Additional qualitative data was collected to gain a better understanding of each participant. One participant, Dr. Shirley Raines, authored a book, *An Uncommon Journey: Leadership Lessons From a Preschool Teacher Who Became A University President* and that book was part of data collection for her. The total number of hours for data collection was 28 hours and 45 minutes. The following graph represents a breakdown of data collected on each participant and a time long of the time spent collecting applicable data for each participant.

Table 2 - *Participant Data Collection Time Log*

Participant	Interview	Additional Data	Total Time
Dr. Judy Bonner	1 hr.	4 hours	5 hours
Dr. Nancy Cantor	50 minutes	2 hours	2 hours and 50 mins.
Dr. Carol Christ	1 hr. 5 mins	4 hours	5 hours and 5 mins.
Dr. Janet Cunningham	50 mins	1 hour	1 hour and 50 mins.
Dr. Shirley Raines	1 hr. 15 mins	6 hours	7 hours and 15 mins.
Dr. Patti Neuhold-Ravikumar	50 minutes	1 hour	1 hour and 50 mins.
Dr. Martha Saunders	1 hour	3 hours	4 hours
Dr. A. Zee	45 minutes	1 hour	1 hour and 45 mins.

Data Analysis

Theoretical framework

As a theory originally meant to address psychological concerns, the double bind theory has been adapted to address the issues that women face as the result of the competition between expectation and ability. In *Beyond the Double Bind*, Kathleen Hall Jamieson (1995) identifies the binds that women most often encounter: Womb and Brain, Silence and Shame, Sameness and Difference, Femininity and Competences, and Aging and Invisibility. Each of the double binds addressed was used to help form interview questions for the semi-structured interviews. Recognizing that the double bind was not a theory that all participants would be aware of, references and explanations about the theory were mentioned in the questions. In addition, background questions about previous positions, personal background, and the impacts of barriers associated with gender were included. Understanding how and when women have encountered double binds in their career progressions can assist in the development of practices and resources that can help increase the number of women who are prepared to serve as presidents of public, four-year doctoral degree granting institutions. Knowing how women who have risen to the ranks of college presidents have achieved leadership positions is essential to establishing a strong foundation on which other women can build their careers in higher education administration.

Once the data was gathered through semi-structured interviews and each interview was transcribed, the data from all of the interviews was used to identify themes. Preliminary coding took place during the transcription. The process of coding is described as the "labeling and systematizing the data" (Tracy, p.186, 2013). After the interview data was transcribed, primary codes were identified and a codebook was constructed. Codes are words or phrases that are gathered through data collection (Tracy, 2013; Saldaña, 2011). In this study codes were first

isolated in primary-cycle coding. This phase allowed the initial terms and data to be examined loosely. Once themes were identified the process of comparing and contrasting themes began. The themes most frequently used were coded again after the first process to ensure that the themes were consistent. Unusual themes, or themes that were not noted as frequently among participants were also noted for analysis. Primary-cycle coding is beneficial because it allows for a closer examination of the data. As a researcher, it allowed me to see what was actually said during the interview process; this enabled me to organize the information accordingly. The identification of commonly used terms or words can also be referred to as first-level coding (Tracy, 2003).

As data from the semi structured interviews were analyzed a second time the constant comparative method of coding was used to determine new codes and to determine when and if existing codes should be revised (Charmaz, 2000). During the coding process the codebook was used to maintain the codes that were identified. The codes from the transcribed interviews were placed into the codebook. The codebook contained key codes and their meanings or definitions in order to establish their importance in the analysis (Tracy, 2013). The codebook was also used to explain research findings and conclusions. Similarities and differences identified in the coding process, were used to help frame the analysis and conclusion. The interview process was conducted in a way that allowed each participant to share information that could only be garnered by a personal narrative. Even though the interviews were semi-structured, the script used for each interview also contained the research questions to maintain consistency and uniformity for each interview.

Prior to the conclusion of each interview, each participant was asked to add any other additional information they felt might be pertinent to the research. It is important to note that all

of the women who participated in this study held terminal degrees and understood the important role research and data collection plays in the academy. The transcriptions were then edited to include only the data from the participants, meaning that the questions were eliminated. Word clouds were generated to identify words that were more prevalent in each individual interview (Atenstaedt, 2017). The word clouds were not the primary methods of analysis, but instead provide support for the totality of the data collection and analysis process, specifically identifying differences in the experiences of the participants (Atenstaedt, 2017).

Validity

Validity of qualitative research is often connected to both the authenticity and credibility of the data gathered through relying on the qualitative paradigm (Creswell, 2000). The experiences of the participants were of the upmost importance in this research and the lens through which this study was approached focused on establishing validity of participant experiences (Creswell, 2000). The commonalities in career experiences and necessary skills helped to increase the validity of each theme. However, this study's validity also came from the detail provided through each narrative. By interviewing women who have risen to the college presidency at public, four-year institutions, their self-reflexivity and lived experiences contributed to the credibility of the experiences presented. The combination of phenomenon and context helped support the case study method as the best method for this research study. The focus on the participant's experiences during their careers, or what they did during their careers along with how they accomplished the phenomenon of becoming a woman president of a public four-year institutions helped provide unique insight into the experiences of women in higher education administrative positions.

Limitations

The number of women college presidents of public four-year institutions interviewed for this study is a solid reflection of the population. Eight participants could be deemed a small sample size, however given the potential population a large percentage was still represented in this research. It is important to note that it is not uncommon for studies of relatively unique groups of individuals to be comprised of only a few members. The fact that there was a limited number of potential participants was the greatest limitation of this study. In addition, identifying potential participants who were not currently employed by an institution was also challenging. If an individual had left an institution due to retirement or resignation it was difficult to obtain contact information for those individuals.

Interviewing elite participants also meant that a greater amount of time had to be dedicated to contacting potential participants. Time constraints in this research study impacted scheduling with women who are presidents of public, four-year publicly funded institutions; they often scheduled meetings two to three months in advance. The benefits of interviewing elite participants greatly out way the limitations, but scheduling issues and access did impact this study in some way. The importance of certain biographical factors such as age, sexual orientation, or religious backgrounds were not considered as primary focuses in this study and as a result were contributing factors in recommendations for future research. Each of those areas could present additional barriers for women, however that may not be apparent in this study.

Conclusion

The beginning of this chapter provided a rationale for why qualitative inquiry was chosen for this research study and connected this methodological choice to the researcher and to the theoretical perspectives addressed in the literature review. Following this, the rationale for case

study methodology was also presented. Conducting semi-structured interviews with eight women who have held the position of president at a public, four-year institutions has the ability to provide qualitative data focused on addressing the gaps in existing research as well as the gender discrepancies that still exist in higher education administration. The utilization of case study methodology helped to answer how the participants navigated their careers to become presidents of public, four-year institutions. In addition, the case study method allowed for the ability to address how the number of women college presidents at public four-year institutions is specifically impacted by the type of institution and its structure. Understanding that there is a great deal of research on women in higher education, the focus of this study is on identifying the "how" or the skills, processes, and qualities that led to the participants becoming presidents of public four-year doctoral degree granting institutions. Ideally, the use of the qualitative research to convey the lived experiences of women college presidents provides a more in-depth view of the career trajectories of women in leadership in higher education to encourage more women to seek such positions at public four-year institutions.

CHAPTER 4 - FINDINGS

This study aimed to highlight the individual experiences of women who have served as leaders of public, four-year research institutions, with the specific purpose of gaining a detailed understanding of the career and personal experiences and opportunities of women who have reached the college presidency. The women who participated in this study were at varying stages in their careers; despite having different career trajectories and entering higher education at different times, the connections between their stories and experiences provide clear feedback on the necessary characteristics and knowledge essential to equipping women to lead public, four-year institutions. This chapter highlights the themes that were identified during the data collection process and also examines differences that were unique to individual participants. Data gathered confirmed that women administrators in higher education are cognizant of the need for more diversity in the field and that there are certain experiences that help to prepare women to lead a public, four-year institutions. As a result, the participants in this study were open to discussing their career experiences and leadership opportunities for women, in an effort to spur more scholarship and discussion on women in higher education administrative leadership positions.

Research Questions

The research questions that helped to frame this study were:

1. How do women who become presidents of public, four-year, research institutions overcome double binds throughout their careers to rise to the presidency at public, four-year institutions?
2. What careers or experiences help women prepare to lead a public, four-year, doctoral degree granting college or university?
3. What do presidents of public, four-year institutions who are women bring to the institutions that they serve?

Themes

The data gathered during semi-structured interviews revealed several important connections between the experiences of the participants. The information provided in the literature review in Chapter 2 was used as a guide to identify important concepts that connected to the areas of interest mentioned in this research. This chapter includes a discussion of the themes identified and their connection to the overall purpose of this research study. In addition, information on each of the participants is provided to further contextualize their interview data, to provide a rationale for why they were selected for participation, and to illustrate how their individual and collective experiences connect.

The themes identified in this research are

1. Career Leadership Opportunities as Preparation for the Presidency
2. The Importance of Mentorship
3. The Impact of Being "The First"
4. Increasing Gender Diversity in University Leadership
5. Double Binds for Women in Higher Education

These themes will be used to address the key research questions that this research aims to answer. Understanding how women prepare for and ascend to the presidency can help establish ways to prepare future women leaders to be ready to apply for or seek presidencies at public, four-year institutions. In addition, understanding how women have addressed issues relating to gender and how having diverse perspectives in leaderships can positively impact the academy were key areas of concern in this research. Prior to examining the themes that addressed the research questions for this study, biographical information on each of the eight participants has been provided for context of the data gathered.

Participant Overview

Eight women who currently serve as presidents of public for year institutions were interviewed for data collection. Seven of the women represented institutions that award doctoral degrees and one participant represented an institution that awarded graduate degrees, but not doctoral degrees. Two of the participants were retired. Three participants were over the age of 65. All eight of the participants identified as white women and one of the participants was a member of the lesbian, gay, and transgender (LGBT) community. There were no participants who identified as African American women or women of color, however this made the connections to intersectionality and the supporting theories used in this research increasingly important. Understanding the impact of race and gender through the literature used as framework in this study, highlighted challenges that specifically impact the career trajectories of African American women. Those challenges also identified reasons that there were limited numbers of African American women and women of color who have served as presidents of public, four-year institutions.

Participant Biographies

Participant biographies are included to provide important background information that may be necessary for context. The educational and professional history of each participant was included in the data analysis, but the biographical data from each participant also details the positions that were frequently held prior to reaching the presidency and the educational background that assisted each individual in preparing for the role of college president. Using a case study methodology for this research also required gaining a deep knowledge or understanding of each individual participant, therefore their backgrounds were particularly important (Yin, 2003). Quotes obtained during data collection precede each biographical sketch, and are used to highlight the individual experiences of each woman.

Judy Bonner

The gravity of being named the first woman president was not anything that I had even thought about…I was met with multiple reporters waiting for an interview. Their first question for me was "What was it like to be the first woman named President at The University of Alabama?" I honestly had not thought about that…the question took me totally by surprise. I was processing that I was being named president and I wanted to do a good job. The fact that I was a woman was not anything I was thinking about.

Dr. Judy Bonner, was the 28th president of The University of Alabama and the University's first and only woman president in its 189-year history. Prior to her tenure at UA, she was a professor at the University of Alabama at Birmingham and The Ohio State University. She earned bachelor and master's degrees from The University of Alabama and her Ph.D. from The Ohio State University; all of her degrees are in nutrition. Immediately prior to being named president, Dr. Bonner served as the University's provost and executive vice president. According to a press release at the time of her retirement, "During Dr. Bonner's tenure as provost and president, the University underwent transformational change growing from just over

19,000 students in 2003 to more than 36,000 students in 2014. Each year, the academic strength of the student body and the faculty exceeded the record set the previous year" (www.ua.edu). Immediately after serving as president Dr. Bonner was selected to serve as provost at Mississippi State University. She is currently retired.

Nancy Cantor

I believe very strongly that people should not check their identity at the door, and I think the more comfortable we all get being who we are, the better. So, I know that there are a lot of my colleagues who would say they don't like it when they're introduced as the first woman this or that, I think that's great.

Dr. Nancy Cantor is Chancellor of Rutgers University-Newark. According to the university's website, "she leads and promulgates efforts to leverage the university's many strengths, particularly its exceptional diversity, tradition of high-impact research, and role as an anchor institution in Newark, New Jersey" (Rutgers University-Newark, 2020). Prior to serving as chancellor at Rutgers- Newark, she was chancellor and president of Syracuse University. She has also served as chancellor of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign; provost and executive vice president at the University of Michigan and has held other positions at the University of Michigan and Princeton University. A social psychologist, Dr. Cantor is a scholar on diversity and inclusion. Dr. Cantor is a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and sciences. She recently received the Ernest L. Boyer award at the Association of American Colleges and Universities. She earned an atrium baccalaureates (A.B.) from Sarah Lawrence College and a Ph.D. in Psychology from Stanford University (Rutgers University-Newark, 2020).

Carol Christ

That's a really good point, because I'm often introduced as University of California's first woman chancellor…And I just think there's an asymmetry in the use of the word first. Somehow, you're exceptional because you're a woman rather than the chancellor of the University of California at Berkeley. I do think that people tend to make your female identity exceptional in a kind of odd way.

Dr. Carol Christ is the 11th chancellor of the University of California, Berkeley. A "scholar of Victorian literature", she served as a professor and administrator at UC Berkeley for over 30 years prior to being selected as president of Smith College where she served for over a discard. She returned to UC Berkeley to lead the Center for Studies in Higher Education and was appointed interim executive vice chancellor and provost before being named chancellor. While at Smith, Dr. Christ oversaw the development of the only accredited engineering program at a women's college. She earned a bachelor's degree from Douglass College, and a M.Ph. and Ph.D. from Yale University. Her first academic role was as a member of the English faculty at UC Berkeley. A noted author, Dr. Christ is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the American Philosophical Society (UC Berkeley, 2020). The media has documented Dr. Christ's personal approach to connecting with students. A recent article, entitled "Finals stress? Chancellor Carol Christ has cookies" showed Dr. Christ delivering cookies to students before finals. "Cookies don't finish papers, but they help", said Christ (UC Berkeley, December 2018)

Janet Cunningham

I was the first female president here at Northwestern [North Western Oklahoma State University]. And this is my, let's say fourteenth year and when I became president, I was asked, "How does it feel to be the first female president?" My answer to that question was always, 'Well, I think it probably feels like any other person moving into a new position.' What I will be really happy about is when that's not even a relevant question anymore.

Dr. Janet Cunningham is the 19th and first woman president of the Northwestern Oklahoma State University. During her tenure as president, the university established its first doctoral program, added an additional campus and underwent several major construction projects. Her accomplishments include significantly increasing fundraising projects, expanding coursework and enrollment, and leading the school to become a member of the NCAA. Immediately prior to serving as president, Dr. Cunningham was the university's executive vice president. Prior to that she served as the vice president for fiscal affairs. She is a recipient of the Kate Barnard Award by the Oklahoma Commission on the Status of Women. She earned a Doctorate in Education from Oklahoma State University and bachelor's and master's degrees from Northwestern Oklahoma State University (NOSU, 2020).

Shirley Raines

I was the first and only woman president at the University of Memphis and at that time the only one in Memphis. But since that time a president of a private league college, Rhodes College, the president of Southwest Tennessee Community College, and the president of Lemoyne-Owen have all been women. So, I think I opened some doors at least in Memphis and hopefully some other places as well.

Dr. Shirley Raines is president emeritus of the University of Memphis. She was the first woman president of the University of Memphis, a role she served in for 12 years. She led the University of Memphis to become one of the Top 20 internship programs in the nation, the largest honors program in the state, and developed an entrepreneurship program that launched companies started by professors and students. She has been the "first woman" to serve in a number of roles including: chair of Conference-USA and chair of the Memphis Regional Chamber of Commerce. Prior to serving as president of the University of Memphis, Dr. Raines

served on the faculties of universities in six states, as a professor, department chair, dean and vice-chancellor (Raines, 2020). Her scholarship is in the area of early childhood education and she has authored 14 books associated with this area of study. Some of her previous institutions were: The University of Alabama, George Mason University, and the University of Kentucky, among others. Dr. Raines holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Tennessee Martin and holds a master's and doctoral degree from the University of Tennessee Knoxville.

Patti Neuhold-Ravikumar

For centuries, men have been the people who have been in charge and when they left other men chose who would succeed them, and so, the times changing as you can tell by the statistics and the numbers and the faces on boards. Who are the regents? Who are your governors? Who are making those decisions and who's being elected, right? So, the face of our country is changing but it has taken a couple of hundred years for us to get there. And I don't expect it to be an overnight thing and just because women make up for slightly large portion the country, does not mean we were going to automatically have parity.

Patti Neuhold-Ravikumar is the 21st president of the University of Central Oklahoma and the institution's first female president in its 129-year history. Prior to serving as president, Neuhold-Ravikumar served as the institution's vice president of finance and chief financial officer. While serving as vice president of finance and chief financial officer she helped lead the institution through a decline in enrollment and "significant" loss of state funding. Neuhold-Ravikumar currently serves on the Boards of Directors of several organizations including the Oklahoma Center for the Advancement of Science and Technology and the Oklahoma State Chamber of Commerce. Prior to working at UCO, Neuhold-Ravikumar worked for her family's business. According to information gathered during data collection, she is the only openly gay college president interviewed for this research. She earned a bachelor's degree from Oklahoma

Christian University and a master's degree from the University of Tulsa. She is currently a doctoral candidate at Concordia University-Chicago (UCO, 2020).

Martha Saunders

This is my third presidency and I have felt very well received in all of them. In the first I followed president who had been quite embattled. And I think that's always an advantage… I was first woman president in Southern Miss…And I'm so glad this is the first time in years that I've not been the first. My predecessor was a woman. You know we're in the 21st century and it's about time.

Dr. Martha Dunagin Saunders is the sixth president and second woman to serve as president of the University of West Florida. Her career in higher education spans over 30 years. Prior moving to the University of West Florida to serve as provost and executive vice president, Dr. Saunders served as president of the University of Southern Mississippi. She established Florida's first doctoral program in intelligent systems and robotics partnership with the Florida Institute of Human Machine Cognition. She holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Southern Mississippi, a master's degree from the University of Georgia and a doctorate from Florida State University (https://uwf.edu/offices/presidents-office/office-of-the-president/presidents-biography/).

Dr. A. Zee

Be the hardest working person in the room and good things will come to you.

Dr. A. Zee is a president of a large regional institution located in the Southeast United States. Prior to serving in her current role she held a senior vice president and provost role and a large research institution. Dr. A. Zee A held faculty and administrative positions at institutions in the Midwest and Northeastern United States. She also held roles at a two-year institution with

oversight of a number of large state and federal grants. An accomplished author, Dr. Zee has published books, book chapters, and research articles. She holds a bachelor's degree from a large private research university in the Southeast, a master's degree from a large flagship, public university in the Southeast, and a Ph.D. from a large research university in the Midwest.

Analysis

There was an overarching connection between each of the participants and their willingness to advance research addressing the issue of women in leadership in public higher education. Although a number of people were contacted about this research, but opted not to participate, the participants described above expressed a willingness to help advance research on the subject. Of those who sent notification of their decision not to participate, the most common reason was that their schedule could not accommodate an interview during the timeframe in which the study was being conducted. The other reason cited was that it was their professional practice to not participate in research studies being performed by students.

The themes identified in this research collectively answered the research questions that helped to frame this study and also helped to spotlight key connections between the experiences of the participants. The connection between the careers and backgrounds of the participants yielded specific similarities that are mentioned in the analysis of the themes presented in this chapter.

Leadership Opportunities as Preparation for the Presidency

I increasingly served on university-wide committees, and got engaged in issues of the university and community, and realized that overtime… people would talk to me about possibilities of leadership.-Dr. Nancy Cantor

This research has established that the number of women presidents at public, four-year, graduate degree granting institutions is far less than would be expected given the number of women currently pursuing a college education or careers in higher education. A noticeable

theme among all of the participants was that all of them had held leadership positions within higher education prior to becoming a president. These positions served as preparation for the presidency, as their previous positions helped them to develop skills that helped them to be seen as leaders and viable candidates for the presidency. Many of the participants were sought after presidential candidates based on their professional accomplishments. Dr. Carol Christ, Chancellor at The University of California at Berkeley, had served as president of Smith College, a "women-centered" institution, prior returning to California with plans to retire. After serving as a department chair, dean, and president of a private institution, Dr. Christ had created a strong career that made her an ideal candidacy for the chancellorship. "I was not a candidate for this job," said Christ "I was very much lobbied to do it by many many people." Her experience reflects the importance of career development and preparation for the presidency and leadership. Being prepared to assume the office could help women overcome any binds or barriers to leading a public, four-year, graduate degree granting institution that may be associated with gender.

Dr. Judy Bonner, former president of the University of Alabama, did not feel as if being a woman ever impacted or "hindered" her success, partly because it was not something that she placed an emphasis on. Instead, she focused on achieving goals in all of the positions she held.

> During the time I served as President or Provost or Dean or Special Assistant to the President or Assistant Academic Vice President or Department Head, I never felt marginalized… My focus was always on finding the most effective way of addressing "the issue of the day."

Bonner's statement about the importance of being effective in every position that she held was a sentiment shared by all of the participants. All of them took pride in achieving success in every position they held and as a result they were prepared to lead their respective institutions.

This theme directly related to two of the research questions used to frame this study. First, how do women who become presidents of public, four-year, research institutions overcome double binds throughout their careers to rise to the presidency at public, four-year institutions? The theme calls to attention the importance of the totality of the careers of each of the individual participants and that although the college presidency may not often be a career goal, being prepared to seek the role can help address or eliminate barriers that may be associated with gender. Leadership and opportunities for increased responsibility can serve as preparation for the presidency. In addition, leadership opportunities as preparation for the presidency are also directly connected to the second research question posed in this study: What careers or experiences help women prepare to lead a public, four-year, doctoral degree granting college or university? Specific roles seem to be key factors in the necessary preparation needed to lead a public, four-year, doctoral degree granting institution. Although these roles varied across the women interviewed, all included academic and/or leadership positions that can be seen as direct precursors to the college presidency.

Provost and executive vice president (vice chancellor)

Seven of the eight participants had previously served as an executive vice president or executive vice chancellor at a university prior to becoming a university president. Based on the percentage of participants who served as provosts or executive vice presidents, these roles are key stepping-stones to the presidency. When asked to reflect on the roles that helped to prepare her to serve as a president, Dr. Bonner referred to her time as the university's provost as "invaluable". She also noted opportunities she had to lead many of the university's internal projects and processes as provost and observed that this role provided an opportunity for her to connect with students, faculty, and staff. According to Dr. Bonner, the presidency is very much

an “external role” whereas the duties of the provost are more internal to the institution. Being able to understand both internal and external concerns provided her with a specific type of knowledge that prepared her to lead the university. Dr. A. Zee also served as a provost of a large institution prior to assuming the presidency. “Being a university provost allowed me to gain experience that helped prepare me for the next step in my career.” As dean of a college and vice-chancellor for academic services at the University of Kentucky, Dr. Shirley Raines “had the opportunity to watch the provost and president up close.” The roles made it apparent to others that it was ‘time for her to be president.’

Department chair/dean

When asked about her most impactful professional experience, Dr. Carol Christ mentioned her time as department chair and college dean. “I started doing administrative jobs, just the ones that faculty usually do, like I chaired my department and I was a dean,” said Christ. After earning the opportunity to take on increased administrative responsibilities she realized that she liked the work. After that, she began to consider administrative opportunities as “a possible career path”. In addition to her department chair and dean roles, Dr. Christ highlighted her first experience in administrative leadership. In the mid 1980’s she served as the Title IX coordinator and the chancellor’s special assistant for the status of women. Dr. Christ referenced this position as the first job that gave her an understanding of how much she might “enjoy administrative leadership”. Similarly, Dr. Judy Bonner mentioned that her previous administrative roles laid a strong foundation and helped to prepare her for the presidency. While serving as an academic dean she also maintained positions as a faculty member, researcher, assistant academic vice president and special assistant to the president. Prior to those positions, she also served as a department chair for eight years.

Faculty experience

The extensive understanding and passion for higher education that was evident in the interviews was strongly fueled by the impact of scholarship and the contribution of faculty. All of the participants, with the exception of one, had served as a full-time faculty member at a post-secondary institution. The participants' faculty experience, or their interactions with faculty, impacted their understanding of what was necessary to lead an institution of higher education. In a 2019 article entitled *Martha Saunders: Notes From a Teaching President,* Dr. Saunders describes the connection between the classroom and the presidency. "I have continued to teach for as long as I have been in university administration," said Saunders. "There is no better place for the president to feel the pulse of the campus than in the classroom" (Saunders, 2019).

Dr. Bonner noted the impact of her faculty experience when discussing her career background. The traditional responsibilities of teaching, research and service were pivotal to Dr. Bonner during the years she spent as a faculty member immediately after receiving her Ph.D. "Understanding the responsibilities and demands faculty face proved to be beneficial while serving as an academic administer," said Bonner. "Throughout my career, I always remember that I was first and foremost a faculty member." Similarly, Dr. Nancy Cantor noted her experience as a scholar and faculty member as essential components to how she approaches leading her institution.

> I was very much just an academic scholar, social psychologist doing my scholarship and teaching work…I increasingly served on university-wide committees and got engaged in issues of the university and community. And over time…when people would talk to me about possibilities of leadership, it was very much in keeping with the notion that one could have broader impact through institutional leadership, as long as it was consistent with the issues that I cared about in the world, said Cantor.

Other leadership roles

Even women who had successful careers in professions outside of higher education still found value in developing in their careers in higher education prior to being selected to serve in a presidency. All of the participants held roles of increasing responsibility at post-secondary institutions prior to being selected to lead an institution. This trajectory provided them with the opportunity to understand a variety of areas within their institution's structure. As more women work to progress in higher education administrative positions, knowing the resources that faculty members and researchers need to perform the primary role of an education institution, which is to educate, faculty participation emerged as needed experience and as a key step towards leadership and ultimately the presidency.

Many of the participants also referenced that civic, social, and volunteer experiences often complemented their higher education experiences. Having the ability to not only gain valuable skills, but to also inspire women outside of higher education were benefits that participants mentioned when discussing holding leadership positions outside of their profession. For example, Dr. Raines was the first woman chair of the Memphis Chamber of Commerce in 150 years. After her tenure as chair, Dr. Raines said that other women followed. "Since that time, two other women have been appointed. And I'm excited about that". Community involvement and other volunteer opportunities also allowed those interviewed to gain valuable skills at various points in their careers. Dr. Cantor found her time as a member of community organizations and boards beneficial. "Those experiences are extremely helpful in understanding what it means to collaborate, to listen to different views and collectively push for goals, all things that one really needs to do as a leader," said Cantor.

Each of the participants highlighted in this research are accomplished women. They all have contributed a great deal of experience and knowledge to their institutions and to the

positions in which they have served. The totality of each of their professional experiences are impressive to say the least; however, even with their individual accomplishments none of them initially considered leading an institution. The fact that none of the participants planned to be a college or university president was one subtheme under career leadership opportunities as preparation for the presidency.

No plans to be a college or university president

A subtheme under leadership positions as preparation for the presidency was that none of the participants planned to be a college president or consciously prepared to be a president. They each embarked on opportunities to lead projects, initiatives, programs or departments with the goal of being successful at those things, not with the goal of reaching the presidency. Each of the participants worked to establish credibility and success in the roles they had throughout their careers. The participants had varying reasons as to why they did not initially have a goal of being a college or university president. However, several of the participants referenced inferred gender barriers as the reason they did not consider the college presidency to be an obtainable goal. Dr. Martha Saunders explained that when she began her career "they did not make women presidents of anything at all, anywhere." As she continued to reflect on why the presidency was not a goal, she highlighted that when she graduated from college "there were barely any women in the workplace."

As opportunities have become increasingly available for professional women, this theme could continue to evolve. The careers or positions that women aspire to are often a reflection of the careers and positions they feel are available to them, therefore representation is key (Patitu & Hinton, 2003). Many of the participants in this study referenced a connection to gender barriers as to why they initially did not consider being a college president. The subtheme of women

historically not being considered for leadership positions in general was particularly applicable to women who have been in the field of higher education over 40 years. Mitchell and Eddy (2015) noted that although career goals of men and women in mid-level leadership positions such as department chairs, were not planned, the ability to function in leadership was thought to be impacted by gender. The study also highlighted that gender was specific to women. The fact that the participants did not plan to be college presidents was commonly voiced, however the impact that gender has on what leadership should be or how it should look is specifically relevant to women (Mitchell & Eddy, 2015), as described below.

When Carol Christ, now chancellor at The University of California at Berkley began her career in the 1970s, women were often relegated to support roles and this impacted how she viewed career opportunities. Dr. Christ explained that in the beginning of her career a woman becoming a president of a college or university was unfathomable. At 75 years old, and with a career spanning forty years starting in the early 1970s, she has lived to see the impacts of gender base norms that have created roles for men and women across many decades. She explained that at the beginning of her career, women could likely not aspire to be a college or university president. “I can't imagine any woman of my generation thinking that she wanted to be a college or university president,” said Christ. As one of the first participants to be interviewed for this study, her statement confirmed the historical implications of the gender norms cultivated by society. There are generations of women, many of whom are still in the workforce, who grew up with limitations and boundaries placed on what they thought they could hope to be based on their gender.

Dr. Christ’s experience was not unique. The impacts of societal concepts that relegated women to certain roles or discouraged them from others, are still making an impact on higher

education. Women who have been in the field for over 25 years have been able to recall periods when women were even less likely to be seen as leaders. Dr. Martha Saunders, president of The University of West Florida, also discussed the impact of historical limitations placed on women in higher education. She discussed how those limitations affected her career aspirations as a young professional. As she described her rationale for why her original career goal was not to be a college president, Dr. Saunders paused and reflected on her time as a young college graduate. "They did not make women presidents of anything, anywhere," said Saunders. As she continued to describe the lack of women in leadership in any field at the beginning of her career, Dr. Saunders also noted that women were "barely in the workplace" at all during that time. As she continued to progress in her career, she did eventually consider a college presidency, but it was not until she had established "credibility" in her career and felt it was an obtainable goal.

Dr. Nancy Cantor also mentioned the lack of gender diversity in higher education at the beginning of her career. "My first job, faculty job, that I got tenure was at Princeton University and there were, at that time, very few women faculty…and very few women in leadership," said Cantor. After receiving tenure at Princeton University, Dr. Cantor went on to have a decade long career at the University of Michigan. It was there that she first encountered a large number of women who were ranked highly at the university. She referenced the time as "pivotal" for her, because she was able to engage with and witness senior ranking women in the academy. Her tenure at Michigan also impacted what she felt was possible for women to achieve and later influenced her career trajectory. As a social psychologist, Dr. Cantor is first and foremost a scholar. "As a social psychologist, I work to solve issues of diversity and community…those things are completely consistent with my scholarship and background. So being a university leaders was less of an abrupt change," said Cantor.

As the workforce has become more diverse and senior leadership opportunities, even if limited in number, have become more available to women within the field of higher education, the data collected in this study reveals that the college presidency is still a role that women do not often directly aspire to. Seeing women in the role or at minimum in positions of leadership greatly influences what women see as possibilities for themselves. Even if women do not feel as if gender is a barrier, representation still impacts what women feel is possible. Prior to being placed in consideration for a presidency most candidates have to apply for the job. Whether or not any individual, regardless of gender, aspires to a college or university presidency is a separate question, but the barrier that is presented by underrepresentation disproportionately impacts women (Gardner, 2019). For the majority of the participants in this study, the courage to apply for a presidency was spurred by the suggestion of someone else as opposed to those participants seeing that ability within themselves without it being recognized by someone else.

Dr. Shirley Raines, president emeritus at the University of Memphis mentioned that she "never" had the goal of wanting to be a college or university president. However, by the time she was nominated for the presidency at the University of Memphis, she felt prepared based on her previous experiences. She said that she "did not think about becoming a college or university president" until she was asked to consider it. As Dr. Raines reflected on her career she mentioned that she enjoyed all of her positions during her lengthy academic career. She referenced a distinction that many women "wait until asked to seek an opportunity to serve as a president at an institution of higher education". This distinction was expressed by the majority of participants. Being a president of a university eventually became a goal, but the concept was not a thought as Dr. Raines was progressing through her career. Dr. Raines' reflection on when she realized that she wanted to be a president offers insight into why this theme was consistent in all

of the interviews. She said that she "enjoyed every job" she had. But according to her she was "like many other women" who wait for someone to see potential in them instead of seeking certain opportunities. "I, like many other women, waited for an opportunity to tap me on the shoulder rather than going after it," said Raines. Her statement mirrored data from the other interviews that suggested someone had to propose the idea of becoming a college president before the women interviewed saw it as an obtainable goal.

The fact that none of the participants ever aspired to, or planned to be a college or university president was a theme, but the fact that several of the participants referenced the lack of women in the role as a rationale for why they did not aspire to it speaks to a connection between gender and leadership within the field of higher education. Even emerging women leaders in the field of public higher education such as Patti Neuhold-Ravikumar, who in her mid-forties was the youngest participant in this study, had no plans to become a college or university president. Neuhold-Ravikumar is president of the University of Central Oklahoma and even after holding several key positions at the institution prior to being selected as president, she stated that she "never thought about" being a college or university president, when asked if it was a career goal of hers. She entered higher education after working for her family's business. When she began her career at UCO it was as a mid-level administrator, first as director of administrative services and immediately prior to serving as president she served as vice president for finance and chief financial officer. Neuhold-Ravikumar discussed how helping to run her family's business helped her in higher education.

> I am in my mid-forties at this point and for the first 10 to 12 years of my career I was helping to run my family business. So, for me…it was a completely different jump. I left the trajectory I was on in order to come into higher education. I can't say that experience helped to shape my trajectory other that it did shape my skill set, my knowledge and my ability to work well with people.

Neuhold-Ravikumar's experience contrasted with that of Dr. Janet Cunningham, president of Northwestern Oklahoma State University. Dr. Cunningham began as a clerk in the university's registration office immediately after completing college. Spending all of her career in higher education allowed Dr. Cunningham a specific perspective. When asked if she ever aspired to be a college or university president, she simply said, "I did not". She worked in a variety of positions of increasing responsibility, moved away from the university and returned as an administrator and accounting professor. Immediately prior to serving as president, she was the institution's executive vice president. Roles that prepare women to serve in leadership positions can vary; however, having the opportunity to serve in various roles can help provide a greater understanding of university leadership and how institutions run. When asked about how she became a college president, Dr. Cunningham recalled how her positions at the university evolved over time. "I came back and was hired to teach and that eventually morphed into an administration position," she said. "And then eventually, led to the presidency." According to Dr. Cunningham, the presidency was one of those things that "just kind of happened".

If women cannot see themselves as leaders of institutions of higher education, particularly large, public, four-year institutions, they will likely not aspire to the role or think it is obtainable. The gaps in leadership that exist because there was a lengthy period of time in American higher education where women could not be seen as leaders, administrators, or presidents on college or university campuses, will take time to close. Those gaps may be slowly closing, but based on the data presented in this research, women who serve in leadership positions are more likely to ascend the presidency. Therefore, increasing mid-level leadership opportunities for women will ultimately help increase the likelihood that more women will serve as presidents of public, four-year, doctoral degree granting institutions.

Summary

The consistent thread of rising through the ranks and career progression through leadership positions within the field of higher education gave the participants in this study a wealth of knowledge about the industry prior to reaching the presidency. Dr. Judy Bonner expressed the importance of gradual career growth and how it attributed to her becoming UA's first and only woman president. When asked if she knew that she wanted to be a college or university president throughout her career, she proclaimed, "absolutely not!" Dr. Bonner, went on to explain that as she progressed through her degree, pursued a doctoral degree, became a faculty member and held administrative positions of increasing importance, she still never planned to be a college or university president. Participants listed various reasons that they did not plan to become a college or university president, but chief among those reasons was that they just did not think it was possible for a woman.

Career aspirations can be impactful and can help determine the trajectory of one's professional career. However, the participants in this study concentrated on doing every job well at various stages of their careers. As a result, those jobs eventually led to the women being seen as viable presidential candidates. "My goal was simply to come to work every day and do a good job for The University of Alabama," said Dr. Judy Bonner. This theme highlights the importance of progressive leadership experience for women in higher education. Those experiences can help impact career goals and aspirations. The fact that some of the participants in this study did not plan to be college or university presidents because historically it did not seem to be possible, provides a practical justification for this study. As a subtheme it also supports the ramifications of career opportunities for women throughout their careers in higher education.

This theme was the most profound because of its simplicity and the rationale many of the participants gave for it. Progressive leadership experiences lead to opportunities and those opportunities can eventually lead to the presidency. Whether or not men plan to become college or university presidents was not at issue here. However, men cannot say that one of the reasons they may not plan to be a college president is because historically, they could not be. Women who serve in mid-level leadership positions such as department heads, deans, and associate provosts have experiences that will prepare them to lead even if they do not seek higher leadership positions or a college presidency.

There are ways to help women begin to start seeing that there are opportunities for them to become college or university presidents and that starts by identifying women who have served in the role and telling their stories as examples of the possibility. In addition, allowing women to experience leadership opportunities within individual departments or units also helps to provide key opportunities that can ultimately prepare them to be ready to serve as leaders of public, four-year institutions. The fact that aspiring to be a college or university president is not an initial career goal may not be specific to any gender, but for women the connection between the lack of opportunity and the lack of women serving in that role is unique and has impaired their ability to see themselves seeking and obtaining the office.

Participants noted experiences that made it possible for them to lead. Career progression helped each participant gain a deeper understanding of higher education that impacted their qualifications. Becoming a college or university president was not the goal of any of the participants, however having previous leadership experiences within the field of higher education helped them establish credibility that aided in their ability to feel as if they could do the job. There are key roles that were helpful in preparation for the presidency and those will be outlined

in the conclusion, however faculty experience and other administrative experiences helped the participants be seen as potential candidates for the presidency and it helped them develop confidence in their abilities to lead. Establishing a successful career prior to the presidency also helped the participants understand the needs of institutional stakeholders and what was needed to be deemed effective in the role of president once they achieved it.

Increasing Diversity in University Leadership

As this research has established, public higher education has largely been controlled by white men. With men in authority they have often selected other men to succeed them or to hold senior leadership positions within their administrations. This is not to say that men intentionally do not select women for senior positions, but several participants noted that men or more likely to hire men. Therefore, women in leadership can help diversify the future of higher education by hiring or supporting more women to serve in senior leadership roles.

Prior to interviewing each participant, data from their biographies, interviews, and popular press articles, and information about gender diversity within their cabinet were gathered. Frequently, participants encountered few if any women in cabinet positions at their institutions prior to their presidency. Many of them were able to change the demographic make-up of that university's cabinet. Dr. Shirley Raines recalled how leadership looked at the University of Memphis when she arrived versus when she left the position. She specifically mentioned how her administration helped to increase diversity in senior leadership, even though her goal was simply to hire the most qualified leaders. According to Dr. Raines, when she assumed office, she was "the only woman among the university's senior executives". However, at the time of her departure, the majority of those posts were held by women. This speaks to the ability that women college presidents have to help diversify higher education leadership as a whole. Not only can their

administrations serve as examples to women that the presidency is obtainable, it can also help increase diversity in other senior leadership positions. Dr. Raines recalled her experience in helping increase diversity in leadership positions during her time at the university.

> The first year, I was the only woman, or when I arrived I was the only woman on the leadership team, meaning me and those senior executives. By the time I left, and of course, it did take 12 years, the women were the majority. I did not even realize that. I mean, it didn't occur to me, because I've just been appointing the best people for the positions in my estimation.

It may not have been a targeted effort by Dr. Raines, to include the number of women in cabinet leadership positions, instead it seemed to be secondary to the importance of placing the most qualified individuals in each role. Talent and ability were the primary focus of the hiring process, but that further supports the theory that women are ready to lead and prepared to do so. A connection that was established during analysis was that women may also hire more women because they know more women. Dr. A. Zee commented, "that men tend to know more men". She cited comfort as a reason that women may be more likely to hire women for senior leadership roles. "The people that you know are safe, the people you know tend to be like you," said Dr. Zee. Understanding that men are often more comfortable hiring men, may be a simple explanation, but it also could be a justification for why men continue to hold the majority of executive leadership positions and presidencies at public, four-year, doctoral degree granting universities.

Similarly, Dr. Martha Saunders referenced the impact of her network on identifying talent for her cabinet. When asked if having more women in leadership positions within her cabinet was a conscious decision, Dr. Saunders also mentioned knowing more women,

> You know it might just be the flip side of why women aren't in other places, you know? I know more women and I drafted some of the members of my cabinet because I already knew them and I said, 'I need the kind of work they were doing.' Some of it was just, we would be doing the search and there was a freshness. I don't want to keep doing things we've always done because that got us here.

Hiring practices, especially relating to executive level positions, can increase the number of women in leadership and in the pipeline to be a president. Dr. Saunders explained how she has helped increase a focus on diversity in hiring practices at the institutions that she has led.

> There is research to support that if you're trying to get an underrepresented group, represented, make sure you have more than one [member of that group] in the finalist pool. There's some incredible exponential factor that if there are two women as finalists, in a group of five or six or whatever…you have exponentially increased the chances that one of them will get picked.

Dr. Saunders continued by explaining the importance of diverse applicant pools and how they help insure the best candidate is selected.

> I think that's what we can control… I'm not closing an applicant pool until its rich enough. I think also one of the things we've done, here is we will say, do your search. Pick the best person you can but before you hire them, if there's a woman in the pool who's good, who's as good, come and talk to me. Sometimes we…give that person an opportunity also.

Summary

The majority of the participants mentioned an increase of women serving in leadership positions at their institutions correlated with their administration. As men continue to hold the majority of presidencies at public, four-year, doctoral degree granting institutions they are likely to continue to hire more men. Diversifying leadership can help establish pipelines that support future diversity efforts in hiring practices. It is not only important to place women in the presidency, but to prepare them throughout their careers to be able to seek a presidential role or be considered qualified for one. As women have more opportunities to grow in their careers in higher education more women could possibly be prepared to assume a presidency during their careers.

The appointments of many of the participants featured in this study seemed to directly result in an increase in diversity on their respective campuses. Increasing diversity in faculty appointments, chair and dean positions, and senior roles on college and university campuses can be a benefit associated with having women in the office of the president at public, four-year institutions. In order for there to be more women and other minorities who are ready and equipped

to be college and university presidents they must also be given the opportunity to lead at executive or departmental levels. Women who serve as presidents seem to understand that diversity is imperative to continued growth within the field of higher education.

The Importance of Mentorship

So, I think in terms of recommendations… I would like to see universities more consciously devise leadership programs for women and mentorship programs for everybody. But I would like their leadership programs to also provide joint leadership preparations for those who either want to seek leadership roles or the administration has decided are good candidates for leadership.- Dr. Shirley Raines

The theme of mentorship presented itself at various points in the participant interviews. Most frequently, it was mentioned when referencing how a participant became president. There was a clear connection to mentorship and career development that led to the presidency. Dr. Janet Cunningham, president of Northwestern Oklahoma State University recalled the importance of having a mentor throughout her career. She mentioned that her mentor provided an example that helped her develop in her career. "I had a mentor in the same field and I followed a little bit of the same path," said Cunningham. "Kind of following her, and watching her was very helpful to me in my career."

Having a mentor, champion, or encourager was critical to each of the participants' success. This seemingly spurred the need to also recognize and encourage young women in higher education administrative positions. Dr. Cantor expressed the need to connect with the younger generation in an effort to continue to "cultivate leaders". For her, cultivating talent in younger generations is necessary to increase the number of women leaders in higher education.

I believe that we have to keep our eye out very strongly for building a bench, I mean for really cultivating talent in younger generations and it's not necessarily just by age. But more to generations of scholars and activist community people who can really bring a different lens, different view, a different list of experience as a collective of tables and that leaders have to put together, so I'm always looking for that.

The connection between current women leaders in higher education and future women leaders in the field can help increase the number of women who are prepared to serve as presidents of college and universities. The knowledge that women (and men) who are already leaders and presidents at public, four-year institutions possess can help future leaders establish the skills and qualities necessary to be tapped to serve as a president of a public, four-year institution. The participants in this study recognized the need to serve as mentors to "up and comers" in higher education in an effort to help more women ascend to the presidency. There was a great deal of importance placed on the role of mentors throughout their careers and there was seemingly a strong need to continue to help nurture future leaders. This justifies existing research that mentorship and mentoring opportunities can help women develop important skills and empower them (Penny and Galliard, 2006).

Although the women participants in this study seek to empower other women, many of them had mentors or champions who were not women. Therefore, it is also important to note that mentors or other supporters may not have to be of the same gender, but that did not diminish the impact that was mentioned by the participants in this study. Dr. Raines had an established career in higher education prior to needing to identify a career opportunity that would allow her to move closer to her hometown in Tennessee for personal reasons. While reflecting on when she felt like she was prepared to seek a presidency at a college or university, she recalled a conversation that she had with a friend. "I asked a very good friend of mine who was a past president of the University of Kentucky for a reference for a position," said Raines. His response was one that came as a surprise. "He said I'm not going to recommend you." She was shocked by his statement, but he followed that statement by saying something that significantly changed her career trajectory. "No, it's time for you to be president." This was when Raines began

evaluating her experience and career differently. That interaction with a friend, who had also been a university president and mentor, helped Raines see her potential.

As reflected in Dr. Raines' experience, mentors may not only provide an example for how to establish a successful career, but they can also be the first to encourage career progression and leadership opportunities. Having individuals who provide encouragement and spur thought can be particularly impactful when navigating unchartered territory. Developing relationships and connections within and out of the field of higher education can help individuals expand their horizons and meet unrealized potential. Although she never had what she referred to as a mentor, Dr. Saunders had people she called "encouragers". While explaining the impact of the individuals who helped her throughout her career, Dr. Saunders mentioned encounters that occurred from the beginning of her career to recently that helped her reach the presidency. Those individuals whom she called encouragers, helped to expand her aspirations. She mentioned how that connection with encouragers started very early in her academic and professional career. Specifically, working for a dean at her university as a work-study student during her graduate studies helped her achieve success during that time. "He would nominate me for this honorary or that…he saw something that he wanted to encourage," she said.

Dr. Saunders also recalled the specific interaction when someone mentioned to her that she would be a good college president. While serving as an academic dean, the then president at the University of West Florida had a discussion with her that changed the trajectory of her career. During a lunch meeting he told Dr. Saunders, "You know you'd be a good president". She briefly dismissed the comment until the president went on to explain why he felt that a presidency should be the next step in her career. Although not officially labeled a mentor, the president seemed to have a vested stake in her career. As Dr. Saunders thought about the

conversation she said that he told her that she had reached the pinnacle of that point in her career. “He said, ‘But we've taught you all we can teach you here and you've got to go some other places and learn some other things,” said Saunders. The magnitude of the advice provided by her boss at the time, clearly influenced what she felt she could accomplish. “That advice was possibly the most generous advice anyone's ever given me,” Saunders said. She took the advice and sought a presidency as the next step in her career. Six months after the conversation, she was provost at another institution and within three years she was in her first presidency.

The interactions that mentors or superiors have with women in higher education can provide the confidence and insight needed to even attempt to rise to the level of president. Regardless of academic or professional areas, the data gathered in this research supports the need for connectivity with others to recognize and reach one’s fullest potential. The need for mentors is not specific to women or even to individuals who work in higher education administrative positions. However, the impact of mentors or encouragers on members of marginalized groups can be particularly effective. The importance of mentorship and sponsorship was mentioned in the review of existing research for this study. Mentorship and shared experiences have specific implications for women of color, particularly because of the lack of African American women in leadership and in the academy. There is a greater imperative for mentorship opportunities for African American women (Penny & Galliard, 2006). With so few African American women in the presidency, other African American women in mid to upper level leadership positions may find it difficult to identify mentors with shared experiences.

In addition to having mentors and encouragers, the role that managers or superiors play in career development was also presented in the data for this research. Having superiors that supported career growth and knowledge expansion was mentioned in all of the interviews.

Although experiences varied, each of the participants had a supervisor who allowed them to take on opportunities and challenges throughout their careers. Those opportunities and challenges provided career experiences and knowledge that proved to be beneficial when seeking a presidency. Patti Neuhold-Ravikumar attributed some of her success to the opportunities she was provided when she initially entered the institution that she now leads. “I’ve been fortunate to be uplifted by people who wanted me to be successful and saw potential in me,” said Neuhold-Ravikumar. She went on to mention the benefit of having superiors, both men and women, who gave her “opportunities to succeed”.

Neuhold-Ravikumar recognized the importance of her career as the youngest participant at 46 years old. She also took a less traditional career route to the presidency. While working for her family’s business, Neuhold-Ravikumar mentioned that working with her mother was particularly impactful. “I had a standard of what a woman in business should be” she said. With what is likely to be a long career ahead of her, she has placed an increased emphasis on leadership and how connections can aid career progression. Recognizing the power in having a good examples and superiors in the workplace was different for Neuhold-Ravikumar because her professional career began with her working for her family. In her case, being surrounded by peers who are also effective leaders is essential because she was surrounded by a strong support system in the beginning of her career that gave her “confidence” to see herself as a leader. When asked to expound on her career future, Neuhold-Ravikumar stated that, “If I do my job well I could be here for the rest of my career.” She went on to say that even if she left she would look back on her career and ask the following questions: “How were the decisions that I made?”, “Who were the leaders that I chose to surround myself with?”, “Did I develop leadership and strength behind me so that when I leave things can continue?” These questions are the essence of

what it means to be a mentor and serve as examples of the important role that women college presidents can play in influencing future leaders and presidents.

Mentorship was not only mentioned as a key component to how the women profiled in this study achieved success, but it was also important to them to pay it forward and inspire and nurture future generations of leaders. Many of the participants noted that they also enjoy providing mentorship opportunities or programs that allow women to receive specialized leadership training. Dr. Saunders noted that the University of West Florida hosts an annual conference dedicated to women in leadership conference. In its sixth year, the women in leadership conference at the University of West Florida has become a premiere event. She said that the conference sells out every year. The event features panel discussions on a variety of issues and a lunch with a keynote speaker. With an estimated 500 women in attendance for the conference the event has become a "must attend event" for women leaders. Dr. Saunders expressed great excitement when explaining the layout of the conference and its purpose.

> We have 500 women here. It is just a thing. It's gotten to be a thing. We bring in experts, we have panels. There are student participants and we usually have one real dynamic speaker. It's just a one-day conference and lunch and it's gotten to be an event that nobody wants to miss. I had people just this week call me because we sold out in three hours.

The development of events such as the conference developed by Dr. Saunders is a prime example of the commonsense, yet seemingly rare and innovative approaches to leadership development for women that are catalyzed through stewards like Saunders. Another example is evident in the consultancy work of Dr. Shirley Raines, who helps educate leaders in higher education. She consults with universities to "help universities devise mentorship programs…that help women develop their leadership". Her work as a consultant has made her an authority on women in leadership, particularly in higher education. For five years, she has conducted training

for the Harvard Seminar for New Presidents and Chancellors. Her recommendations for effective mentorship programs include developing programs that are geared towards those who are seeking leadership positions or those who current leaders feel have the potential to become leaders and potentially presidents in higher education. Assisting in the preparation of future generations of leaders or helping to change the field to accept more diversity was apparent under this theme. Connecting current leaders with potential leaders can have a number of positive results and all of the participants referenced the need for that connection in some way.

Summary

As noted in the explanation from the first theme, many of the participants could not imagine being a college president because they had no examples of women who were college presidents. That coupled with the second theme that highlights the need for experience within the field of higher education and the importance of career progression within that field, places a unique importance on mentorship. Specifically, the influence that current higher education leaders can have on the careers of future leaders. Participants in this study had a wide range of experiences with mentors, champions, and influencers who impacted their lives and ultimately helped them to reach the president's office at public four-year institutions. Based on the data that led to this theme, it is evident that as women have reached the presidency in public higher education, their experiences become increasingly important for future implications on how women will be able to lead within the field.

The increasing number of women presidents at public, four-year, graduate degree granting institutions can help to change the future of higher education. When women make connections with mentors that can assist in career development and support their careers benefit from those connections. The participants mentioned the importance of mentorships or

connectivity to people who have encouraged them throughout their careers in a variety of different ways. The data gathered established a clear connection to the need to have positive interactions with people who are in senior leadership positions or who have more career experience.

The Impact of Being the First

The gravity of being named the first woman president was not anything that I had even thought about - Dr. Judy Bonner

Dr. Shirley Raines vividly recalled being introduced at a public event immediately after being named president of the University of Memphis. “The women kept reaching over their husbands to shake my hand or to say something and it took forever for us to get down through the crowd and the things they said were inspiring,” said Raines. She recalled that many people wanted their children to meet to her. One statement was particularly impactful to Dr. Raines, "I'm so glad they finally have a woman." This statement signified that people were ready for a woman to lead or were at least ready to see a woman in a position of leadership. She continued to recall the experience and remembered a campus police officer approaching her to ask to shake her hand. Dr. Raines said she initially thought “something was wrong”. But instead, the police officer expressed that she just wanted to shake her hand. “Because it meant so much to her to have a woman as president of the university.” Dr. Raines also mentioned that even workers in the concession stands began to come out just to meet her. She summarized the event by expressing what it meant to her. “It was such a powerful experience for me.” Seeing the impact that her selection had on the community seemingly inspired her commitment to helping educate leaders through her work as an author and consultant.

Women who serve as presidents of colleges and universities are often the first to do so. Although this will ideally become a statistic of the past, for now, women are still being recognized by a number. A Google search of the keywords “first woman university president” returned an estimated 302,000,000 results. Researching the potential and eventual participants in this study placed a spotlight on how often the media feels the need to place a numerical evaluation on women in leadership. Reading media articles, websites and viewing other popular media also highlighted the emphasis that is placed on gender when a woman is selected for a college or university presidency. The participants who were the first women to lead their respective institutions helped to change the perception of what a college president should be or what one should look like. However, according to the participants, that was often an unintended consequence. Some participants acknowledged that their accomplishments were often deemed greater because of their gender. “I’m often introduced as University of California's first woman chancellor,” said Dr. Carol Christ. She went on to acknowledge that men are not introduced the same way. “Nobody ever introduced Clark Kerr, University of California at Berkeley's first male chancellor.” The comparison provided by Dr. Christ led to the conclusion that people do not look at women college presidents or chancellors solely as leaders, but instead, women are thought to be more “exceptional” when they are in those roles simply because they are women.

Dr. Raines was the first woman president of the University of Memphis, Dr. Bonner was the first woman president of the University of Alabama, and Dr. Martha Saunders was the second woman president of the University of West Florida and had previously been the first woman president of the University of Southern Mississippi. The participants noted mixed emotions about being labeled in numbers, particularly because men are rarely mentioned to be the first male president of a major university. Dr. Raines referenced the title of “first woman

president" of her university proudly, "I never regretted them introducing me as the first women president. It became a symbol… later they dropped off that first woman president [reference]."

This theme is the most complicated of the themes identified. As women college presidents—who may be the first to lead their institutions—are named there is also the need to place an emphasis on them being the "first", "second", or even the "third" woman to lead their institution. Although accomplishments should never be lessened, some of the participants did express that the need to label women with numbers when they are selected for positions of leadership could discourage some women from pursuing similar positions. However, the potential benefits that are provided to society and the field of higher education by women who have made history by becoming the first woman to serve their institutions as president, greatly outweighs any negative perceptions that can be caused by being labeled with a number.

When Dr. Bonner was named president of the University of Alabama she said she "had not thought about" being the first woman. The then coach of the UA's award-winning gymnastics program, Coach Sarah Patterson, who is often referred to as the university's most successful coach of all time, recognized the importance of Dr. Bonner's selection and helped her to see its impact on women and the future of the institution. Dr. Bonner recalled a conversation that she had with Patterson immediately after being named president.

Coach Sarah Patterson attended that meeting of the Board of Trustees. She told me then and subsequently repeated that she had never missed a practice until that day. But, she missed practice so she could see the Board name the first woman president of The University of Alabama. She said that the action that the Board had taken that day sent a message to her student athletes that they could now accomplish anything. She had led them to a tradition of successfully competing for national championships. Now, she could help her athletes realize that they could literally accomplish anything.

Connecting with other women leaders allowed the participants to see the impact that women leaders can have on the future, particularly when they are the first to serve in a role of

authority. Dr. Bonner continued by explaining how Coach Patterson helped her during her time as president. Their connection allowed Dr. Bonner to gain a deeper understanding of how her presidency could help future generations of women leaders. “She [Patterson] helped me to realize that I needed to embrace being the first woman president,” said Bonner. “I needed to work to inspire, challenge and help young women aim higher.”

The first spouse

A smaller sub theme that emerged under this theme was how the participants handled the duties and roles that were often executed by the wives of college presidents. Dr. Janet Cunningham’s husband, who is also the city attorney in the city they reside, had to create a different job description for the spouse of a public, four-year institution. She recalled there was some confusion over what her husband should be called, “Are you the first gentleman?” Dr. Cunningham said that the infatuation with that “quickly died down” and the couple eventually “adapted to their own style”.

As more spouses have their own careers and have less time to dedicate to the duties that spouses of presidents have often been responsible for, they must change institutional norms to accommodate the needs of their spouses and family. Patti Neuhold-Ravikumar’s wife is successful professional with a career in a different city.

So, my wife is now the first lady and she doesn't even live in the state so there's not an opportunity to have the first lady role at this point. So, she is not at functions. She is not at events. People rarely see her. She has an absolutely stellar and amazing career of her own that she needs to be focus on.

Dr. Zee noted that there has been a change in how the role of a presidential spouse is viewed.

It’s great to see how the change of the spousal role is being absorbed. There are gradual changes that are working to accommodate for not having a non-working spouse, said Dr. A. Zee.

The role of a spouse to university president may be even more complicated when they are both in the field of higher education. Dr. Raines, referred to her husband as “the first man”. As she realized that she did not expect her husband to “plan menus” or “design parties,” she also realized she “didn’t want to do those things either.” She hired a person to execute planning special events and programs to ensure that she did not have to be both president and first lady. Dr. Christ’s late husband also played a special role in her administration and she recalled he referred to himself, “jokingly as the first gentleman”, said Christ. “He really had a role, and his role was important in the community”.

Summary

The impact of women who serve as the “first” of anything can have major implications. At public, four-year institutions of higher education presidents often govern as the executive branch similar to that of a mayor, governor or president of the United States. This theme reflected the impact of having women who break barriers by serving as presidents of public, four-year institutions. The women who serve as presidents of a public, four-year institution can influence changing societal norms and expectations as they lead their respective institutions.

Current and future generations of women can aspire to become college or university presidents, and society can also become more conditioned to seeing women lead institutions of higher education. By increasing the number of woman college or university presidents, society can begin to normalize the concept of a woman leading a large, public, four-year, graduate degree granting institution. The data presented in this theme reflected how impactful and meaningful the selection of women as presidents of public, four-year institutions can be. The importance of being the first was not just tied to breaking barriers, but this theme also has the power to influence society in general. As the media continues to label women in numbers as the

"first", "second", or "third" woman to lead their institution it will highlight that women can lead institutions of higher education. The first may have the ability to create a standard that begins to support women rising to positions of leadership in higher education administration, but the impact of those who will continue to diversify the field is equally as great. Eliminating or overcoming barriers is important, but changing how society responds to women leaders in all fields is even more important. Statements made during data collection about the roles of spouses also highlight the need for a reevaluation of spousal roles and obligations within an administration. As many of the participants in this study noted, they staffed positions that could help with special events and planning that had historically been carried out by first ladies. Understanding that the role of first spouse is changing can also help bring increased awareness to why the role should be compensated or how higher education can promote equity in fields where women have historically supported their husbands.

The more women who are named the first women presidents at public, four-year institutions, the more women will enter the field of higher education with the belief that it is possible to lead an institution. Being the first can also allow women to dismantle social norms for future generations. Professional positions or occupations likely require some form of post-secondary education and as a result they have some connection to higher education. Therefore, women who are college or university presidents can potentially change the field higher education and a number of other professional fields in addition to societal dynamics and norms.

Double Binds for Women in Higher Education

Overall, none of the participants were unfamiliar with the context of the double bind as a theory applied to women in leadership. This allowed for additional discussion to take place prior to or during the interview process that was specifically focused on the binds that are mentioned

in Kathleen Hall Jamieson's *Beyond the Double Bind.* The discussions surrounding the specific question listed in the protocol that aimed to identify if women had encountered any "binds" generated data that presented binds that participants may not have initially thought of as binds. For example, the need to prepare differently was difficult for many of the participants to process particularly because they are not men so that could not say how men prepared versus how they prepared. Of the binds described in Kathleen Hall Jamieson's *Beyond the Double Bind,* the bind of femininity and competence was referenced the most, seemingly because it was an overarching concept that could applied to a number of binds. Womb and Brain was interpreted for analysis not just as familial obligations. The themes of Silence and Shame, Age and Invisibility, Sameness and Difference were not mentioned enough warrant extended analysis. Although age was mentioned by some of the participants it was not in a negative way. Instead, it was either used for context on professional experience, to show the evolution of women in higher education, or to express established credibility. The analysis of double binds themes is broken up into parts below in an effort to give detailed descriptions of the binds that were discussed in the most depth.

Femininity and competence

Since I've never been a male, I can't tell you whether I prepared differently. But I can tell you, as a female, I over-prepared. So that if there was data that was going to be presented, I wanted to know what the data was and dig a little deep. When I was at the University of Kentucky, there were three other women Deans. And we met together regularly. We called ourselves the Secret Dean Society. But we met regularly to prepare for big decisions and problems that were part of the Provost. Then it was the Chancellor of the campus was being discussed. We wanted to be sure that, at least, the four of us, would be very prepared.-Dr. Shirley Raines

The majority of participants mentioned that they prepared strategically for presentations, meetings, and other administrative duties. Dr. Raines' "Secret Deans Society" was one example of how women who have been in positions of leadership in higher education have felt the need to

prepare outside any normal methods and how they spent extra time ensuring they were ready for a task. Being able to assess preparation or the perception of competence based on gender can be difficult, particularly because if a woman is not a man they have no way of being able to compare how they would handle certain situations if they were men instead of women. However, there were some proven statistics mentioned that seemingly have an impact on how women feel in the workplace and about the competence to progress in their careers. When asked to elaborate on the femininity and competence bind when she identified that it might be particularly applicable, Dr. Janet Cunningham mentioned that men and women view competence differently. Dr. Cunningham's example was the frequently confirmed theory that women often need to feel completely or overly qualified for a position before they will seek it. In contrast, men do not need to be certain that they qualify for a job to go after it. "I think males are good with about 60% and then they're ready to try for the job," said Cunningham.

Another key point that resulted from this theme was that even if women did not feel as if they had to prepare more or differently than a man in their position, they did often do more jobs than men were asked to do. For example, at a point in her career at the University of Alabama, Dr. Judy Bonner was serving in several roles simultaneously. Those roles were special assistant to the president, assistant academic vice president and department chair. Although she did not cite the need to prepare differently than a man she did note that other men who were her peers at the time were not asked to serve in as many roles at the same time.

Womb/brain interpreted as family obligations

Connections to family and family obligations were mentioned at various points of most of the interviews. These connections were not always mentioned as binds, but did draw attention to the familial obligations that often impact women. Dr. A. Zee stated that she did not feel as if

she had specific career challenges that related to being a woman. However, as she continued, she did mention how she received questions about being both a mother and a leader in higher education. She recalled, “I get asked, how did you raise three children and do this”.

Dr. Janet Cunningham raised a large family while progressing in her career. She noted that at times individuals questioned how she navigated both her personal life with raising her children and her professional career. Dr. Cunningham recalled being asked, “How do you have four children?” She reflected on some “quilt” that she experienced in relation to balancing raising children and progressing in her career and referenced that happens as the result of “some people trying to put you in a bind”. However, she went onto say that people can only place you in a bind if you let them. Dr. Cunningham takes great pride in referring to her children as “well adjusted” and that she balanced both her personal and professional life well.

Dr. Carol Christ raised two children while advancing in her career. The complexities associated with family and career were evident to her throughout her career. Dr. Christ mentioned how familial responsibilities were a part of balancing her obligations throughout her career. She was a single mother most of her career and that made her personal obligations more difficult to balance. “I had two children and was divorced when my children were five and three,” said Christ. As she continued, she also referenced challenges that can be associated with not having family obligations. “Even at the age of 75 and not having a family, because I'm a widow now, my husband died about six years ago, it's still a challenge to balance my personal life and my institutional life, even though I don't have those immediate obligations.”

Dr. Christ is open about her familial status and obligations, but she also noted that in her opinion men who are leaders in higher education may not be as open about discussing the topic. The importance of balance according to Christ, “particularly with children” should be discussed.

Negotiating balancing raising children or even moving closer to parents or other family for personal reasons while progressing in one's career is something that professional women have had to consider for decades. This bind is not specific to higher education, but it is even more impactful because members of the academy often move several times throughout their careers. Dr. Raines' husband was also a scholar and she referenced their frequent moves for their careers. "We had some moves for me and some moves for him," said Raines. After her mother became very ill she wanted to relocate near her hometown in western Tennessee to help care for her parents. With the priority being the need to relocate near her family she was not waiting for a presidency. "I was really ready to settle for just about anything," said Raines. Soon after her boss encouraged her to seek a presidency she learned that the University of Memphis had a presidential opening. The location allowed her to be closer to home to care for her parents, but it also provided her with the opportunity to grow in her career.

The double binds that were recognized by participants were often only noticed in a reflective or retroactive way. Existing research notes that women often encounter double binds even when they are unaware that they are present (Oakley, 2000). The challenges of implied binds or binds that go unnoticed is that the importance of their affect and influence also go unnoticed. As the participants noted in this research, they did not often even know binds when they encountered them, but as literature supports, that does not mean that those binds did not impact their trajectories.

Analysis of generational impacts

To some extent it is unfair to compare an analysis that does not honor the chronological time frame that addresses when the participants progressed to the presidency. The time periods referenced by many of the participants were not in support of women leading major businesses

and institutions. As they progressed throughout their careers at various points, their goals were "to work hard and establish credibility", as stated by Dr. Carol Christ. Understanding the impact on institutionalized and generational barriers identifies new ways to compare and contrast experiences of many of the women featured in this research and women who may be currently seeking executive leadership positions or presidencies.

Summary

An unexpected stem of the double bind theme in this study was even when the participants did not realize it, they may have been experiencing binds. Although when participants were asked directly about double binds they did not always feel as if they were experiences injustices or problems because of gender. Throughout the interviews, binds frequently presented themselves even if they were not labeled as binds. Women rarely know how it feels to be a man in a situation so the concept of the comparison of experiences based on gender was hard to grasp. Even when the participants recognized the different expectations they often face in comparison to men in the field of higher education, they still focused on working hard to achieve success regardless of any barriers. Dr. Martha Saunders noted that even though she was not previously aware of the double bind theory, she navigated binds "everyday". Recognizing that there were some biological factors, including size that presented potential challenges, she sought ways to navigate those binds successfully. Dr. Saunders recalled using femininity in a powerful way.

> So you're in...you work in a room and there's all these six-foot guys. You're not seen... We see each other but they don't see you just become, and I think, probably short men have the same kind of situation. And so you learn all the non-verbal tricks and this just one tiny thing, but it brings them down to you. Some of it is for you to take that femininity and that, you know, all that charm your mama taught you and you're so proud we all have a seat.

Familial ties and responsibilities are a bind that some participants did not mention when asked about double binds, but they were mentioned in other parts of the interviews. Further, gender expectations that are enforced by society influenced whether participants thought the binds were actually binds or if they were just the norm. The participants acknowledged certain expectations associated with gender that have been upheld by societal norms. Those expectations also presented binds, but they were normalized by the norms that created them and therefore were not considered to fall in a specific category.

African American women in higher education

In addition to establishing ways that women college and university presidents can help increase diversity in leadership, this research identified the lack of African American women and women of color of are leading public, four-year, doctoral degree granting programs. Understanding that African American women encounter different challenges that are the results of the connection of race and gender is essential to recognizing that when more qualified and equally or more capable, African American women often face different challenges than White women. When racism and sexism combined African American women face being marginalized twice over (Crenshaw, 1991). Intersectionality adds to this research by providing academic support and background that explains why there were no African American voices in this research, there were not enough African American women who were eligible to participate. As gender, race, and even socioeconomic status intersect in the academy they are most impactful in higher education because of the historical disparities that have existed and that have continued to influence the academy (Davis & Maldonado, 2015).

Recognizing the additional potential challenges that African American women face is critical in increasing the number of African American women and women of color in the

presidency. Black feminist thought addresses the skills that African American women have that help them to turn the potential disadvantages of the intersections of race and gender into unique opportunities that can be seen as beneficial (Wilder, Jones, & Osborne-Lampkin, 2013). Without the voices of African American women in this research, scholarship is necessary to provide context for what experiences they may encounter. In addition, Black feminist thought, although unique to Black or African American women should also be considered as a point of reference for all women. Realizing any potential disadvantages that can be the result of a marginalized or minoritized identity was something that the participants in this study struggled handled in various ways. Some mentioned ways that they addressed gender, for example, Dr. Martha Saunders' noted that it was " very good to be aware of and to learn how to use [femininity] as an advantage". In contrast, Dr. Zee referenced her lack of femininity as a benefit. Either way, Black feminist thought's emphasis on a creative approach to utilizing perceived disadvantages could be useful for all women.

Contrasting experiences

After collecting data through the interview process and identifying codes and subsequent themes during the analysis, the data from each interview was placed in a word cloud generator to identify key words that were similar and different (Atenstaedt, 2017). Filler words such as just, its, that, and they, were extracted when appropriate to allow prominent attention for key words such as think, woman, leader, president community and mentor. The following words were present in the majority of interviews: president, university, woman, provost, know, mentor, and think were some of the most prevalent words that connected the participants' experiences. Dr. A. Zee, who was the participant who opted to not disclose her identity and Dr. Patti Neuhold-Ravikumar, had the most unique word clouds. Neuhold-Ravikumar's data was the only data that

featured the word non-traditional. Similarly, Dr. Zee's data placed an emphasis on masculinity, in reference to how she is perceived in professional settings and her approach to interactions. "I take a more masculine approach to things and that makes me different". The more traditional and consistent experiences or data have already been analyzed, but the emphasis on words like non-traditional and masculine open the door to one other major connection. Perhaps the most consistent connection between women who are presidents of public four-year institutions is that they all have contrasting experiences and backgrounds. This connection provides another justification for why telling their individual stories is essential to gaining a better understanding of women presidents in public higher education.

Conclusion

This chapter presented an analysis of the findings of the present research study. The data gathered from semi-structured interviews garnered five themes that were addressed in this chapter. The themes were explained to answer the research questions that this research sought to answer. The themes identified were: 1) Leadership Opportunities as Preparation for the Presidency 2) The Importance of Mentorship 3) The Impact of Being "The First" 4) Increasing Gender Diversity in University Leadership 5) Double Binds for Women in Higher Education. Each of the women who participated in this study is currently serving or has served as president of a public four-year institution of higher education.

The experiences of each of the participants were equally unique yet consistently similar. The themes identified connected their experiences and they also called attention to their individual experiences and accomplishments. To reach the presidency in public higher education requires certain skills, an adequate amount of preparation and a willingness to walk into unchartered territory as a leader. For women, there is also an added pressure because they are

still likely to be the first woman to serve in the role at any given institution. All of the women who were participants in this study had academic, professional and social skills that equipped them to be ready to serve in the role of university president.

The decision to reference the participants who had earned doctoral degrees by their title Dr. was made as a style choice. The individual women profiled in this study have made remarkable strides that will likely impact higher education and the careers of women indefinitely. Referring to the women as Dr. was a reminder throughout this chapter of the accomplishments and credibility that the participants have already earned. Seven of the participants have earned a doctorate and one is a doctoral candidate. The academic achievements of the participants are a reminder of what it takes to be considered a viable presidential candidate at a public, four-year institution. Using Dr. in this chapter placed an emphasis on the title as opposed to the gender of the participants. Their accomplishments would have likely led them to be presidents even if they were not women, but the fact that they are women makes recognizing those accomplishments even more imperative. Given how fluid roles and titles can be, the professional titles of the participants were not used to maintain consistency.

There were overarching connections and achievements between each of their academic and professional skills; these were also identified as a theme. Each of the women also had occupational experiences within the field of higher education that prepared them to seek the presidency, while also giving them a clear understanding of the challenges they may face while also setting goals and strategic plans under their administration. The participants all also understood that they had to take a leap from comfort to the relative unknown in order to serve as president of their respective institutions. The majority of them were the first women to serve at their institutions as presidents or they had previously broken that barrier at another institution. As

a result, each of them had entered previously uncharted territory, as women leaders of large, public, four-year universities. The participants acknowledged and understood that the responsibility and gravity associated with being a leader, particularly of a large institution, is quite significant. When asked what advice she would give to women who are hoping to become college or university presidents, Dr. Cantor offered this advice "make it a room of your own, don't just take it as something that is given". Perhaps with the benefit of hindsight, all of the participants offered advice that centered on women seeking and taking advantage of opportunities as opposed to waiting for opportunities to be given to them.

During each interview, each participant was asked to provide advice to women who are current or future leaders in higher education. The advice mentioned by each of the participants is listed below.

Judy Bonner

My advice to young people beginning an academic career has always been to do what you love and to love what you do. My advice is to come to work every day focused on doing an extraordinary job for your university. If you focus on adding value and you enjoy what you are doing, the future will take care of itself.

Nancy Cantor

Don't attempt to check your identity at the door, be who you are and embrace that. Find a network of support. Try to…make it a room of your own, don't just take it as something that is given. And I guess the final thing I would say is that you have to pick your battle.

Carol Christ

Choose leadership positions very carefully, find the position that's a good fit for both your talents as a leader, and your commitments and values. I think finding mentors is important in developing yourself as a leader. I think it's really important to say… being centered in yourself, being comfortable in your own skin and shoes, and being able to feel that you're your authentic self in leadership positions.

Janet Cunningham

No matter what job you have, if that's being a hostess at one of the restaurants or a student worker, do the very best you can do because that will be noticed… Always give it everything you've got and bring your A-game. Treat people the way you want to be treated. If you treat people with respect, often that respect will come back to you. And pick your battles.

Shirley Raines

Do your very best. And, of course, you would expect me to say be prepared, know what the agenda is, develop relationships with other leaders, and observe the people you think are most effective, and try to be more like him or her.

Patti Neuhold-Ravikumar

Get out of your comfort zone as often as she possibly can. Gain a broad exposure to higher education. If you're getting into higher education, don't become specialist so early that it cuts your path short.

Martha Saunders

You are going to work a long time and if [the opportunity] before you is not a good fit, and if it doesn't fit the rest of your life, unless you are ready to throw the rest of your life away, there will be another opportunity. You're not going to be not valuable next year.

CHAPTER 5 - DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This research was intended to explore the experiences of women who have served as presidents of public, four-year, graduate degree granting institutions. Beginning with a summary of the purpose and goals of this research, this chapter will address the research questions that guided this study. This chapter will present implications and conclusions based on the findings that resulted from this study. The methodology used to execute this research will be discussed along with the study's findings and conclusions. The chapter will conclude with an overview of the limitations and suggestions for necessary future research that can expand the work presented in this study. The limitations for this study had a strong impact on the implications that were identified, particularly as it relates to diversity in higher education. Suggestions for future research will also be provided.

The purpose of this study was to gain a detailed understanding of the career and personal experiences and opportunities of women who are or who have been, presidents of public, four-year, doctoral degree granting institutions. Data was gathered from eight qualitative interviews with women who are or who have been presidents of public, four-year institutions. Seven of the institutions represented were doctoral degree granting institutions and one granted other terminal degrees, but did not have a doctoral program. This research aimed to provide women in higher education administration and those who seek future careers in higher education administration with knowledge on the necessary experiences, training, and opportunities that would best equip them to be able to seek a college presidency. In addition, this research also aimed to identify any double binds or career barriers that may be unique to women and that the participants

encountered during their careers prior to reaching the presidency and any issues that they had once they assumed the office. This research was specific to public, four-year institutions with graduate programs. The rationale for selecting public, four-year, doctoral degree granting institutions was that they have the fewest number of women in presidential posts in comparison to other types of post-secondary institutions and they also have the most publicly funded resources (ACE, 2017).

Five themes emerged during the semi-structured interviews that were used for data college in this research. The themes highlighted the experiences of women who have served or are currently serving as presidents of public, four-year institutions.

1. Career Leadership Opportunities as Preparation for the Presidency
2. The Importance of Mentorship
3. The Impact of Being "The First"
4. Increasing Gender Diversity in University Leadership
5. Double Binds for Women in Higher Education

These themes will be used to consider implications and next steps for research relating to women college presidents and leaders in higher education.

Research Questions

This qualitative case study was conducted to answer the following research questions:

1. How do women who become presidents of public, four-year, research institutions overcome double binds throughout their careers to rise to the presidency at public, four-year institutions?
2. What careers or experiences help women prepare to lead a public, four-year, doctoral degree granting college or university?

3. What do presidents of public, four-year institutions who are women believe that they bring to the institutions that they serve?

Discussion of Findings

Diversity in presidential leadership at public, four-year, graduate degree granting institutions has been lacking. Even as women have outnumbered men in undergraduate and graduate populations, women are still statistically less likely, than white men, to lead such institutions. There are several theories regarding why there is still a gap in leadership opportunities for women in higher education administration. This research aimed to gain a rich understanding of how women who have reached the college presidency had done so and what experiences and opportunities helped them to reach the office. Using the information gathered during semi-structured interviews each research question was answered with the support that stems directly from the data provided by women who are or who have been presidents of public, four-year, graduate degree granting institutions.

Research question 1

How do women who become presidents of public, four-year, research institutions overcome double binds throughout their careers to rise to the presidency at public, four-year institutions?

A consistent thread that combined all of the backgrounds of participants in this study was high levels of professional accomplishment. In each woman's eyes, their individual credibility and standing within academic and professional circles seemed to take precedent over their gender. The scholarly and professional credibility that each of the women had prior to being appointed to a presidency helped them to reach the office and ultimately overcome any barriers to leadership. Obtaining a terminal degree, gaining a clear understanding of various areas within

higher education and connecting with mentors and peers were just some of the experiences that helped the participants become presidents of public four-year institutions.

Each participant had obtained or was in the process of obtaining a terminal degree. Their academic and scholarly accomplishments helped to remove potential doubts in their scholastic qualifications. Holding a terminal degree also helped them to be seen as equal to university faculty and to feel confident in their understanding of the necessary components of scholarship and research and their role in the academy. Obtaining a terminal degree served as an asset to women who have been or are college presidents, as they sought positions of increased responsibility and importance on college campuses. In addition to achieving the highest possible degrees in their respective fields, participants also had varied experiences within higher education. Understanding how institutions of higher education operate helped make them more prepared as leaders. Experiences as members of both the faculty and staff communities were necessary and seemingly provided key knowledge and information that helped women reach the presidency and address concerns once they held the office. Subsequently, the academic and professional experiences that the participants had prior to becoming presidents helped to provide justification for the fact that they were qualified to lead. Their individual professional portfolios both inside and outside of higher education helped to lessen any perceived doubt in ability.

The most complex answer to how women overcame any possible double binds was that they did not always recognize them or acknowledge them. This does not mean that they did not encounter or overcome a bind, but they did not know each time they encountered one. Societal norms have made certain issues not as noticeable. Also, women cannot always compare their experiences to those of men because they do not know how it feels to be treated as another gender. Binds are such a part of society that recognizing them can be difficult. However, the

participants still worked to achieve professional and scholarly success that would eliminate any doubt in their ability to serve in a leadership role or as a college or university president.

The individual successes and accomplishments of women who serve as presidents of public, four-year institutions were key in framing how they frequently overcame double binds and barriers to career advancement. Even if binds were not recognized, women who have become presidents of public four-year institutions were able to overcome them based on established credibility within the field of higher education and in some cases, internally at the institutions they represented. The participants in this study often noticed binds that they overcame in retrospect and those were acknowledged during the analysis of this research.

The participants did not focus on limitation that may have been associated with their gender. An argument can be made based on the data gathered for in this research that women who focus on accomplishing success in each role that they hold are more likely to overcome binds. Not because double binds do not exist, but instead because they do not focus on them. Women in presidential roles within public higher education are examples of the double bind (Jenkins, 2014). Even when they do not acknowledge or recognize a bind they are still experiencing them. Hard work and dedication seem to be key ways to overcome the double bind. The focus on working hard and achieving goals in various positions does not erase double binds that women encounter, but they could be used to diminish effects that double binds have on the careers of women in the field. Success and the fact that women college presidents are assiduous in their work ethic are ways that women overcome binds. Through their perseverance and work experiences women college presidents provide a counter narrative to any potential double bind which is perhaps the most successful method to dismantle them.

Recognizing the additional potential challenges that African American women face is critical in increasing the number of African American women and women of color in the presidency. Black feminist thought addresses the skills that African American women have that help them to turn the potential disadvantages of the intersections of race and gender into opportunities for development (Collins, 1986). The ability to change disadvantages into opportunities for career and personal advancement can also be representative of women in general. Black feminist thought also discusses how the authority of African American women is often challenged even when they are in positions of authority (Hooks, 1984). This also has implications for women as a whole. Through recognizing the challenges that African American women face, that are unique to them, the academy can also gain a deeper understanding of challenges to authority that women face.

Research question 2

What careers or experiences help women prepare to lead a public, four-year, doctoral degree granting college or university?

Having leadership experience in higher education is essential for women who aspire to lead public institutions of higher education. All of the participants in this research had held leadership positions at public, four-year post-secondary institutions, prior to assuming the role of university president. Therefore it can be concluded that experiences as student leaders, faculty, and staff help to provide a robust body of knowledge that can be used for women to progress during their careers in public higher education. Faculty positions are particularly impactful in helping women in higher education to identify the needs of faculty and students on college campuses. Based on the population examined in this research, women who serve as presidents of public, four-year, graduate degree granting institutions often enter the field as faculty members.

As a result, they have a detailed understanding of the needs and concerns of faculty. Faculty positions are also often tied to research and funding and they can be helpful in providing mid-level career opportunities for professionals within the academy. Those opportunities are of particular importance to women due to the lack of women in leadership.

In addition to faculty experiences, serving as a department chair or college/unit dean can also prepare women to lead. In those roles, individuals are given the opportunity to lead and to impact curriculum and university procedures and processes. The roles also provide the opportunity to learn leadership skills, all of which provide career preparation for being a college or university president. Serving as a department chair or academic dean can also help provide connections that can provide opportunities for mentorship and exposure. Those opportunities can help provide women with a detailed portfolio and track record of leadership activities.

The position of executive vice president and provost can also provide key experiences and knowledge that can help prepare a woman to lead a public, four-year, doctoral degree granting college or university. The position often serves as the internal voice for leadership and has a large reporting structure that reaches across a number of areas and disciplines on post-secondary campuses. The executive vice president and provost is often listed as the second in command at an institution and was mentioned often in this study as a role often immediately preceding the presidency. Academic units as well as a number of important internal institutional functions also often report to this role.

Career progression within higher education is beneficial to women who will seek presidential posts at public, four-year, graduate degree granting institutions. Therefore, the provost or executive vice president role can be a training ground for the presidency. Holding the position also makes the presidency a logical career progression or next step for those who serve

in the role. The scope of work for executive vice presidents and provosts provides key leadership opportunities that could be deemed beneficial when seeking a presidency.

Other community and volunteer leadership roles may also be helpful to women seeking a college or university presidency. Volunteer roles on and off college campuses provide ways for women to network and gain leadership skills. Connections with the communities in which institutions reside can also assist in career progression and gather support for a presidential nomination. Leadership or volunteer roles with organizations such as an areas chamber of commerce can help women develop key leadership skills and connections. Sorority participation and experience may also help provide leadership opportunities for women even prior to beginning their professional careers.

Experience

The gap between the job opportunities available to men and those available to women is striking because women outnumber men at every level of education (Napolitano, 2018). There educational attainment combined with ability has not been enough to close the gap in leadership opportunities and career progression past a certain point. Therefore, it is necessary that the academy, from an organizational perspective, institute changes that can help support more women ascending to executive leadership positions and ultimately the presidency. The importance of experience cannot be overlooked. College or university presidents have often shown themselves to be effective executives or presidents at previous institutions (Travis & Price, 2013). This means that presidents are likely moving from one institution to another making it harder for women to prove that they can be effective executives if they are not assuming positions that can showcase a track record of leadership experience. Through mentoring and career training, more women can earn positions executive leadership

opportunities and establish the career credibility that was mentioned by participants in this research and that existing scholarship suggests is needed to become a college or university president.

Research question 3

What do presidents of public, four-year institutions who are women believe that they bring to the institutions that they serve?

In general, presidents bring diverse experiences and backgrounds to their institutions that yield specific benefits that are unique to those leaders. The contributions of men were not at issue in this research. However, women who are presidents of public, four-year institutions bring just as much intellect, skill, preparation and talent to college presidencies as men do. Women also bring a different approach to leadership, attention to detail, and have an increased awareness of the importance of diversity. Increased diversity is one of the chief benefits of having women serve as presidents of public four-year institutions. As a heavily male-dominated field, particularly where leadership is concerned, public four-year graduate degree granting institutions can benefit from the diversity of thought and experience that women can bring to leadership and the presidency. Gender should not be the sole reason someone is placed in a position, but it should not be a barrier either. The participants in this study noted that they did not feel that gender limited their career progressions, but they also noted qualities that they believed positively impacted the institutions they served and their careers overall. Having more women in presidential posts will likely impact the number of women in cabinet or executive positions.

The pipeline to leadership in higher education can be varied. However, college and university presidents, who happen to be women, are more attuned to providing career growth and pipelines for women. Mentorship programs and career training for all employees can be helpful,

but they can be particularly impactful for marginalized groups. Women who serve as presidents of public, four-year, graduate degree granting institutions recognized the need for additional training and development opportunities for employees and how those opportunities could be particularly beneficial to women. Women who are presidents of public, four-year institutions can help bring an awareness to the needs of marginalized groups in general, not just women.

Having diverse representation allows members of marginalized groups the opportunity to realize that barriers can be overcome and that it is possible to achieve certain goals. Women college presidents, particularly at public, four-year, graduate degree granting institutions serve as examples that it is possible for women to achieve a college or university presidency. In addition, as most college campuses are dominated by women, students having representation in the top executive office of an institution can have positive repercussions. As students, faculty, and staff see women in the role of college or university presidents they are also able to see additional possibilities for themselves. Women college presidents are cognizant of what their positions mean to other women and to members of marginalized groups. They are also aware that their presence may be a contributing factor to other women and minorities believing that they can obtain the office.

Personality traits that are frequently associated with women such as compassion and understanding can be traits held by any leader of any gender. Women, however, may perhaps be more likely to cultivate and respect the place of these qualities in the toolkit of a good leader. Women leaders often bring a different understanding and thought process to addressing issues than men do and that diversity in thought can be benefit of having a woman in the presidency at a public, four-year institution. For example, as identified in the literature for this research, women are often considered more likeable than men, but men are seen as more competent

(Eklund et al., 2019). Stereotypes like these are not helpful, but as the participants in this research expressed, likability, compassion and, understanding can be combined with hard work to help show that women are both likable and competent. This is not to say that a member of another gender could not be both of those things. However, based on the literature presented in this research, women are uniquely qualified to show likable traits (Eklund et al., 2019). When that is combined with the data that was referenced in this research, which highlighted hard work and perseverance, that spotlights how women can be particularly effective as college or university presidents. Hard work and credibility are often connected to competence. The women featured in this study believed that their hard work and the totality of their careers helped them ascend to the presidency. By connecting qualities that express competence with other qualities that support likability, a justification can be provided in support of the argument that women are uniquely qualified to lead colleges and universities. The qualities that women presidents feel they possess that help them serve their institutions are important because they establish connections to the traits and experiences that are necessary for women to achieve the presidency.

Limitations of the Study

The scarcity of women who were eligible to be interviewed impacted the number of women who could participate. The data gathered was rich and there was enough data to develop themes and form conclusions, however the small number of women who served as presidents of public, four-year, graduate degree granting institutions impacted how much data could be gathered and from whom that data could be provided. As referenced earlier, according to the most recent data available from *The Chronicle* there were 31 women serving as presidents of public, four-year institutions in 2017. Although some of those women have left their posts and other women have been assumed presidencies this number served as a guide for how many

participants were necessary to provide an accurate representation of the total potential population. Eight participants reflected a little over 25% of the total population. This limitation was not the most problematic, but it did mean that there could not be a large number of interviews for this study and that a great deal of importance was placed on each individual participant's narrative.

Contact information could be identified for any of the sitting presidents, but there were instances where generic email addresses were listed for presidents and there were no assistants or other personnel listed on an institution's website. As potential participants were identified and researched, it also became apparent that there was no definitive way to reach participants who had retired from their roles or who had resigned. Presidents who had resigned or who were dismissed from their roles were particularly complicated. Not only were they difficult to contact if they were not working at another institution or business, but they may also have contractual or legal obligations that would prevent them from speaking on specific experiences at the institutions that they served. Time constraints for this research were also problematic. In scheduling some of the interviews, some participants needed four to six months-notice prior to an interview and that timeline could not be supported by the current study.

The most compelling limitation was that of race. Intersectionality was discussed in the literature review for this study in an effort to shed light on the unique challenges that African American women face. Those challenges could be assumed to be the result of the intersections of race and gender. As women were contacted to participate in this study it became apparent that there were very few women of color and a specifically limited number of African American women. Although leaders of two large, four-year, doctoral institutions were identified and contacted along with former presidents, all of the women represented historically Black colleges

or universities. It was not the intent of this study to exclude HBCU's, but it did help to identify a very impactful finding. Without HBCU's African American women would basically be erased from the presidency at large, public, four-year, graduate degree granting institutions. This limitation also means that the voices of hundreds of African American women and women of color are being relegated to secondary leadership roles at best which specifically limits the impact that they are able to make on the field of higher education and on their individual institutions. Without hearing the experiences of African American women who have led public four-year, doctoral degree granting institutions data could not be gathered that speaks to the differences and challenges that may disproportionally impact African American women. Therefore, literature and research on intersectionality and the impact of race and gender of are particular importance because it provides the most telling information on the experiences of women of color in administrative roles in the academy. Of particular importance is additional research on the existence or lack of pipelines that create opportunities for women of color to ascend to the presidency.

Recommendations for Future Research

Telling the stories of women who have served as presidents of public, four-year, graduate degree granting institutions will play a large role in bridging any gaps that may exist on how women lead or can prepare to lead such institutions. As this area of research expands there are key focus areas that would greatly enhance existing research. These areas may also expedite the identification of solutions that can help close the gender gap in public higher education administrative positions, particularly presidencies at public, four-year doctoral degree granting institutions.

This study proposes the following areas as recommendations for future research: Understanding the career trajectories of African American women in public higher education; the impact of societal norms and media portrayals on women ascending to the presidency; governance structures at public, four-year, doctoral degree granting universities; and how and why women leave the presidency. Potential guidance for proposed future research are listed in this chapter to provide a rationale for why these areas should be of importance. An implication of this research lends itself the consideration of the professional trajectory of women who represent a different generation and timeframe.

African American women and the college of university presidency

Particular attention should be paid to identifying why women of color, specifically African American women, are not often selected for presidencies at predominately white, public, four-year, graduate degree granting institutions. As mentioned in the limitations of this study, identifying African American women who are serving or who have served as presidents at public, four-year institutions was difficult at best. However, with a number of African American women or women of color serving as provosts or cabinet members at institutions, the question becomes, why are they not making it to the presidency? Even in analyzing presidencies at historically Black colleges and universities there are still few African American women presidents. Attention to factors that affect African American women in the field as a whole is necessary, but there should also be research on how their career trajectories differ depending on the type of institution. Future research would benefit from segregating research based on varying types of institutions.

The numbers and percentages of women, especially African American women, who are serving in college presidencies is greatly skewed by two-year colleges and private liberal arts

institutions. That does not mean that there should not be a combined discussion, but the challenges that African American women face to seeking leadership will likely differ based on the institution. Overall, the needs that are specific to African American women, as well as, the historically acceptable "anti-blackness present in the academy must be addressed to increase the number of African American women who lead public institutions.

This research established the impact of mentorship on the careers of women who went on to assume the presidency. However, the strains of that are specific to African American women or women in color impact their experiences long before they would be in contention for a presidency. Bowman Role Strain Adaptation Model (BRSAM) explains the institutional inequalities that are rooted in culture and history and how those inequalities effect marginalized groups (Bowman, 2006). By recognizing the inequities or strains that marginalized groups experience and connecting those strains to ways that individuals achieve success, the academy can provide more support of African American women. Understanding both the negative and positive experiences of marginalized groups in an effort to evaluate the strains that they face is part of BRSAM (2006). Greater knowledge of the strains that are present in the academy for African American women can help to identify there needs.

The impact of societal norms and media portrayals

Another important factor in identifying the societal norms that impact women reaching the college presidency is how women leaders are portrayed in the media. There is no shortage of research on women in leadership positions in collegiate environments, but very few examine how public perception and media framing and portrayals, impact how women are viewed as leaders and therefore how likely they are to be placed in the top position. Media portrayals can potentially impact if women will pursue a position and how they will be perceived once they are

in that position. Analyzing any differences in how men and women in positions of leadership could advance the research presented in this study by providing additional information about societal norms.

The general public or external stakeholders outside of individual college campuses often rely on news sources for information about leaders. The impact the media has on diversity in leadership in public, higher education should be researched in more detail. The media is an external factor that should be assessed, but there are also internal institutional structures and processes that should also be investigated further. As popular culture and the media have continued to evolve their effects on the perception of leadership and organizational structures have increased. The influence of media and public perception have been analyzed in politics and communication, but are not often applied to higher education. This gap could be leaving the field of higher education and other fields that have gender disparities in leadership, vulnerable to not accurately preparing leaders and organizations to adapt to change. Furthermore, understanding how media portrayals impact how people view leaders and the qualities leaders should possess could assist women with knowing how to effectively manage the media.

Governance structures

This research touched on the impact of governing bodies such as board of trustees or similar governing structures. Future research on the individuals who select college or university presidents could expand the knowledge available about how presidents are selected. In addition, research in this area could be the first step in developing policies that encourage equal representation on such boards or governing bodies. An in-depth analysis of leadership structures could yield additional recommendations on how institutions support the growth and development of all members of their communities, particularly members of marginalized groups. Boards and

governing bodies frequently impact or create an institution's policies and procedures. Therefore, identifying ways to diversify the makeup of those boards can help women at various stages of their careers and in the presidency. It is important that future research on women presidents at public, four-year, graduate degree granting institutions also work to identify challenges between selection and departure or hiring and dismissal. This research acknowledges key areas that can be helpful to women as they seek a presidency in the long or short term, but bridging the gap between what happens once a woman is selected to serve as a college or university president and when she leaves the position will be helpful.

How and why women leave the presidency

The last area recommended for future research is determining how and why women leave the presidency. When women are announced as college and university presidents there is often a great deal of media attention, especially in reference to public, four-year, doctoral degree granting universities. However, when women leave those positions, especially under duress, it could hinder other women from seeking similar positions. Tracking individuals who leave college presidencies can be a challenge. As recognized in the limitations for this study, identifying and contacting presidents after they have resigned or retired can be difficult. Research on the varying reasons women leave presidential posts and how long they tend to hold such posts in comparison to men, will be helpful in identifying any institutional challenges that should be addressed by the field as a whole. By researching reasons women leave the role and how long they stay in presidencies important information can be gathered. The identification of how or why women leave presidencies can help provide scholarship on ways women can avoid any potential challenges that may shorten or hinder their tenure as a president.

As research on women in higher education continues to grow and evolve the areas presented in this chapter provide a guide for where research can be beneficial. Understanding the career trajectories of African American women in public higher education; the impact of societal norms and media portrayals on women ascending to the presidency; governance structures at public, four-year, graduate degree granting universities; and how and why women leave the presidencies are the next steps to gaining a better understanding of what women need to do to achieve the rank of college president and how women can also be most successful once the role is obtained.

Recommendations for Practice

As research establishes clear connections between the experiences of women who have served as presidents of public, four-year institutions, it is imperative that research also creates advancements within the field of higher education. Gaining a greater understanding of the backgrounds and experiences of women leaders and presidents at public, four-year institutions could impact organizational practices by providing ways that the academy can increase diversity in leadership within public higher education. Furthermore, research in this area can expand how scholars in the field explore the impact of historical practices that have limited the number of women serving in presidencies at public, four-year, research institutions. This area of research has the potential to impact scholarly research and human resources or organizational practices. Both scholarly research and the practical application of organizational support for women throughout their careers in the academy have the potential to yield positive results in helping to increase diversity in leadership in higher education.

Conclusion

The purpose of this case study was to gain an understanding of the experiences and opportunities women need to have in order to reach a college presidency at a public, four-year institution and how women who have reached the role have overcome any double binds that particularly effect women. The number of participants for this study was small, but that is a direct reflection on why this research is needed and why it should continue and be expanded. The participant population provided an appropriate representation of women college presidents, particularly at predominately white institutions. According to table provided by *The Chronicle of Higher Education* that listed a 2017 database of college presidents, only 31 women were presidents of public, four-year institutions. That number was used as a guide to help determine the necessary number of participants that would reflect the population. The eight participants in this study made up 25% of the eligible population. Due to the large amount of the population represented, the results, implications, and conclusions presented in this chapter will be helpful in continuing and increasing research on the subject of women leaders in public higher education.

This study presented real life examples, through a case study approach, of the experiences of women college presidents at public, four-year, graduate degree granting institutions. The data gathered supports the fact that there should be more diversity in public higher education presidencies and that women are equally as capable as men to lead such institutions. Women who have served as presidents of public, four-year institutions had different paths to reaching higher education and the presidency, but they all recognized that as women, they were often charting a path for other women in the field of higher education. As stated throughout this study one of the most important conclusions from this study is that double binds are such an integral part of the fabric of society that recognizing them can be nearly impossible.

Whether or not binds are recognized does not mean that they do not exist or that they do not impact the careers of women. Identifying binds and categorizing them as barriers can help prevent binds from going unnoticed and unaddressed. Lastly, knowing the experiences of women who have risen to the presidency is the most important way that a roadmap can be developed to help increase the number of women serving as presidents of public, four-year, graduate degree granting institutions.

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APPENDIX A - WOMEN UNIVERSITY PRESIDENTS INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Thank you for agreeing to participate this research study. My name is LeNa` Powe McDonald and I am a doctoral student at the University of Alabama. As a part of my research study that seeks to identify ways to increase gender diversity and opportunities for leadership in the field of public higher education. As a president of a public, hour-year institution, you were selected based on your experiences within the field of public higher education. Before I conduct your interview, I want to ensure that you have a clear understanding on how the data gathered will be used and that your interview will be recorded and the answers will be transcribed. The interviews and transcriptions will be stored in the University of Alabama's UA Box System (similar to Drop Box). The system is encrypted and I am the only person who will have access to it. Once your interview is transcribed the recording of your interview will be deleted. For the record, can you please acknowledge at this time if you consent to being recorded and will allow the information gathered to be used for purposes of the research explained to you. Do you consent to continue recording?

These questions are structured to gain insight into your individual experience. Please share as much applicable information as possible throughout the interview. These interviews will be semi-structured and a part of a case study, to allow the maximum amount of data to be gathered from each participant.

The interview will begin by me stating your name and the date and time of the interview.

Interview Questions

1. When you began your career, did you know that you wanted to be a college or university president?
    a. If so, how did that impact decisions you made throughout your career?
    b. If no, when did you change your career trajectory and what led to that change?
2. How did your professional experiences, early in your career, prior to any cabinet or presidential post help shape your career trajectory?
3. Have you worked at any other types of post-secondary institutions? (Two-year college, private college or university, liberal arts focused college.)
    a. If so, did those experiences differ from the experiences you have encountered at a public, four-year institution? If they did, how?
4. The double bind is a theory that addresses how someone deemed more powerful addresses someone deemed powerless. For example, Kathleen Hall Jamison references five binds that uniquely impact women: Womb and Brain, Silence and Shame, Sameness

and Difference, Femininity and Competences, and Aging and Invisibility. Have you ever encountered double binds or expectations that were the result of your gender?
    a. If so, please elaborate
5. Understanding that there is a discrepancy in the percentage of women presidents at public four-year institutions, did you feel marginalized in any way?
    a. Did you feel as if you had to prepare differently or have a different set of skills based on your gender? If so, please explain.
6. Were there any women who proceeded you as president at any of the institutions you have been employed by? (If this information is known I will reference the number).
    a. Did you encounter your gender being a focus on campus (students, faculty, staff, etc.)?
7. How were you received by your institution(s) at the time of your appointment?
    a. Did that reception have an impact on you in any way?
8. Have you held other leadership positions outside of higher education? For example, volunteer, social, sorority, community based, elected, etc.
    a. If so, what were they and did they help to equip you with any skills that you would not have gained if you had not experienced them?
9. Has there ever been a time you believed that your gender prevented you from progressing in your career?
    a. If so, please explain. Did that or those experience help or hinder your professional growth?
10. Has there been a time you felt your gender was a benefit during your career?
    a. If so, please explain.
11. If you could give a woman who is just entering the field of higher education any advice, what would it be?
12. Why do you think that women have struggled to narrow the gender gap, particularly at public 4-year doctoral degree granting institutions of higher education?
13. Statistically speaking there is less of a gap in private education and in the two-year college system. However, public, four-year, doctoral degree granting, research institutions continue to lag in the percentage of women who lead such institutions. Why is this?
14. A google search of the keywords “first woman university president” returned an estimated 302,000,000, do you think the emphasis being placed on gender at the time a woman is selected to lead an institution helps to inspire or hinder others who may be seeking the role?
15. Did you feel as if you accomplished something that your predecessors did not?
    a. If so, what were those things?

APPENDIX B – RECRUITMENT EMAIL

Women in Leadership in Higher Education Recruitment Email

Dr.____,

My name is LeNa` Powe McDonald and I am a doctoral student at the University of Alabama. As a doctoral student most of my research has focused on women in leadership positions in the field of higher education. I am contacting you to request your participation in an interview that will be used to support my research associated with my dissertation.

Interviews will be conducted through video conferencing and in person, depending on what is the most feasible for you as the participant and for me as the researcher. If you are willing to participate in this study, please complete the online consent form and scan an email it back to me at lpmcdonald@ua.edu. Once the consent form is received I will then forward additional correspondence to you or your designated representative to determine the best date and time for your interview. If you have any questions about the consent form or the research being conducted please contact me at 205-613-6904.

I look forward to receiving your response and hope you will consider participating.

APPENDIX C - IRB APPROVAL

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA | Office of the Vice President for Research & Economic Development
Office for Research Compliance

December 12, 2019

Lena' McDonald
ELPTS
College of Education
Box 870302

Re: IRB # EX-19-CM-329: "The New First Lady on Campus: Women Leaders at Public 4-Year Institutions of Higher Education"

Dear Ms. McDonald,

The University of Alabama Institutional Review Board has granted approval for your proposed research. Your application has been given exempt approval according to 45 CFR part 46. Approval has been given under exempt review category 2 as outlined below:

(2) Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) if at least one of the following criteria is met:

(iii) The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects can readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, and an IRB conducts a limited IRB review to make the determination required by §46.111(a)(7).

The approval for your application will lapse on December 11, 2020. If your research will continue beyond this date, please submit the continuing review to the IRB as required by University policy before the lapse. Please note, any modifications made in research design, methodology, or procedures must be submitted to and approved by the IRB before implementation. Please submit a final report form when the study is complete.

Please use reproductions of the IRB approved informed consent form to obtain consent from your participants.

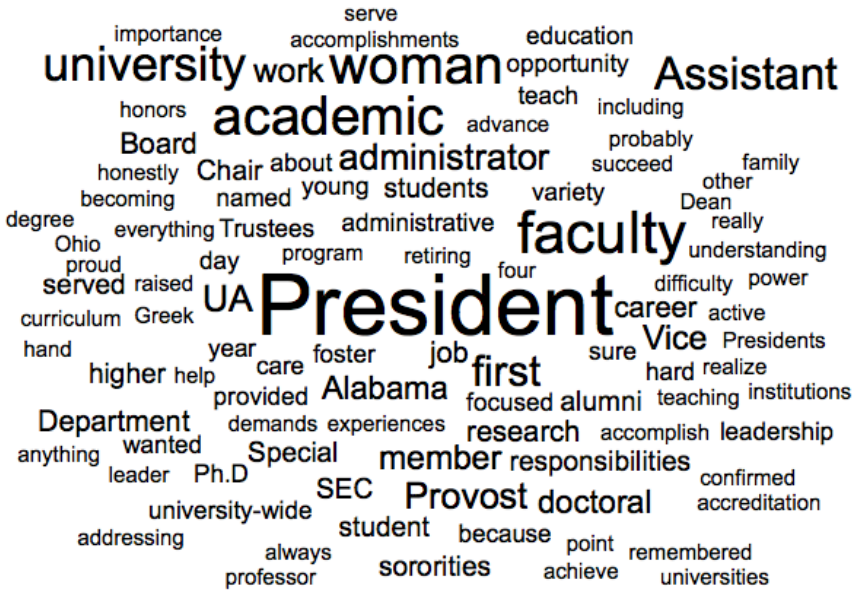
Sincerely,

Carpantato T. Myles, MSM, CIM, CIP
Director & Research Compliance Officer

Jessup Building | Box 870127 | Tuscaloosa, AL 35487-0127
205-348-8461 | Fax 205-348-7189 | Toll Free 1-877-820-3066

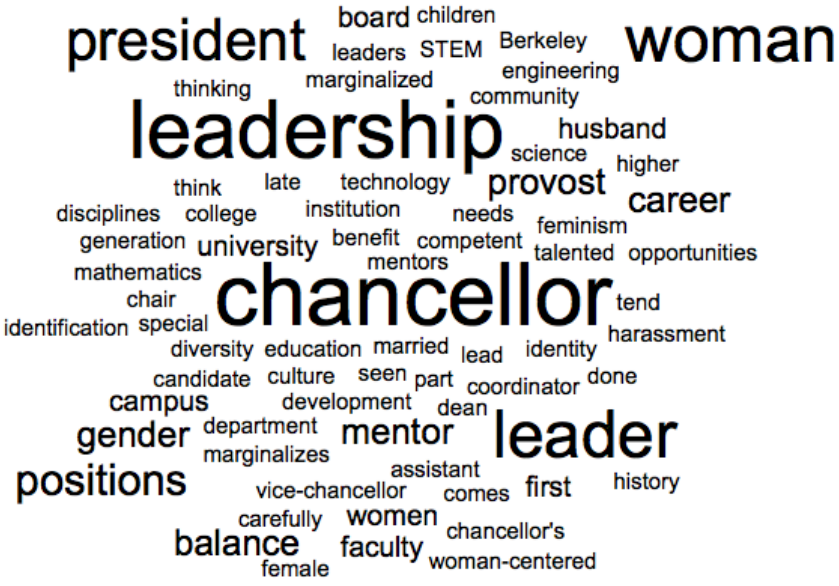
Appendix D – PARTICPANT WORD CLOUDS

Dr. Judy Bonner

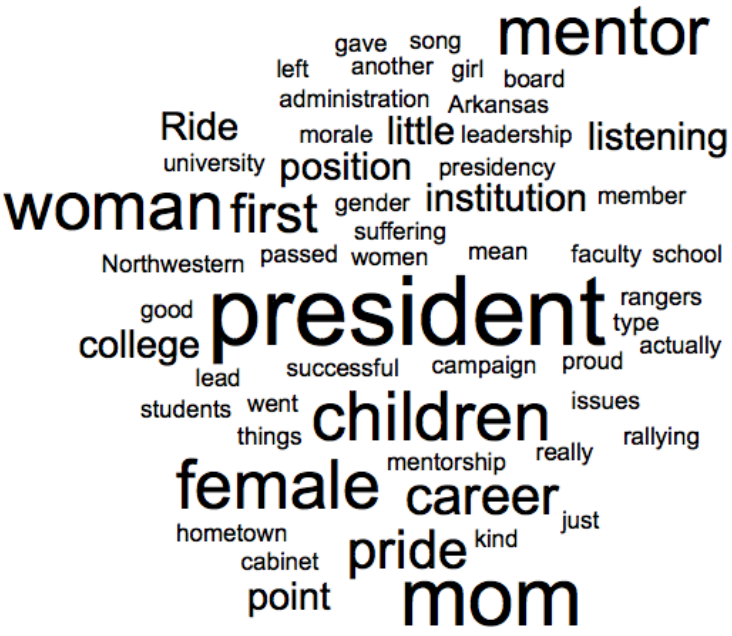


Dr. Nancy Cantor

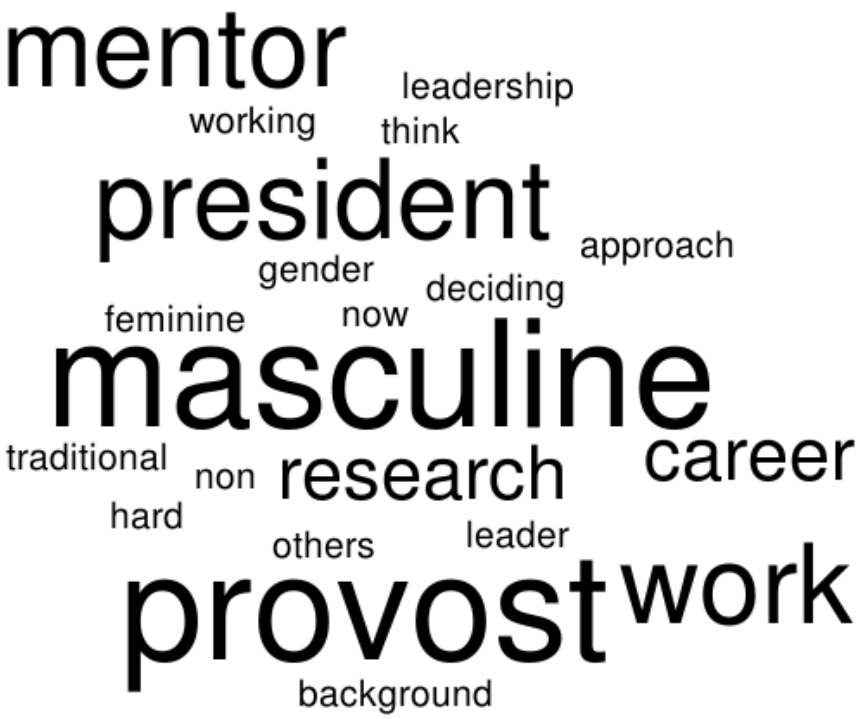
Dr. Carol Christ



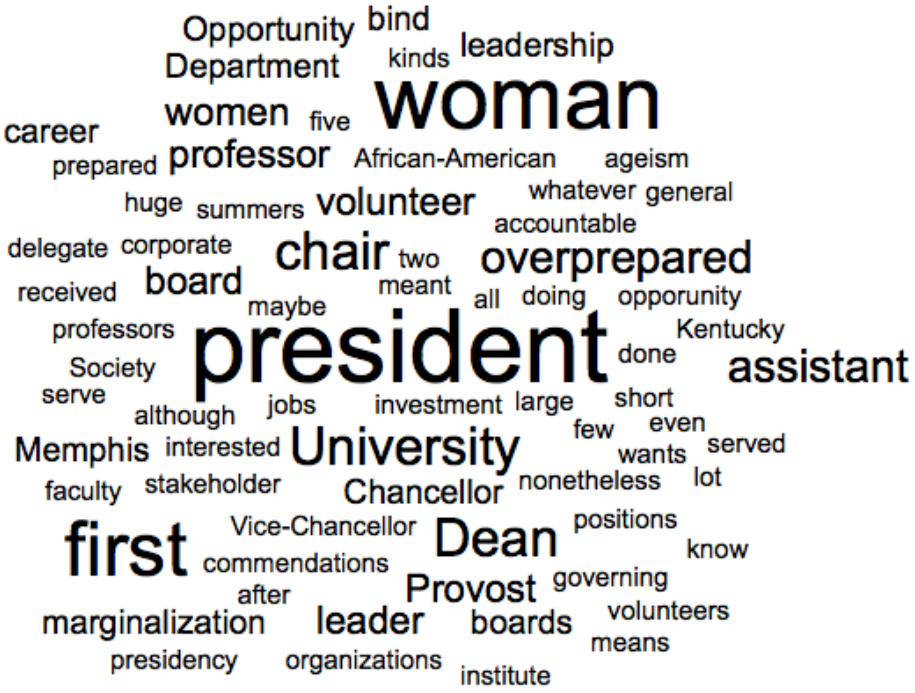
Dr. Janet Cunningham



Dr. A. Zee



Dr. Shirley Raines



Dr. Patti Neuhold-Ravikumar

Dr. Martha Saunders