A CASE STUDY OF TWO PRIVATE RESTORATION MOVEMENT CHRISTIAN INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION DEMONSTRATING POSITIVE RETENTION AND GRADUATION RATES OF BLACK STUDENTS

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Anne R. Menear

Dr. Nissa Ingraham, Dissertation Supervisor

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The undersigned, appointed by the dean of the Graduate School, have examined the dissertation entitled

A CASE STUDY OF TWO PRIVATE RESTORATION MOVEMENT CHRISTIAN INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION DEMONSTRATING POSITIVE RETENTION AND GRADUATION RATES OF BLACK STUDENTS

Presented by Anne R. Menear

a candidate for the degree of doctor of education in educational leadership,

and hereby certify that, in their opinion, is worthy of acceptance.

______________________________________________

Dr. Nissa Ingraham

______________________________________________

Dr. Timothy J. Wall

______________________________________________

Dr. Sara Taylor

______________________________________________

Dr. Travis Dimmitt
DEDICATION

To my friends and family who have endured my many comments and conversations about race, education, and doctoral studies. Thank you for your patience.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my brother and friend, DeRonte Polite. Your insight into what it is like to be a Black man in America, and specifically what is like to attend a Bible College, has impacted my thinking significantly. You are wise beyond your years. I genuinely appreciate the care and concern you have shown me personally, and for the patience you show in explaining race and culture to me and others. Thank you for all your encouragement and your friendship.
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACSI: Association of Christian Schools International

CCCU: Council for Christian Colleges and Universities

CC or COC: Church of Christ/Christian Churches (non-denominational)

HBCU: Historical Black Colleges and Universities

HLC: Higher Learning Commission

IPEDS: The Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System

NCES: National Center for Education Statistics

PWI: Predominantly White Institutions

RM: Restoration Movement

USDOE: United States Department of Education
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ABSTRACT

This case study utilizes mixed methods to evaluate the methods and processes used to recruit, to gauge student persistence and the graduation rates of black students in a Christian college setting. It examines the institutional practices and policies that influenced positive retention and graduation of Black students in small, private Christian colleges and universities associated with the Restoration Movement and how these methods and processes were used in two specific universities that demonstrate the highest percentage of retention and graduation rates from among other like institutions, according to efficacy, confidence, dispositional assessments, and qualitative data gathered from multiple perspectives. The conceptual framework for this study includes the triangulation through analysis of three specific areas: first, a consideration of the tenets of Restoration Movement (RM) schools concerning their history in the United States; second, the application or avoidance of Critical Race Theory (CRT), and thirdly, the application of Social Integration Theory in recruitment and retention practices. The data collected generated a comparison of two groups utilizing quantitative analysis. Additionally, individual perspectives supported and enhanced the research design through rich descriptions of the experiences of students in these two schools. Data analysis revealed a descriptive analysis of what works and does not work in the retention, persistence, and graduation of Black students in private Christian schools (RM).
SECTION ONE
INTRODUCTION TO DISSERTATION

Introduction

In 1903, W.E.B. DuBois described white Christians as “…essentially honest-hearted and generous people (who) cannot cite the caste-leveling precepts of Christianity or believe in the equality of opportunity for all men, without coming to feel more and more with each generation that the present drawing of the color-line is a flat contradiction to their beliefs and professions” (DuBois, 1903, p. 112). W.E.B. DuBois wrote these words more than a hundred years ago. Yet, we still see the fruits of inequality along racial lines, even in religious communities (Du Bois, 1903; Tisby, 2020). According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), Christian colleges and universities across the United States only graduate 29% of their Black students (2019). Among these Christian institutions, even fewer Black students persist and graduate from the Restoration Movement (RM) Christian institutions of higher learning (NCES, 2019). In 2018, the two best graduation rates reported to NCES for Black students were 28.6% and 24.5%. All the others fell well below the 20% mark, and three schools were in the single digits. Any college might find it hard to justify a 1.8% graduation rate of Black students, yet this is the reported ratio in a private, Christian college (CCCU, 2020). The reported low graduation rate for Black students in Christian colleges and universities creates this research opportunity.

This research intends to illuminate the retention and completion rates of Black students attending RM Christian colleges and universities. This case study will examine two RM Christian colleges that demonstrate higher than average recruitment, retention, and graduation of their Black students than other RM institutions of like size and mission. In doing so, this case study will help determine what factors contribute to positive practices in matters of diversity in
RM Christian higher education so that such contributing factors that contribute to best practices may be implemented at other locations.

**Background of the Study**

As the United States has slowly grappled with the concepts of integration along racial and ethnic lines, the issues of diversity and inclusion have found a home in mainstream media, public institutions, and political arguments (Ash & Longman, 2017). However, RM Christian higher education systems have been slower in this evolution (Daugherty, 2015). Since 2009-2019 there has been a surge of intentional diversity and inclusion policies on public college campuses (CCCU report, 2020). Unfortunately, private RM Christian colleges and universities made few, if any, changes in this regard (Ash & Longman, 2017, p. 12). RM institutions are comprised of students who are predominately white and middle-class (Daugherty, 2015). Most of these private, RM Christian colleges and universities have been formed and funded by predominately white RM churches; thus, these schools are a mirror image of their supporting congregations (Ash & Longman, 2017, p. 15).

Nevertheless, not many have agreed on how to address this issue. Even within the Black community, there has been little agreement. For instance, during the Restoration Movement (also known as the Third Great Awakening, 1850-1900), several well-known Black ministers and scholars emerged. Among them, Marshall Keeble and Booker T. Washington were staunch advocates for working alongside their white counterparts (Alexander Campbell and Barton W. Stone) to evangelize the post-Civil War Black community (Daugherty, 2017). But others, like G.P. Bowser and WEB. Du Bois was critical of Keeble and Washington, vying to work for what they viewed as real equality, not just the tenets of *separate but equal* (Daugherty, 2017).
W.E.B. Du Bois noted in his book *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903) that education would be the key to reconciling the devastation brought by slavery and oppression. He stated:

(T)The function of the university is not simply to teach breadwinning, to furnish teachers for the public schools, or to be a center of polite society, it is, above all, to be the organ of that fine adjustment between real life and growing knowledge of life, an adjustment which forms the secret of civilization (p. 53).

DuBois believed that the freed black men could only find true freedom by attaining the same levels of wisdom and intellect as white men did - through education (Du Bois, 1903). He believed that this education should be done “side by side” with much patience and peace, performing a “social surgery” that would heal a nation marching toward modern history (Du Bois, 1903, p. 64).

Dating back to the establishment of education and everyday living in the New World (Colonial America), Craig Wilder, author of *Ebony and Ivy: Race, Slavery, and the Troubled History of America’s Universities* (2013) stated it this way: “Colleges were imperial instruments akin to armories and forts, a part of the colonial garrison with the specific responsibilities to train ministers and missionaries, convert indigenous peoples and soften cultural resistance, and extend European rule over foreign nations” (p. 33). The architects of this New World were not seeking to make all men equal, nor were they interested in integrating new people groups, new thoughts, cultures, or systems (Wilder, 2013). The forefathers of this nation worked hard to exchange Europe’s white monarchy’s authority with the white democracy of the united colonies. Colleges and universities that arose from this worldview focused on teaching the people of the newly birthed United States about the democratic system of rules of power and teaching them how to operate in this “new way” of thinking (Fletcher, 2018).
Joe Feagin (2009) coined the phrase *white racial frame*. Feagin, a social theorist out of Texas A&M University, introduced this phrase in his book, *The White Racial Frame: Centuries of Racial Framing and Counter-Framing* (2009). This description is meant to explain how early American colleges and universities were instituted to teach their young, affluent white men how this new country would be run (Feagin, 2009). During that time, colleges and universities were bastions of culture and tradition aimed at insulating the white man and their way of life (Feagin, 2009; Fletcher, 2018). It was not an open system of free education offered to the masses.

Within these historical controversies and contexts, the researcher will examine the present state of inclusivity in RM Christian colleges and universities. The topics of retention and completion in the world of higher education have received a great deal of attention in the past twenty-five years (Ash & Longman, 2017). Scholars work to develop strategies, policies, and processes that will significantly increase college enrollments, increase retention ratios, and graduate the next generation of leaders (Tinto, 1993). However, in RM Christian higher education, little has been written about the retention, persistence, and graduation of minorities (specifically, Black or African American). Though statistics are available through the Council for Christina Colleges and University (CCCU) and National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), this descriptive data has not been adequately analyzed to provide a rationale for the apparent disparities between Black and White graduates. Specifically, there is a significant gap in the literature analyzing the data regarding retention and completion ratios of minorities in Christian colleges and universities that identify themselves with the Restoration Movement (RM) associated with Christian Churches and Churches of Christ. This research proposes to fill this gap in the literature for both scholars and practitioners by describing two institutions that have reported positive numbers in recruitment, persistence, and graduation of Black students.
Diversity and Faith-Based Education

According to an April 26, 2017 report published in Inside Higher Education, college completion rates reveal wide gaps along racial and ethnic lines. Historically underrepresented individuals continue to earn degrees at a significantly lower rate than white and Asian students (National Student Clearinghouse Center, 2017). Institutional data from NCES and Integrated Post-Secondary Education Data System (IPEDS) report an average graduation rate of 54.8% of students who entered in the fall 2010 semester graduated from American colleges and universities (including private and public, and two- and four-year institutions). However, if this data is disaggregated by race, 62% of graduates are White, and 38% are Black.

According to George Yancey (2010), the Brown v. Board of Education (1954) verdict not only allowed black students to enter the public education system, but the court ruling simultaneously created a mass exodus of white Christian students to private schools across the United States (Yancey, 2010). Conservative Christian Bible colleges in the Restoration Movement (RM) often illustrate this point vividly; they report of significantly lower numbers of diverse student enrollments (IPEDS, NCES, 2014-2018). From 1954 to 1960, not fewer than nine RM schools were established. The Southern Education Foundation (SEF) (2020) reports that 125,000 white public school students transferred to private schools in the South; an increase of 43% during that span of six years. SEF contends that this shift was directly correlated to the 1954 ruling on Brown v. Board of Education (SEF, 2020). Whether or not this assertion holds for private, Christian colleges and universities is a subject yet examined thoroughly. Figure 1 below illustrates this point.
Today there are over 150 Christian colleges and universities accredited by the CCCU in the United States. Of these institutions, 34 (Appendix A) are well-known ministry training schools among the Churches of Christ and Christian churches affiliated with the Restoration Movement (RM), sometimes associated with the Stone-Campbell Movement (Webb, 2003). The number of Black or diverse students enrolled in these Christian universities is low. The statistics for retention and graduation of minorities in RM colleges and universities are meager (IES/NCES, 2018) despite the Christian tenets that promote equality and inclusion among all cultures and races. Few Christian colleges of similar size and mission have more than 20% of their populations comprised of Black students enrolled each year (IPEDS, NCES, 2018).

According to NCES (2018, 2019), there are 18 institutions with undergraduate populations of between 100-300 students in the United States that identify with the Restoration Movement. Of these 18, only two demonstrate any consistent recruitment (20% or above), retention (20% or above), and graduation (10% or above) of Black students (IPEDS/NCES, 2019). These two colleges include Texas Christian College* (College A), located outside of a
major metropolitan area in central Texas, and Atlantic Coast Christian University* (College B), located near the Atlantic coast of North Carolina. Each of these institutions, like most of the Christian colleges and universities in the Restoration Movement, was founded by Churches of Christ/Christian Churches, with a mission focused on training ministry leaders for local congregations and faith-based organizations (CCCU, 2018). These schools have similar demographics, mission statements, and program offerings (CCCU, 2018 and IPEDS, 2018). This case study seeks to reveal the policies and processes that each of these institutions has implemented to recruit, retain, and graduate Black students.

One school within the Restoration Movement serves as a statistical anomaly. Southern* Christian College (SCC), once called Wilson-Summit*Bible College, is situated in a large city in central North Carolina. This college has a Black student population of 97% and graduates 100% of that population (IPEDS/NCES, 2019). SCC’s student population (under 100 students) excludes it from this analysis. However, it does illustrate how the RM has chosen to create separate institutions for minorities rather than to integrate minorities into already existing, predominantly white colleges and universities (Webb, 2003).

SCC’s creation was much like the emergence of historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) of the late 1890s. These colleges were created to offer higher education to minorities (White House Initiative on HBCUs, 2008), intending to provide Black people with a separate but equal opportunity for education. They were viewed as an alternative to having Black students in predominantly white institutions. Colleges like SCC served as a place where minority (primarily Black) Christians could train for ministry without attending Bible training institutions that were predominately white, thus reinforcing a separate but equal policy aimed at keeping races separated (Webb, 2003). This fact is essential to remember, as many higher
education institutions were not accessible to Black or diverse students in the public sector, or institutions designated as private (Webb, 2003).

“For 20 years, the Annual Financial Aid Survey of CCCU Institutions has tracked trends in enrollment, financial aid, and other financial health indicators, including tuition and fee revenue, net tuition revenue, discount rates, and the percentage of students utilizing need-based aid at Christian colleges and universities” (Satre, 2019). In more than thirty CCCU institutions, there is a report of a sharp decline in enrollment. This decline in Christian school enrollment includes all students, regardless of their demographics or students’ ethnicity (Satre, 2019).

Subsequently, T. Scott Womble of Saint Louis Christian College in St. Louis, Missouri, questioned the viability of Bible colleges and universities in his 2018 master’s dissertation at George Fox University. He cited several reasons for concern, suggesting that administrators and faculty at RM Christian colleges and universities will have to make drastic changes. He suggested in his research that RM Christian colleges and universities have been slow or dismissive about addressing cultural issues within their institutions and enrollments have suffered much. Womble stated:

(A) host of culturally specific issues has stressed the foundation of biblical higher education. For example, The shifting of the US ethnic and racial demographics, the proliferation of advanced digital technologies and data, and the move from traditional degrees to continuous learning platforms’ have created an unstable environment to which Christian higher education must adapt to remain viable and ultimately to thrive (Hulme, Groome, & Helzel, 2016, p. 15).

For Restoration Movement Bible colleges to survive, Womble asserts that they must “provide more flexible and relevant approaches to education that will meet the needs of an ever-
changing society” (Womble, 2018, p. 14). These concerns center on the same issues that many Christian institutions are dealing with, and in fact, represent a significant fear that the death of the Bible college is imminent if they continue to operate a “business as usual” policy and practice.

Though physically located in or near urban areas with large populations of culturally diverse people, many of the Restoration Movement colleges and universities report that 10.6% of its students are Black among 23 RM schools of similar size and mission (see Appendix A). As Black student populations increase in the United States, RM Bible colleges are met with the difficulty of creating specific plans of action to meet the needs of the diverse populations headed to their institutions. These plans would need to lay out a strategy for adequately recruiting, retaining, and graduating Black students. Bible colleges are tasked with the job of matching their stated mission statements with policies of inclusivity. The reasons why small, private Christian colleges in the RM do not have substantially diverse communities could be hypothesized, but this research does not focus on the “why” but rather on the “how.” The focal point of this case study research sought to reveal how two specific institutions are successfully recruiting, retaining, and graduating Black students by uncovering the policies and procedures that are applied at those institutions of higher education.

**Statement of the Problem**

There is a gap in the literature associated with the successful recruitment, retention, and graduation of Black students at small, private Restoration Movement Christian colleges and universities (Ash & Longman, 2017). Many institutions in public higher education have made significant changes to intentionally improve inclusive recruitment practices and employed specific tactics aimed at retaining and graduating Black students. This includes adding Diversity
and Inclusion offices and staff, and increasing funding for training, et al. (CCCU, 2020). However, there is no research or literature on how private, RM Christian colleges and universities are intentionally addressing these issues (CCCU, 2020). This lack of research has created an obstacle (whether purposefully or inadvertently) to fully understanding how to address diverse students’ recruitment, retention, and graduation rates as a scholar and a practitioner.

**Purpose of the Study**

This research intends to fill the gap in research and to assist the scholarly practitioner. The quantitative data gathered in this study will reveal or substantiate why there is such a large disparity between Black students and White students who graduate from RM Christian colleges and universities. The evidence revealed may create a catalyst for changing recruitment and retention practices that may increase Black students’ completion ratios. The research will also examine the effects of re-acculturation or acculturation activities to serve Black students to create a welcoming environment. These activities encourage the completion of degree programs in these institutions (Tinto, 1993). The data, especially the qualitative data, can be used in the design of Orientation activities held at the beginning of each semester. These changes, based on the research, would have direct effects on housing assignment processes, the design and planning of campus events, and the creation of other policies, programs, and processes aimed at creating a community as suggested by Tinto (1993).

This research will examine the phenomenon of creating favorable circumstances in the recruitment, persistence, and graduation of diverse students at private, RM Christian colleges, and universities. Furthermore, research will help inform similar colleges of these best practices to affect their institutions’ changes.
Research Questions

The overarching research questions guiding this case study are: What institutional practices and policies influenced positive retention and graduation of Black students in small, private Christian colleges and universities associated with the Restoration Movement?

- What practices positively influence the recruitment of Black students?
- What campus events, programs, and activities influence the retention of Black students?
- What campus events, programs, and activities influence graduation rates of Black students?

Conceptual Underpinnings

Establishing an appropriate lens for examining diversity issues in Christian higher education includes reviewing racial, cultural, and even historical perspectives. The three conceptual underpinnings that formulate the basis of this research include the following: Restoration Movement, the tenets and racial relationships found in the Restoration Movement, past and present (Webb, 2003 and Yancy, 2010); Critical Race Theory (CRT), examining Black students’ higher education issues through the lens of CRT (Bell and Freeman, 2017); and Social Integration Theory, the programs, and processes that higher education has employed to promote Black students’ retention (Tinto, 1993; Seidman, 2005; and Ash & Longman, 2017). Each of these provides the foundational concepts needed to create a complete picture of how Black students persist in higher education institutions, specifically in private, four-year, not-for-profit, RM Christian colleges, and universities in the United States.

Restoration Movement

The Restoration Movement has long touted itself as one of the most conservative Christian organizations among the other American church denominations (Webb, 2003). With
strict adherence to the biblical text, RM churches have become known for their views on several subjects (Webb, 2003; Murch, 2004). These activities include the weekly celebration of the Lord’s Supper, baptism by immersion in water for the forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit, and allowing each of its churches to operate independently without a hierarchy of governance beyond the local Church. The mantra of the Stone-Campbell Movement is that the Church shall speak where the Bible speaks and be silent where the Bible is silent, and that diligence is necessary when the Bible addresses an issue (Murch, 2004). However, outside of these tenets, churches can operate with relative freedom (Webb, 2003; Murch, 2004).

Of course, this freedom has many limitations. Some of these limitations include issues directly affecting marginalized groups of people (Tisby, 2020). For instance, women are not afforded opportunities to serve in high leadership (elders or preaching ministers). Moreover, the role of historically underrepresented people has been minimal, if existent at all (Tisby, 2020). For the most part, history has revealed that minorities in the RM have been assisted in forming their separate congregations, thus creating a “separate but equal” scenario that discouraged the mixing of races within congregations (MacLoughlin, 1981). Setting up these separate congregations would allay any fears that people might have about violating the faith’s principles. After all, the Bible requires in the Old Testament that Israel’s nation not mix with other nations. Such mixing would result in excommunication or death of the offenders (King James Version, Deuteronomy 7:3-4). The New Testament of the Bible tells slaves to obey their masters; thus, slavery must be an acceptable or reasonable situation in some cases (New International Version, Ephesians 6:5-8, 1994). Treating people of other races kindly, being benevolent, and offering physical care to others are central biblical tenets; however, to accomplish these tasks, one should assist diverse communities in building separate places of worship outside of the mainline white
congregations (Murch, 2004). The founders and leaders of the RM, including Alexander Campbell, and Barton W. Stone, led the way among congregants by freeing their slaves (Daugherty, 2015), providing for Black people to sit outside the church house to hear Sunday sermons, and assisting Black communities in establishing places of worship (Webb, 2003). However, at that time, expecting White and Black people to sit together inside churches was not something to be debated or considered (Webb, 2003).

**Critical Race Theory**

This research concentrates solely on Black Americans’ plight in the higher education setting through Critical Race Theory’s emergence from the Civil Rights Movement on college campuses in the 60s and 70s. This plight was examined through the lens of Critical Race Theory (CRT). During the mid-1970s, CRT emerged from the early work of Derrick Bell and Alan Freeman, who were discontent with the slow pace of racial reform in the United States (Delgado, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1998). According to Gordon (1990), CRT originated from the Critical Legal Studies (CLS) movement (as cited in Ladson-Billings), which failed to address the “effects of race and racism in the US jurisprudence” (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004, p. 26). As a result, CRT analyzes the role of race and racism in perpetuating social disparities between dominant and marginalized racial groups (DeCuir & Dixson; Ladson-Billings; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). CRT’s purpose is to unearth what issues are ignored or assumed when analyzing race and privilege, as well as the profound patterns of exclusion that exist in US society (Parker & Villalpando, 2007).

Even as CRT’s tenets are used in the legal system, there is also a large influx of these principles found in higher education (Gordon, 1990). Colleges and universities are grappling with diversity and inclusion issues on their campuses (Ash & Longman, 2017). For example, in a
predominantly white institution (PWI), only working toward increasing the number of enrolled Black students is an insufficient goal if institutional change is a priority (Ash & Longman, 2017). Examining the campus climate efforts to have culturally competent and diverse staff, faculty, and administrators is a more effective way of becoming more diverse and inclusive (Ash & Longman, 2017). The tenets of CRT can be used to uncover the ingrained societal disparities that support a system of privilege and oppression (Delgado, 1995).

**Social Integration Theory**

This research also references the writings of Vincent Tinto and his social integration theory, coupled with the concept of re-acculturation, as described by Nicki Cole (2020). Tinto is considered by many to be the leading authority on college campuses for guidance in the retention and completion of students in higher education (Braxton, 2019). Tinto, a professor at the University of Syracuse, wrote during the 60s and 70s, seeking to discover how schools could make a more concerted effort in integrating cultures through intentional social gatherings to create campus communities. While CRT explains some of the issues related to race in higher education (primarily from an opposing point of view), Tinto helps describe the spectrum of challenges colleges and universities face in retaining and graduating any college student. According to Tinto (1975, 1993), higher education’s failure to recognize and create “rites of passage” has dramatically affected college retention rates. Tinto’s integration framework provides a deeper understanding of social integration on college campuses; in other words, when students feel like they are a part of the campus community, retention increases. Then he offers practical suggestions on how to make positive changes.

Accordingly, Bean (1980, 1983) elaborated on Tinto’s research and connected student satisfaction with retention. Thus, there was a reactionary influx of programs and policies on
college campuses, which were added to increase student connectivity. For many years, new student orientation focused on studying and figuring out a class schedule. However, now, orientation programs focus on creating a sense of community on campus. The focus is now on programs meant to connect students with resources for mental or physical health services, connect to upper-level students as tutors or mentors, and plan social activities and events (Museus, S. D., & Jayakumar, U. M., 2012). In reaction to these theories, colleges embrace the idea that integrating academics with “daily life” has a remarkable effect on retention and graduation ratios. Embracing this concept has led to a marked increase in the creation of events and activities designed to increase the integration of student social life and academic life on college campuses (Hunter, 2012).

Nicki Cole focused her work in higher education on the issues of acculturation or re-acculturation. These terms have recently become trendy terminologies in geopolitical and social/cross-cultural settings (Cole, 2018). They are meant to express how social, psychological, and cultural foundations are maintained while new cultures are adapted. In other words, a person could stay true to their cultural heritage (language, customs, et al.) while learning to be a part of a more significant community experience (Cole, 2018). In this form of social integration theory, acculturation and re-acculturation are concepts that are gaining more and more traction in the realm of higher education. Acculturation is “a process of social, psychological, and cultural change that stems from the balancing of two cultures while adapting to society’s prevailing culture” (Cole, 2018, p.3).

Like social integration theory, acculturation recognizes the significant effect that creating increased student connectivity has a positive effect on retention. However, acculturation takes this concept a few steps further by creating a space that encourages students to maintain their
primary culture while becoming part of another culture. This balancing act requires that students go outside their comfort zone (what they would consider being a healthy activity) to do something they have never experienced before to create a new community with people from a foreign culture.

Cole’s theoretical framework represents pragmatic and positive suggestions to improve campus culture. The work pulls some Tinto tenets, explaining the connection between the student development department’s efforts at an institution, with definite improvements in institutional processes and programming. This combination of efforts contributes to an increase in retention ratios in student populations. Critical Race Theory offers a framework of “why” or “how” schools arrived in their current states, while Cole’s theory on acculturation addresses the question of “what next” or “what should we do?”

These variables will differentiate information available on larger college campuses affiliated with larger populations or have multiple program offerings and recruit for purposes outside of ministerial fields.

**Design of the Study**

This case study utilized mixed methods to describe and interpret factors that promote or hinder Black students’ recruitment, retention, persistence, and graduation at two faith-based private colleges that identify as Restoration Movement. The qualitative data of this case study was used to describe persistence factors, as suggested by Tinto (1993) and Padilla (1999), as such data is required when examining the reasons why students persist in higher education. The sections below outline the study’s design by describing the setting, participants, data collection tools, and data analysis process.
Setting

This study’s setting involved two Restoration Movement Christian Colleges of similar background, size, and purpose. Both institutions offer associate and bachelor’s degrees in ministry-based programs and have a full-time, on-campus student population of between 100 and 300 students. Both institutions identify themselves as a ministry of the Restoration Movement churches (Church of Christ and Christian Churches). Both are considered small, private Christian colleges with moderate entrance policies; students do not have to be from the Restoration Movement churches but are asked to acknowledge that they have distinct faith statements accessible to all students (Organizational Websites, 2020).

Each institution has a similar university structure in its organization, with a traditional hierarchy bureaucracy, led by a president overseen by a Board of Trustees. The executive teams, comprised of vice presidents for each of the major departments (academics, campus life, enrollment/admissions, development, and business), oversee corresponding deans, directors, and coordinators under them in their subsequent departments (Bohlman & Deal, 2013). Each of these institutions has a dean of enrollment management who coordinates with admissions and academics in recruitment, admissions, retention, and graduation rates. The VP of Academics coordinates with the VP of Enrollment to report to the faculty, residence life, and ancillary staff to identify struggling students and steer them to the appropriate person. This coordination might involve academic coaches, student development personnel, counselors, advisors, coaches, or others (Organizational Documents, 2020), focusing on students’ persistence at the institution.

Both institutions in this research designate the responsibility of monitoring and student persistence to the academic department, with coordination from student development (campus or student life). Generally, each of the Enrollment VPs sees their role as completed after the
recruitment, application, and enrollment of a student is completed (Organization documents, 2020). The students then become the responsibility of the academic and student development departments. Though many colleges and universities include enrollment management in retention issues, these smaller faith-based institutions do not (Organization documents, 2020); this understanding will help explain some of the disconnects between department administrators and retention, persistence, and graduation issues (Tinto, 1993; Ash & Longman, 2017; Organizational documents, 2020).

Participants

This study was comprised of three data points, which are as follows: 1. Interviews with two focus groups: Focus Group A and Focus Group B (two groups of 5-9 Black students from each institution, College A and College B); 2. Four separate individual interviews, one with each of the administrators (two VPs of Academics and two VPs of Student Development); and 3. A survey was sent to all the Black students whose names were submitted by each college administrator. The use of these three data points created triangulation and was presented alongside descriptive data from NCES.

The focus group interviews for each institution included currently enrolled, full-time students who identified themselves as Black or African American. A pool of participants was created from each institution’s VP of Academics and VP of Student Development suggestions. Each administrator was asked to provide a list of fifteen to twenty students who met the criteria (currently enrolled, full-time students identifying themselves as Black or African American). The researcher chose nine participants at random from this pool of names and arranged a meeting date and time suitable for a joint Zoom meeting for each focus group. Each of the participants was chosen and contacted via email, anticipating at least five to nine participants agreeing to the
meeting. The interviewer provided the focus group with ten questions before their use in the group interview. Participants were given consent forms ahead of time, agreed to an audio recording of the group interview, and asked basic demographic questions for data collection before their focus group participation. The researcher made field notes of the group members for analysis after the interviews were conducted (Creswell, 2012 and Seidman, 2013).

In addition to student participants in focus groups, individual interviews were conducted with four administrators (two Vice Presidents of Academics and two Vice Presidents of Student Development) from each institution. Each administrator had been in their positions for more than five academic years; and worked at many different levels within their institution. Each administrator has been a part of their institution for more than five years, some having served as faculty, then deans before becoming vice presidents, and one administrator served as a faculty member at a sister institution. The administrators are graduates of the college they are employed at or a similar institution (RM, faith-based, private colleges) and are currently members of an RM congregation. These personal interviews with college administrators lasted just under one hour in length, and questions were drawn from a pool of ten pre-determined questions (Creswell, 2012; Appendix J). Participants were given questions ahead of time via email and were asked to read over them before the agreed-upon interview time, and each signed and returned consent forms that accompanied the questions. Responses were collected in an audio recording which was then transcribed using the transcription software tool, Trint.

In addition to the focus groups and individual interviews, the researcher sent a questionnaire containing Likert-rated questions and open-ended questions. The five Likert-rated questions using a six-point scale (ranging from strongly agree to disagree strongly) to the entire list of suggested Black students submitted by the administrators at each institution. The survey
was conducted anonymously using Google Forms. The researcher used respondent validation by asking each student participating in the study to verify their race, age, and class level at the onset of the questionnaire (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Respondents were also asked several open-ended questions and asked to rate their attitudes or views on various topics on retention, persistence, and graduation. A simple independent t-test, assuming normal, continuous distribution, was used to analyze the data. This data was gathered to determine if there was a significant difference between the group members (Merriam, 2009).

Though analysis of quantitative, descriptive data made readily available through the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) and Council for Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU) was used, the researcher carefully gathered a large amount of data qualitatively through these interviews and the focus group.

**Data Collection**

Data collection was initiated using guidelines for the case study approach outlined by Sharan Merriam (2009). This qualitative approach was used to describe common points among people with like experiences of a phenomenon, focusing on commonalities among the participants (Merriam, 2009). The researcher wanted to ascertain how participants described or felt about their experience as students and administrators at College A and College B. This research involved several interviews and focus groups targeting essential people at each college who had similar experiences at their institution (Krueger & Casey, 2009). Though there are similar surveys that gauge retention, persistence, and graduation available for higher education researchers, the researcher wished to ask several rated survey questions and several open-ended questions that were more specific to the RM institutions.
Tools

Dated informed consent forms were used to protect all participants and acknowledge the participants’ rights during data collection via email (Creswell, 2012; Appendix G & H). Formal consent forms were submitted and subsequently approved by the IRB Committee of the University of Missouri – Columbia and UCM (Appendix G & H). Qualitative research data were not collected without dated letters of informed consent from all participants (Merriam, 2009). Questionnaires were voluntary, with the option to withdraw from the research at any time during the process without repercussions (Kreuger & Casey, 2009). Interviews were conducted via phone, zoom meeting, or Google meeting and were recorded and later transcribed using Trint transcription software (Appendix C - F). Pseudonyms protect all participants in transcriptions and data reporting (Krueger & Casey, 2009), and all information is kept confidential (Creswell, 2012; Merriam, 2009). The risks of participation in this study were not different from everyday risks in the participants’ professions and positions (Merriam, 2009). Data were kept in a locked room or secured behind passwords. The researcher has no personal connection with any of the participants in this study, aside from being a college professor in a similar institution.

Data Analysis

Quantitative Analysis

The study used the direct investigation of the recruitment, retention, and completion rates at each of the two RM Christian colleges and universities, exploring data thoroughly with the intent of discovering what phenomena are evident to create the positive ratios that have existed at the institution over five years (2014-2018). The data gathered quantitatively from the participants, IPEDS/NCES raw data reports, and reports from the CCCU were analyzed and reported using SPSS. These reports revealed statistics organized and analyzed in charts and tables to reveal trends better and report correlations. SPSS helped the researcher organize the
quantitative data to examine frequencies and determine regression (Field, 2017). All quantitative data was compiled and analyzed using Microsoft’s Statistical Package of Social Sciences (2017) to determine frequencies from among Likert questionnaire answers. Charts or tables will illustrate the data to organize the information for this case study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Consideration of these three data points (focus group, individual interviews, and Likert scale data) created triangulation (Merriam & Merriam, 2009).

**Qualitative Analysis**

Qualitative data involved interviews and focus groups. Interviews for both colleges were conducted in the same location and set up via phone conference and were carefully recorded using two devices (audio recording devices); the data was analyzed using axial coding (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). All conversations from audio recordings were transcribed using Trint software and checked for accuracy.

After the data was collected, the researcher will use inductive, constant comparative analysis (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The analysis was completed with axial coding, mindful of connections between research questions and key phrases found in the recordings (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Axial coding was used to determine themes representing commonalities of ideas and experiences from the data. The codes and themes were related to the conclusions drawn about recruitment, retention, and completion ratios of black students in RM colleges and universities.

The researcher’s data analysis process was designed to determine answers to the research questions using data to reveal developing themes from the participants’ experiences. (Creswell, 2012; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Great care was taken with the data to determine reliability (in comparison with other institutions or comparable data) and validity (strength of the analysis of
the case study data from the interviews). While determining transferability, the application needs to examine and compare like institutions. The researcher must guard against over-generalizing or reinforcing negative stereotypes. When individual interview data were reviewed, the researcher utilized a system of coded memos that summarized possible themes, listed questions that were to be answered, and noted her thoughts and personal reflections (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). These memos were then used to improve questions for the survey (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

The researcher utilized several methodologies to increase the data’s validity, including an audit trail of descriptions of methods and processes used in the study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The researcher also created a detailed narrative of the study setting to formulate validity for transferability, credibility, and trustworthiness (Creswell, 2014). Triangulation provided credibility in comparing data from surveys, interviews, and themes drawn from the focus groups (Creswell, 2014; Appendix J - L). Another vital consideration addressed by the researcher was personal positionality. This perspective allows the researcher to have transparency about their role in the data itself and their interpretation (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

**Limitations**

The variables involved in this research include examining the recruitment of mission-fit students, considering the activities and circumstances that integrate students into a campus community in the first few weeks, and discovering the resources students need to complete a degree. For this study, the researcher has placed delimitations in the following ways as they pertain to the variables: recruitment, retention, and graduation of Black students (limited to any student that does not self-identify as white or Caucasian), small (between 100-300 undergraduate students), Christian (primarily non-denominational or affiliated with the Restoration Movement or Stone-Campbell Movement, churches of Christ/Christian churches), and moderately selective
four-year colleges or universities in the contiguous United States, who have limited programs that are focused on ministry degrees/training.

Several limitations were pre-determined regarding selecting colleges or universities that were to be used for data analysis. These limitations included the type of colleges and universities (private, four-year Christian colleges or universities that cited an affiliation with the Restoration Movement), size of the undergraduate, full-time student enrollment (between 100-300 students), and similar mission and degree programs. These similar degree programs include primarily ministry-focused degrees, including, but not limited to, Preaching, Christian Education, Youth Ministry, Worship Ministry, Missions, and others. Only on-site degree offerings were examined for this study when reporting data about recruitment, retention, and degree program completion.

This research identified a total of 34 institutions that are directly associated with the Restoration Movement (Appendix A). Of these 34, seven fit into the stated criteria of 100-300 full-time undergraduate students (Appendix B). Of these seven, two were selected as having the highest retention and graduation rates for specifically Black students. These statistics are illustrated in Figure 2.

![% Retention and Graduation Rates of Black Students at Seven RM Colleges of Similar Enrollment Numbers](image)

*Figure 2.* Percentage of Black Students Retained from Fall 2017 to Fall 2018 at seven RM colleges of similar enrollment.
Definitions of Key Terms

There are several terms used throughout this research that will need further clarification because of the context in which they will be used. These key terms include:

Black – review of literature has led this researcher to use the term “Black” to apply to minority persons who identify as such; however, some people prefer the term “person/people of color” or “African American,” this researcher is deferring to the term “Black” throughout this paper. For this research, persons identifying as “mixed” or of “two or more races” were excluded from the reported statistics unless noted otherwise (Martin, 1991).

Diverse – any person who does not identify solely as white or Caucasian; used interchangeably with the word “minority” or “historically underrepresented people” and does not refer to a distinction such as sexual orientation or gender (Ash & Longman, 2017).

Graduation – in the context of this research paper, this will be the awarding of an undergraduate diploma or bachelor’s degree in any course of study within the allotted four to six years given for undergraduate degree attainment (FAFSA, 2020).

Minority - refers to persons or specifically minority students; any person who does not identify as solely white or Caucasian, akin to the term racial minority. NOT a reference to gender, sexual orientation, or individuals with physical or mental disabilities (Ash & Longman, 2017). Also referred to in this research as “historically underrepresented people.”

Non-White – used to refer to any person who does not identify as white or Caucasian. This term is often used to refer to people who identify as African American, black, brown, Hispanic, or Asian ethnicities. This term appears in current literature and writings (Johnson, 2018).
Persistence – a technical term used in higher education that describes retention and continuance of education by a student; when students persist, they continue through the program showing academic progress (FAFSA, 2020).

Recruitment – for this research, this term refers to a college or university’s specific, intentional act of recruiting or inviting first-time, first-year students who never attended college, not including high school-age students who enroll in college or AP courses (Ash & Longman, 2017).

Restoration Movement (RM) – describing the religious group that identifies itself as non-denominational, founded by the Stone-Campbell Movement that sought to release itself from denominational associations. The RM churches are referred to as Christian Churches or Church(es) of Christ, are independent (with no governing body or hierarchy), evangelical in nature, and unified by the common belief of water baptism and weekly observation of the Lord’s Supper. Though often referred to as a denomination, it is not affiliated with the United Church of Christ, nor is it associated with the Disciples of Christ, though they came from the same or similar origins (Foster, 2012).

Retention - refers to the percentage of a school’s first-time, first-year undergraduate students who continue at that school the next year (FAFSA, 2020).

Significance of the Study

Scholarly Significance

From the scholarly viewpoint, knowledge is objective and independent of the knower (Anandarajan & Lippert, 2006). As stated previously, there is a literature gap about the specific events and policies that promote positive recruitment, retention, and graduation of Black students at RM colleges and universities. This study is the first known attempt to examine this issue from
that perspective while recognizing the significant cultural and religious relevance involved in this study. Understanding the historical background and the significance of making an intentional change in RM colleges and universities should be considered a high priority. This research will shed light on the issues that have directly affected the retention, persistence, and graduation of Black students in Christian institutions of higher learning. The data gleaned from the research can then be applied to processes and procedures that will positively impact Black students’ retention, persistence, and graduation.

From a scholarly perspective, it is essential to reflect on this issue’s historical record in higher education to make future changes effectively. Since the colonial days, colleges and universities in America were primarily established by religious people with religious purposes. Author Jeannine Hill Fletcher quotes Craig Wilder in her book entitled, *The Sin of White Supremacy: Christianity, Racism, & Religious Diversity in America*, describing the early colleges as “…imperial instruments akin to armories and forts, a part of the colonial garrison with the specific responsibilities to train ministers and missionaries, convert indigenous peoples and soften cultural resistance, and extend European rule over foreign nations” (Fletcher, 2018, p. 9). Fletcher goes on to explain how these “academic spaces of theological training” were the birthplace of Christian supremacy, where the concepts and doctrines of “conquest, colonization, and conversion” made its way through the colonies via preachers and pulpits, in university classrooms, and straight to powerful politicians in government (Fletcher, 2018, p. 9).

Craig Wilder’s book *Ebony and Ivy: Race Slavery and the Troubled History of America’s Universities* (2013) takes this depiction even further as he describes how America’s finest universities (Princeton, Harvard, Yale, et al.) were directly involved with the spread of the slave trade and propagated scurrilous harm to minority groups (specifically Native Americans and
Africans, and others) while at the same time training missionaries and ministers. During the formative years of the American colonies, wealthy landowners, political figureheads, and academic leaders (including several university presidents) continued to quash the idea of freeing slaves, even as the Enlightenment century reached its pinnacle.

Wilder goes on to explain that it was the Enlightenment itself that “brought the high point of the African slave trade and the rise of systematic racial extermination” (Wilder, 2013, p. 163). During this time, enlightened humanism found its way into racialism, allowing people to be grouped by their defining characteristics, rather than envisioning themselves as one people, under one God. The Church at that time sanctioned the differences between white and black as defined by God, and our duty as real men was to keep those two groups separate (Wilder, 2013, p. 160). As this sentiment grew, even those who opposed slavery did not agree that the two groups should be combined. Thus, the dividing line became more about a person’s view of slavery, not as a defense for or against racism in general.

Just as the American Revolution was beginning, the birth of the Restoration Movement’s founders took place. Barton W. Stone and Thomas Campbell (derived from the RM reference to the Stone-Campbell Movement). As America strove to put together its government and was headed toward the Civil War, these young preachers found a deistic society ready for an “Awakening” among its people. As declining attendance and divisions continued among the Puritans, Methodists, Catholics, Anglicans, Presbyterians, and Lutherans, Stone and other prominent Presbyterians left their denomination in favor of returning to the basic principles of the Bible, which included a departure from normally good church governance and the stipulations for church membership that were prevalent at that time (Webb, 2003).
Recognizing the RM founder's and followers’ separatist views and followers is one way that the scholarly practitioner can see systemic racism in the church and its colleges and universities. This research was intended to shed light on this issue to provoke Black people’s more thoughtful viewpoints on college campuses, especially Christian campuses (Paredes-Collins, 2009; Perez, 2013). The research provided data and suggestions on improving collegiate processes and policies designed to promote persistence and graduation among Black students, thus solidifying practitioner significance. Before this can be accomplished, the scholarly practitioner must grapple with the ideologies that form these foundations.

**Practitioner Significance**

Once the scholar addresses the ideological significance, the practitioner can apply those principles to actions and develop policies and programs meant for best practices or improvement. While this research will reveal an overarching scholarly significance, it will also contribute to the practitioner’s significance. The subject of diversity on college campuses across the United States has become more prevalent, and there must be significant responses to alleviate those tensions. Some examples of this distress include the 2016 racial tensions at the University of Missouri in Columbia, Missouri, the 2014 shooting of Michael Brown and subsequent riots in Ferguson, Missouri; riots and marches led by the Black Lives Matter movement, and more recently, the death of George Floyd (2020). These issues, among others, have brought national attention to the subject of racism in our country.

Many of these race and diversity issues could be addressed powerfully on RM college campuses. Unfortunately, the Christian college campus has shown little to no visible reaction to cultural issues (Ash & Longman, 2017; Tisby, 2020). This research will contribute a reference, evidentiary data, and a statement of purpose for RM schools to reflect on and hopefully make
needed changes within their institutions. The conclusions drawn by this research will have direct use for the institutional leaders who make decisions that will either prevent or promote persistence (Tinto, 2012). The results may serve as a model for decision-making in other institutions that share a common background, mission, size, and programming (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Understanding these student experiences more accurately can help institutions tailor recruitment and campus services to promote student retention and persistence (Tinto, 2012).

Restoration Movement colleges and university campuses have few diverse students (CCCU, 2020; IPEDS, 2020). White, middle-class Christian students comprise most of these RM campuses and have had little or no exposure to diverse cultures or people. Christian campuses should not ignore the social injustice that lies outside their campus communities, and they certainly should not be allowed to continue to ignore the social injustice that is taking place inside of their campus communities. If RM Christian colleges and universities are truly going to represent Christ on their campuses, that means that every person is essential, and every person deserves respect. Christians are under a biblical mandate from God to treat all people with love and respect; therefore, Christian institutions of higher learning must show how that translates into the recruitment, retention, and completion/graduation ratios seen within Christian colleges and universities across the United States.

**Summary**

There is a necessity for intentional policies and procedures to recruit mission-fit students in higher education. However, there is little evidence that Christian colleges and universities have made intentional efforts to address racial discrimination issues in their campuses’ recruitment practices. There is even less data about programs and policies meant to support the persistence of any racially diverse students who arrive on Christian college campuses (CCCU,
2018). The low graduation rates for minorities in Restoration Movement institutions illustrate this point (Tisby, 2019).

Thus far, the research has revealed a gap in the data and literature specifically for diversity issues in small, private Christian colleges and universities. Furthermore, there is practically nothing stated in the literature or reported data about diversity issues in small, private Restoration Movement Christian colleges and universities. This research intends to uncover data that will support increased retention and completion rates of racially diverse students in these institutions. This two-institution study will reveal what faith-based colleges should do and not serve minority (specifically, Black or African American) students better, subsequently positively affecting retention and completion rates for that demographic.
SECTION TWO
PRACTITIONER SETTING FOR THE STUDY

The study was conducted at two small, private, Christian colleges of like size and composition and identical historical foundations. One was located within an urban city in Texas. The other was in a small coastal city in North Carolina. This section of the research provided a more thorough description of the setting to promote the transferability of the study’s findings (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). This section describes the study’s context, describes each institution’s foundations, analyzing each institution’s organizational structures, and implications made possible by the research.

History of Organization

Two institutions (College A and College B) were included in this case study. Both colleges were private, not-for-profit colleges created by and currently supported by non-denominational Christian Churches and Churches of Christ within the Restoration Movement. Both institutions were accredited by the Association of Biblical Higher Education (ABHE) and had between 100 to 300 full-time, on-campus undergraduate students who were pursuing associate or bachelor’s degrees in some form of ministry. Each college consisted of only one campus where most of its courses were taught, students resided, and campus activities were held. While College A and College B offered online and accelerated courses, this research focused on on-campus (residential), traditional undergraduate degree-seeking students.

Both colleges were established with similar purposes: to educate Christians who sought to enter the ministry (McKinney, 1997). Likewise, the four-year bachelor’s degrees offered by each organization were similar; both colleges offered degrees in Christian ministries (preaching,
youth and family ministry, cross-cultural/international ministry, and biblical studies), as well as Business and Counseling or Psychology degrees (Organizational websites, 2020).

There are currently 27 RM colleges and universities in the United States (US), two in Canada, one in India, and one in the Philippines (NCES, 2020). Of the 27 RM schools in the US, 14 were established between 1940 and 1960 (NCES, 2020). Within those 20 years, RM churches worked to establish biblical, ministry training schools, patterned after the denominational Bible institutes and ministry training schools that emerged at the beginning of the 19th century (Moody Bible Institute, Nyack Missionary Training Institute, and others), just following the Third Great Awakening (Enlow, 2015).

Among RM colleges and universities, seven total institutions met the same criteria (NCES, 2020; Organizational websites, 2020); however, only College A and B reported that more than 23% of students enrolled in 2018 were Black (IPEDS, NCES, 2019). Colleges A and B represented foundational RM traits with comparable mission statements and programs that reflected RM principles (Marsden, 1996).

College A

College A was geographically located in a large suburban town outside of a large urban city in central Texas; College A was located with more than 40,000 people (US Census, 2009). The campus is situated on a twenty-two-acre property and includes five main buildings. Facilities included two dormitories, one for male and the other for female residents, a library, chapel, classroom building, and gymnasium. College A competed in intercollegiate sports within the National Christian College Athletic Association (NCCAA) in men’s baseball, men’s soccer, women’s soccer, men’s basketball, women’s basketball, and women’s volleyball.
The college was founded in 1950 to train leaders for evangelical Christian ministry in the
tradition of the Restoration Movement (Stone-Campbell Movement). The college was a non-
profit private Christian college dedicated to ministry and evangelistic leadership training.
College A’s mission states that the institution “educates and mentors students to be people of
influence, engaging in their calling to the work of Christ in the Church and the world”
(Organizational website, 2020).

College A was accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of the Association for
Biblical Higher Education (ABHE), formerly the Accrediting Association of Bible Colleges
(AABC), to grant certificates and degrees at the associate and baccalaureate levels. The ABHE
was recognized as a national, institutional accrediting agency for Christian colleges by the
United States Office of Education (USOE), the Council for Higher Education Accreditation
(CHEA), the successor of the Council on Postsecondary Education (COPA), and subsequently,
the Commission on Recognition of Postsecondary Accreditation (CORPA), and the Coordinating
Board of the Texas College and University System.

According to self-reported data in Fall 2018, College A had 167 full-time undergraduate
students enrolled. The National Center for Education Statistics reported that College A consisted
of the following race and ethnicity as of Fall 2018: 40% white, 24% Black or African American,
15% Hispanic, 10% Two or more races, 5% Unknown, 3% Nonresident alien, 1% Asian, and 0%
American Indian or Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, or Other Pacific Islander (see Figure 3).
The overall reported retention rate for Fall 2018 to Fall 2019 at College A was 50%, and the
graduation rate for students entering in 2010 was 23% (four-year) and 34% (six-year). Of these
graduates, Black students comprised 10%. In June 2019, eight of the 36 students graduating with
a bachelor’s degree from College A were Black students (NCES, 2020).
Figure 3. Enrollment by Race and Ethnicity at College A (NCES, 2018).

College A had developed an objective to promote diversity and inclusion on its campus by adopting an initiative that illustrated how it planned to “meet the educational needs of an increasingly diverse student body and encourage the leadership of churches and Christian organizations” (Organizational website, 2020). This initiative created a committee to enhance campus diversity through education and initiatives that received reports or concerns from the campus community. The committee comprised the faculty, staff, and students (Organizational website, Student Development, 2020; Appendix M).

College B

College B was geographically located in a small town in North Carolina, with more than 18,000 people (US Census, 2010). The college is a four-year, co-educational institution awarding associate and bachelor’s degrees and certificates in various ministry programs. The college was founded in 1948 under a different name; in 2009, the college changed its name to a university and updated its branding and marketing to attract new students (Hampton, 2009). The college fundamentally stayed the same and maintained its mission statement throughout this transition.

The campus included two dormitories (one for each gender, male or female) and a campus life building that housed a chapel, gym, and library. Students had the opportunity to
participate in intercollegiate sports, including men’s golf, men’s baseball, men’s basketball, women’s basketball, tennis, men’s soccer, women’s soccer, cross country, and women’s volleyball. Student-athletes competed within the NCCAA. All students were eligible for Title IV funds and may have applied for athletic or academic scholarships (Organizational website, 2020).

College B reported a full-time, on-campus student population of 196 for the Fall 2018 semester. Of that population, 57% White, 29% Black, 7% Two or more races, 5% Hispanic, 2% Nonresident alien, 1% American Indian or Alaska Native, and 0% Asian, Native Hawaiian, or Other Pacific Islander. The overall reported retention rate for Fall 2018 to Fall 2019 at College B was 65%, and the graduation rate for students entering in 2010 was 16% (four-year) and 42% (six-year). Of these graduates, Black students comprised 13%. In June 2019, 6 of 31 students graduating with a bachelor’s degree from College B were Black students (NCES, Integrated Postsecondary Educational Data System, 2020).

![Figure 4. College B’s Enrollment Percentage by Ethnicity for Fall 2018 (NCES, 2018).](image)
Organizational Analysis

Both colleges in the study had institutional administrations led by presidents; each president was overseen by a board of Trustees, charged with selecting and overseeing the college president, creating policies relative to fiscal matters, educational programs, and physical facilities (Organizational Websites, 2020). The organizational structures were very similar to most Christian colleges and universities with presidents at the top of the hierarchy, responsible for the colleges’ daily operations, followed by a group of five administrators in charge of the five different departments of the institution (Marsden, 1994 and 2005). These departments often included academics, enrollment, student life, finances, and advancement. At each institution, the faculty (professors and adjunct professors) reported to the administrator in charge of academics. Each college had an administrator overseeing enrollment management, tasked with admissions and enrollment of new and prospective students. The head of finance oversaw financial aid, scholarships, and budgets, income, and receipts. Advancement departments oversaw fundraising and marketing for each college. The administrator for student services primarily supervised residential students (housing and food services), student conduct, and student events.

Furthermore, both institutions illustrated how the administrative team established a balance of tension between departments within an organization (Bolman & Deal, 2013). Each administrator played a role that differentiated and integrated the organizational needs within that paradigm (Bolman & Deal, 2013). The extra effort was made to assure stakeholders that administrative tasks were tied to the college’s mission and vision to its strategic plan (ABHE Essential Elements, EE 1, 2020). Both colleges illustrated what Bolman and Deal (2013) called vertical management; both were guided by long-standing institutional policies and procedures with similar assessment practices, while, at the same time, allowing for lateral coordination.
through shared governance policies, grievance procedures, and advocacy meant to give employees a say in what happens within the institution with defined parameters (Bolman & Deal, 2013).

**College A**

College A operated its organization with a president who was overseen by six members of the Board of Trustees. The board acted as the check and balance for the president’s activities, approving strategic plans, final approval of new hires in the administrative team, expenditures, and infrastructure expenses and changes that cost over a certain amount (Board Handbook, College A, 2020). The president had five “Cabinet Members,” four of whom were referred to as vice presidents, and one was considered a director (see Figure 5. Organizational Chart and Organization Website, 2020).

![Organizational Chart](image)

*Figure 5. College A's Organizational Structure (2020).*

College A’s mission statement was as follows: “(College A) educates and mentors students to be people of influence, engaging in their calling to the work of Christ in the Church
and the world” (Organizational Website, 2020). In the past decade, the college placed a significant emphasis on student graduation rates, which had been as low as 25.5% (NCES, IPEDS, 2019 & Organizational website, 2020).

College A was characterized by its deeply rooted RM symbols and traditions intermingled with personnel and students’ needs as part of current culture and politically relevant issues (Bolman & Deal, 2013). While each department had different functions and purposes, there was a cohesive dedication to the college’s overall mission. Even as competition for funds and power was commonplace in institutions (Bolman & Deal, 2013), efforts were made by leadership to point all personnel and programs toward fulfilling the institutional mission and purpose (College A, Employee Handbook, 2020).

As is the case in any tuition-driven college, a unified force to increase enrollment and retention had to be followed to meet budgetary goals. The VP of Enrollment Management coordinated plans and strategies to increase enrollment, working alongside the other departments to create a culture of persistence needed for retention and graduation. The institution’s leaders recognized the importance of incorporating all resources and personnel in strategies to promote persistence (Seidman, 2005). While the dean of non-traditional programs and institutional effectiveness was tasked with dealing with first-year student experiences to transition into the college community, it was understood that it required the entire team to work together to accomplish this goal (Tinto, 1993).

In response to diversity on College A’s campus, several strategic initiatives, including a Diversity and Inclusion document and committee, to increase safety guidelines for diverse students were added in 2019 (Organizational website, 2020). The committee comprised seven people, including faculty, staff, and students, tasked with discussing reports or concerns about
diversity and inclusion from the College A community. College A's diversity and inclusion statement stated, "We recognize and value each person as God's created being; we are consistent in aligning our approach to diversity and inclusion with biblical truths" (Organizational Website, 2020). The goal of this initiative was "to develop a greater understanding of people in different cultures, backgrounds, and lifestyles and move forward through the lens of scripture" (College A, D & I Statement, Organizational website, 2020). For descriptive data purposes, the chart in Figure 6 below shows the number of Black students to White and other races on College A's campus from 2013-2018.

![College A: FTE Enrollment by Race](image)

*Figure 6: College A’s FTE Enrollment by Race from Fall 2013 to Fall 2018 (NCES, 2018).*
College B

College B has a similar organizational structure to College A (Figure 7 below). It includes a simple hierarchy led by a president overseen by a Board of Trustees (Bolman & Deal, 2013). College A and B's notable difference is that College A has six Trustees on their board, while College B has twenty-one. The administrators below the president are referred to as "Heads of Department," which includes four Vice Presidents (Academic Affairs, Enrollment Services, Finance, and Student Life) and one Director (Institutional Advancement). The president and department heads are charged with keeping the organization on a mission, encouraging collaboration, and effectively using resources through strategic planning and policies that best represent the institution (Northouse, 2015).

Faculty and staff are under the immediate oversight of their departmental head but can speak at employee meetings or informal grievance processes described in the Employee Handbook (Administrator document via email, 2020; Organizational website, 2020). Academic policies allow for shared governance for faculty, enabling them to approve programmatic and policy changes under the leadership of the VP of Academic Affairs (College B, Academic Catalog, Organizational website, 2020).

*Figure 7. College B's Organizational Structure*
Much like the VP of Enrollment Management for College A, the VP of Enrollment Services works with its staff to recruit new students. Tuition-driven institutions rely on students' influx, which is a vital position with adequate resources and procedures. Additionally, faculty and staff work together to encourage retention and persistence of students, as they work toward the mission of the college, which states, "(College B) is an institution of Christian higher education whose mission is to impact the world by transforming ordinary people into extraordinary Christian leaders" (Organizational website, 2020). As previously stated, students' persistence is directly affected by the college employees' interaction and the campus community (Seidman, 2005; Tinto, 1993).

College B is characterized by the "interwoven nature of its structure, personnel policies and culture, political landscape, and symbols and traditions" (Bolman & Dean, 2013, p. 15). While for-profit institutions target masses of students, not-for-profit Christian institutions tend to be more selective, as they are trying to find students who fit those traditions of the RM faith and ministry-mindedness (McKinney, 1997). The college's operations should mirror the college's desire to have mission-fit students who will ultimately increase retention and graduation rates (Tinto, 1993). Figure 8 below illustrates six years of data on students' full-time equivalency at College B, coupled with indicators of race.

![Figure 8. College B: FTE Enrollment by Race (NCES, 2018)](image-url)
Leadership Analysis

Right leadership processes are driven by institutions’ abilities to balance centralized authority and standard operating procedures versus decentralized authority and autonomy (Bolman & Deal, 2013). Both College A and College B feel the tension between these leadership styles, and each is described separately below.

Colleges A and B were comprised of a traditional organizational structure with centralized leadership over divisions or departments. The presidents illustrated direct leadership and served as the central leaders of college processes, policies, and overall vision and strategy (Northouse, 2016). The president used various strategies to meet compliance goals (Essential Elements of ABHE, 2020). There are also some situational leadership indicators where the president and his cabinet must create new initiatives to meet pressing needs that arrive (Northouse, 2016). One example of this is the formation of the Diversity and Inclusion Committee in 2015.

Though there was some indication that each college president used a delegation approach, it was more likely that members of their leadership teams volunteered to tackle situations within their respective departments. The notable differences were the names of the leadership teams. College A called this a Cabinet while College B referred to this group as the administrative team. Each cabinet member was given frequent opportunities to express their views and to suggest changes or alterations to college programming in response to events or issues that occurred during each term. Northhouse (2016) coined this structural form as an “initiating structure.” This structure was applied at both institutions.

At each institution, the faculty had shared governance, allowing for academic and programmatic changes, generally, as a group, but sometimes in committees or task forces
assigned by the academics' vice president. Staff were given a voice during employee meetings and in consultation with their direct supervisors. The grievance process was clearly outlined in the institutions’ employee handbooks.

**Implications for Research in the Practitioner Setting**

This research provided RM colleges and universities with additional information to enhance recruitment practices and college programming with the retention and graduation of Black students in mind. The information gathered from two RM colleges may have served as a template for other like institutions when considering how to increase the retention and persistence of Black students. Students often gave information during their exits from institutions that did not provide the right perspective into what the students experienced and subsequently factored into their decisions to return or complete their degrees at that institution (Padilla, 1999; Abadeer, 2009). If RM school leaders truly wished to increase Black students' retention and graduation rates, they needed a better understanding of what practices best influenced said students' returns from their unique perspectives (Tinto, 2012; Abadeer, 2009; Ash & Longman, 2017).

**Summary**

This section provided the necessary foundational knowledge of the critical elements involved with this study. Institutions wishing to duplicate or emulate the practices or structures of the two colleges involved in the study may have increased Black students' persistence at their respective institutions. This transferability indicated the study's structure, pointing out best practices, pathways to success, and historical backgrounds related to the Restoration Movement’s standards of offering education to all people, regardless of race. As most RM schools were similar in leadership structure, much could have been learned from those
institutions that had been modestly successful at cultivating diverse populations in programming, mission, and recruitment practices. The scholarly practitioner's goal was to increase knowledge and perspective on an issue that had not been adequately addressed among educational leaders at RM colleges and universities.
SECTION THREE

SCHOLARLY REVIEW FOR THE STUDY

Overview

Analyzing why students chose an institution initially was vital for college marketing strategists and enrollment managers (Tinto, 1993; Ross, 2018). Analyzing why students choose to remain at an institution has proven to be slightly more challenging (Seidman, 2005). College students tended to give an array of reasons for why they dropped out (Tinto, 1993; Seidman, 2005). Finances, academics, family issues, lousy food, depression, or even a bad roommate were cited as justification for students’ lack of persistence in higher education (Seidman, 2005). Few students indicated racial issues as they left college (Brunsden, Davies, Shevlin & Bracken, 2000). On Christian college campuses, black students comprise 29% of the undergraduate population (NCES, 2019). Confer & Mamiseishvili (2012) wrote that students liked good sports programs, attractive campuses, comfortable living accommodations, and good food (Tinto, 2005). However, there is little information in the literature that explains why Black students enrolled and persisted at small private RM Christian colleges (Ash & Longman, 2017).

One possible explanation was the RM’s historic neutrality about slavery and systemic racism (Daugherty, 2019; McLoughlin, 1981). This neutrality had little to do with whether slavery and racism were wrong but had more to do with how church leaders and preachers in the RM refused to speak against it openly (Daugherty, 2019; Tisby, 2020). Nathan (2012) wrote, "Outside of a few Quakers, almost no Whites in the early 18th century, Christian or non-Christian, questioned the validity of slavery as an institution" (p. 1). An examination of the Restoration Movement's history revealed why race issues were overlooked in higher learning (Austin, 2018). The core beliefs of the Restoration Movement did not defend nor protect against
race implicitly and became merely a side issue of little concern (Kelley, 1974). The result of RM founders' neutrality was that many colleges and universities continued to treat race as unimportant (Erikkson & Abernathy, 2014). Only a few RM colleges have created intentional initiatives to combat systemic racism (Confer & Mamiseishvili, 2012; Ash & Longman, 2017).

The literature revealed that only targeted intentional efforts to extend educational opportunities to black students resulted in desired retention and graduation rates (Ma, 2003). This literature review is broken into three parts, as reflected by section one's conceptual underpinnings. These included the following: (a) "Restoration Movement" to explain the historical backdrop of RM colleges and universities in racial neutrality and the concept of redemptive diversity; (b) "Critical Race Theory" alongside the importance of institutional mission development; and (c) “Social Integration Theory” to describe Tinto’s work on retention models and Conn’s study Psychological Sense of Community (PSC); both Tinto and Conn described the importance of community culture on college campuses and included studies and suggestion on how to create pathways to success for diverse students.

**Restoration Movement**

**History of RM and Higher Education**

In 1819, one of the prominent founders of the Stone-Campbell (Restoration) Movement, Thomas Campbell, moved to Pennsylvania (Richardson, 1872). Thomas Campbell moved there so that he was free to teach the Bible to young Black children (Richardson, 1872). In Kentucky, where he lived previously, it was illegal to teach any Black person to read or write (Rury & Tamura, 2019). Although he did not believe that slavery was in and of itself immoral, Thomas Campbell did not think it was an issue that should have been brought into the Church (Richardson, 1872). He believed slavery was a political issue and only divided the Church
(Richardson, 1872). For the better part of his life, T. Campbell tried to remain neutral on the issue of slavery (Richardson, 1872; Foster, 2012).

T. Campbell's son, Alexander, became a central person in the Stone-Campbell Movement in the 1830s (Richardson, 1872). His preaching and printed materials (*Millennial Harbinger*) urged Christians to be united in a spirit of cooperation to "avoid polarization and fragmentation over the issue of slavery" (Foster, 2004, p. 129-130). Like his father, he did not view slavery as immoral but rather as a political issue that should have been left to the government to sort out (Richardson, 1872). A. Campbell warned church members and leaders to avoid bringing political subjects into the church (Austin, 2018; Parker, 1847).

The Third Great Awakening (1850 through 1900) was a religious revival in North America (MacLoughlin, 1981). It was a time known for social and religious activism in churches and college campuses (MacLoughlin, 1981). Denominations, and the so-called “non-denominations” (RM), alike, were building numbers and establishing meeting houses across the American frontier with fervor (MacLoughlin, 1981). With this fervor came an urge to establish colleges and schools that best represented that faith community's ideals (MacLoughlin, 1981). Out of this movement arose many institutions of higher learning (MacLoughlin, 1981). Seven distinctively RM colleges were founded after the Civil War (Figure 9).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution of Higher Ed</th>
<th>Year Established</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Milligan College</td>
<td>1866</td>
<td>Carter County, Tennessee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Freed–Hardeman University</td>
<td>1869</td>
<td>Henderson, Tennessee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. York College</td>
<td>1890</td>
<td>York, Nebraska</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Lipscomb University</td>
<td>1891</td>
<td>Nashville, Tennessee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Johnson University</td>
<td>1893</td>
<td>Knoxville, Tennessee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Northwest Christian University</td>
<td>1895</td>
<td>Eugene, Oregon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Abilene Christian University</td>
<td>1906</td>
<td>Abilene, Texas</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 9. RM colleges were founded after the Civil War (NCES, 2020).*
It was during this era that three well-known Black colleges were founded. These included Washington, D.C.’s Howard University in 1867, Alabama’s Tuskegee University in 1881, and Atlanta, Georgia’s Morris-Brown College in 1885 (Tisby, 2020). During the Antebellum Period, freed Black people seeking higher education were encouraged to seek education, specifically Black colleges (Tisby, 2020). The concept became known as separate but equal, the doctrine that racial segregation is constitutional so long as the facilities provided for blacks and whites are roughly equal (Tisby, 2020). Tisby (2020) described how freed slaves were invited to sit in the famous backyard during the RM Cane Ridge Revival (Tisby, 2020, p. 68). Black men and women had gained freedom from slavery, but they were still under the weight of social separation and exclusion (Tisby, 2020). The RM leaders and revivalists, including Alexander and Thomas Campbell, Charles Finney, and Barton W. Stone, were known to be abolitionists in thought but were not in favor of integrating the Black community into the white community church (Kelley, 1974; Tisby, 2020).

In 1877, Butler University in Indiana was founded by the Disciples of Christ staunch abolitionists (Austin, 2018). Butler University was a religious institution that emerged out of the Third Great Awakening (1850-1900); it had only been 12 years after the Civil War and the 13th Amendment's ratification (Kelley, 1974). Butler's founders spoke out publicly against Alexander Campbell's neutral viewpoint of slavery (Kelley, 1974; MacLoughlin, 1981). A. Campbell, who founded Bethany College, also in Indiana, had become known as pro-slavery (Kelley, 1974).

In the words of historian Thad Austin (2018), "The conflict between Butler and (Alexander) Campbell over the issue of abolition led to the establishment of a non-profit, educational institution and served as a civil prelude to the national conflict that followed" (p. 230). Contradictions like these between the founders of religious groups of that day and leaders
at higher education institutions began to find themselves in vehement disputes (Austin, 2018). The Civil War was supposed to have ended the slavery debate, but some would argue the damage still exists (Austin, 2018). Some believe that this reparation has yet to happen (Eriksson & Abernathy, 2014). The continuation of the separate but equal doctrine in American society permeated many RM churches and, thus, permeated higher learning (Tisby, 2020).

**Redemptive Diversity**

Leaders at Christian colleges and universities often have spoken of redemption; it was found throughout their statements of faith and in their core values (Association of Biblical Higher Education, Organizational website, 2020). Most often, the redemption of which they spoke of related to the relationship between God and man (Reese, 2017). However, there was much to be said about the redemption of people with other people. Redemption represented reconciliation. Reconciliation may have included apologies, possible legal ramifications, confessions, and in some cases, reparations (Reese, 2017). Biblical redemption costs something (Reese, 2017). It was not like “grace” giving the other person a free pass for bad behavior (Reese, 2017); it required hard conversations and plotting a course to reconcile a person to the community (Tisby, 2020; Reese, 2017).

Abadeer (2009) suggested in the article, “Seeking Redemptive Diversity in Christian Institutions of Higher Education: Challenges and Hope from Within,” that even though it may have caused tension on Christian campuses, one way to combat diversity issues was to push through these barriers toward a "redemptive diversity" (p. 188). Diversity and cross-cultural engagements should be among the leading forces and objectives in Christian academic institutions of higher learning (Abadeer, 2009, p. 187). Monsma described this tension of redemptive diversity in Abadeer’s article. Monsma stated that redemptive diversity "may expose
Christian institutions of higher education to political, social, and intellectual backlashes, such as the increasing bias against Christian institutions concerning the legitimization (sic) of religion in the American academy” (Abadeer, 2009, p. 200).

One cause of fear for Christian institutions practicing redemptive diversity was that it included potential negative repercussions (Abadeer, 2009). Redemptive diversity included the gradual loss of their Christian identities through processes and trends of society trivializing religion and succumbing to secularism in academic life, marginalizing religious practices as extracurricular activities, and rejecting (or being hostile toward) the Christian faith and religion in general as restrictive, dogmatic, exclusive, and divisive. (Marsden, 1997; Abadeer, 2009, p. 189).

Abadeer (2009) continued to describe institutions that demonstrated “weak” or poorly orchestrated diversity events and initiatives (p. 190). It was suggested that great care and caution be taken in creating "half-hearted" attempts at cultural celebrations, as they do not address the core issues that were harbored deep within the institution's traditions (Abadeer, 2009, p. 195). Further, Abadeer (2009) called for Christian colleges and universities to consider the issues of heritage, mission statements, and identity to consider diversity outside of their campuses (p. 196).

**Critical Race Theory**

While the RM leaders supported the redemption of humankind and redemptive diversity sought to reveal and repair the diverse community's brokenness, Critical Race Theory examined to right the wrongs of racism through the law (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). The process of creating a community on Christian college and university campuses was full of conflict and contradiction (Ash & Longman, 2017). As posited in the section on the history of RM schools,
most of the founders purported a neutral viewpoint on race issues (MacLoughlin, 1981; Kelley, 1974). This neutrality created a core belief that affected RM institutions' current philosophies (MacLoughlin, 1981; Kelley, 1974). Evidence of this might have been found in the current perspectives on Critical Race Theory (Nathan, 2012). The CRT issue was mentioned in Yosso's article in the 2005 edition of “Race, Ethnicity, and Education.” Yosso (2005) pointed out that communities were separated by cultural wealth and contended that CRT’s basic tenets (law and legal institutions were inherently racist, that race was a social construct, and that the real issues of society center around power and wealth) caused Americans to question the traditional interpretations of cultural capital (Yosso, 2005; Bell, 2009; Delgado & Stefancic, 2017).

Critical Race Theory has recently received criticism from Christian public figures and institutions (French, 2020). Among these critics were Dr. John MacArthur, Dr. J.P. Moreland, and Dr. Timothy McGrew (Piper, 2020; Hall, 2019; French, 2020). These theologians had a broad audience among evangelical Christians from many faith backgrounds and have publicly warned the Church about the dangers of CRT (Hall, 2019; Zeppieri, 2018). The main opposition to CRT from fundamental Christians was that this theory could not provide an adequate solution to racism in America (French, 2020). These and other theologians proposed that the Word of God and the Holy Spirit were the only ways that racism's injustices could be thwarted (Piper, 2020).

According to Christian author and lawyer, French (2020), Christians were looking at CRT as a flawed theory and, subsequently, a flawed solution, when instead, it should have been used only as an explanation of racism in the United States. Rather than focusing on the dangers such controversial philosophical viewpoints might have stirred up, French (2020) suggested in the article in The Dispatch that CRT was "an analytical tool (one of many) that can help us
understand persistent inequality and injustice in the United States” (p. 1). While French admitted that using CRT as the only lens to view systemic problems, like racism, was contradictory to scriptural truths, the author believed that Christians needed to use it as a tool to understand better the viewpoint that was being taught (primarily in universities and law schools across the country) and presented in various forms of media. French (2020) further explained in the article entitled, "The Use and Abuse of Critical Race Theory in American Christianity" (September 13, 2020) that Christians needed to have a better understanding of why racism has been so pervasive in society and that American Christians needed to examine other viewpoints, not replace Scriptural tenets.

French’s (2020) definition of CRT definition acknowledged that CRT recognizes that racism is engrained in the fabric and system of American society. The individual racist need not exist to note that institutional racism is pervasive in the dominant culture. Thus, this becomes the analytical lens that CRT uses in examining existing power structures. CRT identifies that these power structures are based on white privilege and white supremacy, which perpetuates the marginalization of people of color. (p. 2)

However, asking American Christians to view race through any lens, but Scripture is something of a battle (French, 2020); nonetheless, it is a topic Christians must look at with intentionality (French, 2020).

*Mission Development*

Perez was the dean of Transitions and Inclusion at George Fox University, a conservative Quaker college in Oregon (Perez, 2014). Perez submitted that it needed to first adjust its institutional mission for the institution to adjust its stance on diversity and racism (2014). Perez’s
article "Diversity at Christian Colleges: It is About Mission" provided research from a qualitative case study of four Christian colleges (Perez, 2014); each college purposefully addressing issues of diversity on their campuses (Perez, 2014). The study’s focus sought to discover the importance of the college's mission statement and how it affected desired changes in the college campus community's diversity (Perez, 2014). Perez's research provided various tools that institutional leaders could have used to increase Christian campuses' diversity. These tools included intentional hiring, enrollment strategies, and curriculum development (Perez, 2014). Perez (2014) stated that it was also vital for the institution to examine its mission statement for intentional diversity. Furthermore, diversity must show itself in the institution's curriculum and employees (Perez, 2014). Perez (2014) stated, "Students of color or students from underrepresented groups need to be able to see themselves in the curriculum and the faculty to be able to thrive, so that is important" (p. 21).

Paredes-Collins (2009) writes in the Christian Higher Education about the institution's prioritization of diversity. According to the article, students were not interested in the marketing spiel or even the mission statement if they only talked (Paredes-Collins, 2009). The evaluative study examined the diversity of student enrollment at four CCCU schools. Paredes-Collins' (2009) subsequent article, "Institutional Priority for Diversity at Christian Institutions," provided perspective on the intentionality, environment, and demographic awareness of the colleges within a typology by rating them as high, moderate, or low institutional commitment. This study and Perez’s research revealed the importance of the institutional mission and its intentionality in recruitment efforts.
Social Integration Theory

College personnel familiar with Vincent Tinto's work in college retention models and interactionist theory had a firm grasp of the importance of creating a campus community (Brunsden et al., 2000). Seidman (2005) cited Tinto's four issues that directly correlate to student retention: (a) economics, (b) organizational, (c) sociological, and (c) psychological (Braxton, 2000). A more recent study by Conn (2017) expostulated Tinto’s ideas, reporting the most influential factor for retention was the psychological sense of community (PSC).

Psychological Sense of Community (PSC)

Conn (2017) reported a study conducted on 6,322 undergraduate students from 11 institutions in the Council of Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU). The study used a Thriving Quotient questionnaire in a hierarchical multiple-regression analysis (Conn, 2017). The findings indicated that assisting students in developing a sense of campus community was of utmost importance (Conn, 2017). Simultaneously, financial need and the students’ perceived integrity of the institutions played a role in their decisions, but the PSC was the highest (Conn, 2017). The community was not merely location and homogeneity; today's students viewed the community as relationship-based, having civic awareness, being global citizens, and social awareness (Schreiner, 2019, p. 152). Students valued student-faculty interaction, volunteerism, and engagement with diversity as predictors of social agency and civic awareness (Schreiner, 2019). These were the types of psychological support structures students desired to formulate in their communities (Conn, 2017).

There was no distinction made between racial distinctions in either Conn's (2017) or Schreiner's (2019) findings, and it was appropriate to conclude that most of that data perspective was from a white point of view since 71% of students in Christian colleges and universities are
white, according to CCCU and NCES (2019). Therefore, it was critical to include the PSC for students of color in this literature review tended to be slightly different (Conn, 2017). According to Tienda (2013), data from white students' perspectives could not have been applied to students of color. Students from diverse communities, in particular Hispanic and Black backgrounds, faced more significant economic and social inequalities that created larger gaps in retention and graduation rates for their respective races. Tienda (2013) challenged higher education administrators to do more than just talk about diversity. Instead, Tienda (2013) encouraged them to institute innovative strategies to formulate instructional missions and to use best practices for integration practices that included cross-race dialogues, programs, and peer-led activities.

Likewise, scholars García and Guerra (2004) found that such deficit approaches to schooling began with overgeneralizations about family background and were exacerbated by a limited framework to interpret how personal views about educational success are shaped by personal “sociocultural and linguistic experiences and assumptions about appropriate cultural outcomes” (p. 163). Educators often assumed that schools worked and that students, parents, and the community needed to change to conform to this already effective and equitable system (Yosso, 2005). Such was the educational paradigm most often touted by Christian institutions – tradition and pedagogy that are void of cultural sensitivity (Hunn, 2014). Thus, the neutral viewpoint that individuals were all one in Christ overshadowed the need to allow cultural differences to shape a community (Hunn, 2014; Tienda, 2013; Eriksson & Abernathy, 2014).

Accordingly, Bean (1983) also elaborated on Tinto's research and connected student satisfaction with persistence. Thus, there was a reactionary influx of programs and policies on college campuses, which were added to increase student connectivity (Bean, 1983). For many years, new student orientation focused on studying and figuring out class schedules (Seidman,
However, orientation programs focused on creating a sense of community on campus (Hawkins, 2018; Tienda, 2013). The new focus now was on programs meant to connect students with mental or physical health services, connect to upper-level students as tutors or mentors, and plan social activities and events (Museus & Jayakumar, 2012). In reaction to these theories, colleges embraced the idea that integrating academics with daily life had a remarkable effect on retention and completion ratios (Seidman, 2005). Embracing this concept has led to a marked increase in the creation of events and activities designed to increase the integration of student social life and academic life on college campuses (Hunter, 2012).

Tinto’s (1993), Seidman’s (2005), and Conn’s (2017) widely accepted community-building concepts are widely accepted in the collegiate realm. Some posited that these concepts were merely forms of colonialism (Tisby, 2020; Wilder, 2013). Many colleges have long been touting the value of transforming students into one cohesive, uniform group to create a community like a societal melting pot (Wilder, 2013). Nevertheless, others proposed acculturation, which allowed students to become a community while maintaining their cultural identities (Cole, 2020).

**Acculturation**

Cole (2020) focused her work in higher education on the issues of acculturation or re-acculturation. These terms recently have become trendy terminologies in geopolitical and social/cross-cultural settings. They were meant to express how social, psychological, and cultural foundations were maintained while new cultures were adapted. In other words, a person could stay true to their cultural heritage (language, customs, et al.) while learning to be a part of a more significant community experience (Cole, 2020). In this form of social integration theory, acculturation and re-acculturation are concepts gaining more and more traction in the realm of
higher education (Coley, 2018). Acculturation was "a process of social, psychological, and cultural change that stems from the balancing of two cultures while adapting to society's prevailing culture" (Coley, 2018, p. 1).

Like social integration theory, acculturation recognized the significant effect that creating increased student connectivity positively affected retention (Cole, 2020). However, acculturation took this concept a few steps further by creating a space that encouraged students to maintain their primary culture while becoming part of another culture. This balancing act required students to go outside their comfort zones of what they would consider being a healthy activity and opt to do something they have never experienced before, creating new communities with people from a foreign culture (Coley, 2018).

Cole's (2018) theoretical framework represented pragmatic and positive suggestions to improve campus culture. Cole's (2018) work pulled some Tinto tenets, explaining the connection between the student development department's efforts at an institution with definite institutional processes and programming improvements. This combination of efforts contributed to increased retention ratios in student populations (Coley, 2018). Critical Race Theory offered a framework of "why" or "how" schools arrived in their current states, while Cole's theory on acculturation addressed the question of "what next" or "what should we do" (Coley, 2018, p. 1).

Pathways to Success

While acculturation described a much more intense shift in ideological and philosophical thoughts on college community formation, researchers still made many other options and suggestions (Absher, 2009). Several studies and articles were written to provide practical pathways to success for Christian institutions looking to increase diversity to address their campuses' race issues (Absher, 2009). One of the first ways to increase diversity on campus was
to hire more diverse faculty and staff. In the *Journal of Research on Christian Higher Education*, Absher reported that 75% of full-time faculty members on college campuses were white males. In 102 Christian institutions, the research revealed that the need for intentional recruitment of minority faculty and students was necessary (Absher, 2009).

In a study of 12 CCCU member institutions, 1,536 students of color were asked about their intent to graduate with degrees (Ash & Schreiner, 2016). Ash and Schreiner used the Thriving Quotient to assess the students (Schreiner, 2012). From this data, several suggested pathways to success were presented (Schreiner, 2012). Among these suggestions: (a) creating campus environments, (b) policies, and (c) practices that considered the unique needs of all students, equipping faculty for inclusive pedagogy, delivering on the implicit institutional promises made to a student of color during the admissions process (Ash & Schreiner, 2016). While institutional fit, student academic success, and feeling safe and protected by the institution contributed to the reported 35% of the variation in intent to graduate, students indicated their chief concerns were feeling like they were a part of the community without homogeneity was key (Ash & Schreiner, 2016).

Confer and Mamiseishvili (2012) examined the reasons that diverse students enrolled at CCCU schools. The researchers examined statistics from the College Board's Admitted Student Questionnaire PLUS (ASQ PLUS) survey, alongside information from 283 admitted diverse students from eight CCCU schools between 2005 and 2010 (Confer & Mamiseishvili, 2012). With an end goal of refining market strategies in enrollment, the test revealed diverse students were significantly impacted by campus interaction and promotional materials as primary draws to the college (Confer & Mamiseishvili, 2012).
Another pathway to success was re-thinking team-based learning pedagogy (Hunn, 2014). Team-based learning pedagogy was popular with many institutions that involved grading students in individual assessments applied to the groups or teams where they were placed (Hunn, 2014). Collaborative team projects are also assigned, and assessment is often performed using peer ratings. Some educational leaders view team-based learning pedagogy as mostly ineffective due to racial inequity and systemic racism (Hunn, 2014). Hunn (2014) explained that such pedagogy lacked cultural sensitivity, created feelings of isolation, and created social discomfort and needed to be considered from a diverse standpoint. Adjustments need to be made to accommodate students from differing backgrounds rather than white students (Hunn, 2014). The suggestion was not to discontinue team-based learning but rather to think about how it could have been more successful using a different racial vantage point (Hunn, 2014).

Summary

The literature revealed that the gaps in retention and graduation rates between White and Black students in colleges and universities were explainable through various lenses (Cole, 2020; Schreiner, 2018). If Tinto’s (1993) ideas on creating community on college campuses were the great glue that affixed students in an institution's fiber, we saw that understanding this principle was fundamental to understanding the deficit of persistence among Black students. Further, the Restoration Movement’s history and apparent historic neutrality on race issues have contributed to insufficient programs and policies that encouraged Black students to persist (MacLoughlin, 1981). If RM colleges and universities continued to fail to recruit, retain, and graduate Black students, the perception might have been that the RM had no evidenced desire to take on the challenges that came with dealing with racism and subsequent discrimination. Educators, theologians, and scholars cannot continue to view education as a privilege for the few. Education
should be accessible to all people, and this principle should be reflected in the community programming and policies of every college, regardless of the historical heritage that formed it.
SECTION FOUR
CONTRIBUTION TO PRACTICE

Plan for Dissemination of Practitioner Contribution

The dissertation will be given to the administrators of both institutions who are involved as stakeholders in student retention, persistence, and graduation, including (a) the deans of enrollment management, (b) the vice presidents of student development, and (c) the vice presidents of academics.

The presentation will be submitted to the Association for Biblical Higher Education for presentation at its annual conference in February 2024. This presentation will include an Executive Summary and a PowerPoint.

Type of Document

The information was disseminated via email to the head administrators, personnel, and students who participated in the study. A PowerPoint presentation and Executive Summary will be submitted to the Association for Biblical Higher Education (ABHE) and shared in person at ABHE’s annual convention in Orlando, Florida.

Rationale for Contribution Type

This research must be given to the primary stakeholders as a means of quantifying and qualifying the policies and practices utilized by their institutions for the recruitment, persistence, and graduation of Black students. This would also have implications for other ethnicities or minority groups that are present on their campuses. Handing or delivering a copy of the dissertation's research findings may have a direct effect on the policies and practices of each of the institutions involved. It could also be shared with other college campuses, administrators, and educators.
Of greater impact, presenting this research via PowerPoint at the ABHE Conference will have a broader reach. By formally presenting this research to educators and administrators at this conference, there is an opportunity to propose changes in policies and procedures on other campuses – 150 other member schools. The information would be presented to Christian educators who are voluntarily attending the presentation, thus indicating that they have some sort of connection to the subject matter. This would be an opportunity to share the research with a wider variety of people, coming from institutions all around the country and the world. The implications are far-reaching.

Furthermore, ABHE generally releases the information from each of the presentations to other schools, administrators, and educators on their web platform. By posting this presentation on the ABHE website and the conference's social media pages, the research data can be utilized in a variety of locations and situations within the Christian higher education community. The rationale for this contribution is to point out the issues that directly affect the recruitment, persistence, and graduation of Black students. The research is designed to address student needs and institutional shortcomings that are revealed by the research to recommend practices or policies to improve upon existing services. The proposed contents for these contributions include an introduction, setting, methods, results, discussion, and recommendations. Overall, this research is meant to positively affect the recruitment, persistence, and ultimately, the graduation of Black students who attend private, Christian RM colleges and universities.
A CASE STUDY OF TWO PRIVATE RESTORATION MOVEMENT
CHRISTIAN INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION DEMONSTRATING POSITIVE
RETENTION AND GRADUATION RATES OF BLACK STUDENTS

Executive Summary for Presentation

By Anne R. Menear
Executive Summary

Statement of the Problem
There is a gap in the literature associated with the successful retention and graduation of Black students at small, private RM Christian colleges and universities.

Purpose of the Study
The evidence revealed may create a catalyst for changing recruitment and retention practices that may increase completion ratios among Black students.

Design of the Study
- Methodology: Basic qualitative and one Quantitative analysis
- Participants: Four administrators (two from each institution); 5-9 Black students in each of the two focus groups and __ Black students from both schools in quantitative analysis.
- Data Collection Tools: Personal interviews and focus groups; quantitative Likert
- Data Analysis: Inductive, constant comparative analysis; open coding, emerging themes
- Trustworthiness: Description of setting; data triangulation; audit trail; peer review.

Theoretical Framework
Three conceptual underpinnings formulate the basis of this research includes the following:
- Restoration Movement, the tenets and racial relationships found in the Restoration Movement, past and present (Webb, 2003 and Yancy, 2010),
- Critical Race Theory (CRT), examining Black students’ higher education issues through the lens of CRT (Bell and Freeman, 2017), and
- Social Integration Theory, the programs and processes that higher education has employed to promote Black students' retention (Tinto, 1993; Seidman, 2005; and Ash & Longman, 2017).

Research Questions
How have institutional practices and policies influenced the positive retention and graduation of Black students in small, private Christian colleges and universities associated with the Restoration Movement?
- How did recruitment policies and practices affect the retention of Black students?
- How did events, programs, & activities, or policies influence the retention (persistence) of Black students?
- How did campus events, programs, and activities or policies influence the graduation rates of Black students?

Limitations
Several limitations were pre-determined regarding selecting colleges or universities that were to be used for data analysis. These limitations included:
- Type of colleges and universities (private, four-year Christian colleges or universities that cited an affiliation with the Restoration Movement),
- Size of the undergraduate, full-time student enrollment (between 100-300 students), and
- Similar mission and degree programs.

Delimitations
For this study, the researcher has placed delimitations in the following ways: as they pertain to the variables:
- recruitment, retention, and graduation of Black students (limited to any student that does not self-identify as white or Caucasian),
- small (between 100-300 undergraduate students),
- Christian (primarily non-denominational or affiliated with the RM or SCM, church of Christ/Christian churches),
- moderately selective four-year private colleges or universities in the contiguous United States,
- who have limited programs that are focused on ministry degrees or ministry training.

Significance of the Study
This study is the first known attempt to examine this issue from that perspective while recognizing the significant cultural and religious relevance involved in this study. Understanding the historical background and the significance of making an intentional change in RM colleges and universities should be considered a high priority. This research will shed light on the issues that have directly affected the retention, persistence, and graduation of Black students in Christian institutions of higher learning. The data gleaned from the research can then be applied to processes and procedures that will positively impact Black students' retention, persistence, and graduation.
A CASE STUDY OF TWO PRIVATE CHRISTIAN COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES IN THE RESTORATION MOVEMENT WITH POSITIVE RETENTION AND GRADUATION RATES FOR BLACK STUDENTS

Anne R. Menear
University of Missouri Doctoral Program
Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis
Dr. Nissa Ingraham, Dissertation Supervisor

Welcome and Introduction

Who I am and explain my background in higher education briefly.

Why do I care about this subject matter?

Introduce the research collected and a basic idea of what the research is covering.
PROBLEM STATEMENT

There is a gap in the literature associated with the successful recruitment, retention, and graduation of Black students at small, private Restoration Movement Christian colleges and universities.

While institutions of public higher education have made significant changes to intentionally improve inclusive recruitment practices and employed specific tactics aimed at retaining and graduating historically underrepresented students (adding Diversity and Inclusion office and staff, increasing funding for training, et al.), little information exists about how private, Christian colleges and universities in the RM are intentionally addressing these issues.

This lack of research has created an obstacle to fully understanding how to address the retention and persistence of diverse students. These issues are important for the scholarly practitioner in Christian higher education.

- The primary problem being addressed is the gap in the literature associated with successful recruitment, retention (persistence), and graduation of Black students at small, private Restoration Movement Christian colleges and universities.

- While institutions in public higher education have made significant changes to intentionally improve inclusive recruitment practices and employed specific tactics aimed at retaining and graduating minority students (adding Diversity and Inclusion offices and staff, increasing funding for training, et al.), little information exists about how private, Christian colleges and universities in the RM are intentionally addressing these issues.

- This lack of research has created an obstacle to fully understanding how to address the retention and persistence of diverse students. These issues are important for the scholarly practitioner in Christian higher education.
PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

Three Purposes

1. The evidence revealed may create a catalyst for changing recruitment and retention practices that may increase Black student’s completion ratios.

2. The research will also examine the effects of re-acculturation or acculturation activities to serve Black students to create an intentionally welcoming environment.

3. This research will examine the phenomenon of creating favorable circumstances in the recruitment, persistence, and graduation of diverse students at private RM Christian colleges and universities.

THREE PURPOSES:

1. The first significance lies in revealing or substantiating the disparity between the number of black students and white students represented in RM Christian Colleges and Universities

2. The data might serve as evidence for the disparity or lend itself to the explanation of why the disparity exists.

3. The research might reveal what re-acculturation or acculturation activities would best serve diverse students and create a welcoming environment that would encourage the completion of degree programs in these institutions.

The data, especially the qualitative data, may serve as a springboard for changing Orientation activities held at the beginning of each semester. These changes might affect the following: housing assignment processes, design and planning of campus events, and other policies, programs, and processes aimed at creating a "home away from home" as suggested by Tinto in his book entitled Leaving College: Re-thinking the Causes and Cures of Student Attrition (1993).

**It should be noted that this research will illustrate the phenomenon of how two RM colleges/universities achieved favorable circumstances in the recruitment, retention, and graduation of Black students. Furthermore, this research can provide a foundation for other colleges to gauge the effectiveness of their programming.**
OVERARCHING RESEARCH QUESTION

How have institutional practices and policies influenced the positive persistence and graduation of Black students in small, private Christian colleges and universities associated with the Restoration Movement?

The question at hand is what practices, if any are being employed to influence the positive recruitment, persistence, and graduation of Black students.

There is an extraordinary occurrence within RM colleges and universities, in that the number of Black students recruited to play sports at these small colleges focuses on athletic skills, more so than academic readiness and preparedness.

Is there data to indicate that student-athletes who are recruited to these colleges are being offered financial training and assistance, academic assistance, and opportunities for social integration?
RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- To what extent did recruitment practices affect the recruitment of Black students?
- To what extent did campus events, programs, and activities influence the persistence of Black students?
- To what extent did campus events, programs, and activities influence the graduation rates of Black students?

The primary focus of this research concentrated on these three questions:

- To what extent did recruitment practices affect the recruitment of Black students?
- To what extent did campus events, programs, and activities influence the persistence of Black students?
- To what extent did campus events, programs, and activities influence the graduation rates of Black students?
Establishing an appropriate lens for examining diversity issues in a Christian higher education would include a hard look at racial, cultural, and even historical perspectives.

The research centers around a three-fold or three-pronged approach.

1. The conceptual framework begins with an overview of the historical cultural and racial issues that are evident in the Restoration Movement itself, and in the college and university classrooms that emerged from that movement.
2. A better understanding of the systemic racism in American culture can be better assessed through the lens of Critical Race Theory.
3. Tinto’s Social Integration Theory helps us understand the cultural and social connections that need to be made for college students (of any nationality, ethnicity, religion, etc.) to find success in the college setting.
CONCEPTUAL UNDERPINNINGS

1. **Restoration Movement (RM)** – the tenets and racial relationships found in the Restoration Movement, past and present (Webb, 2003 and Yancy, 2010);

2. **Critical Race Theory (CRT)** – examining Black students’ higher education issues through the lens of CRT (Bell and Freeman, 2017); and

3. **Social Integration Theory** – the programs and processes that higher education has employed to promote the retention of Black students (Seidman, 2005 and Longman, 2017).

RESEARCH DESIGN

This study utilized case studies of two RM, private Christian Colleges and Universities with similar sizes, demographics, and degree offerings. The study was aimed at describing and interpreting factors that promoted Black students’ retention and completion at their respective schools. Qualitative and quantitative data were analyzed alongside narrative data to examine why students in higher education persist (Tinto, 1993 and Padilla, 1999)

Mixed methods to describe and interpret factors that promote Black students' retention and completion at two faith-based colleges that identify as Restoration Movement.

Qualitative data was used to describe persistence factors, as suggested by Tinto (1993) and Padilla (1999), as such data is required when examining the reasons why students persist in higher education.

The sections below outline the study's design by describing the setting, participants, data collection tools, and data analysis process.
PARTICIPANTS

Included:

Administrators were given a questionnaire via email and asked follow-up questions via phone (on VPs of Academics) from each institution (VP College A and VP College B).

Questionnaires were given anonymously to Black students at each of the colleges. Personal interviews were offered to students who filled out the questionnaire.

The use of these three data points created triangulation and was presented alongside descriptive data from NCES.

PARTICIPANTS:

Administrators were given a questionnaire via email and asked follow-up questions via phone (VPs of Academics) from each institution (VP College A and VP College B). Questionnaires were given anonymously to Black students at each of the colleges. Personal interviews were offered to students who filled out the questionnaire.

The use of these three data points created triangulation and was presented alongside descriptive data from NCES.

Participants included RM College administrators and Black college students.

Participant responses were coded and categorized. The overriding categories were Institutional and Personal.
CODING AND DETERMINATION OF FINDINGS

INSTITUTIONAL vs. PERSONAL

CODING:

Most of the coding that emerged from analyzing the data could be neatly separated into “Institutional” issues and “Personal” issues. When answering questions, the participants would lean toward one of these explanations. Either the institution was heavily involved in the issues raised, or they were matters of a more personal nature (primarily family and finances)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INSTITUTIONAL</th>
<th>PERSONAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>They’ve given EVERY student the same opportunities to succeed.</td>
<td>I came from a &quot;do as I say, not as I do,&quot; background. After I had my own children, I realized that I was applying this same mentality and being this example for my kids concerning higher education. I didn’t understand their reluctance to take higher education seriously or make it a priority initially. One day I realized that they would not see the importance if they did not see either of the leaders of their family lead by example in this area first. Since I have started my journey, two of my kids that were in danger of being high school drop outs, graduated high school. Two of my other children that are currently in high school are now interested in college, one will be graduating in July and has applied to several colleges and is awaiting acceptance. They have taken several college tours and are now excited about continuing their educations outside of high school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The college is well below average in making sure their African American student body is protected or even comfortable on campus. I have friends who hear Caucasian teachers allowing their nonblack students to say the N-word and not correct them. Professors make racist jokes/remarks and hide behind the idea of religion to excuse their anti-blackness or racism in general. Black students do not feel safe or motivated to be on campus due to these things. Most black students on campus feel as if they are seen as less of a person compared to the rest of the student body.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can only speak from my own experience. I have not had any opposition from the school</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I have had great support from my professors and the school’s administrative staff.

The student body at this college is made of mostly athletes. Even on the athletic teams black students/players feel like they are being treated in a manner that is not equal to their Caucasian and Hispanic teammates. Our teammates use racial slurs and there is nothing being done about it because the mentality of students, players, coaches, and faculty is nowhere near where it should be. Black students truly want to enjoy being here but can't because no one actually sees us as equal. I personally am tired of being referred to as a racial slur and no one suffers consequences.

I was only motivated to earn my degree strictly from people who were not on this campus.

Myself & my family motivate me to stay in school. Me wanting better for my life in the future motivates me also. I am very driven & determined so when things get tough I don’t tend to just wanna give up. My procrastination sometimes made it difficult to stay in college.

-Money issues: I’ve worked my jobs and taken out many loans.
-Issue regarding end goals/career path: I’ve decided to finish my degree and use it to get a job that will fund my future aspirations.

I overcame my fear of failure by realizing the success of continuing and reminiscing on the words of my late grandmother who always told me that "Nothing beats a failure but a try." Financial failure has been avoided by the support and willingness of my husband to allow me to take this risk. He has been supportive by working a second job, or doing shift work at times to meet the needs of our household. I have also taken on shift work at times when my school and parenting schedule allowed it (we have 5 children at home that are all pre-school or school age). I also received academic scholarships and grants to assist with the cost as well as financial aid.

The doubts from family was overcome by being persistent regardless of their opinions and remaining dedicated to what I know was God calling me to something higher than I desired for myself.

My husband and I have been faithful to marriage counseling and applying strategies to our marriage and family life to help navigate the strain of this temporary season.
Aside from the descriptive data gleaned from the NCES and IPEDS reports that are submitted each year, each of the students in the study were asked to fill out a Likert scale on the questionnaire that they received. From this information it is revealed that those interviewed were 75% motivated to earn their degree. Asked to further rate what circumstances best described their motivation for staying in college, these students indicated the following:

**QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>50% Strongly disagree 50% Neutral</td>
<td>Other students helped me stay in college.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75% Strongly disagree 25% Disagree</td>
<td>The sequencing (order) of my courses helped me stay in college.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25% Strongly disagree 25% Neutral 25% Agree 25% Strongly agree</td>
<td>The teaching and learning that have taken place in the classroom helped me stay in college.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50% Strongly disagree 25% Neutral 25% Agree</td>
<td>My out-of-class experiences – e.g., studying, group projects, involvement in campus activities, etc. – helped me stay in college.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75% Strongly agree. 25% Disagree</td>
<td>Factors outside of the institution – e.g., family, friends, co-workers – helped me stay in college.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Aside from the descriptive data gleaned from the NCES and IPEDS reports that are submitted each year, each of the students in the study were asked to fill out a Likert scale on the questionnaire that they received. From this information it is revealed that those interviewed were 75% motivated to earn their degree. This slide represents the data from rating what circumstances best described their motivation for staying in college.
Students were also asked to rate the college in its job of assisting minority or diverse students. 75% felt that the college assisted them adequately, while 25% did not think so.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment practices specifically targeting Black or diverse students?</td>
<td>75% = no effect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25% = neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus events, programs, and/or activities that influenced the persistence (continuance) of Black students?</td>
<td>75% = no effect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25% = neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus events, programs, and/or activities targeted to influence graduation rates of Black students?</td>
<td>75% = no effect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25% = neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactions with College Personnel</td>
<td>50% = no effect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25% = neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25% = extremely effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuition and Scholarships</td>
<td>50% = no effect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>50% = neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location of the College</td>
<td>50% = positive effect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25% = no effect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25% = neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>75% = neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25% = no effect</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FINDINGS

- To what extent did recruitment practices affect the recruitment of Black students?
- To what extent did campus events, programs, and activities influence the persistence of Black students?
- To what extent did campus events, programs, and activities influence the graduation rates of Black students?

FINDINGS:

The findings of this research are focused on answering the three research questions:

To what extent did recruitment practices affect the recruitment of Black students?

To what extent did campus events, programs, and activities influence the persistence of Black students?

To what extent did campus events, programs, and activities influence the graduation rates of Black students?

The potential exists for further research to answer these questions more fully. The people who responded to the surveys did not address the effectiveness of the recruitment practices they experienced in choosing to come to the colleges they chose. They did not mention campus events, programs, or activities that influenced their persistence or graduation.

The focus group and individual student questionnaires revealed that there were more issues for Black (and subsequently all “Diverse) students once they came to the campus. Recruitment practices were seldom if ever mentioned. When students were asked about recruitment there were several comments made about hoping/anticipating that they were being recruited the same way that non-white students were being recruited and had no reason to think otherwise.

Black students listed personal and financial reasons as their number one issue regarding persistence. This can also be coupled with family issues. Of those interviewed or surveyed, money issues and having to take care of the family (linked to money issues) were the most often cited reasons for having to leave school before graduation.

There is no outright evidence to suggest that the students in the study left their respective colleges because of racism or mistreatment. However, some students indicated that the way that they were treated made it “easier” to leave. These students were identified by the student services department at each institution. They passed along the questionnaires to specifically Black
students who would be likely to answer the questions. Honestly and within the timeframe. One such student indicated that “if I had made a stronger attachment with the college, with my fellow students, then it would have been harder to leave. But as it was, I didn’t really make any friends on campus that I could live without.” An administrator (Athletic Director at one of the RM Christian Colleges), who also happened to be Black, supported this statement by adding that he, too, felt that several student-athletes left easily at the end of the basketball season (before the end of the semester) because “they had no real connection to the student body.”

Slide 15

**THEMES THAT EMERGED**

- Racism is still an issue;
- The “one-size-fits-all” model of recruitment does not work;
- Self-reflection and Self-assessment are imperative;
- Black and historically underrepresented students face different issues than white students.

**THEMES:**

Statements drawn from the questionnaires indicated that “systemic racism” (like that described in Critical Race Theory) is occurring on RM Christian college campuses.

Research and comments from the focus group indicated that RM Christian colleges and Universities need to stop using the “one size fits all” model of recruitment. The research indicated that recruitment programs needed to be more transparent about costs and the long-term debt that college attendance may cause.

The student body at this college is made of mostly athletes. Even on the athletic teams black students/players feel like they are being treated in a manner that is not equal to their Caucasian and Hispanic teammates. Our teammates use racial slurs and there is nothing being done about it because the mentality of students, players, coaches, and faculty is nowhere near where it should be. Black students truly want to enjoy being here but can’t because no one actually sees us as equal. I personally am tired of being referred to as a racial slur and no one suffers consequences.

Racism. The majority of the student body is either Caucasian or Hispanic and most of them downplay racism and racist slurs. It takes a toll on African-American students more than people realize. I do not leave my dorm room a lot of the time because I get called the N-word
or hear the N-word day in and day out from nonblack students and it is excused by most other people who hear it as well.

The Christian ethos of the college along with the promotion of ethical responsibility to acknowledge and respect cultural differences as a Christian in a secular world played the biggest role in encouraging me to continue to enroll here.

I had to overcome the fear of failure in many areas. I feared academic failure, as well as financial failure due to the associated cost of funding my educational experience. I had to pull away from the workforce to go to school and before doing so, I was the primary breadwinner for my household. I also received lots of my family expressing doubts about my decision, which made it challenging to stay committed to my decision. There has been a strain on my marriage due to the amount of support that this decision has required financially and otherwise.

Myself & my family motivate me to stay in school. Me wanting better for my life in future motivates me also. I am very driven & determined so when things get tough I don’t tend to just wanna give up. My procrastination sometimes made it difficult to stay in college.

RM Christian colleges and Universities can and should examine their programming and policies and internally ask the questions that have been raised in this research. What is working and what is not working in these locations? What demographics are being reached? How are issues within those demographics being addressed? Or are they? These are some anecdotally driven suggestions.

Black and minority students tend to have more financial and familial limitations.

- “There has been a strain on my marriage due to the amount of support that this decision has required financially and otherwise.”

- I’ve been trying to complete my undergrad for 6 years. I am now 5 classes away. (job and family have prevented the “normal” four-year college plan)

- Money issues: I’ve worked my jobs and taken out many loans.

- Issue regarding end goals/career path: I’ve decided to finish my degree and use it to get a job that will fund my future aspirations.
Nationally, the persistence and graduation rates of Black students are lower than white students. (This does not include HBCUs). White students graduate 80+% of the time, earning four-year degrees, while Black students graduate around 60% of the time from like programs (Marcus, *The Hechinger Report*). In addition to this disparity in graduation rates, it should be noted that black students accumulate nearly 86% more student loan debt than their white counterparts.

While the concentration has been on getting students into college (regardless of their ethnicity), and the efforts made to even the playing field for college entrance, there has been little focus on what needs to happen once the students arrive on campus. Black and non-white students are subject to a degree of acculturation that is not easy to achieve. Most college campuses, especially RM Christian colleges and universities are primarily white and thus promote a white culture. This is reflected in comments from the study focus group: music, speaking, treatment by faculty regarding dress, and attitudinal differences are seen primarily through white lenses.

Furthermore, there are environmental difficulties and notable anomalies that contributed to this research. The global pandemic created by COVID-19 led to many colleges and universities closing or going online. This research has been started and interrupted by the pandemic, causing the results and findings to be limited in their scope. Before this, the research seemed more promising, more students would have been more willing and able to participate in the study surveys, focus groups, and questionnaires. The researcher had no control over these events as other issues were definitely in play.
PRACTITIONER RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Hire someone who will specifically serve as “Diversity Representative” (or Ambassador).

2. Student life should spend time training student workers and staff in diversity sensitivity.

3. Black and diverse students should be involved in the creation of student activities.

1. Hire someone who will serve as a “Diversity Representative” (or Ambassador). There is a need for Christian colleges and universities for a person present who can serve as an ambassador of the college and represent diverse students. This person would be most effective if they were non-White (Tisby, 2021). Since most faculties and staff employees on RM campuses are white, it is imperative to find someone who not only represents similar beliefs as the campus they serve but also represents and understands the people group that they serve.

2. Student life should spend time training student workers and staff in diversity sensitivity. Having employees who are involved with setting the tone and culture on the campus become better prepared for issues of diversity when they have been taught in advance what those issues might be and how to handle them. Knowledge is power and educating oneself as to the potential pitfalls puts one firmly on the road to that knowledge.

3. Black and diverse students should be involved in the creation of student activities. Concerted efforts should be made to invite or even nominate diverse students to decision-making bodies so that their input can be represented. This could be done through student councils or discipleship programs, committees, and other organizations.

**It should be noted that these recommendations are based on a limited number of replies to the questionnaire and surveys. The recommendations are being made only to the two colleges that were being researched in the study.**
SCHOLARLY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Research pathways to inclusion and create forums (both public and anonymous) for students to discuss issues openly.
- Institutions should be actively involved with self-evaluation and self-assessment (both formal and anecdotally) of institutional processes and policies.
- Campuses should investigate how to show real, substantial changes that affect the overall campus culture by hiring person(s) who are in charge of studying the issues, creating policies, and promoting campus-wide programming; someone who will make retention and persistence and graduation of minorities a priority.

It is recommended that institutions like the two in this study use time and resources to create forums in which these issues can be discussed openly and freely.

Institutions should create venues where honest and discrete feedback can be gathered, AND used. It is one thing to collect data, and it is indeed a big deal different to use the data.

Self-evaluation and self-assessment regarding procedures and policies that directly affect minority students should be completed regularly and referred to in institutional changes.

RM colleges and universities that are serious about changing their campuses to accommodate the needs of minority students will proactively change their policies and procedures with these data points in mind. Furthermore, it would be greatly beneficial to any institution that hires an administrator who deals directly with issues of race and gender as a part of the campus Title IX, FERPA, and Title IV policies. This will help them to meet, and hopefully, exceed the government regulations that are tied to these specific issues.


# REFERENCES


stanceon-criticalracetheory/

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REFERENCES


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REFERENCES


SECTION FIVE
CONTRIBUTION TO SCHOLARSHIP

Target Journal

The target journal for publication is *Christian Education Journal: Research on Educational Ministry* published by Biola University in California as one of the SAGE publications.

Rationale for this Target Journal

The purpose of this journal is to strengthen the conception and practice of Christian education in church and parachurch settings. This publication is distributed widely among CCCU and ABHE colleges and universities to inform and challenge the practices of institutions of Christian higher education. It is held in high regard among Christian colleges and university personnel (faculty and administrators) and educational researchers.

Plan and Format for Submission

This article is to be submitted electronically after the completion of the entire dissertation, October 27, 2023. It is submitted directly to the editor of the Journal. The submission requirement includes: a clear literature review, methods, results and findings, discussion, limitation, and a conclusion. The text is no longer than 25 pages with a 250-word abstract.
Case Study of two Private Restoration Movement Institution of Higher Education with Positive Retention and Graduation Rates of Black Students

Anne R. Menear
Principal Researcher
University of Missouri - Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis

Correspondence should be sent to anne.menear@gmail.com.

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.
Abstract

This case study utilizes mixed methods to evaluate the methods and processes used to recruit, to gauge student persistence, and the graduation rates of black students in a Christian college setting. It examines the institutional practices and policies that influenced positive retention and graduation of Black students on small, private Christian colleges and universities associated with the Restoration Movement how these methods and processes used in two specific universities who demonstrate the highest percentage of retention and graduation rates from among other like institutions, according to efficacy, confidence, dispositional assessments, and qualitative data gathered from multiple perspectives. The conceptual framework for this study includes the triangulation through analysis three specific areas: first, a consideration of the tenets of Restoration Movement (RM) schools in respect to their history in the United States; second, the application or avoidance of Critical Race Theory, and thirdly, the application of Social Integration Theory in recruitment and retention practices. Data collected generated a comparison of two groups utilizing quantitative analysis. Additionally, individual perspectives supported and enhanced the research design through rich descriptions of experiences students in these two schools. Data analysis revealed a descriptive analysis of what works and does not work in the retention, persistence, and graduation of Black students in private Christian schools (RM).

Keywords: recruitment, persistence, retention, graduation, critical race theory, minorities
Case Study of a Private Restoration Movement Institution of Higher Education with Positive Retention and Graduation Rates of Black Students

Introduction

Christian colleges and universities have long been touted as safe places for all people wanting to come and learn more about the Bible and theology, to earn a degree within the ministerial realm, and to have community with like-minded individuals. But somewhere in the transition from the historical/traditional “Bible” college model to what is currently present on these campuses has created nothing short of an identity crisis. When the Bible college, which was originally designed to provide ministerial leadership training for local churches, started to branch out into more liberal arts offerings, this caused mission shift. And it also caused an influx of students, some, or most of which, had little intention of pursuing ministry positions after graduation and many of whom did not have a significant faith background. As the mission and demographic of the college changed, the policies and procedures and personnel did not change with it. The institutions expanded degree programs, built more dorm space, more classrooms, and added more professors. But they did not make needed adjustments to issues that would surface in campus life.

On top of this, to draw more students, some Bible colleges lowered admission standards (CCCU data, 2020). This brought an influx of new students who would have otherwise been unable to attend junior college or secular colleges/universities. The policies to guide recruitment, processes for the on-boarding of non-Christian or non-ministry students into an unfamiliar environment had to be adjusted hurriedly and haphazardly. Unfortunately, because of the quick changes, many of these students choosing to attend religious institutions were often uninformed about degree options, financial requirements, and standards and expectations of
conservative Christian campus life. Thus, students leave because they fail courses that they are not prepared for academically, they cannot pay their bills (and sometimes did not realize how much it would cost), or they were expelled because of behavior issues they would not have encountered at home or in a secular college. In essence, these students are excited to go to college, but unprepared for how much it will truly cost, how much work it will take and what rules they will need to follow. And unfortunately, many of these students who end up in this situation are minorities.

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), Christian colleges and universities across the United States only graduate 29% of their Black students (2019). Among these Christian institutions, even fewer Black students persist and graduate from the Restoration Movement (RM) Christian institutions of higher learning (NCES, 2019). In 2018, the two best graduation rates reported to NCES for Black students was 28.6% and 24.5%. All the others fell well below the 20% mark, and three schools were in the single digits. Any college might find it hard to justify a 1.8% graduation rate of Black students, yet this is the reported ratio in a private, Christian college (CCCU, 2020). The reported low graduation rate for Black students in Christian colleges and universities creates this research opportunity.

This research intends to illuminate the retention and completion rates of Black students attending RM Christian colleges and universities. This study will examine two RM Christian colleges that demonstrate higher than average recruitment, retention, and graduation of their Black students than other RM institutions of like size and mission. In doing so, this case study will help determine what factors contribute to positive practices in matters of diversity in RM Christian higher education so that such contributing factors may be implemented at other locations.
Background of the Study

As the United States has slowly grappled with the concepts of integration along racial and ethnic lines, the issues of diversity and inclusion have found a home in mainstream media, public institutions, and political arguments (Ash & Longman, 2017). However, RM Christian higher education systems have been slower in this evolution (Daugherty, 2015). Since 2009-2019 there has been a surge of intentional diversity and inclusion policies on public college campuses (CCCU report, 2020). Unfortunately, private RM Christian colleges and universities made few, if any, changes in this regard (Ash & Longman, 2017, p. 12). RM institutions are comprised of students who are predominately white and middle class (Daugherty, 2015). Most of these private, RM Christian colleges and universities have been formed and funded by predominately white RM churches; thus, these schools are a mirror image of their supporting congregations (Ash & Longman, 2017, p. 15).

Nevertheless, not many have agreed on how to address this issue. Even within the Black community, there has been little agreement. For instance, during the Restoration Movement (also known as the Third Great Awakening, 1850-1900), several well-known Black ministers and scholars emerged. Among them, Marshall Keeble and Booker T. Washington were staunch advocates for working alongside their white counterparts (Alexander Campbell and Barton W. Stone) to evangelize the post-Civil War Black community (Daugherty, 2017). But others, like G.P. Bowser and WEB. Du Bois was critical of Keeble and Washington, vying to work for what they viewed as real equality, not just the tenets of separate but equal (Daugherty, 2017).

WEB. Du Bois noted in his book *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903) that education would be the key to reconciling the devastation brought by slavery and oppression. He stated:
(T)he function of the university is not simply to teach breadwinning, or to furnish teachers for the public schools, or to be a center of polite society, it is, above all, to be the organ of that fine adjustment between real life and growing knowledge of life, an adjustment which forms the secret of civilization (p. 53).

DuBois believed that the freed black men could only find true freedom in attaining the same levels of wisdom and intellect as white men did - through education (Du Bois, 1903). He believed that this education should be done “side by side” with much patience and peace, performing a “social surgery” that would heal a nation marching toward modern history (Du Bois, 1903, p. 64).

Dating back to the establishment of education and everyday living in the New World (Colonial America), Craig Wilder, author of Ebony and Ivy: Race, Slavery, and the Troubled History of America’s Universities (2013) stated it this way: “Colleges were imperial instruments akin to armories and forts, a part of the colonial garrison with the specific responsibilities to train ministers and missionaries, convert indigenous peoples and soften cultural resistance, and extend European rule over foreign nations” (p. 33). The architects of this New World were not seeking to make all men equal, nor were they interested in integrating new people groups, new thoughts, cultures, or systems (Wilder, 2013). The forefathers of this nation worked hard to exchange Europe’s white monarchy’s authority with the white democracy of the united colonies. Colleges and universities that arose from this worldview focused on teaching the people of the newly birthed United States about the democratic system of rules of power and teaching them how to operate in this “new way” of thinking (Fletcher, 2018).

Joe Feagin (2009) coined the phrase white racial frame. Feagin, a social theorist out of Texas A&M University, introduced this phrase in his book, The White Racial Frame: Centuries
of Racial Framing and Counter-Framing (2009). This description is meant to explain how early American colleges and universities were instituted to teach their young, affluent white men how this new country would be run (Feagin, 2009). During that time, colleges and universities were bastions of culture and tradition aimed at insulating the white man and their way of life (Feagin, 2009; Fletcher, 2018). It was not an open system of free education offered to the masses.

Within these historical controversies and contexts, the researcher will examine the present state of inclusivity in RM Christian colleges and universities. The topics of retention and completion in the world of higher education have received a great deal of attention in the past twenty-five years (Ash & Longman, 2017). Scholars work to develop strategies, policies, and processes that will significantly increase college enrollments, increase retention ratios, and graduate the next generation of leaders (Tinto, 1993). However, in RM Christian higher education, little has been written about the retention, persistence, and graduation of minorities (specifically, Black or African American). Though statistics are available through the Council for Christina Colleges and University (CCCU) and National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), this descriptive data has not been adequately analyzed to provide a rationale for the apparent disparities between Black and White graduates. Specifically, there is a significant gap in the literature analyzing the data regarding retention and completion ratios of minorities in Christian colleges and universities that identify themselves with the Restoration Movement (RM) associated with Christian Churches and Churches of Christ. This research proposes to fill this gap in the literature for both scholars and practitioners by describing two institutions that have reported positive numbers in recruitment, persistence, and graduation of Black students.
Diversity and Faith-Based Education

According to an April 26, 2017 report published in Inside Higher Education, college completion rates reveal wide gaps along racial and ethnic lines. Minorities continue to earn degrees at a significantly lower rate than white and Asian students (National Student Clearinghouse Center, 2017). Institutional data from NCES and Integrated Post-Secondary Education Data System (IPEDS) report an average graduation rate of 54.8% of students who entered in the fall 2010 semester graduated from American colleges and universities (including private and public, and two- and four-year institutions). However, if this data is disaggregated by race, 62% of graduates are White, and 38% are Black.

According to George Yancey (2010), the Brown v. Board of Education (1954) verdict is not only allowed black students to enter the public education system, but the court ruling simultaneously created a mass exodus of white Christian students to private schools across the United States (Yancey, 2010). Conservative Christian Bible colleges in the Restoration Movement (RM) often illustrate this point vividly; they report of significantly lower numbers of diverse student enrollments (IPEDS, NCES, 2014-2018). From 1954 to 1960, not fewer than nine RM schools were established. The Southern Education Foundation (SEF) (2020) reports that 125,000 white public school students transferred to private schools in the South; an increase of 43% during that span of six years. SEF contends that this shift was directly correlated to the 1954 ruling on Brown v. Board of Education (SEF, 2020). Whether or not this assertion holds for private, Christian colleges and universities is a subject yet examined thoroughly. Figure 1 below illustrates this point.
Today there are over 150 Christian colleges and universities accredited by the CCCU in the United States. Of these institutions, 34 (Appendix A) are well-known ministry training schools among the Churches of Christ and Christian churches affiliated with the Restoration Movement (RM), sometimes associated with the Stone-Campbell Movement (Webb, 2003). The number of Black or diverse students enrolled in these Christian universities is low. The statistics for retention and graduation of minorities in RM colleges and universities are meager (IES/NCES, 2018) despite the Christian tenets promote equality and inclusion among all cultures and races. Few Christian colleges of similar size and mission have more than 20% of their populations comprised of Black students enrolled each year (IPEDS, NCES, 2018),

According to NCES (2018, 2019), there are 18 institutions with undergraduate populations between 100-300 students in the United States that identify with the Restoration Movement. Of these 18, only two demonstrate any consistent recruitment (20% or above), retention (20% or above), and graduation (10% or above) of Black students (IPEDS/NCES, 2019). These two colleges include: Texas Christian College* (College A), located outside of a major metropolitan area in central Texas, and Atlantic Coast Christian University* (College B), located near the Atlantic coast of North Carolina. Each of these institutions, like most of the Christian colleges and universities in the Restoration Movement, were founded by Churches of
Christ/Christian Churches, with a mission focused on training ministry leaders for local congregations and faith-based organizations (CCCU, 2018). These schools have similar demographics, mission statements, and program offerings (CCCU, 2018 IPEDS, 2018). This case study seeks to reveal the policies and processes that each of these institutions have implemented to recruit, retain, and graduate Black students.

One school within the Restoration Movement serves as a statistical anomaly. Southern* Christian College (SCC), once called Wilson-Summit* Bible College, is situated in a large city in central North Carolina. This college has a Black student population of 97% and graduates 100% of that population (IPEDS/NCES, 2019). SCC’s student population (under 100 students) excludes it from this analysis. However, it does illustrate how the RM has chosen to create separate institutions for minorities rather than to integrate minorities into already existing, predominantly white colleges and universities (Webb, 2003).

SCC’s creation was much like the emergence of Historical Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) of the late 1890s. These colleges were created to offer higher education to minorities (White House Initiative on HBCU, 2008), intending to provide Black people a separate but equal opportunity for education. They were viewed as an alternative to having Black students in predominantly white institutions. Colleges like SCC served as a place where minority (primarily Black) Christians could train for ministry without attending Bible training institutions that were predominately white, thus reinforcing a separate but equal policy aimed at keeping races separated (Webb, 2003). This fact is essential to remember, as many higher education institutions were not accessible to Black or diverse students in the public sector, or institutions designated as private (Webb, 2003).
“For 20 years, the Annual Financial Aid Survey of CCCU Institutions has tracked trends in enrollment, financial aid, and other financial health indicators, including tuition and fee revenue, net tuition revenue, discount rates, and the percentage of students utilizing need-based aid at Christian colleges and universities” (Satre, 2019). In more than thirty CCCU institutions, there is a report of a sharp decline in enrollment. This decline of Christian school enrollment includes all students, regardless of their demographics or students’ ethnicity (Satre, 2019).

Subsequently, T. Scott Womble of Saint Louis Christian College in St. Louis, Missouri, questioned the viability of Bible colleges and universities in his 2018 master’s dissertation at George Fox University. He cited several reasons for concern, suggesting that administrators and faculty at RM Christian colleges and universities will have to make drastic changes. He suggested in his research that RM Christian colleges and universities have been slow or dismissive about addressing cultural issues within their institutions that enrollments have suffered much. Womble stated:

(A) host of culturally specific issues has stressed the foundation of biblical higher education. For example, the shifting of the US ethnic and racial demographics, the proliferation of advanced digital technologies and data, and the move from traditional degrees to continuous learning platforms’ have created an unstable environment to which Christian higher education must adapt to remain viable and ultimately to thrive (Hulme, Groome, & Helzel, 2016, p. 15).

For Restoration Movement Bible colleges to survive, Womble asserts that they must “provide more flexible and relevant approaches to education that will meet the needs of an ever-changing society” (Womble, 2018, p. 14). These concerns center on the same issues that many Christian institutions are dealing with, and in fact, represent a significant fear that the death of
the Bible college is imminent if they continue to operate a “business as usual” policy and practice.

Though physically located in or near urban areas with large populations of culturally diverse people, many of the Restoration Movement colleges and universities report 10.6% of its students are Black among 23 RM schools of similar size and mission (see Appendix A). As Black student populations increase in the United States, RM Bible colleges are met with the difficulty of creating specific plans of action to meet the needs of the diverse populations headed to their institutions. These plans would need to lay out a strategy for adequately recruiting, retaining, and graduating Black students. Bible colleges are tasked with the job of matching their stated mission statements with policies of inclusivity. The reasons why small, private Christian colleges in the RM do not have substantially diverse communities could be hypothesized, but this research does not focus on the “why” but rather on the “how.” The focal point of this case study research sought to reveal how two specific institutions are successfully recruiting, retaining, and graduating Black students by uncovering the policies and procedures that are applied at those institutions of higher education.

**Statement of the Problem**

There is a gap in the literature associated with successful recruitment, retention, and graduation of Black students at small, private Restoration Movement Christian colleges and universities (Ash & Longman, 2017). Many institutions in public higher education have made significant changes to intentionally improve inclusive recruitment practices and employed specific tactics aimed at retaining and graduating Black students. This includes adding Diversity and Inclusion offices and staff, increasing funding for training, et al. (CCCU, 2020). However, there is no research or literature on how private, RM Christian colleges and universities are
intentionally addressing these issues (CCCU, 2020). This lack of research has created an obstacle to fully understanding how to address diverse students’ recruitment, retention and graduation rates as a scholar and a practitioner.

**Purpose of the Study**

This research intends to fill the gap in research and to assist the scholarly practitioner. The quantitative data revealed or substantiated why Black students persisted and graduated at higher levels among similar RM Christian colleges and universities. The evidence revealed may create a catalyst for changing recruitment and retention practices that may increase Black students’ completion ratios. The research sought to examine the effects of re-acculturation or acculturation activities to serve Black students to create a welcoming environment. These activities encourage the completion of degree programs in these institutions (Tinto, 1993). The data, especially the qualitative data, can be used in the design of Orientation activities held at the beginning of each semester. These changes, based on the research, would have direct effects on housing assignment processes, design and planning of campus events, and creation of other policies, programs, and processes aimed at creating a community as suggested by Tinto (1993).

This research will examine the phenomenon of creating favorable circumstances in recruitment, persistence, and graduation of diverse students at private, RM Christian colleges, and universities. Furthermore, research will help inform similar colleges of these best practices to affect their institutions’ changes.

**Research Questions**

The overarching research questions guiding this case study are: What institutional practices and policies influenced positive retention and graduation of Black students on small, private Christian colleges and universities associated with the Restoration Movement?
What practices influence the recruitment of Black students?

What campus events, programs, and activities influence the retention of Black students?

What campus events, programs, and activities influence graduation rates of Black students?

**Conceptual Underpinnings**

Establishing an appropriate lens for examining diversity issues in Christian higher education includes reviewing racial, cultural, and even historical perspectives. The three conceptual underpinnings that formulate the basis of this research include the following:

a. **Restoration Movement**, the tenets and racial relationships found in the Restoration Movement, past and present (Webb, 2003 and Yancy, 2010), b. **Critical Race Theory (CRT)**, examining Black students’ higher education issues through the lens of CRT (Bell and Freeman, 2017), and c. **Social Integration Theory**, the programs, and processes that higher education has employed to promote Black students’ retention (Tinto, 1993; Seidman, 2005; and Ash & Longman, 2017).

Each of these provide the foundational concepts needed to create a complete picture of how Black students persist in higher education institutions, specifically in private, four-year, not-for-profit, RM Christian colleges, and universities in the United States.

**Restoration Movement**

The Restoration Movement has long touted itself as one of the most conservative brotherhoods among the other American church denominations (Webb, 2003). With strict adherence to the biblical text, RM churches have become known for their views on several subjects (Webb, 2003; Murch, 2004). These activities include the weekly celebration of the Lord’s Supper, baptism by immersion in water for the forgiveness of sins and gift of the Holy Spirit and allowing each of its churches to operate independently without a hierarchy of
governance beyond the local Church. The mantra of the Stone-Campbell Movement is that the Church shall speak where the Bible speaks and be silent where the Bible is silent, and that diligence is necessary when the Bible addresses an issue (Murch, 2004). However, outside of these tenets, churches can operate with relative freedom (Webb, 2003; Murch, 2004).

Of course, this freedom has many limitations. Some of these limitations include issues directly affecting marginalized groups of people (Tisby, 2020). For instance, women are not afforded opportunities to serve at high leadership (elders or preaching ministers). Moreover, the role of minorities has been minimal, if existent at all (Tisby, 2020). For the most part, history has revealed that minorities in the RM have been assisted in forming their separate congregations, thus creating a “separate but equal” scenario that discouraged the mixing of races within congregations (MacLoughlin, 1981). Setting up these separate congregations would allay any fears that people might have about violating the faith’s principles. After all, the Bible requires in the Old Testament that Israel’s nation not mix with other nations. Such mixing would result in excommunication or death of the offenders (King James Version, Deuteronomy 7:3-4). The New Testament of the Bible tells slaves to obey their masters; thus, slavery must be an acceptable or reasonable situation in some cases (New International Version, Ephesians 6:5-8, 1994). Treating people of other races kindly, being benevolent, and offering physical care to others are central biblical tenets; however, to accomplish these tasks, one should assist diverse communities in building separate places of worship outside of the mainline white congregations (Murch, 2004).

The founders and leaders of the RM, including Alexander Campbell, and Barton W. Stone, led the way among congregants by freeing their slaves (Daugherty, 2015), providing for Black people to sit outside the church house to hear Sunday sermons, and assisted Black communities in establishing places of worship (Webb, 2003). However, at that time, expecting White and
Black people to sit together inside of churches was not something to be debated or considered (Webb, 2003).

**Critical Race Theory**

This research concentrates solely on the Black Americans’ plight in the higher education setting through Critical Race Theory’s emergence from the Civil Rights Movement on college campuses in the 60s and 70s. This plight was examined through the lens of Critical Race Theory (CRT). During the mid-1970s, CRT emerged from the early work of Derrick Bell and Alan Freeman, who were discontent with the slow pace of racial reform in the United States (Delgado, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1998). According to Gordon (1990), CRT originated from the Critical Legal Studies (CLS) movement (as cited in Ladson-Billings), which failed to address the “effects of race and racism in the US jurisprudence” (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004, p. 26). As a result, CRT analyzes the role of race and racism in perpetuating social disparities between dominant and marginalized racial groups (DeCuir & Dixson; Ladson-Billings; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). CRT’s purpose is to unearth what issues are ignored or assumed when analyzing race and privilege, as well as the profound patterns of exclusion that exist in US society (Parker & Villalpando, 2007).

Even as CRT’s tenets are used in the legal system, there is also a large influx of these principles found in higher education. Colleges and universities are grappling with diversity and inclusion issues on their campuses (Ash & Longman, 2017). For example, in a predominantly white institution (PWI), only working toward increasing the number of enrolled Black students is an insufficient goal if the institutional change is a priority (Ash & Longman, 2017). Examining the campus climate efforts to have a culturally competent and diverse staff, faculty, and administrators is a more effective way of becoming more diverse and inclusive (Ash &
The tenets of CRT can be used to uncover the ingrained societal disparities that support a system of privilege and oppression (Delgado, 1995).

**Social Integration Theory**

This research also references the writings of Vincent Tinto and his social integration theory, coupled with the concept of re-acculturation, as described by Nicki Cole (2020). Tinto is considered by many to be the leading authority on college campuses for guidance in the retention and completion of students in higher education (Braxton, 2019). Tinto, a professor at the University of Syracuse, wrote during the 60s and 70s, seeking to discover how schools could make a more concerted effort in integrating cultures through intentional social gatherings to create campus communities. While CRT explains some of the issues related to race in higher education (primarily from an opposing point of view), Tinto helps describe the spectrum of challenges colleges and universities face in retaining and graduating any college student. According to Tinto (1975, 1993), higher education’s failure to recognize and create “rites of passage” has dramatically affected college retention rates. Tinto’s integration framework provides a deeper understanding of social integration on college campuses; in other words, when students feel like they are a part of the campus community, then retention increases. Then he offers practical suggestions on how to make positive changes.

Accordingly, Bean (1980, 1983) elaborated on Tinto’s research and connected student satisfaction with retention. Thus, there was a reactionary influx of programs and policies on college campuses, which were added to increase student connectivity. For many years, new student orientation focused on studying and figuring out a class schedule. However, now, orientation programs focus on creating a sense of community on campus. The focus is now on programs meant to connect students with resources for mental or physical health services,
connect to upper-level students as tutors or mentors, and plan social activities and events (Museus, S. D., & Jayakumar, U. M., 2012). In reaction to these theories, colleges embrace the idea that integrating academics with “daily life” has a remarkable effect on retention and graduation ratios. Embracing this concept has led to a marked increase in the creation of events and activities designed to increase the integration of student social life and academic life on college campuses (Hunter, 2012).

Nicki Cole focused her work in higher education on the issues of acculturation or re-acculturation. These terms have recently become trendy terminologies in geopolitical and social/cross-cultural settings. They are meant to express how social, psychological, and cultural foundations are maintained while new cultures are adapted. In other words, a person could stay true to their cultural heritage (language, customs, et al.) while learning to be a part of a more significant community experience (Cole, 2018). In this form of social integration theory, acculturation and re-acculturation are concepts that are gaining more and more traction in the realm of higher education. Acculturation is “a process of social, psychological, and cultural change that stems from the balancing of two cultures while adapting to society’s prevailing culture” (Cole, 2018, p.3).

Like social integration theory, acculturation recognizes the significant effect that creating increased student connectivity has a positive effect on retention. However, acculturation takes this concept a few steps further by creating a space that encourages students to maintain their primary culture while becoming part of another culture. This balancing act requires that students go outside their comfort zone (what they would consider being a healthy activity) to do something they have never experienced before to create a new community with people from a foreign culture.
Cole’s theoretical framework represents pragmatic and positive suggestions to improve campus culture. The work pulls some Tinto tenets, explaining the connection between the student development department’s efforts at an institution, with definite improvements in institutional processes and programming. This combination of effort contributes to an increase in retention ratios in student populations. Critical Race Theory offers a framework of “why” or “how” schools arrived in their current states, while Cole’s theory on acculturation addresses the question of “what next” or “what should we do?”

These variables will differentiate information available on larger college campuses affiliated with larger populations or have multiple program offerings and recruit for purposes outside of ministerial fields.

**Design of the Study**

This case study utilized mixed methods to describe and interpret factors that promote or hinder Black students’ recruitment, retention, persistence, and graduation at two faith-based private colleges that identify as Restoration Movement. Qualitative data was used to describe persistence factors, as suggested by Tinto (1993) and Padilla (1999), as such data is required when examining the reasons why students persist in higher education. The sections below outline the study’s design by describing the setting, participants, data collection tools, and data analysis process.
Setting

This study’s setting involved two Restoration Movement Christian Colleges of similar background, size, and purpose. Both institutions offer associate and bachelor’s degrees in ministry-based programs and have a full-time, on-campus student population of between 100 and 300 students. Both institutions identify themselves as a ministry of the Restoration Movement churches (Church of Christ and Christian Churches). Both are considered small, private Christian colleges with moderate entrance policies; students do not have to be from the Restoration Movement churches but are asked to acknowledge that they have distinct faith statements accessible to all students (Organizational Websites, 2020).

Each institution has a similar university structure in its organization, with a traditional hierarchy bureaucracy, led by a president overseen by a Board of Trustees. The executive teams, comprised of vice presidents for each of the major departments (academics, campus life, enrollment/admissions, development, and business), oversee corresponding deans, directors, and coordinators under them in their subsequent departments (Bohlman & Deal, 2013). Each of these institutions has a dean of enrollment management that coordinates with admissions and academics in recruitment, admissions, retention, and graduation rates. The VP of Academics coordinates with the VP of Enrollment to report to the faculty, residence life, and ancillary staff to identify struggling students and steer them to the appropriate person. This coordination might involve academic coaches, student development personnel, counselors, advisors, coaches, or others (Organizational documents, 2020), focusing on students’ persistence at the institution.

Both institutions in this research designate the responsibility of monitoring and student persistence to the academic department, with coordination from student development (campus or student life). Generally, each of the Enrollment VPs sees their role as completed after
recruitment, application, and enrollment of a student is completed (Organization documents, 2020). The students then become the responsibility of the academic and student development departments. Though many colleges and universities include enrollment management in retention issues, these smaller faith-based institutions do not (Organization documents, 2020); this understanding will help explain some of the disconnects between department administrators and retention, persistence, and graduation issues (Tinto, 1993; Ash & Longman, 2017; Organizational documents, 2020).

Participants

This study was comprised of three data points, which are as follows: 1. Interviews with two focus groups: Focus Group A and Focus Group B (two groups of 5-9 Black students from each institution, College A and College B); 2. Four separate individual interviews, one with each of the administrators (two VPs of Academics and two VPs of Student Development); and 3. A survey sent to all the Black students whose names were submitted by each college administrator. The use of these three data points created triangulation and was presented alongside descriptive data from NCES.

The focus group interview included currently enrolled, full-time students who identified themselves as “diverse” or “nonwhite” in ethnic background. A pool of participants was created from the institution’s VP of Academics and VP of Student Development suggestions. Each administrator was asked to provide a list of fifteen to twenty students that met the criteria (currently enrolled, full-time students identifying themselves as Black or African American). The researcher chose nine participants at random from this pool of names and arranged a meeting date and time suitable for a joint Zoom meeting for each focus group. Each of the participants was chosen and contacted via email, anticipating at least five to nine participants agreeing to the
meeting. The interviewer provided the focus group with ten questions before their use in the group interview. Participants were given consent forms ahead of time, agreed to an audio recording of the group interview, and asked basic demographic questions for data collection before their focus group participation. The researcher made field notes of the group members for analysis after the interviews were conducted (Creswell, 2012 and Seidman, 2013).

In addition to student participants in focus groups, individual interviews were conducted with four administrators (two Vice Presidents of Academics and two Vice Presidents of Student Development) from each institution. Each administrator had been in their positions for more than five academic years; and worked at many different levels within their institution. Each administrator has been a part of their institution for more than five years, some having served as faculty, then deans before becoming vice presidents, and one administrator served as a faculty member at a sister institution. The administrators are graduates of the college they are employed at or a similar institution (RM, faith-based, private colleges) and are currently members of an RM congregation. These personal interviews with college administrators lasted just under one hour in length, and questions were drawn from a pool of ten pre-determined questions (Creswell, 2012; Appendix J). Participants were given questions ahead of time via email and were asked to read over them before the agreed-upon interview time, and each signed and returned consent forms that accompanied the questions. Responses were collected in an audio recording which was then transcribed.

In addition to the focus groups and individual interviews, the researcher sent a questionnaire containing five questions using a six-point Likert scale (ranging from strongly agree to disagree strongly) to the entire list of suggested Black students submitted by the administrators at each institution. The survey was conducted anonymously using Google Forms.
The researcher used respondent validation by asking each student participating in the study to verify their race, age, and class level at the onset of the questionnaire (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Respondents were asked several open-ended questions and asked to rate their attitudes or views on various topics on retention, persistence, and graduation. A simple t-test, assuming normal, continuous distribution, was used to analyze the data. This data was gathered to determine if there is a significant difference between the group members (Merriam, 2009).

Though analysis of descriptive data made readily available through the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) and Council for Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU) was used, the researcher carefully gathered an adequate amount of data qualitatively through these interviews and questionnaires.

**Data Collection**

Data collection was initiated using guidelines for the case study approach outlined by Sharan Merriam (2009). This qualitative approach was used to describe common points among people with like experiences of a phenomenon, focusing on commonalities among the participants (Merriam, 2009). The researcher wanted to ascertain how participants described or felt about their experience as students and administrators at College A and College B. This research involved several interviews and focus groups targeting essential people at each college who had similar experiences at their institution (Krueger & Casey, 2009). Though there are similar surveys that gauge retention, persistence, and graduation available for higher education researchers, the researcher wished to ask several rated survey questions and several open-ended questions that were more specific to the RM institutions.
Tools

Dated informed consent forms were used to protect all participants and acknowledge the participants’ rights during data collection (Creswell, 2012; Appendix G & H). Formal consent forms were submitted and subsequently approved by the IRB Committee of the University of Missouri – Columbia and UCM (Appendix G & H). Qualitative research data were not collected without dated letters of informed consent from all participants (Merriam, 2009). Questionnaires were voluntary, with the option to withdraw from the research at any time during the process without repercussions (Kreuger & Casey, 2009). Interviews were conducted via phone, zoom meeting, or google meeting and were recorded and later transcribed using Trint transcription software (Appendix C - F). Pseudonyms protect all participants in transcriptions and data reporting (Krueger & Casey, 2009), and all information was kept confidential (Creswell, 2012; Merriam, 2009). The risks with participation in this study were not different from everyday risks in the participants’ professions and positions (Merriam, 2009). Data were kept in a locked room or secured behind passwords. The researcher has no personal connection with any of the participants in this study, aside from being a college professor in a like institution.

Data Analysis

Quantitative Analysis

The study used the direct investigation of the recruitment, retention, and completion rates at each of the two RM Christian colleges and universities, exploring data thoroughly with the intent of discovering what phenomena is evident to create the positive ratios which have existed at the institution over five years (2014-2018). The data gathered quantitatively from the participants, IPEDS/NCES raw data reports, and reports from the CCCU were analyzed and reported using SPSS. These reports revealed statistics organized and analyzed in charts and tables to reveal trends better and report correlations. SPSS helped the researcher organize the
quantitative data to examine frequencies and determine regression (Field, 2017). All quantitative data was compiled and analyzed using Microsoft’s Statistical Package of Social Sciences (2017) to determine frequencies from among Likert questionnaire answers. Charts or tables will illustrate the data to organize the information for this case study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Consideration of these three data points (focus group, individual interviews, and Likert scale data) created triangulation (Merriam & Merriam, 2009).

**Qualitative Analysis**

Qualitative data involved interviews and focus groups. Interviews for both colleges were conducted in the same location and set up via phone conference and were carefully recorded using two devices (audio recording devices); the data was analyzed using axial coding (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). All conversations from audio recordings were transcribed using Trint software and checked for accuracy.

After the data is collected, the researcher will use inductive, constant comparative analysis (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The analysis was completed with axial coding, mindful of connections between research questions and key phrases found in the recordings (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Axial coding will determine themes representing commonalities of ideas and experiences from the data. The codes and themes will relate to the conclusions drawn about recruitment, retention, and completion ratios of black students in RM colleges and universities.

The researcher’s data analysis process was designed to determine answers for the research questions using data to reveal developing themes from the participants’ experiences. (Creswell, 2012; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Great care must be taken with the data to determine reliability (in comparisons with other like institutions or comparable data) and validity (strength
of the analysis of the case study data from the interviews). While determining transferability, the application needs to examine and compare like institutions. The researcher must guard against over-generalizing or reinforcing negative stereotypes. When individual interview data were reviewed, the researcher utilized a system of coded memos that summarized possible themes, listing questions that were to be answered and noted her thoughts and personal reflections (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). These memos were then used to improve questions for the survey (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

The researcher utilized several methodologies to increase the data’s validity, including an audit trail of descriptions of methods and processes used in the study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The researcher also created a detailed narrative of the study setting to formulate validity for transferability, credibility, and trustworthiness (Creswell, 2014). Triangulation will provide credibility in comparing data from surveys, interviews, and themes drawn from the focus groups (Creswell, 2014; Appendix J - L). Another vital consideration addressed by the researcher was personal positionality. This perspective allows the researcher to have transparency about their role in the data itself and their interpretation (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

**Limitations**

The variables involved in this research include examining the recruitment of mission fit students, considering the activities and circumstances that integrate students into a campus community in the first few weeks, and discovering the resources students need to complete a degree. For this study, the researcher has placed delimitations in the following ways as they pertain to the variables: recruitment, retention, and graduation of Black students (limited to any student that does not self-identify as white or Caucasian), small (between 100-300 undergraduate students), Christian (primarily non-denominational or affiliated with the Restoration Movement
or Stone-Campbell Movement, churches of Christ/Christian churches), and moderately selective four-year colleges or universities in the contiguous United States, who have limited programs that are focused on ministry degrees/training.

Several limitations were pre-determined regarding selecting colleges or universities that were to be used for data analysis. These limitations included the type of colleges and universities (private, four-year Christian colleges or universities that cited an affiliation with the Restoration Movement), size of the undergraduate, full-time student enrollment (between 100-300 students), and has a similar mission and degree programs. These similar degree programs include primarily ministry focused degrees, including, but not limited to, Preaching, Christian Education, Youth Ministry, Worship Ministry, Missions, and others. Only on-site degree offerings were examined for this study when reporting data about recruitment, retention, and degree program completion.

This research identified a total of 34 institutions that are directly associated with the Restoration Movement (Appendix A). Of these 34, seven fit into the stated criteria of 100-300 full-time undergraduate students (Appendix B). Of these seven, two were selected as having the highest retention and graduation rates for specifically Black students. These statistics are illustrated in Figure 2 below.

![Figure 2. Percentage of Black Students Retained from Fall 2017 to Fall 2018 at seven RM colleges of similar enrollment. Table created from NCES and IPeds Reports, 2019.](image)
RESULTS

Quantitative Findings

Aside from the descriptive data gleaned from the NCES and IPEDS reports that are submitted each year, each of the students in the study were asked to fill out a Likert scale on the questionnaire that they received. From this information it is revealed that those interviewed were 75% motivated to earn their degree. Asked to further rate what circumstances that best described their motivation for staying in college, these students indicated the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>50% Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Other students helped me stay in college.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>50% Neutral</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75% Strongly disagree</td>
<td>The sequencing (order) of my courses helped me stay in college.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25% Disagree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25% Strongly disagree</td>
<td>The teaching and learning that have taken place in the classroom helped me stay in college.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25% Neutral</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25% Agree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25% Strongly agree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50% Strongly disagree</td>
<td>My out-of-class experiences – e.g., studying, group projects, involvement in campus activities, etc. – helped me stay in college.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25% Neutral</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25% Agree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25% Strongly agree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75% Strongly agree.</td>
<td>Factors outside of the institution – e.g., family, friends, co-workers – helped me stay in college.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25% Disagree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students were also asked to rate the college in its job in assisting minority or diverse students. 75% felt that the college assisted them adequately, while 25% did not think so.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recruitment practices specifically targeting Black or diverse students?</th>
<th>75% = no effect 25% = neutral</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Campus events, programs, and/or activities that influenced the persistence (continuance) of Black students?</td>
<td>75% = no effect 25% = neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus events, programs, and/or activities targeted to influence graduation rates of Black students?</td>
<td>75% = no effect 25% = neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactions with College Personnel</td>
<td>50% = no effect 25% = neutral 25% = extremely effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuition and Scholarships</td>
<td>50% = no effect 50% = neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location of the College</td>
<td>50% = positive effect 25% = no effect 25% = neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>75% = neutral 25% = no effect</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Summary of the Results of the Quantitative Analysis

Those students who participated in the questionnaire indicated that there was more credence to the effects of outside influences and issues to their persistence and graduation from the RM college or university that they attended. In fact, the students felt that intentional recruitment and extracurricular activities planned by their campus had little or no effect on their persistence or graduation from the institution. It can be conjectured from this research that the institutions involved thought they had a slightly elevated rate of persistence (retention) and graduation (completion) when compared to other like institutions, but there is little credit given to the colleges programming and policies for their motivation and completion. With this being said, the best conclusion is to state that a larger study need to be done in order to ascertain a more significant explanation of these issues.

Qualitative Findings

Data collection methods included personal interviews, focus group, Likert scaled questionnaire, and a qualitative questionnaire issued to students who were specifically identified as Black. Multiple resources were used for data collection in order to create triangulation of the data (Merriam, 2009). The use of triangulation creates validity for qualitative studies (Creswell, 2009; Merriam, 2009). Personal interviews were conducted with Black students (both alumni and currently enrolled students, in a RM Christian College or University). The focus group was conducted on an RM campus, with 35 enrolled students from multiple race backgrounds. This venue allowed the researcher to hear an authentic discussion of topics of racism on the campus in real time, and allowed the researcher the ability to record and respond situationally to dig deeper into emerging responses (Merriam, 2009). Both the Likert scaled questionnaire and qualitative
questionnaire were sent through a gatekeeper for student development at the two specific RM institutions who had the highest retention and graduation rates from among all the RM institutions.

All participants were given time to review and ask questions regarding the scope of the research and its application in a dissertation and journal article. Written permission was given for participation in the focus group, interview and participation in the surveys was optional anonymous.

The participants in the questionnaire indicated several examples from their personal experiences that helped to further explain the findings herein. Most of comments that emerged from the questionnaires could be neatly separated into “Institutional” issues and “Personal” issues. When answering questions, the participants would lean toward one of these explanations. Either the institution was heavily involved in the issues raised, or they were matters of a more personal nature (primarily family and finances)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INSTITUTIONAL REASON</th>
<th>PERSONAL REASONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>They’ve given EVERY student the same opportunities to succeed.</td>
<td>I came from a &quot;do as I say, not as I do,&quot; background. After I had my own children, I realized that I was applying this same mentality and being this example for my kids concerning higher education. I didn't understand their reluctance to take higher education seriously or make it a priority initially. One day I realized that they would not see the importance if they did not see either of the leaders of their family lead by example in this area first. Since I have started my journey, two of my kids that were in danger of being high school drop outs, graduated high school. Two of my other children that are currently in high school are now interested in college, one will be graduating in July and has applied to several colleges and is awaiting acceptance. They have taken several college tours and are now excited about continuing their educations outside of high school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The college is well below average in making sure their African American student body is protected or even feel comfortable on campus. I have friends who hear Caucasian teachers allowing their non black students to say the N word and not correct them. Professors make racist jokes/remarks and hide behind the idea of religion to excuse their anti-blackness or racism in general. Black students do not feel safe or motivated to be on campus due to these things. Most black students on campus feel as if they are seen as less of a person compared to the rest of the student body.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can only speak from my own experience. I have not had any opposition from the school or staff. I</td>
<td></td>
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| }
have had great support from my professors and the school's administrative staff.

The student body at this college is made of mostly athletes. Even on the athletic teams black students/players feel like they are being treated in a manner that is not equal to their Caucasian and Hispanic teammates. Our teammates use racial slurs and there is nothing being done about it because the mentality of students, players, coaches, and faculty is nowhere near where it should be. Black students truly want to enjoy being here but can't because no one actually sees us as equal. I personally am tired of being referred to as a racial slur and no one suffers consequences.

I was only motivated to earn my degree strictly from people who were not on this campus.

Myself & my family motivate me to stay in school. Me wanting better for my life in future motivates me also. I am very driven & determined so when things get tough I don’t tend to just wanna give up. My procrastination sometimes made it difficult to stay in college.

-Money issues: I’ve worked my jobs and taken out many loans.
-Issue regarding end goals/career path: I’ve decided to finish my degree and use it to get a job that will fund my future aspirations.

I overcame my fear of failure by realizing the success of continuing and reminiscing on the words of my late grandmother who always told me that "Nothing beats a failure but a try.” Financial failure has been avoided by the support and willingness of my husband to allow me to take this risk. He has been supportive by working a second job, or doing shift work at times to meet the needs of our household. I have also taken on shift work at times when my school and parenting schedule allowed it (we have 5 children at home that are all pre-school or school age). I also received academic scholarships and grants to assist with the cost as well as financial aid.

The doubts from family was overcome by being persistent regardless of their opinions and remaining dedicated to what I know was God calling me to something higher than I desired for myself.

My husband and I have been faithful to marriage counseling and applying strategies to our marriage and family life to help navigate the strain of this temporary season.
There are only a few answers taken from the qualitative finding that address the research question of “What institutional practices and policies influenced positive retention and graduation of Black students on small, private Christian colleges and universities associated with the Restoration Movement?” Most of the comments were explanations as to why the students did or did not persist. There is need for further study into what school programming or activities were most effective in helping with persistence. Though one conclusion might be that campus programs had little effect on persistence – at least for the students in the survey. When indicating that their motivations for persisting and graduating from college were, these included: Money issues, career aspirations, family encouragement, and personal doubts. The array of answers given regarding personal motivation were just that – “personal.” 80% of the students involved in the surveys and cited personal financial issues, family issues (childcare, elder care and other home issues), ministry issues (work and difficulties in balancing work life, home life and student life), and self-motivation (self-doubt, et al) as more pressing issues affecting their success.

While there was some mention of outside effects (from the college), these were not stressed by the respondents as being overwhelming examples of issues that affected their continuance or completion of their degrees.

As one student put it, “I had to overcome fear of failure in many areas. I feared academic failure, as well as financial failure due to the associated cost of funding my educational experience. I had to pull away from the workforce to go to school and prior to doing so, I was the primary breadwinner for my household. I also received lots of my family expressing doubts about my decision, which made it challenging and to stay committed to my decision. There has been strain on my marriage due to the amount of support that this decision has required financially and otherwise.” This view was expressed in different words by several of the
respondents. The greatest impact of their success or failure came from personal issues, not really the issues that they faced on the campuses where they attended.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Additional comments or explanations that you feel would contribute to this study (Your personal reflections on your experience at the college are completely anonymous).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I think your research study is ambitious, but I fear that you will have a difficult time getting accurate results.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The student body at this college is made up mostly of athletes. Even on the athletic teams’ black students/players feel like they are being treated in a manner that is not equal to their Caucasian and Hispanic teammates. Our teammates use racial slurs and there is nothing being done about it because the mentality of students, players, coaches, and faculty is nowhere near where it should be. Black students truly want to enjoy being here but can't because no one actually sees us as equal. I personally am tired of being referred to as a racial slur and no one suffers consequences.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Summary of the Results of the Qualitative Analysis**

Students who feel supported by the family are more likely to persist and complete their degrees. This is greatly affected by the level of financial stability that exists. If a student does not feel this support, or cannot raise the funds needed, not just for tuition and housing, but for transportation and food, and other necessities, is less likely to persist in their pursuit of a degree. Furthermore, the research findings from the questionnaires revealed that Black students who have felt supported by college personnel have found more success than those who have not. It should come as no surprise that when students feel unliked or are treated less than others, will not stay students very long (Tisby, 2020). Students who feel this support will feel safe to address issues that need to be corrected along the way, rather than just complaining about it after the fact (Tinto, 1993).

**CONCLUSION**

This was a very informative study for the researcher and for those interested in creating a better environment for diverse students on RM college and university campus (and any campus for that matter). Trying to understand the reasons that, specifically, Black students persist and
graduate from RM colleges and universities will help college administrators and policy makers to create a campus culture where these students can thrive. In his 2021 Franz Lecture, racial activist and Christian leader and author, Jemar Tisby concluded that, despite the many societal factors currently in play on Christian university campuses, there can be positive changes made. He presented the framework of ARC—awareness, relationships and commitment. Tisby recommended building awareness by documenting a history of the institution, including its racial status over the years, and disseminating it; relationships by placing yourself in communities that cause you to be constantly mindful of racial dynamics; and commitment by hiring diverse personnel in clusters—three or more at a time. But perhaps even more than these essentials, Tisby suggested, Christian colleges need one thing: “Courage” (Tisby, 2021).

**Limitations and Opportunities for Future Research**

Sadly, one of the biggest limitations is the failure for some institutions to acknowledge that there is a disparity between the success of white and non-white students on their campuses. The assumptions are made that “students can find success, no matter what their background, if they simply put their head down, put their nose to the grindstone, and do the work” (from a conversation with an RM professor). Within conversations with colleagues, administrators, and students, it is quickly revealed that there is still little admission of culpability in the existence of systemic racism. This is also demonstrated by several comments made by students who attended RM colleges as minorities. Some of these comments include:

- “I know the professor heard the other students (using racial slurs), but they did nothing.”
- “I am regularly called the N-word on the court and in the dorm. I don’t know why people think that it okay.”
- “I told my RA (resident assistant) about what happened, and they just laughed.”
Pretending like racism and racist remarks are not occurring is not a solution to the issues at hand (Johnson, 2018). And allowing minority students to continue to be treated this way is simply unacceptable. There needs to be a study conducted about the effectiveness of race training for employees and students. There needs to be a study of the effectiveness of having a designated “safe place” for students to go to safely report incidents. There needs to be a study about the effectiveness of having a person designated by administration as a diversity liaison or campus diversity minister. There is an opportunity in front of us, to learn from the data, acknowledge that there are still issues, and that developing a plan is the next step to ending systemic racism on our campuses. I would go as far as to say that it is our Christian duty to do so.

**Implications and Conclusion**

Christian schools are supposed to be places where any person, regardless of race or gender or socioeconomic background, can come and learn a profession among other like-minded people. It is supposed to be a safe place for all who come onto campus. While it has been repeatedly said that God is “color blind” and that His people are to be the same, this does not justify the existence of racism on Christian campuses. Yes, Christian schools should be a safe place for ANY student who wants to attend, but it is not always the case.

There is a common belief made that Christian colleges and universities are only interested in recruiting black athletes to attend their schools to bolster their athletic programs. Whether this statement is true or false is hard to determine exactly. However, the facts of the data do reveal a possible support for such a statement. If these institutions are honestly assessing their policies and procedures, and the people who enact these policies, they will either find positive or negative feedback to support such statements. But if the questions are never asked, and it is merely assumed that everything is “okay” then there is little opportunity to change the
current circumstances. Christian colleges and universities have to examine their programs – from recruitment to graduation, and even their alumni relationships – in order to provide a safe and inclusive environment for ALL of their students. It is crucial that RM institutions of higher education change recruitment and retention practices in order to increase completion (graduation) ratios among all students, but in this particular case, Black students.

**Declaration of Conflicting Interests**

At the current time the researcher is not directly affiliated with an RM college or university. It is worth mentioning that the researcher is a member of an RM congregation that supports RM colleges financially. The researcher spent seventeen years as a professor in an RM college setting; it is important to note that there has been considerable time and energy spent in that realm of higher education in this RM institution. Though the researcher is still affiliated with the accrediting agency of RM colleges and universities (ABHE), there is no real conflict of interest. None of the schools that are included in the study, even on the periphery, are institutions in which the researcher has a vested interest in. The researcher is not employed by any of these institutions nor is there a direct contribution made to the institutions.

However, with complete transparency in mind, the researcher intends these findings to be helpful to these institutions, regardless of personal affiliation. The data gathered is meant to provide honest data that can be used to improve how these schools recruit, retain (persistence), and graduate minority students. The experience of the researcher is that many RM schools invest time and energy into recruiting talented black athletes to make their athletic programs more successful, but once they arrive, little is done to retain and to assist said students into finding success in their degree program.
Funding Disclaimer

The researcher is a member of an RM congregation that supports to RM colleges financially monthly. The researcher spent seventeen years as a professor in an RM college setting but is no longer employed by that institution nor do they receive any renumerance of any kind from that institution. Though the researcher is still affiliated with the accrediting agency of RM colleges and universities (ABHE), they are not paid for any duties that are related to the accrediting agency or the schools that they serve. None of the schools that are included in the study, even on the periphery are institutions in which the researcher has a vested interest in, nor receives any financial gain in participation. The researcher is not employed by any of these institutions nor is there a direct contribution made to the institutions.

References


SECTION SIX
SCHOLARLY PRACTITIONER REFLECTION

Sara Furr (2015), the Director of DePaul University’s Center for Intercultural Programs, reflects my sentiments in her blog article, “Being a scholar-practitioner,” published in the March 18, 2015 edition of American College Personnel Association’s (ACPA) College Student Educator’s International web-based newsletter. In this article, she asks the appropriate question: “Why did it seem there was such a huge disconnect between the study of higher education and practice in higher education?” When Ms. Furr was eager to share what she had learned at her first Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE) conference with her colleagues. However, as is sometimes the case, they seemed disinterested and even unaware that ASHE existed. After this experience, she gave some thought about what a scholar-practitioner is and came up with three basic principles that she shares with the ACPA subscribers. These principles include: practice, present and publish.

Taking my cues from Furr’s article, I believe that these three principles express how I feel about my reflection on being a scholar-practitioner. First and foremost, an educator must be willing to practice the work of being a scholar, reading voraciously and synthesizing information from countless literature reviews, journal articles, dissertation theses, published works, and much more. Because the best way to encourage my colleagues and students to excel at research, I must be modeling it in my everyday work.

Second, I must be willing and competent in the presentation of that which I have been researching. There are countless opportunities for educators to present in conferences and workshops across the country and the world. Practicing excellent research gathering and analysis is of great importance, but if we are never prepared to present our ideas professionally,
we will never fully be prepared for the scope of possibilities open to us in applying what we have learned.

Third, the task of publishing, though sometimes daunting, is to be a goal reached for and achieved. Students, educators, and administrators will someday be looking at our articles and research projects in published form – either on their own or coupled with someone we meet along the way who share our same ambitions and interests.

As one of the former leaders of the Faculty Improvement Committee at my institution, I planned opportunities for improvement for the faculty during our bi-monthly meetings. The difficulties that I experienced occurred in a conservative Christian institution with an all-white, male faculty, the majority of which are over 65 years of age. Sometimes I was treated as a subordinate because of my age, and sometimes because of my gender. However, these were not my primary difficulty in this task. The hardest part of serving in this capacity is that I was the only teacher on our faculty trained in the teaching profession. The rest of the faculty can be considered professionals in their fields (having a great deal of knowledge in their subject areas) but did not have any formal teacher training in methodologies of how to conduct classes, assess learning, formulate, and assess objectives or exercise positive classroom management.

Many of the activities and training opportunities that I shared with the faculty were focused on educational and technological principles. Through the years I attempted to teach them how to use our educational software to the fullest, integrate the use of Canvas for grading and posting assignments, and helped them to organize their teaching responsibilities using the latest techniques and technologies. Several of our professors have been active learners, but several of them “just want to teach” and are not keen on learning all the “extras” that go alongside teaching. The Academic Dean had to continuously remind the faculty to complete
their assessments, course workload reports, post attendance and include adequate amounts of
grades to assess student learning.

Another important task that I had taken on, with help from the Online Coordinator, the
Assistant Librarian, and the Head of the Tutoring department, was in creating a more cohesive
rubric for all our faculty (online and onsite) to use in their classrooms. The idea was that we
would like to have more consistency in assessing writing and research format, as well as content.
The online professors were seemingly more motivated to tackle this issue, having mastered the
use of Canvas’s operating system and how it makes using rubrics simple. The onsite faculty were
more likely to be set in their ways and not likely to change how they have done things for
decades. While I encouraged them by showing them how easy it was and explaining why we all
need to do things in the same way, oftentimes the Academic Dean then had to step in as the
enforcer.

Currently, in my job as a public-school classroom teacher, I find that this program and
the research for my dissertation have showed up in several different ways. First and foremost is
how I treat my students and colleagues who are minorities. It has revealed to me my own biases
(Johnson) and my own peculiarities in how I deal with people and specifically with my students
(Northouse). There is so much to be said about how this dissertation has stretched me out of my
comfort zone, forcing me to work with other personality types, and studying different
methodologies and being taught about educational practices and policies that I probably never
would have been exposed to. Ultimately, I have been able to apply most everything that I have
learned. In particular, the way that we treat others, regardless of their age, gender, ethnicity, or
physical or mental ability, is crucial in building the respect and rapport needed for education to
be transferred. I will not be able to teach my students successfully or appropriately until they feel safe in my classroom.

Northouse (2016) states that “…personality certainly plays an integral role in leadership; the skills approach suggests that knowledge and abilities needed for effective leadership” (p. 43). While the Meyers Briggs’ personality test has identified me as ESFJ (extraverted, sensing, feeling, judging), it is StrengthsQuest that best describes how I feel about myself. The top five traits ascribed to me include the following: 1. Context, 2. Learner, 3. Responsibility, 4. Harmony, and 5. Intellection. Though I am hesitant to call myself a “leader” I know that I have certain characteristics that fuel my desire to be a “change agent.”

For as long as I can remember, I find great satisfaction in bringing people together for a common purpose. Though sometimes that means I will be in charge, most of the time it means that I will be in the trenches working with people who need a little guidance and direction to help them to succeed. In the educational sphere, this has led me to various positions of like skills; this would include vice principal or assistant administrator, assessment coordinator, dean of women, accreditation coordinator, and other dynamic roles that are more in the arena of coordinating people, rather than leading in the traditional sense. Leadership is often coupled with privilege and power that is aimed to create space between those in charge and those who do the work (Johnson, 2018). Fortunately, power is one thing that I do not seek, nor is it something that is given to me frequently, and as for privilege, I hope I will be respectful to those without it.

When Northouse (2016) describes transformational leadership, I understand that I am not the charismatic, powerful orator sent to inspire the masses. However, instead, I am happy to be the person who acts as a change agent in any given circumstance. I do not require the position in the front, or atop the pyramid, or standing on the stage. My personality and my skills have often
led me to the place where I feel comfortable, and that is in making the dreams and visions of leaders come to fruition. The thing I have witnessed in my life thus far has led me to see that there are some who talk big and dream big and who can fan a fire beneath the feet of the masses, and I am not that person. I am the one that carries the wood and the matches, and I am perfectly fine with this scenario.

So, how has the dissertation influenced my practice as an educational leader? This process has indeed challenged me as a scholar and as an educator. Because of this dissertation, I am being challenged to practice, and thus, apply, the educational strategies into my everyday life as an educator. It is, in fact, the utilitarian part of being a scholar. It is practical and it is used in real life and in real time, even now in my classroom. Secondly, it has pushed me to share what I have learned by requiring me to professionally present the information in a clear and concise manner. Being able to present the information formally to others is yet another touchpoint of how well the information is being understood and utilized. Thirdly, in publishing the information, I am allowing others the opportunity to scrutinize the work and to give feedback. This is necessary for continued growth in my field, but also openly displays the areas of weakness (areas for improvement) and strengths (parts that might be taken and used by others in similar situations) that are found within the research. Publishing allows for a broader inculcation of feedback, from points of view and experiences of people that I might not normally encounter during my day-to-day work. The researcher should never shy away from hearing what other professionals have to say about the work being done. A good leader learns from the people around them. I have learned that being a good leader involves these three practical tenets: to practice, to present and to publish. This has and will continue to make me a leader in my field.
In addition, I would hope that this dissertation and the research that it entailed would help to make me a better human being. The issues targeted in this research point at the issues of racism that still exist in our world today. My hope is that I, myself, and others like me will be able to see this data and become more aware of their own biases and prejudices that may be preventing minority students from finding success in our institutions. It should be sobering to think that the things we say, the activities we promote and how we promote them, and the conversations that we have with minority students has had something of a neutral or negative effect on their success. While we might want to believe that the “playing field” in education is fair and even, either by the natural evolution of time (since slavery is long past, as some may refer), or by the passing of policies (affirmative action, et al.), at the core there remains the issue that non-white students are still struggling to find success in the pursuit degrees in higher education – either in secular or religious colleges and universities - in comparison to their white counterparts. Be it for reasons of money, or familial issues, or other personal factors, educators must continue to ask the question, “Have we done enough for these students?” Having completed this research, I have concluded that we have not.
References


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## Appendix A

Restoration Movement Schools, IPEDS Enrollment Report 2018 (NCES, 2019)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Est.</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Undergrad/On-campus Population (all)</th>
<th>Population Diversity</th>
<th>overall Retention Rate %</th>
<th>Overall Graduation Rate (%)</th>
<th>White Student Graduation %</th>
<th>African American and Mixed Race Graduation %</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>72%</td>
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<td>African American and Mixed Race Graduation %</td>
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<td>70%</td>
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<td>School</td>
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<td>Total Population Diversity</td>
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<td>Overall Graduation Rate (%)</td>
<td>White Student Graduation %</td>
<td>African American and Mixed Race Graduation %</td>
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Appendix B

Seven RM Colleges and Universities of like size and mission.

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<th>IDENTIFIER</th>
<th>COLLEGE</th>
<th>FOUNDED</th>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th>FTE</th>
<th>RETENTION</th>
<th>RETENTION OVERALL</th>
<th>GRADUATION</th>
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<td>Moberly, MO</td>
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<td>Black: 18%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>34%</td>
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<td>White: 51%</td>
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<td>Hispanic: 22%</td>
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<td>Asian: 0%</td>
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<td>Other: 10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Manhattan Christian Coll</td>
<td>1927</td>
<td>Manhattan, KS</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>Black: 6%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>44%</td>
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<td></td>
<td>White: 59%</td>
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<td>Hispanic: 9%</td>
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<td>Asian: 0%</td>
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<td>Other: 25%</td>
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<td>G</td>
<td>Great Lakes Christian Coll</td>
<td>1949</td>
<td>Delta Township, MI</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>Black: 18%</td>
<td>Full-time: 59%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>27%</td>
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<td>White: 66%</td>
<td>Part-time: 83%</td>
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<td>Asian: 1%</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Other: 9%</td>
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</table>
Interview Invitation Phone Call

*Hello! Am I speaking with XXXX? This is Anne Menear, the Dean of Student Conduct at Central Christian College of the Bible in Moberly, MO. How are you today?

*As a doctoral student, I am interested in analyzing factors that may influence a student’s decision to continue to enroll at College A/B. The Academic Dean of your college has given me permission to contact you to see if you would be interested in participating in a research study that explores the experiences of students like you…who progressed to at least the fourth year of college. You have a unique perspective, and I would like to understand the experiences you have had as a student, specifically related to the factors that helped you be successful and the things that you might have had to overcome to be successful. I would love to interview you, to learn more about your experiences as a college student.

*The interview will last approximately an hour and can be scheduled at a time that works best for you between [insert date range]. Would you be willing to participate? ______Great! What day and time would work best for us to meet the week of _______________? Because of Covid, our interview will take place over Zoom. Can I set up a date and time for us to speak using Google Meet or the Zoom app?

*Is your college email the best way to get in touch with you? I will email you the date, time, and the link for our interview. I will also email you an informed consent document that explains the study and your rights as a participant. If you have a chance, please review that form prior to the interview. I will have a paper copy of the informed consent form for you at our zoom meeting and will record a verbal confirmation of your consent to participate. I look forward to learning more about you and your experiences at XXX! Have a great day! Goodbye!

**For negative responses to invitation to interview:**

That’s okay. I appreciate you taking the time to talk to me today. If you consider my offer and decide you would like to participate, please let me know by calling XX. Have a great day! Goodbye!
Appendix D

Confirmation Email

Email Subject: Reminder and Info for College Student Retention and Graduation Interview

*Hello,_________!

*Thanks again for your willingness to be interviewed as a part of my research regarding college student retention and graduation. As we discussed on the phone, your interview is scheduled for a zoom video call. The link is: ___________________________

*Please plan on the interview taking approximately an hour.

*I have attached a copy of the informed consent document that I will read to you prior to the interview. If you have the opportunity, please review the document before you come to the interview. It provides information related to the study and to your rights as a participant. As outlined in the informed consent document, your participation in this study is completely voluntary, and you may withdraw at any time. *Additionally, your name and other identifying information will not be shared in the results of the study. Unless you tell others, I will be the only person who will know you are participating in the study.

*Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or concerns. I look forward to learning about your unique experiences and perspectives.

* See you on _______ at ________ o’clock.

Anne Menear
Appendix E

Survey Invitation Email

Email subject: College Students Survey Invitation

*Hello _______! I am completing research regarding the experiences of black college students in Restoration Movement colleges and universities. You have a unique perspective, and I would like to understand the experiences you have had as a student, specifically related to the factors that helped you be successful and the things that you might have had to overcome to be successful.

*The following link connects you to a survey that asks a series of questions related to you – your demographics, your disposition, and your college experiences.

*The survey begins with informed consent, which explains the purpose of the study and your rights as a participant. If you agree to voluntarily participate, after reading the informed consent page, continue to begin the survey.

*The survey should take less than 30 to complete.

*Survey link: _________________

*The survey results do not identify you by name, so I will not know whether you have taken the survey or not. If you choose to complete the survey, please know that I genuinely appreciate your taking the time to do so.

*If you have questions or concerns about this survey or my research, please feel free to contact me by replying to this email. I wish you much success as you continue your education.

*Sincerely, Anne R. Menear
Appendix F

Survey Reminder Emails

Reminder 1  Email subject: College Students Survey Invitation

Hi! This is a reminder that the survey for my study is still available. If you would like to complete the survey, please click on the link in the email below. The survey will close at the end of the day on Friday. As you know, I am studying the factors that helped black students continue to enroll and the factors that had to be overcome to continue to enroll. So, I would love to know about your experiences and gain insight about the factors that influenced your continued enrollment.

*Like I said in my previous email, the results do not identify participants by name, so if you have already completed the survey, please ignore this email and receive my sincere thanks for taking the time to do so. If you have any questions about the survey or my research, please do not hesitate to ask by responding to this email. Again, I wish you much success as you continue your education.

*Thank you,
Anne Menear

Reminder 2  Email subject: College Students Survey Invitation

*Hello! Just a reminder that the survey for my study continues to be open. If you have not yet completed it and wish to do so, you can access the survey through the following link:

*As I stated previously, the results do not identify participants by name, so if you have already completed the survey, please ignore this email, and know that I am grateful for your participation. Please be in touch if you have any questions about the survey or my research.

*Thank you,
Anne Menear
Appendix G

Informed Consent - Interview and Focus Group

This form is designed to provide you with an understanding of the purpose of the research being conducted and of your rights as a potential voluntary participant. If you volunteer to participate, this form will serve as the record of your agreement to participate.

Research Study: Retention and Persistence of Black College Students at Restoration Movement, Christian colleges, and universities.

Anne Menear

Office:

Phone:

Email:

Invitation to Participate

*You are invited to participate in an individual interview where you will be asked to share how your personal characteristics and the various experiences you have had in college influenced your decision to continue enrolling at __________. The interview will take place in a video conference using Zoom and will only include yourself and the researcher.

*The interview will be audio-recorded to ensure the researcher has an accurate record of your responses. It is anticipated that the interview will take approximately one hour to complete.

Research Uses

*The data collected for this study will be utilized by the researcher to complete the dissertation requirements for a Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership from the University of Missouri. Participants may request to view the results by contacting the researcher via email.

Participant Rights

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may choose to not participate, or you may withdraw from participation at any time. Additionally, you may choose to not answer all the interview questions. Your decision to not participate, to withdraw, or to not answer all the questions does not affect your relationship with the researcher or the institution in any way.

Risks
Participation in the interview may cause participants to reflect on themselves and their college experiences, as a result, it is possible that participants could experience varying degrees of emotional discomfort. The researcher will make every effort to minimize any such discomfort.

**Benefits**

Participants may receive benefits from completing the interview, such as, learning more about themselves and how their college experience influenced their decision-making.

**Costs/Payments**

There are no costs or payments for your voluntary participation in this study.

**Participant Confidentiality**

Your identity and personal information are strictly confidential unless law requires disclosure. Audio files and transcripts of the interview, along with the compiled results of the study, will be kept on a password-protected computer. Any paper copies of results will be kept in a locked file cabinet. Participant responses may be quoted in the results, but no student identifiers will be included. The results shared in the researcher’s dissertation will not include student names or specific identifiers.

**Contact Information**

You may ask the researcher any questions you have regarding this study prior to consenting to participate, during the interview, or after the interview is complete. If you wish to withdraw from this study, you may do so at any time. During the interview, you can let the researcher know you wish to withdraw. After the interview, you may contact the researcher to withdraw. Please direct your questions or request to withdraw to Anne Menear at _______. This project has been reviewed by the University of Missouri’s Institutional Review Board and by Research Review Board for research and research-related activities involving human subjects.

*If you have questions regarding this research or the review process, please call the University of Missouri’s Office of Research at 573-882-3181 or Research Review Board Chair, at _______.

*If you choose to voluntarily participate in this study, please sign this form. By signing this form, you are communicating that you understand the contents of this form, the research study, and the associated risks and benefits. Additionally, by signing this form, you are agreeing to voluntarily participate in this study. You will notice you have two forms, if you agree to voluntarily participate, please sign both forms. You will keep one form for your records, and the researcher will keep the other.

Printed Name of Participant ____________________________________ Date______________

Signature of Participant _______________________________________________
Appendix H

Informed Consent – Survey

This information is designed to provide you with an understanding of the purpose of the research being conducted and of your rights as a potential voluntary participant.

*Research Study: Retention and Graduation of Black College Students at Restoration Movement Christian colleges and universities.

Researcher: Anne Menear
Office: 660-263-3900 x 151
Phone: 573-582-9070
Email: anne.menear@gmail.com

Invitation to Participate

You are invited to participate in an electronic survey where you will be asked to share how your personal characteristics and the various experiences you have had in college influenced your decision to continue enrolling. The survey, which follows this information, is offered through Google Forms. It is anticipated that the survey will take less than 30 minutes to complete.

Research Uses
The data collected for this study will be utilized by the researcher to complete the dissertation requirements for a Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership from the University of Missouri. Participants may request to view the results by contacting the researcher (via email).

Participant Rights

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may choose to not participate, or you may withdraw from participation at any time. Additionally, you may choose to not answer all the survey questions. Your decision to not participate, to withdraw, or to not answer all the questions does not affect your relationship with the researcher or the institution in any way.

Risks

Participation in the survey may cause participants to reflect on themselves and their college experiences, as a result, it is possible that participants could experience varying degrees of emotional discomfort. The researcher will make every effort to minimize any such discomfort. Benefits Participants may receive benefits from completing the survey, such as, learning more about themselves and how their college experience has influenced their decision-making.
Costs/Payments

There are no costs or payments for your voluntary participation in this study.

Participant Confidentiality

Your identity and personal information are strictly confidential unless law requires disclosure. Individual and compiled survey results will be kept on a password-protected computer. Any paper copies of results will be kept in a locked file cabinet. Participant responses may be quoted in the results, but no student identifiers will be included. The results shared in the researcher’s dissertation will not include student names or specific identifiers.

Contact Information

You may ask the researcher any questions you have regarding this study prior to consenting to participate, during the survey, or after the survey is complete. If you wish to withdraw from this study, you may do so at any time. During or after the survey, you can let the researcher know you wish to withdraw.

*Please direct your questions or request to withdraw to Anne Menear at xxxxx.

This project has been reviewed by the University of Missouri’s Institutional Review Board and by Research Review Board for research and research-related activities involving human subjects. If you have questions regarding this research or the review process, please call the University of Missouri’s Office of Research at 573-882-3181 or Research Review Board Chair, at ------.

*If you choose to voluntarily participate in this study, please continue to begin the survey. By beginning the survey, you are communicating that you understand the contents of this form, the research study, and the associated risks and benefits. Additionally, by beginning the survey, you are agreeing to voluntarily participate in this study.

Printed Name of Participant ___________________________ Date __________

Signature of Participant ____________________________________________
Appendix I

Survey Protocol

Format: Electronic survey through Google Forms

Delivery: Invitations to participate and link to the survey were sent through institutional email or text messages.

Date: Initial invitation: ______________; Final invitation: ______________

Participants:

The survey was sent to all students in the population at the site institution, except for those who participated in the interview portion of the study. The first page of the survey will provide informed consent information. Students who voluntarily participate will demonstrate their consent by participating in the survey.

Survey Items:

1. Are you from a RM background? (Do you or have you been attending an RM church? Or has a member of your family come from this background?)

2. How many hours have you completed in your college career?
Appendix J

Likert Survey Questions

1. Rate your level of motivation. How motivated are you to earn a college degree?

    **Highly Unmotivated** 1 2 3 4 5 6 **Highly Motivated**

Open-ended question: What motivates you the most to earn your college degree?

2. Rate your level of agreement with the following statement: Specific faculty, staff or programs of the institution helped me stay in college.

    **Highly Disagree** 1 2 3 4 5 6 **Highly Agree**

Open-ended question: Which specific person or program impacted you most to stay in college?

3. Rate your level of agreement with the following statement: College events positively influenced me to stay at the college.

    **Highly Disagree** 1 2 3 4 5 6 **Highly Agree**

What college events did or did not influence you to stay at the college?

4. Rate your level of agreement with the following statement: My out-of-class experiences at – e.g., studying, group projects, involvement in campus activities, etc. – were instrumental for why I stayed at the college.

    **Highly Disagree** 1 2 3 4 5 6 **Highly Agree**

Name a specific experience that was instrumental in your staying at the college.

5. Rate your level of agreement with the following statement: Factors outside of the institution – e.g., family, friends, or work – influenced me to stay in college.

    **Highly Disagree** 1 2 3 4 5 6 **Highly Agree**

Open-ended question: What factors outside of the institution influenced you the most?
Appendix K

Focus Group Questions

Demographics:

What is your name, class level, and major? Where are you from?

Open-ended Questions:

1. Why did you choose to attend an RM institution?
2. How were you recruited to come to College A or B?
3. As you reflect on your experience at XXXX, please describe the factors that played the biggest role in encouraging you to continue to enroll at XXXX.
4. What events or activities have been specifically designed to recruit, retain, and graduate diverse students at College A or B? (this might be three separate)
5. How do you think these activities have positively or negatively affected overall recruitment, retention, and completion of diverse students at College A or B?
6. What are some perceptions that people have regarding specifically Black or diverse students at College A or B?
7. What programs or events do you think are done well at College A or B specifically for Black or diverse students?
8. Please feel free to make additional comments or explanations that you feel would contribute to this study. Again, your personal reflections on your experience at XXXX are completely anonymous.

EXTRA QUESTIONS- What do you wish College A or B knew about you (regarding diversity)?

As you reflect on your experience at XXXX, please describe the things you had to overcome to continue to enroll at XXXX. For each of the things you had to overcome to continue to please describe how you overcame each.

To what extent did recruitment practices affect the recruitment of Black students?
To what extent did campus events, programs, and activities influence the persistence of Black students?
To what extent did campus events, programs, and activities influence graduation rates of Black students?
Appendix L

Questions for Personal Interviews with Administrators of College A or B

General:

What is your name and official job title?
What is your role in recruitment of students at College A or B?
What is your role in retention and completion of students at College A or B?

Core Questions:

1. What factors do you think most contribute to the recruitment of Black or diverse students at College A or B?

2. What events or activities have been specifically designed to recruit, retain, and graduate diverse students at College A or B?

3. How do you think these activities have positively affected recruitment, retention, and completion of diverse students at College A or B?

4. What are some perceptions that people have regarding Black or diverse students at College A or B?

5. What do you think is done well at College A or B regarding Black or other diverse students?

6. What do you think College A or B should do differently for diverse or specifically Black students?
Appendix M

**College A - Diversity and Inclusion Statement** (from Organizational website, 2020)

**Diversity & Inclusion (D & I) Overview**
Diversity and Inclusion at College A means creating an environment whereby all students, faculty, staff, are treated consistent with the Bible. D&I allows for personal growth and development while maintaining a biblical worldview and an environment of trust and individual value. Our guiding principle in valuing Diversity and Inclusion is and will always be in accordance with our biblical worldview in our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

**Diversity & Inclusion Definition**
Diversity refers to our uniqueness and differences as individuals. Inclusion refers to the process whereby this diversity is accepted, respected and valued. Within the parameters of a Christian-world view, diverse opinions are not left out.

**Diversity & Inclusion Statement**
We recognize and value each person as God’s created being; we are consistent in aligning our approach to diversity and inclusion with biblical truths.

**Purpose of D & I**
To develop a greater understanding of people in different cultures, backgrounds, and lifestyles and move forward through the lens of scripture.

**What is the D&I Committee?**
College A’s D&I committee consists of a combination of representatives from faculty, staff, and the student body. The committee works to enhance diversity at College A (through education and initiatives) and receives reports or concerns from the College A community regarding diversity and inclusion. Current committee members include: XXXX (Chair of Committee), Dr. XXXX (Faculty), XXXX (Staff), Coach XXXX, XXXX (Staff Rep), XXXX (Student Rep).

**How Does D & I Affect Each of Us?**
It affects our social environment and strengthens our community. Diversity enriches the educational experiences it challenges stereotyped preconceptions. It encourages critical thinking and helps students, staff and faculty learn to communicate effectively with people from varied backgrounds.

**How Can I get Involved in D & I?**
If you know of any situations or problems that are happening around campus feel free to let us know. If you have any ideas you would like to express feel free to contact us using the form below.
Appendix N

Questionnaire

Research Study: Retention and Persistence of Black College Students at Restoration Movement, Christian colleges and universities.

Informed Consent
If you volunteer to participate, this form will serve as the record of your agreement to participate. Questions or Concerns can be addressed to Anne Menear (the researcher), by phone at 573-582-9070 or via email: anne.menear@gmail.com

Participant Rights
Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may choose to not participate, or you may withdraw from participation at any time. Additionally, you may choose to not answer all the interview questions. Your decision to not participate, to withdraw, or to not answer all the questions does not affect your relationship with the researcher or the institution in any way.

Risks
Participation in the interview may cause participants to reflect on themselves and their college experiences, as a result, it is possible that participants could experience varying degrees of emotional discomfort. The researcher will make every effort to minimize any such discomfort.

Benefits, Costs/Payments
Participants may receive benefits from completing the interview, such as, learning more about themselves and how their college experience influenced their decision-making. There are no costs or payments for your voluntary participation in this study.

Participant Confidentiality
Your identity and personal information are strictly confidential unless law requires disclosure. All results of the study will be kept on a password-protected computer. Any paper copies of results will be kept in a locked file cabinet. Participant responses may be quoted in the results, but no student identifiers will be included. The results shared in the researcher’s dissertation will not include student names or specific identifiers.

anne.menear@gmail.com

By clicking "YES" below you are communicating that you understand the contents of this form, the research study, and the associated risks and benefits.

Which Bible College do or did you attend?

________________________
I choose not to answer.
Do or did you live on campus?
  Yes, I am/was considered a residential student.
  No, I am/was considered a commuter.
  No, I am/was an online student.

Did you graduate from this college?
  Yes
  No
  I choose not to answer.

What is your gender?
  Male
  Female
  I choose not to answer.

Please select your race/ethnicity: Asian, Black, Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, Hispanic, Native

How motivated are/were you to earn a college degree?
  Not Motivated
  1
  2
  3
  4
  5
  Highly Motivated

Please explain your rating by briefly describing the following: a. What motivates you to earn a college degree? b. What about you, as a person, helped you stay in college? c. What about you, as a person, made it difficult to stay in college? ("as a person" refers to your internal decisions rather than external situations/circumstances)

Rate your level of agreement with each of the following statements:

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<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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<tr>
<td>Other students at helped me stay in college.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The sequencing (order) of my courses helped me stay in college.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The teaching and learning that have taken place in the classroom at helped me stay in college.</td>
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<tr>
<td>My out-of-class experiences at – e.g., studying, group projects, involvement in campus activities, etc. – helped me stay in college.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Factors outside of the institution – e.g., family, friends, or work – helped me stay in college.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other students at helped me stay in college.</td>
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<td>My out-of-class experiences at – e.g., studying, group projects, involvement in campus activities, etc. – helped me stay in college.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Factors outside of the institution – e.g., family, friends, or work – helped me stay in college.</td>
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As you reflect on your experience at the college, please describe the factors that played the biggest role in encouraging you to continue to enroll at the college.

As you reflect on your experience at the college, please describe the things you had to overcome in order to continue to enroll at the college.
For each of the things you had to overcome to continue to enroll at (your answer to #14), please describe how you overcame each.

Do you think the college did or has done a good job assisting minority or diverse students?
   Yes
   No
   Not Sure

In what ways has the college done a good job assisting minority or diverse students? OR In what way has the college NOT done a good job assisting minority or diverse students?

Rate how each of the following college practices affected the recruitment and persistence of Black students to the campus. (in your opinion).

<table>
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<tr>
<th>No Effect</th>
<th>Slightly Effective</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Affected Well</th>
<th>Extremely Effective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

- Recruitment practices specifically targeting Black students?
- Campus events, programs, and/or activities that influenced the persistence (continuance) of Black students?
- Campus events, programs, and/or activities targeted to influence graduation rates of Black students?
- Interactions with College Personnel
- Tuition and Scholarships
- Location of the College
- Other

Recruitment practices specifically targeting Black students?

Campus events, programs, and/or activities that influenced the persistence (continuance) of Black students?

Campus events, programs, and/or activities targeted to influence graduation rates of Black students?

Interactions with College Personnel

Tuition and Scholarships

Location of the College

Other
Additional comments or explanations that you feel would contribute to this study. (your personal reflections on your experience at the college are completely anonymous).

Would you be willing to participate in a one-on-one interview with the researcher via Zoom or phone call?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

If you are willing to participate in a one-on-one interview, please contact Anne Menear at anne.menear@gmail.com

FURTHER DATA
*You are invited to participate in an individual interview where you will be asked to share how your personal characteristics and the various experiences you have had in college influenced your decision to continue enrolling at your college. The interview will take place in a video conference using Zoom and will only include yourself and the researcher.

*The interview was audio-recorded to ensure the researcher has an accurate record of your responses. It is anticipated that the interview will take approximately one hour to complete.

Research Uses
The data collected for this study will be utilized by the researcher to complete the dissertation requirements for a Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership from the University of Missouri. Participants may request to view the results by contacting the researcher via email.

Participant Rights
Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may choose to not participate, or you may withdraw from participation at any time. Additionally, you may choose to not answer all the interview questions. Your decision to not participate, to withdraw, or to not answer all the questions does not affect your relationship with the researcher or the institution in any way.
VITA

Anne Renae Menear was born in Huntington, West Virginia. She graduated from Kentucky Christian College (now Kentucky Christian University) in 1993 with her undergraduate degree, which had two majors (Bible and Teacher Education: Grades 5-8) and two minors (English Communications and History). After serving for six months as a 5th-7th grade teacher at a missionary school in Ikoma, Japan, she returned to the United States to work at Mountain View Christian Academy in Winchester, Virginia. While in Winchester, she worked as a 5th and 6th-grade teacher for five years before becoming a junior and senior high English teacher and being the assistant elementary principal. In 2005, she moved to Moberly, Missouri, to work as an Instructor of English at Central Christian College of the Bible while finishing her Master of Education degree in Curriculum and Instruction at Western Governors University. She has since become a full-time professor and the head of the Christian Education department, Assessment Coordinator, and Dean of Student Conduct. In January 2021, she moved to the position of Registrar in the Academic Department, while remaining the head of Christian Education, teaching two courses, and continuing as Assessment Coordinator. In August 2021, she returned to teaching full-time at Moberly High School. She just completed her second year as an English Language Arts teacher. Upon completion of her doctorate in Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis at the University of Missouri-Columbia, Anne plans to continue to write, research and present with the goal of educating educators and administrators on the importance of inclusivity in the classroom.