This study explores the lived experiences of six African American female administrators in Missouri public higher educational institutions. The Black Feminist Thought theory as espoused by Patricia Collins is the framework with which this research examines their leadership. The conceptual lens of race, gender, and class offers an opportunity to see strength and empowerment as these women face oppression with a conqueror’s attitude. The ways in which these women are empowered to employ leadership and use their positional authority is reflected in the three themes, knowledge, consciousness, and the politics of empowerment.

Interviews were conducted with the participants using open-ended questions. They were questions about their positional authority, the cultural climate, political climate, and challenges as African American female administrators. They were also asked to make recommendations to Missouri institutions. The themes that emerged where: 1) racism, 2) sexism, 3) gender equity, 4) disrespect of knowledge, 5) lack of diversity, 6) isolation, and 7) lack of recruitment and retention efforts. Yet, with these emerging themes, the participants were empowered to continue to perform their duties, because students need what they have to offer, perseverance, advocacy, and role models.