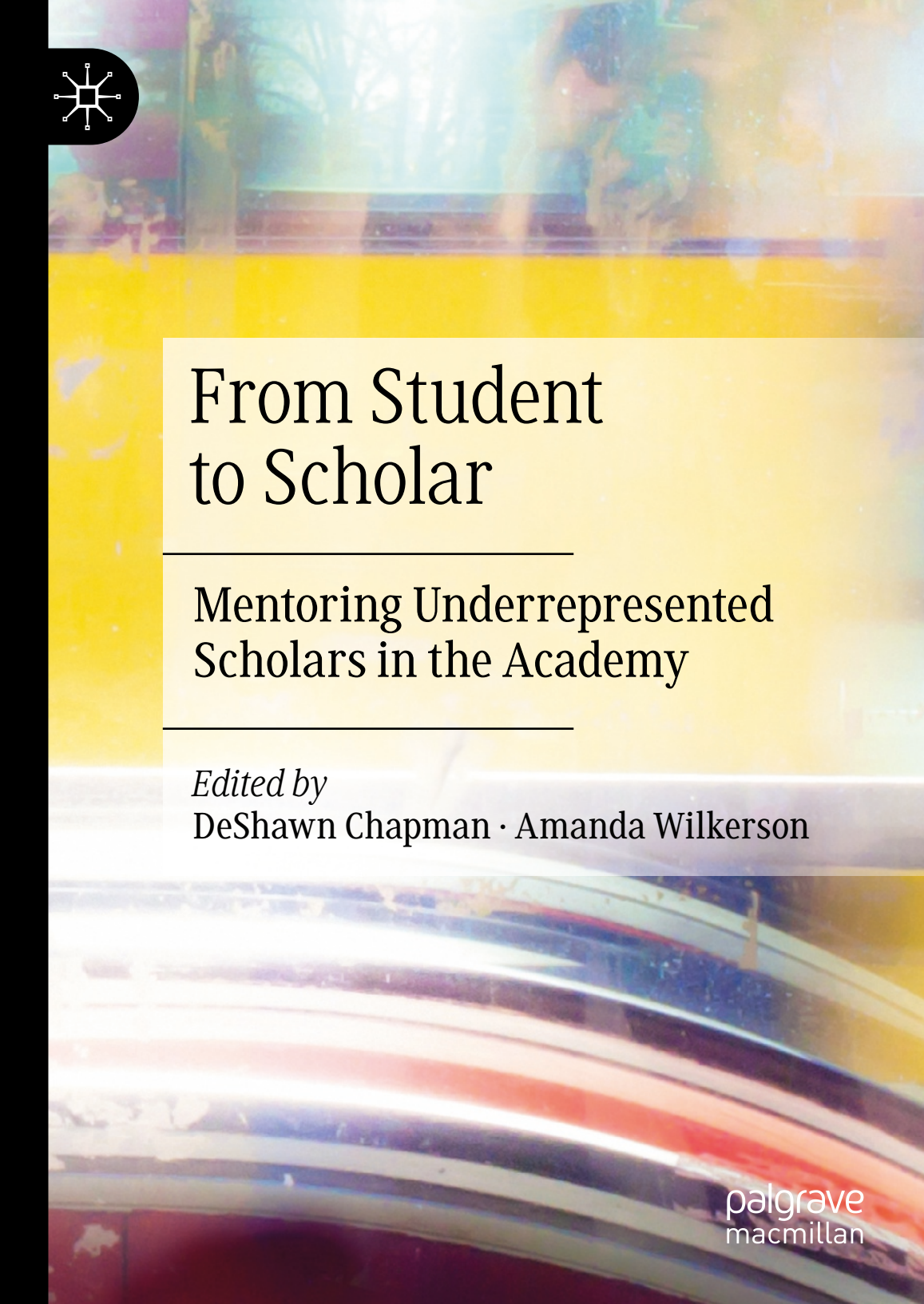
From Student
to Scholar
Mentoring Underrepresented
Scholars in the Academy
Edited by
DeShawn Chapman · Amanda Wilkerson
palgrave
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Editors
DeShawn Chapman
Center for Higher Education Innovation
University of Central Florida
Orlando, FL, USA

Amanda Wilkerson
University of Central Florida
Orlando, FL, USA

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I dedicate this work to current and future students who aspire to earn post-secondary degrees. May these narratives inspire and shed a light on what is possible, as you boldly pursue your dreams in excellence
—DeShawn Chapman

This body of work is dedicated to the diligent and deliberate labor of students, particularly those who are underrepresented in the academy, yet seek to ascend into the role of scholar. Allow these narratives to give you permission, motivation, and fuel to change the world
—Amanda Wilkerson

Foreword

I arrived twenty minutes early to the first university-level committee meeting that I attended as a faculty member. I wasn't sure exactly where the meeting room was located, since it was across campus from the education building, and did not want to get lost, then show up late, sweaty, and out of breath. My goal was to appear confident, worldly, worthy of a place among peers. Soon, the round table in the small room had eight or ten faculty members seated around it. They all looked smart to me. Most exchanged the greetings of acquaintances, but not of friends, with each other. I sat quietly and smiled nervously. The committee chair, a seasoned veteran of the university, opened the meeting by asking each of us to state our name and where we were "from." Seated to her right, I was first to respond. I said, "I'm Sissi Carroll. I'm from Dalton, Georgia." As the others gave their replies, I quickly, and to my embarrassment, realized my mistake. When she said "from," she did not mean, "Where did you grow up,?" as if we were gathered for a book club or attending a baby shower. Instead, she was using a university dialect. In that dialect, "from" refers to one's academic home. Instead of hometowns, the others responded with "Wellesley," "University of Michigan," "Colorado State," "University of Oregon," "The Ohio State University," and other institutions. I had not translated normal speech into university speech. I simply didn't know I should have.

This scene is a minuscule example of the problem new faculty members experience and points to the help that mentors can provide. My inability

to translate "from" in university dialect was inconsequential in the long run. However, the consequences of failures to translate university language and demands are high for many new faculty members. The problem is intensified because experienced faculty members forget how much we have learned, and we take for granted our knowledge of aspects that are crucial for success in academia, including these: information on appropriate teaching loads; interpretations of annual evaluations, feedback from journal editors, concerns raised by student and peer evaluations; opportunities for collaboration; promotion and tenure criteria; expectations for service; speaking up without alienating those with whom work must be accomplished. Mentors should make ourselves available to help newer colleagues negotiate these and myriad other challenges. We should also help them navigate the social and emotional environment of academia—the times when frustration, confusion, anger, injustice, defeat, curiosity, celebration, satisfaction, and joy settle around them.

Those whom I have had the honor of mentoring know that my goal is to help them succeed, and that effort requires that I will be honest yet tough as a critic of their teaching performance, demanding but helpful as pre-submission journal editor, and vocal when I see them spending too much time working toward others' projects and goals, and being distracted or diffused away from their own.

I have been honored to work across race, ethnic, and gender boundaries when mentoring. Experience has taught me that what matters most is that I demonstrate an authentic interest in the strengths of those with whom I partner in the mentor/mentee relationship. The most valuable currency in academia is time, setting aside blocks of time to listen, read, and respond to the concerns and ideas that a new faculty member brings to me as her mentor is evidence of my sincere interest in his or her development. Good mentors get to know those whom we mentor, regardless of racial, ethnic, economic, social, gender, or other differences. We seek to understand and assist the person beneath all the identifiers, the person who needs assistance understanding the impact of the university on him or her.

Earlier in my career, I began to worry that a middle-aged white woman like me would not be an appropriate mentor for the young African American women I was eager to welcome into our faculty. I know now that I was wrong. The relationship always begins with listening. Intensely. I ask mentees what their goals are, how they see themselves achieving their goals, what has worked for them in the past, who their allies have been,

what barriers they face. As a mentor, I help the new faculty members mentally collect and stack their strengths so that they can build on them. Later, when deep, unshakable trust is developed in our relationship, we will dip together into areas of weakness. We will gently begin to probe how to address those areas. The place to begin a mentoring relationship, I believe, is always with a focus on the mentee's strengths.

I wondered, too, about the other side of the relationship: Can a scholar who is new to the university and from a traditionally underrepresented group teach a middle-aged white woman like me how to ask important mentoring questions, to listen better, to contribute more fully, to be the guide she needs? Those I have mentored have proven to me that they can, and do.

Being a mentor always pushes me toward self-examination, and in the vulnerability of that examination, I have grown to better understand my own identity as a professional, to identify the values the shape and are essential to me. This understanding is one of the gifts of mentoring. When an emerging scholar asks questions that challenge me to review and, when necessary, amend my own stances, I am renewed and humbled. The relationships that develop in the conversations that occur during mentoring are lasting because they are based on deep trust and honesty. It is a relationship that is free of any hidden assumptions, failures, or attitudes.

A few years ago, I was invited to give a talk to a class of doctoral students. I arrived early (a habit I have never lost) and was able to sit for a while, listening as the students discussed a text, they read for the class session. They were especially animated about recent developments in state and national educational policy. One student caught my attention with her ability to nudge her classmates toward deeper clarity in their stances, to consider various perspectives, to think critically. She seemed to be the kind of student with whom working would be a pleasure. I learned her name: Amanda Wilkerson. Over the next three years, Amanda and I became a team: I have served as a mentor, given my role as dean of the college and hers as doctoral student, postdoctoral scholar whom I asked to direct the Urban Scholars Research in our college, and now a faculty member in the College of Community Innovation and Education at UCF. She has taught me, through her knowledge and commitment to equity and community-engaged research, and research-informed policy, how to look more carefully at critical issues, and from more nuanced perspectives. In the most recent role as a beginning faculty member in the college, she

has new questions and concerns. The trust we have established in our relationship allows her to ask them and provides me with the freedom to answer her with supportive honesty.

During those same years, I began working with colleagues across campus and with Community-Based Care, a group funded by the State of Florida, to assist in providing education for teens who live in the foster care system. Our goal was to provide a stable and sturdy academic and social-emotional bridge to post-secondary education for them. We needed a project leader who had both experience in teaching and an understanding of the foster child system. The leader also had to possess the intelligence and determination to work to find funding, motivate teens, develop curricula, and collaborate with the national First Star organization to conceptualize and implement our program. It was DeShawn Sims Chapman who confidently and quietly stepped into the leadership role to anchor the team. I have served as a mentor for DeShawn, listening carefully as she established plans for UCF First Star and its participants while a postdoctoral scholar. DeShawn's invincible belief in the students of First Star as human beings, her dedication to the work that supports them, including her successful effort to secure a state appropriation for the program, reminds me of the obligation that education and resources bestows on those of us who have the privilege of university positions. Like Amanda, DeShawn is now in a new role. As Education Manager for a major multi-year funded project, DeShawn has new questions. Our mentor/mentee relationship continues to thrive because we have embedded trust in our conversations and connections. The relationship will continue to inform and fuel her progress and mine.

Although I have served as one mentor for Amanda and DeShawn, it is I who have learned myriad lessons from them and the others whom I have been blessed to mentor during my professional life in higher education. They have taught me directly about the essential need for equity, access to education, and asset-based approaches to community-engaged programs. Specialists in urban education, each has directly challenged many assumptions that I have brought to them about how educators might "lift lives" of those who live in generational poverty. Each has helped me better understand toxic charity and think toward solid equity, for example.

It is from working with Amanda and DeShawn and others that I learned that mentoring is an opportunity to identify a person's strengths and build on those. I am their champion and their supporter, their critic, and their coach. I push and suggest, nudge, and question. I have heard

from both about having bouts of imposter syndrome and shared with them my own. We have enjoyed meals, wine, and a myriad of conversations together. We have agreed, argued, and raised questions together. I have edited their work, and they have done the same with mine. We have learned, together, about working in urban settings, and the challenges of doing it effectively, as insiders and as outsiders.

Amanda might say that, unlike other mentors she has, I don't gush and lead cheers for her, but instead, I celebrate her accomplishments than ask questions to push her to continue, to think more, to continue to move in various ways. DeShawn might suggest that I have been the opposite of a micromanager, leaving her to find many answers for herself, including navigating the hallways of the state capitol in order to secure funding for her project. Both are right. As different scholars, they have different needs from a mentor, because they bring different strengths to the academy. And yet the best parts of my week include individual meetings during which I hear about the accomplishments of each, discuss what we can do to advance their projects, then talk about life: how DeShawn's young child is teething and growing, and how Amanda's nephew is dealing with early adolescence and life.

I have been reminded through experience that mentoring, when done well, involves a process of considering all of the interconnected aspects of life that touch on professional success. Academic, emotional, and social goals do not exist separate from social, spiritual, physical, familial, and economic ones. As a mentor, I want to be positive, listen carefully, model effective practices, and facilitate opportunities for growth in all areas into which I am admitted access. In all interactions, I aim to be honest, direct, and kind.

As David Brooks reminds us in *The Second Mountain* (Random House, 2019), "Our emotions assign value to things and tell us what is worth wanting. The passions are not the opposite of reason: they are the foundation of reason and often contain a wisdom that the analytic brain can't reach" (p. 45). A happy life as a university faculty member requires a balance of passion and reason. Mentoring is about listening to life, and finding where career demands fit into and contribute to it. The best mentors don't focus on the work only: they focus on the person.

In this volume, there are many variations on the theme of mentoring. The common thread is the importance we place on having a trusted guide, a listener, a helper whom we trust to give us advice and criticism

without also levying an evaluation on us. Mentoring is a gift of passing forward positive input. The giver and the receiver are rewarded, in turn, as receivers and givers. What an extraordinarily precious gift to exchange.

Orlando, FL, USA Dr. Pamela S. Carroll

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Dr. Pamela S. Carroll is Dean, College of Community Innovation and Education, University of Central Florida. She supports eight academic units, 350 faculty and staff, and 9,000 students who bring multiple perspectives to common concerns regarding complex contemporary social issues. Prior to UCF, she was Dean of the College of Education at Oklahoma State University (2012–2015), as faculty member and associate dean in the College of Education at Florida State University 1990–2012. There, she earned the university's highest teaching distinction: The University Teaching Excellence Award. At UCF she frequently is asked to mentor women seeking leadership roles, and continues to actively support students and faculty as they navigate academia. She was awarded the Mildred W. Coyle Eminent Scholar Chair in 2019. She has served nationally as President of the Council on Academic Deans of Research in Education Institutions (CADREI). Currently she is chair of the State University System Dean's Collaborative in Florida.

Acknowledgements

This book is significant to me because without mentors I wouldn't be where I am personally, professionally, or spiritually. I would like to use this space to acknowledge and thank significant people in my life and a collection of mentors who have supported my growth and development.

To Kevin Chapman (and Kameron, too): Thank you for a love that is unwavering, supportive, and that encourages me to grow. The two of you are my inspiration.

To Allen and Alice Sims: Thank for being my first mentors and for providing a spiritual and educational foundation. Both have been the greatest gift you could have given.

Michelle, LaTanya, and Lisa: My sisters and role models. Thank you for laying a path for me to walk in excellence.

Dr. Carolyn Hopp—Thank you for noticing me, validating my ideas. and stretching me.

I would like to acknowledge other mentors that have, and continue to, support my development: Dean Pamela Carroll, Dr. Malcolm Butler, and Dr. Dave Edyburn.

—DeShawn Chapman

I use this significant space, to express my profound appreciation to my family, professional colleagues, and mentors. First, I wish to acknowledge Dewey, Valerie, Cynthia, DeMarkco, Derrick, Rebecca, Vera, Vanessa, Christina, John, John Dewey, and Christian for your constant support

and encouragement. I speak your names because you are all authors in the story of my life and I love you very much. I acknowledge too my department, Educational Leadership and Higher Education, in the College of Community Innovation and Education at the University of Central Florida. I provide additional acknowledgements to my mentors: Dr. David Jackson, Florida A&M University, Dr. Adeline Evans, Florida A&M University, Dr. Dave Edyburn, University of Wisconsin, Dr. Caroline Pratt Marrett, University of Central Florida, and Mrs. Althea Robinson. Special thanks to Dr. Malcolm Glover. Also, with deep appreciation and sincere gratitude I acknowledge an extraordinary administrator, colleague, and mentor who has profoundly changed the trajectory of my academic career, Dean Pamela S. Carroll of the University of Central Florida. I am thankful for you and admire your joie de vivre! Finally, I acknowledge the supernatural force which resides in me, God! Thank you heavenly father for holding the power of my life and its destiny in your hand. From the time that I was a little girl with big dreams until now, you have orchestrated the steps of my life from Liberty City and Miami Gardens, Florida all the way to the academy. While that pathway was not continuously clear, I will continually remember that in moments like these, the physical manifestations of my personal prayers have in many ways been answered. Moreover, you had and still do have a hand in positioning me to pursue, without fail, my life's calling.

—Amanda Wilkerson

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Notes on Contributors

Dr. Paula Belló is an academician at Escuela de Pedagogías en Inglés, Facultad de Ciencias de la Educación, at Universidad de Talca, in Linares, Chile. She holds a Ph.D. in Education with an emphasis in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) from the University of Central Florida (UCF), FL, USA; an M.A. in English Language Teaching (ELT) from The University of Warwick, Coventry, UK; and a B.A. in Foreign Language (Spanish/English) Education form Universidad de Tucumán, Tucumán, Argentina. Dr. Belló research focuses on the experiences of pre- and in- service teachers, both in their learning processes and their everyday job and professional development. As a co-researcher in the longitudinal international research study: *Teachers' Work: Exchange of Narratives among Latin American Teachers* (Proyecto de Investigación de la Universidad Nacional de Tucumán, Argentina) she has worked with research teams from Mexico and Brazil since 2018. She has ample experience in presenting, both in her home country, Argentina, and abroad, Mexico and the USA, and has been a member of the Holmes Scholars (UCF) since 2014.

Dr. DeShawn Chapman is an advocate for access and equity for underserved students, Dr. DeShawn Chapman has positioned her work at the intersection of educational research and practice. Beginning as a middle and high school classroom teacher, DeShawn honed her core skills in curriculum and instruction by working in general and special education at both suburban and urban schools. Roles such as Department Chair,

Faculty Advisory Committee Chair, Program Developer and Researcher cultivated Dr. Chapman's expertise as a teacher leader. As Postdoctoral Associate in the University of Central Florida's College of Community Innovation and Education, DeShawn served as the director of First Star Central Florida Academy—a college and career preparation program for high school youth in foster care that focuses on academic support, life skills development and caregiver engagement. Dr. Chapman has worked to create partnerships with nonprofit organizations, school districts, foundations, and the local child welfare agency to improve the life skills and educational wellbeing of the region's youth in foster care. Currently, Dr. Chapman works at the University of Central Florida in the Center for Higher Education Innovation. Here, she directs educational programing for a multi-stakeholder initiative to support the education ecosystem in one of Central Florida's historically Black communities. Dr. Chapman demonstrates the courage, expertise, and leadership to make changes within traditional and nontraditional educational spaces to deconstruct power and privilege and encourage the development of learning environments that result in equitable educational outcomes for underserved students, particularly students impacted by poverty and trauma.

Natoya Coleman is a Ph.D. Student in Urban Education and Holmes Scholar at Rowan University where she focuses on Secondary English curriculum and instruction in urban and diverse learning environments. Her research interests include mentorship among Black women in higher education, Black Feminist Thought, Critical Literacy, and Equity-based pedagogical practices in secondary English classrooms.

Frank Conic is a Mathematics Instructor at Santa Fe College in Gainesville, Florida. Frank volunteers as a student mentor, tutor and computer lab supervisor in the math department. He also mentors African American males in *the My Brothers Keepers* program at Santa Fe College. Frank serves as a Mathematics coach for the National Achievers Society at the Santa Fe College Center of Excellence. This is a multifaceted program to motivate elementary and secondary students to prepare for and ultimately enter college. One of his noteworthy achievements during the 2016 school year included leading the 11th–12th grade mathematics team to the Florida State Brain Bowl title, the first in its 30-year history. Frank also serves as the Program Director for the Community College Futures Assembly, an independent policy forum in the Institute of Higher Education at University of Florida and the Alamo Colleges District.

Frank was born in Saginaw, Michigan and is the youngest of four siblings. After graduating from the Saginaw Arts and Sciences Academy (SASA), and Saginaw High School (SHS) Frank earned his B.S. in mathematics from Hampton University and then his M.S. in Applied Mathematics from Clark Atlanta University. He holds a Doctorate in Higher Education Administration from the University of Florida. Franks research interests include Developmental Education Policies and Reform, the mathematics Achievement Gap, and the School to prison Pipeline. Frank has presented papers and posters on his research ideas at conferences regionally and nationally.

Dr. Andrew P. Daire is Dean and a Professor of Counselor Education in the School of Education at Virginia Commonwealth University. He holds a Ph.D. in Counseling Psychology with a specialization in Rehabilitation Psychology from The Florida State University, and a M.S. in Mental Health Counseling and B.S. in Biology from Stetson University. Dr. Daire's research examines couple and family stress and the impact of brief interventions on individual and family mental and physical health. An accomplished researcher and scholar, Daire has over 70 refereed publications and 110 refereed and invited presentations in addition to securing more than $16 million in externally federal funding to support his research. Daire is a Fellow of the American Counseling Association and has received numerous awards and accolades including 2018 Distinguished Alumni Award for Stetson University and national mentorship awards from the American Counseling Association, Association for Counselor Educators and Supervisors, and Southern Association for Counselor Educators and Supervisors. With over 25 years of experience in higher education, Dr. Daire is a transformational leader who emphasizes personal and professional development, and the motivation of faculty, students and staff towards excellence, innovation and impact. A big believer in the value of community engagement, Daire believes research and instruction are at their best and most impactful when focused on serving the public.

Dr. Tia N. Dumas is an Assistant Dean for Professional Development and Inclusive Excellence in the Graduate School and a Provost's Fellow in the Office of the Provost at Clemson University. Dr. Dumas' role at the Graduate School is to maintain a robust professional development program for graduate students and postdoctoral fellows; she designed and developed the GRAD 360° program to address this mission. She works with various campus units to build and sustain a supportive and

effective educational environment for all graduate students, particularly students from underrepresented communities in higher education. She also holds a clinical appointment in the Department of Educational and Organizational Leadership Development.

Dr. Kimmerly Harrell is an assistant professor of Communication Disorders and the Director of Speech-Language Pathology Clinical Services at Louisiana Tech University. She holds a Ph.D. in Communication Sciences and Disorders from the University of Central Florida, an Ed.S in Curriculum and Instruction from Lincoln Memorial University, an M.S. in Communicative Disorders from the University of Mississippi and a B.S. in Speech Pathology and Audiology from Tennessee State University. Dr. Harrell's research focus is in language and literacy disorders, where she examines how reading and vocabulary interventions impact reading comprehension in culturally and linguistically diverse adolescents. Prior to her academic appointment, Dr. Harrell worked as a licensed and certified Speech-Language Pathologist in schools, skilled nursing facilities, private practice, long-term acute care, and rehabilitation hospitals.

Dr. Shaywanna Harris-Pierre is an Assistant Professor in the Professional Counseling program at Texas State University in the College of Education. She holds a doctorate in Counselor Education from the University of Central Florida, a M.A. in Marriage and Family Therapy from the University of Akron and a B.S. in Psychology from Hampton University. Dr. Harris' research focuses on trauma in low-SES children and families and methods in which to mitigate the biopsychosocial impact of trauma on the developing child. Shaywanna has presented papers at conferences nationally, internationally, and regionally. Dr. Harris has received over $10,000 in funding for her research and has been recognized with the Russel V. Ewald Academic Excellence Award by the Florida Education Fund. Dr. Harris serves her profession and her university through membership on editorial boards for professional counseling journals, and membership on the Texas State University College of Education Equity Advisory Committee.

Dr. Carolyn Walker Hopp earned a Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction from the University of Central Florida (UCF). She recently retired from the University of Central Florida College of Community Innovation and Education. Dr. Hopp's work focuses on multiple areas of education including professional development related to mentoring preservice and

veteran teachers in urban schools, and working with educators to develop curriculum, instruction, and assessment models focused on student learning and achievement.

She has been affiliated faculty with the University of Central Florida Center for Research in Education, Arts, Technology and Entertainment (CREATE) where she collaborated on designing curriculum for after school programs, engaged in research, and professional development. Dr. Hopp also designed curriculum for the UCF College of Medicine Pipeline Partnership with Jones High School. She is also known for her research in urban education as well as in designing district-wide mentoring models in Osceola and Seminole Counties (Florida) that have been commended by the state of Florida for their comprehensive approach to mentoring and professional development. Dr. Hopp is an educational consultant with universities and schools locally, nationally, and internationally, including the International School of Geneva, Switzerland, and the College of Education at the University of Johannesburg, South Africa.

Dr. Jessica L. Martin is an assistant professor in the Department of Counseling at Lamar University. She holds a Ph.D. in counselor education from the University of Central Florida, a Master of Science in rehabilitation counseling from Winston-Salem State University, and a Bachelor of Science degree in Applied Sociology from East Carolina University. Prior to her position with Lamar University, Dr. Martin taught at the University of Central Florida and Wake Forest University. Additionally, she is the project manager of a summer entrepreneurship program for minority youths with disabilities. Her research interests include: experiences and techniques for working with African American female mental health clients, post-secondary transition services of minority youth with disabilities, and counselor identity development and training. She has been recognized by the Southern Association for Counselor Education and Supervision and the American Educational Research Association Division E as an Emerging Leaders Fellow.

Dr. Terrance McNeil is an Assistant Professor at Tennessee State University in the College of Education, Department of Educational Leadership. He earned his doctorate in Educational Leadership from Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University. Terrance has worked with the United States Department of Education, the National Science Foundation and the Florida Legislature to promote teaching excellence and diversity. He has also worked extensively with the American Association of

Colleges for Teacher Education, serving as a lobbyist, blog writer and National Vice-President of the Holmes Scholar Executive Council. Dr. McNeil was recognized by Secretary of Education John King as an advocate for underserved student populations in 2016 and honored with the White House Initiative on HBCU's Excellence in Innovation and Competitiveness Award in 2018. His research interests focus on issues germane to Historically Black Colleges and Universities, educational equity, achievement gap reversals, and culturally responsive school governance.

Dr. Sheila D. Moore has served as an Assistant Professor of Educational Leadership at Florida A&M University where she has taught educational leadership courses in both Master and Doctoral Programs and served as dissertation chair. A former teacher and school leader, Dr. Moore has also served the profession through the Florida Association of Professors of Educational Leadership (FAPEL), Florida Department of Education, Southern Regional Council on Educational Administrators (SRCEA), American Education Research Association (AERA), American Association for Colleges of Teacher Education (AACTE), and others. Dr. Moore's research interests include leadership preparation programs, clinical practices, and collaborative partnerships; social justice in school leadership with emphasis on female leadership in urban settings and mentoring/doctoral student development. Dr. Moore has been recognized and is the recipient of teaching, research, and mentoring awards. Recently, Dr. Moore was invited to write reviews for the *Teachers College Record* and published a chapter in the book *Partnerships for Leadership Preparation and Development: Facilitators, Barriers, and Models for Change.*

Eshe Price is a Ph.D. student and Holmes Scholar at Rowan University in Urban Education with a focus on intersectional methodologies. Informed by her own educational and professional experiences, she particularly interested in examining the experiences of Black girls and women using culturally relevant methodologies. Her current research operationalizes critical race quantitative intersectionality to examine the material impact of race and racism at its intersection with other forms of subordination.

Dr. Shalander "Shelly" Samuels is currently a high school English instructor in the Orange County School District as well as an Adjunct professor at Seminole State Community College in Central Florida. She holds a doctorate in Curriculum and Instruction with an emphasis on Literacy

from the University of Central Florida. Dr. Samuels' research interests focuses on English Speakers of Other Languages' (ESOL) achievement and learning as well as creating unique literacy intervention programs in marginalized communities. She focuses on reframing the stereotypical literacy approaches in majority minority academic achievement. She focuses on developing varying opportunities through concepts of intersectionality while connecting higher education and grades k-12 research, especially in urban areas. Dr. Samuels has written several educational materials and presented at national and international conferences as well coordinated research forums that focuses on literacy, she is also an active member of several academic organizations such as the American Reading Forum (ARF).

Dr. Irenea Walker is an Assistant Professor of Elementary Education at the University of Northern Iowa in the College of Education. She received her Ph.D. in education from the University of Central Florida, M.A. in human resources development from Webster University, and B.A. in mass media arts from Clark Atlanta University. Dr. Walker's primary research focuses on Black elementary students' attitudes, perceptions, and positionality of social studies content with an emphasis on Black American history. Dr. Walker has presented at national and local conferences. She has also been published in scholarly journals such as *Social Studies Research and Practice*, *Theory and Research in Social Education*, and *Journal of Social Studies Research*. Some of her awards and honors include the UNI College of Education Summer Fellowship, UNI Faculty Honorary Sideline Coach, McKnight Doctoral Fellow, and Scholars of Color Travel Award from the College and University Faculty Assembly of the National Council for the Social Studies.

Dr. Whitney Watkins completed her Bachelor's degree in Psychology from Florida State University, Master's of Science in Education degree in Higher Education Administration from Indiana University, and her Doctorate in Education in Higher Education and Policy Studies from the University of Central Florida. Dr. Watkins was most recently the Director of an Upward Bound Program and has worked extensively with high school student populations, as well as, grant-funded programming and success. She currently oversees the Dual Enrollment Program at Barry University in Miami Shores, Florida. She has also taught and developed curriculum at both the graduate and undergraduate levels in the areas of leadership studies and group counseling. Her experience with and fervor for student success fueled her research agenda which focused on the success of high achieving Black female students. Dr. Watkins has presented at national and regional conferences including AERA and NASPA. Dr. Watkins has a high

enthusiasm for high school and college student success and will continue to make impacts on these populations.

Dr. Amanda Wilkerson is a scholar and social reformer who examines academia and analyzes K-20 student achievement in order to better understand enhancing the human condition. She is a tireless advocate for equity and excellence in higher education who seeks to build a better world for individuals and institutions through cooperation, collaboration, and community engagement. Currently, Dr. Wilkerson serves as an Assistant Professor in the College of Community Innovation and Education at the University of Central Florida. She is also an affiliated faculty member and visiting scholar with the Center for Minority Serving Institutions at Rutgers University. A proud graduate of Florida A&M University, Dr. Wilkerson has always expressed a sincere commitment to promoting the common good by teaching and mentoring young people who face socioeconomic challenges. She has written educational materials and coordinated forums on significant civic and scholastic matters. Dr. Wilkerson served as the guest editor for the *Urban Education Research and Policy Annuals Journal-Hillard Sizemore Special Edition* and she has written several articles. As a part of her passion for higher education and her mission to create inclusive learning environments, Dr. Wilkerson regularly works with instructional leaders to build their capacity for studying and practicing equity-based pedagogical approaches. Her research focuses on explicating affirmative teaching practices, educational policies, and community organizing methods that improve community partnerships and bolster student success. Dr. Wilkerson has been recognized with the Outstanding Service in Education award by the Holmes Scholars Association of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) and the Diversity Scholarship with the Adult Higher Education Association (AHEA). She serves as the national chair for the Urban Education Topical Action Group for AACTE. In that capacity, she creates and manages collaborative partnerships that provide critical services for those who serve underserved urban student populations. Dr. Amanda Wilkerson is an innovator and an intellectual who continues to work on community development projects, charitable causes, and advocacy initiatives for nonprofit organizations and governmental agencies. Her twitter handle is @DrAVWilkerson.

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CHAPTER 1

Student to Scholar: Critical Ethnographic Conceptualizations of Mentoring a Black Female Scholar and Considerations for Diversifying the Academy

Amanda Wilkerson

The American postsecondary education system is widely regarded for its rich teaching, research, and service traditions (Beard & Hartley, 1984; Hannan & Silver, 2000; Kezar & Sam, 2010). Yet, diversifying faculty in higher education has been particularly problematic (Kayes, 2006) since many postsecondary institutions fail to mirror the diversity of their student populations as it pertains to recruiting and retaining faculty of color (Espinosa, Turk, Taylor, & Chessman, 2019).

In the United States there are approximately 1.5 million faculty members (McFarland, et al., 2018). Yet, when the data are disaggregated the numbers reveal limited progress in diversification such that the demographic breakdown of full-time faculty of color are, 10% Asian Pacific Islanders; 6% Black/African Americans; 5% Hispanic; and 1% American Indian or Other (McFarland, et al., 2018). These data are often used as

A. Wilkerson (✉)
University of Central Florida, Orlando, FL, USA
e-mail: Amanda.Wilkerson@ucf.edu

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the baseline to routinely scrutinize, document, and enact programming to disrupt static stratification of faculty diversity (Moody, 2004; Smith, 2015). Diversifying the postsecondary faculty pipeline, as it is routinely referred to, suggests that specific ethnic groups remain underrepresented in academe (Alger & Carrasco, 1997).

Conversations on how to address the minimal progress associated with increasing diversity tend to focus on developing programs that grow the rate of diverse faculty. Such discourses have made it possible to develop plans that incentivize diversity hiring. For example, some universities have hiring programs where funding allocations are specifically set aside to hire diverse faculty. Outside the university, some initiatives have situated their work in training future faculty to acquire the necessary research skills to teach and produce academic scholarship. I know of aspects related to the aforementioned programs. As a Black woman who sought to become a faculty member, these pathways were made available to me. To contextualize perspectives on diversifying faculty and provide a pragmatic overview of the book, I synthesize insights regarding transition from student to scholar within the context of my own narrative, examine historic considerations of faculty of color and needs for mentoring, describe initiatives in faculty diversity programming, preview considerations presented by the authors of this edited volume, and summarize the motivations that led to the book you are now reading.

Credentialed No Career

Approximately three years ago, I earned the highest academic credential in my field. I graduated with a terminal degree, but I was troubled. The graduation ceremony was supposed to be celebratory in nature. Yet in a heart-stopping slap-in-the-face to reality sort of way, I felt conflicted. My years of work finally resulted in the recognition and endorsement of the university. Yet, ironically my preparation did not, initially, go far enough to help me secure a faculty position to launch my academic career. While I am, and forever will be, Dr. Amanda Wilkerson, at the time of my graduation I was unemployed and recovering from a sleep debt and associated emotional and physical fatigue related to the long and grueling process of writing my dissertation. To make matters worse, I was frustrated by the new set of circumstances I encountered. My best efforts to prove to myself that I was worthy of working at the fount of knowledge and the

home of intellectual curiosity, the university, as an emerging urban education expert and faculty member were met with an oppressive reality. I was credentialed with no employment prospects.

Undoubtedly, instead of feeling elated, I felt overwhelmed that I had not lived up to my own career expectations and the explicit and implicit expectations of my family, friends, and colleagues. I carried the weight of the expectations from my family as a first-generation graduate student that I would miraculously figure out how to turn my college degrees into an opportunity worthy of the time, commitment, and work I had dedicated several years of my life to. The expectations from my peers and doctoral student counterparts was, as a natural born leader, I would position myself to succeed against all odds. All of the weighty expectations of my friends and families paled in comparison to the individual who had the most knowledge to help me transition from student to scholar: my dissertation chair.

I perceived my dissertation chair's expectations were not as hopeful as either my family or friends. I felt that she only expected that I would graduate. Moreover, I sensed that for my dissertation chair, getting me across the graduation stage would be the final activity of our scholarly collaboration. As is the case for all doctoral students, the nature of the short-term mentoring relationship would have long-lasting impact on my career trajectory and success beyond graduate school. However, as I embarked upon the search for an academic position, I felt the limitations of being unsupported.

I navigated my first steps beyond the dissertation, alone. Yet, through these experiences I was determined to figure out how to move closer to my intended goal of securing a faculty position. On my journey to the professoriate I knew I would have much to learn about what it meant to serve the academy as a knowledge broker. However, in my search to become a scholar I felt profoundly ignored and predictably overlooked. Essentially, graduation was a reminder that people within the academy had the power to include or separate, elevate or deprecate, and coordinate or conceal structural pathways to the professoriate. Hence, rather than allowing the modifications of support to change my focus, I used internal goals as a compass to illuminate my external actions while continuing to pursue, without giving up, steps that would lead to a career in the professoriate.

Professoriate Pathways

My aspirations to become a faculty member were based on the desire to have an impact in the field of education. Moreover, my desire to make a difference in the lives of students, families, and communities has never waned. Despite not having any immediate prospects for a career in academia, I created self-imposed routines that would help me survive this turbulent period in my life. I got up every morning and read my Bible as a form of medication and motivation. Without guidance or advice, I wrote outlines for potential research studies, refined manuscript ideas, and developed presentation proposals to submit at academic conferences. I even remained "in touch" with my academic advisors. From time to time, I emailed colleagues and close friends to solicit support, encouragement, and guidance. I tried to stay optimistic. In reality, I was lost and anxious. Yet I made every effort to find a way back to the academy. Sometimes just for the sake of keeping my sanity, and with hopes that I would get professional guidance, I would even try to keep in touch with my dissertation chair.

However, I lived a very sobering existence. I was deeply in debt and living with my parents. Moreover, it became clear that job searching would be a long and involved process. The panic, along with sorrow, I experienced during graduation crept back up at different times. One of those occasions of panic transpired after having forced myself to drive down to the local unemployment office to apply for temporary assistance. Unfortunately, Dr. Wilkerson needed public assistance. The same panic I felt at graduation suddenly hit me again, a month later as I sat in an orientation class to serve as a K-12 substitute teacher, where the main requirements were, among other things, a high school diploma. I woke up every morning to my parents, who themselves were career K-12 veteran instructors, feeling horrible because, though I had accumulated multiple degrees, I had not secured work that was on par with my professional ambition or academic training. In the solace of those moments, I found comfort in the sage scriptural reading which simply says despise no small beginnings. Those words gave me the courage to believe that where I was at, careerless, frustrated, and looking to have a chance at leading the academic life I always wanted, was not where I would always be. In my estimation, I knew how to be a college student; I was one for a decade. Yet, I had no idea how to transition into being, Dr. Wilkerson, the scholar.

Postdoctoral Mentorship

My pathway to the professoriate was not always smooth. As I continued along the way, from time to time I discovered signs that affirmed the steps that I was taking were headed in the right direction. One of which was my selection as a University of Central Florida (UCF) Holmes Scholar. The American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) Holmes Scholars group is a national merit-based mentoring program created for underrepresented minority doctoral students (Lamb, 1999). AACTE's Holmes Scholar program helped me through each stage of my doctoral journey. After graduation, I also relied on Holmes's national network of colleagues. Nationwide, my contemporaries offered to help because they knew my journey would be filled with a mixture of significant victories and unspoken difficulties.

I always received information. However, I was not sure how to use it. One mentor, A Holmes Scholar Alumni, working at a Historically Black College and University (HBCU), explicitly explained that I needed to seize opportunities to showcase my work and network with college administrators and faculty. During the conferences I attended, I would request "meet and greets" with selected presenters. To explain, my request generally meant previewing conference agendas and seeking additional time with presenters, whom I felt shared information that was fascinating to me or connected with my research interest. Generally speaking, those requests were met with vague replies that resulted in nothing more than a business card handoff after a presentation. Yet, in hindsight, opportunity found me when I crossed paths with my college Dean. Dr. Carroll visited a course I was taking on the topic of college leadership. During her official visit, she presented as a guest lecture and field questions from the class regarding our inquiries related to administration. Since it was a small seminar course, formality was reduced. Her approach that day was to walk up to each student and introduce herself. When she came to me, she controlled most of the conversation, allowing me to interrupt primarily to respond to her questions. She asked my name, what year of the program was I in, what was my research interest. Then she was on to the next student. After her discussion presentation, I would see her occasionally, but it was always in passing only exchanging platonic pleasantries.

A few months after graduation, research support, career assistance, and mentoring appeared in an unexpected way. While at home, I received a phone call from the new Dean of my college asking me to come to

her office. I had no idea what to expect, and in many ways, it felt like I was being called to the principal's office! Nevertheless, when we met, she offered me an opportunity to train under her tutelage. The benefits of working with Dr. Pamela Carroll, who affectionately refers to herself as "Sissi," her childhood nickname, were enormous. Dean Carroll is a mentor and colleague. She, a former faculty member turned college administrator, would allow me to continue my writing and research with her guidance, expertise, and support. And the opportunity to work with her came with monetary compensation! Yet, if she never paid me, I would have said yes, because I was eager to start my career. I suspect; however, she never knew the significance of her support for me. During our meeting in her office, she handed me an offer letter that made me suspicious since she carefully framed her words. She wished she could give me more, but $52,500 was all she could offer. What Dean Carroll did not know was her presumably meager compensation package offer was the most money I had ever made annually in my adult life.

I accepted the position of postdoctoral associate, an appointment that lasted two years, and planted myself solidly under her guidance. During that time, she challenged me to take ownership of our collaborative research work. In promoting the idea of seizing the opportunity, I managed projects that enhanced my ability to work with other scholars in the field. For instance, during her professional mentorship of me, I managed the Urban Teacher Initiatives Project. As a part of the project, I was responsible for researching the experiences of preservice instructors' clinical field experiences at K-12 urban schools. At the same time, she provided resources so that I could collect data connected to working with urban schools, communities, and families. Given her role as an administrator of a large college, Dean Carroll was extremely busy. Yet she graciously took time to meet often. Our meetings were usually, weekly and lasted for about an hour. During those meetings I could strengthen my work with her wise feedback. Likewise, we created a few published academic manuscripts as a result of her socializing me to experiences associated with faculty work. As long as I showed interesting in working, she would make time to help.

With her support, I was also able to host the Florida Urban Education Summit. As a part of organizing the summit, I received greater access and unique opportunities to interact with other urban education scholars. For instance, we invited a scholar with international prominence,

Dr. Noguera, to the summit. Pedro Noguera is a distinguished professor in education at UCLA's Graduate School of Education and Information Studies. She allowed me to direct his on-campus visit. I utilized that time to gently inquiry about his thoughts and recommendations regarding the Florida Urban Education landscape. Organizing the summit, also attracted other scholarly opportunities. For example, I served as the guest editor of an urban education journal with a world-renowned scholar, Dr. Lewis. Chance Lewis is a distinguished professor in urban education at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. Over time, I looked to Dr. Carroll as more than a supervisor. Dean Carroll became a vibrant force, who assisted me in many ways. She engaged me holistically, supporting my vision of community engaged research through intense mentorship, which repositioned my career trajectory. Thus, I firmly believe that without addressing structural support, access to critical resources, and incubating the success of scholars of color, diversifying the faculty pipeline is impossible. Stated differently, I never would have imagined that I too could be a faculty member without the reinforcement of solid pre-career mentorship, through Dr. Carroll. Her support was vital as it further strengthened my research skills and deepened connections with other scholars in the field.

Faculty Mentorship

Currently, I am a faculty member. Though I have acquired the position I sought and dreamed of, my need for mentoring remains eminent. Dr. Dave Edyburn now occupies the role of wise mentor. He is a senior scholar in the field of Special Education, who is nationally, and internationally recognized for his research and grant work. More than that, he reinforces in me that I have the talent, skills, and ability to make a significant contribution to the field and the academy. His mentoring of me is critically differentiated to account for such considerations as race, cultural, and experiential knowledge. I have learned that the credential I earned and the culture I emerged from creates a contradiction between my professional desires and my personal realities. I am Black, I am also a woman, but I am not a quota. Yet, the presence of my race at the start of my faculty appointment is an indisputable factor in my acculturation into the academy.

As I began to explore faculty work, as a woman of color, with a first-generation status, I wanted quality to be the quotient of my professional

disposition. Though the aforementioned statement is simple the problem is quite complex. I am clear about my career interest. However, I had no clear indication concerning what it would take to be successful. Moreover, my notion of success was not necessarily only academic in nature. I also wanted to take the gifts I learned in the academy and leverage those scholarly skills to work in and outside academic environments. Additionally, I desired to masterfully apply academic skills within the context of oftentimes being the only representative of me. I am the youngest in my department and I am also the only Black female in the urban education area. Relatedly, those characteristics can make my professional existence seem isolating. Besides physical attributes, I have different perspectives on research approaches, engagement in service activities, interest in grant work, and such. Yet, Dr. Edyburn provides formidable support that aides me in challenging the notion that collegiality can occur when so many differences might abound. Take for instance our interactions versus our realities. He is not just a senior scholar; he is also a White man who has arguably lived a very different life from me. Yet, Dr. Edyburn and I authentically share research projects, exchange content for educational reading, and continually speak by telephone to stay connected. In essence, a presence of bidirectional accessibility to a senior scholar reinforced and located support for my new reality of being in a tenured tracked faculty position.

When juxtaposing my lived scholastic experiences to that of joining the workforce that trained me, I am thankful to have the mentoring support of two advisors who have coached me to and through my professional process differently, nevertheless, diligently. Admittedly, the undergirding of faculty diversity emerged during discussions of affirmative action. Research centering on affirmative action looks at policies that inform practices regarding increased representation as it relates to race and gender (Kalev, Dobbin, & Kelly, 2006). What is controversial about conceptions of affirmative action is that in reality many Americans believe in the idea of representation. However, loath the notion that a service, position, or any point of privilege should be extended in order to appear diverse (Moses, 2001). Consistent with the aforementioned, I have adopted asset-based thinking, versus affirmative action approach, regarding mentoring. I knew the possibilities of being a faculty member were real and reachable. During my undergraduate experience at a Historically Black University, my time completing courses was facilitated by faculty members that looked like me, who earned terminal degrees in their field, and were engrossed

in scholarly provocations. Consequently, those observations convinced me that I too could become a faculty member. I have also come to realize that I could never rely on the degree alone. In fact, no one ever gets the job because they meet the minimum requirements, or in the context of a faculty position, a terminal degree. I knew that to enter and remain in the field as an academician I needed guidance because I wanted to blaze a trail, but I realized I had no roadmap. Therefore, support and guidance in the form of mentorship would be essential to help me, and likely other scholars of color, navigate pathways of the profession.

Historical Explorations of Mentoring Scholars of Color

When I began my student to scholar journey, I often wondered what it was like for those, scholars of color, that came before me. Consider the life of Edward Bouchet. As I studied the literature regarding the historical underpinnings of African Americans earning degrees, especially a doctorate, his story is chronicled. Dr. Bouchet was the son of a man who lived captive to the capitalism of the grotesque slave industry in the United States. As a part of the vestiges of slave culture, his father was freed, yet worked for meager earnings as a groundskeeper for a New England university, Yale, which at the time was referred to as Yale college. In spite of his family's subjugation to an inhumane past, he excelled academically. Bouchet was noted as the valedictorian of his high school class. The importance of the aforementioned accomplishment can be understood greater when situating it within the context of the era for which he accrued this honor. Out of slavery, the experience of African Americans during the 1870s introduced reconstruction across the nation regarding a new way of life. For instance, more than 22 African Americans were elected to office in Congress. In 1870 federal legislation was passed, 15th amendment, which noted, citizenship was available to all despite race or creed. Yet the liberating power afforded to Black people at that time was minimized under the control of racism that ran rapidly across the country (Quezada & Louque, 2004; Smith, Turner, Osei-Kofi, & Richards, 2004; Turner, González, & Wood, 2008). Nevertheless, Bouchet earned both his undergraduate and Ph.D. degrees from Yale University. However, his transition from student to scholar was not quite realized. The pinnacle of his life's work amounted to being a science teacher at the

Institute for Colored Youth in Pennsylvania. Today the Institute for Colored Youth is known as Cheyney University a Historically Black College and University. Yet at the time of his departure, the institution granted no baccalaureate degrees. Moreover, while he longed to be a faculty member his denial into academia as a leader was a result of the value system of the day. Ultimately Dr. Bouchet returned home to New Haven to die with his dreams unfilled. This discourse, credentialed with no support, suggests that while academic skill and knowledge are fundamental factors necessary to engage in academic work, entry to the academy as examined through Bouchet's lived experiences requires a critical examination of practices and approaches that do not reproduce injustices. Given the inequities experienced by Bouchet compared to the current complexities associated with faculty diversification, changes to support scholars of color occurred. Similarly, racism's systemic legacy still poses barriers to scholars of color in the academy today. Strategic initiatives aimed at attracting and retaining a diversified faculty workforce are stratified as a result of toxic work environments, institutional or personal racism, and problematic promotion and tenure procedures (Griffin, Pifer, Humphrey, & Hazelwood, 2011; Harper, 2012; Jayakumar, Howard, Allen, & Han, 2009). Yet there are mentoring frameworks that alter the aforementioned contentious truth.

The Modernity of Mentoring Scholars of Color

In response to the growing challenges regarding diversifying the faculty pipeline there are a number of organizations that have focused their attention on supporting the success of doctoral students of color. Among them are the McKnight Fellows, Black Doctoral Network, and Holmes Scholars. Each of the organizations has positioned their work to generate tectonic shifts in structure, purposes, and programming to extraordinarily address increasing faculty of color to provoke placement parity and generate goodwill that lives up to the noble ideas of the academy.

For example, the McKnight Fellowship is a state-based program focused on developing African American and Latinx doctoral students. This state-based program began in the 80s and provides tuition reimbursement during the doctoral studies program. Additionally, recipients of the fellowship receive mentorship. The program purports that a byproduct of their work is the expansion of employment opportunities.

The Black Doctoral Network is similar in that it is a nationwide convening of doctoral students. While the network is nationwide its focus is

to support the scholarly endeavors of all types of doctoral students in various fields who attend the annual convening. Support is developed mainly among scholars who go back to their respective institutions after forming networks to collaborate on studies of interest with intellectuals who look like them. This is important, primarily because the Black doctoral student maybe the only one at their institution. As a result, the Black Doctoral Network can form hubs of support and collaboration in safe spaces.

Holmes Scholars

The Holmes Scholars organization is quite different. Remarkably, all of the authors in this book are a part of the Holmes Scholars program. The program is specifically for doctoral students in colleges of education and was formed by the Holmes Group. The Holmes Group was established in the 80s by a national consortium of educational Deans who sought to reform teacher education. Named after the inaugural dean at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, Henry Wyman Holmes, the group's fascination with influencing teacher education led to a critical examination of the nation's pedagogical commitment to educational reform and renewal. In the context of their work, several reports were written and prepared (Holmes Group, 1990, 1995; Sedlak, 1987). Provoked to take action on the theme of equity and diversity the Holmes Group established Holmes Scholars to select and support promising doctoral students of color in the field of education.

The focus of the scholar's program was to create a pool of diverse, race scholars, to diversify the faculty pipeline. The premise for beginning the group resulted in segmenting the purpose of Holmes Scholars into three specific areas: (1) Support, (2) Mentoring, and (3) Leadership. The Holmes group strategized that scholars of color would be able to succeed through financial support, faculty mentoring, and leadership development.

Today the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Educators (AACTE) has generously advanced the equity imperative of the Holmes Group by adopting and supporting the Holmes Scholars within its organization. The structural forces that sustain the Holmes Scholars are the sponsoring institutions for which the scholars are completing their doctoral work and the students themselves. In fact, Holmes Scholars supports doctoral students, postdoctoral professionals, and working scholars, through national programing for scholars and alumni. A challenge for the

Holmes Scholars group, however, is to maintain the historic premise of its established purpose as AACTE reframes the scope of its work with scholars to address the diversification of the K-12 teacher pipeline through the development of Holmes Master's Program (AACTE, n.d.).

This book provides multiple chapters about the dimensions of mentorship scholars of color received and its cyclical impact on success at different stages in the higher education workforce pipeline. The truth is opportunities for mentoring support within the context of supporting scholars of colors should be perpetual (Davidson & Foster-Johnson, 2001). The literature I have provided thus far is quite sparse concerning the diminishing milestones and accomplishments as to whether scholars of color achieve tenure and promotion to associate professors, and even fewer full professors. As a result, it might be important to devote attention to mentoring using accounts from the full spectrum of voices in the continuum of faculty work. To further contextualize this book, we look at the perspectives of students, researchers, and influential academics regarding mentoring perceptions.

Student to Scholar Purpose

One goal of this book is to understand the mentoring experiences of Holmes Scholars and the role it has played in assisting each scholar in reaching their professional goals. Mentoring was initially proposed by the Holmes Group as a part of the framework to develop Holmes Scholars. This book afforded the opportunity to writers to share ethnographic accounts of mentoring so that readers could understand mentoring experiences throughout various stages of a scholar's career. We implored authors to uncover their beliefs, and share experiences associated with mentoring. The writer's perceptions and experiences were critical in order to understand, going forward, how to produce relevant mentoring support. The reality is if mentoring is beneficial, and its usage can substantially assist scholars of colors, then a full and robust understanding of what works must be explored. Furthermore, while I understand that no mentoring experience is alike, I believe the Holmes Group idea to raise the question of equity and diversity in the makeup of college faculty is a specific distinction that has been largely overlooked in mentoring. Therefore, it is this book's ambition to reveal the mentoring perspectives from those who obtained the services to decide what is needed as moves are made to support students transition into scholars.

The book begins with author narratives from individuals who were doctoral students and identified as student scholars. The student scholar chapters discussed a mixture of student experiences from scholars who attended different types of institutions. Through their work, scholars developed very powerful narratives to allow readers to understand the vitality of mentoring. One such case is with a Black male, who was a PhD student, and a Holmes Scholar at a Historically Black College and University (HBCU). He draws upon the importance of mentoring through a discussion on the formation of the Holmes Scholar program at his university. Further, he explained why mentoring was needed for HBCU scholars and how mentoring was conceptualized within a minority serving institution context. The chapter is written with his faculty advisor to further illustrate the nature of his mentoring experiences. In total, the student section contains five chapters. Each chapter reveals or conveys attitudes, aspirations, arrangements, and arguments that speak to the value of mentoring. In the work of Walker, she intimately described her mentoring experiences as an attempt to step away from her comfort zone. Similarly, Conic chronicled the meaning of mentoring support in relation to school types analyzing the significance of mentoring at Predominately White Institutions (PWIs) versus Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). At the same time, Coleman and Price extend the context for the content of mentoring to discuss peer mentoring relationships among female counterparts. Finally, Samuels elaborates on the complexity of mentoring for working practitioners.

The second section of the book chronicles the experiences of those working in the field to highlight their conceptions of mentoring. We refer to this section as working scholars. The section contains the work of six authors. Of the six, three serve as faculty, two are administrators, and one describes pursuing faculty work as a foreigner, who was forced to job search abroad. Given the challenges faced by the authors, the writers pontificate about opportunities to advance and discuss mentoring both reflectively and reflexively. Their stories gave illuminating glimpses into the lives of scholars whose doctoral experiences were traumatic. For example, failing a dissertation defense multiple times because of the lack of committee support, or dealing with the death of a mother during doctoral studies and subsequently navigating candidacy alone. Both stories point to how these scholars have utilized traumatizing experiences to approach how they mentor and interact with graduate student scholars to ensure that their student experience does not mirror their own. Thus, the

second section of this book, working scholars, marks a shift from focusing on the development of student scholars to understanding how mentoring experiences have shaped and transformed the practices of those who have transitioned from student to working academic. The nature of the presented narratives was deeply personal, complex, yet exceptionally enlightening. Harris discussed transitioning from student to academic as she evolved into her role as an assistant professor. Meanwhile, Watkins highlights the importance of identifying new possibilities not previously imagined related to managing change and making nontraditional professional moves. Bello profoundly interconnects mentoring to scholars who cross transnational boundaries to work past international barriers. Finally, the section concludes with the work of Dumas who discussed how she, an Assistant Dean, transformationally approached mentoring diverse graduate student leaders.

The final section of the book features preeminent scholars. Their stories offer a perspective about the mentoring experience that uniquely allows the book to provide a full range of the mentoring spectrum. Daire, a college Dean and recognized researcher, offers a template for mentoring reform. He argued that efforts to advance mentoring scholars of color must begin by addressing the value and need for mentoring. He further explores identifying criterium for evaluating mentoring drawing from the perspective that mentoring must be differentiated and negotiated among the mentee and the mentor. In contrast Hopp, herself once a Holmes Scholar, Holmes Scholar Alumni, and Holmes Scholar Coordinator considers the benefits and impact of mentoring through promising programming, practices, and policies.

Conclusion

There have been many calls for action, campus initiatives, as well as research studies devoted to diversifying the faculty pipeline. In the work entitled *Written/Unwritten: Diversity and the Hidden Truths of Tenure* (Matthew, 2016), a chilling commentary was provided regarding diversity and truths of tenure. Matthew's (2016) edited work resoundingly clarified the horrors of the faculty terrain regarding scholars of color in the academy. That work was my first interaction with the annals of faculty life. It depicted, in a revelatory manner, what scholars, might likely face regarding tenure and promotion. Ironically, the book was released the year I graduated with my doctoral degree. I read every single page with

bated breath wondering how I could ensure that I would not experience the terror which the authors wrote of. I am aware that mentoring alone is not the only factor that can impact and/or impede a mentee's success in the academy. However, I and the other editor of this book readily pursued the opportunity to explore mentoring among a bounded group of individuals who have shared similar experiences. Thus, the primary goal of the book is to understand the full complexity of mentoring. The soul of this book will not answer whether or not mentoring is important, it is and that has already been established. Instead mentoring will be chunked into categories associated with the professional standing of the author in order to compare what is done, what works, to encourage a more formal and in-depth conversation regarding mentoring identities and strategies.

In conclusion, despite widespread programming that provides mentoring support to advance graduate students of color, shared faculty diversity data (McFarland, et al., 2018) indicates that there are problems. In addition, since mentoring programs are stratified by degree program, sources of financial support, and campus climate the academy has yet to reap the full benefits of mentoring, especially from programs that aim to diversify the pipeline of the faculty. This gulf does not have to continue to widen. The accounts from within this volume can inspire implications for action. Moreover, all too often, mentoring is cavalierly applied to many circumstances. Yet, more consideration should be given to mentoring capacity particularly as academic abilities grow, identities shift, and needs change. The aforementioned is primarily important for mentors who seek to create a space to support mentees. In particular, this book will be a praxis for shifting mentoring programming. As such, I invite readers to take ownership of the shared information and develop unique and specific mentoring programs to suit the needs of the students you are developing into scholars.

To conclude, higher education institutions, now more than ever, must consider how mentoring translates into practices that identify ways to validate and encourage graduate students and junior faculty. Additionally, consideration should be given to how to make mentoring meaningful. While there is no easy paradigm for mentoring, this edited volume provides valuable insight into the nature of mentoring and suggests several ways one might consider actualizing the creation of supportive atmospheres. The book also identifies challenges with mentoring, stalled approaches, and under-identified pitfalls. It is, therefore, the collective hope and aspiration of the presented authors that readers will be curious

about strengthening students and supporting scholars, and through mentoring scholars of color, enhance their ability to become the driving force of change and the beacon of light in the academy.

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PART I

Student Scholars

CHAPTER 2

Bridging Mentoring and Professional Development for African American Doctoral Student Success

Terrance McNeil and Sheila D. Moore

Introduction

Research indicates for African American doctoral students, mentoring relationships can provide academic, social, and career guidance that is invaluable during the doctoral matriculation process (Brunsma, Embrick, & Shin, 2017). The emphasis of most previous research was placed on factors affecting specific ethnic groups, during the time they were engaged in doctoral studies at Predominantly White Institutions (PWI). However, reflections of doctoral students enrolled at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) who have successfully navigated the doctoral student journey have not been documented to an appreciable degree. Furthermore, as more students pursue doctoral-level studies at HBCUs, and encounter roadblocks to success, it is important to illuminate the voices

T. McNeil
Tennessee State University, Nashville, TN, USA
e-mail: tmcneil3@tnstate.edu

S. D. Moore (✉)
University of Central Florida, Orlando, FL, USA

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of those who completed their degrees as they reflected on their experiences, struggles, and successes. Thus, highlighting the voices of doctoral students in this chapter may generate important implications; including, how to better understand the issues and challenges they experience, how they meet the expectations in order to graduate, and the impact of a mentoring culture.

Furthermore, it is equally important to highlight the voices of faculty engaged in mentoring minority doctoral students. Faculty mentoring has been characterized as: "activities and interactions that may be related to work, skill acquisition, and social or emotional aspects of the mentor or the protégé" (Davidson & Johnson, 2001, p. 551). This relationship has been addressed as a critical function in the doctoral experience and can be viewed as one of the few formal mechanisms in this process (Brunsma et al., 2017). In addition, the nature of faculty mentorship is considered one of the strongest determining factors of African American doctoral degree completion (Brunsma et al., 2017)

The chapter begins with the context of HBCUs and a synthesis of the literature on mentoring and a framework which identifies with the culture of the HBCU experience. The experiences of a faculty mentor and the implementation of the mentoring and professional development program, including barriers and successes are then recounted. Next, the voice (coauthor) of a doctoral student involved in the implementation of the mentoring and professional development is conveyed, as well as the voices of other students who participated in the program. The chapter concludes with implications and recommendations for future programming at HBCUs that support mentoring doctoral programs. We use pseudonyms to protect the identity of individuals and entities we reference in this chapter.

HBCU Context

HBCUs emerged to meet the education and training needs of traditional African American students previously excluded from higher education in the United States. These postsecondary institutions became centers of higher learning that both educated and prepared group members to be contributors to their communities and the nation, and emphasized contributions their communities made (Cantey, Bland, Mack, & Davis, 2013; Gasman, Nguyen, & Conrad, 2015). HBCUs historically provided more inclusive and nurturing environments for students compared to

other institutions (Gasman et al., 2015). HBCUs provided a strong sense of belonging through a family and community atmosphere, and similar cultural experiences. Such environments facilitated the development of a student's self-concept, self-efficacy, and self-esteem, thereby validating a student's presence and purpose at the institution, and life in general (Cantey et al., 2013).

Even though today's African American students can attend college anywhere their grades and talents can take them, many still turn to HBCUs for their education. For some students, it may be the chance to study with mentors who are of the same culture and who are successful in their fields. Many develop mentoring, fraternal and family ties to an HBCU that go back generations. In addition to rigorous academics, HBCUs have storied legacies that are intertwined with the history of civil rights in the United States, giving their students, regardless of race or background, a distinct perspective on the African American experience. One of the coauthors (doctoral student) of this chapter has two degrees from an HBCU and the other coauthor (faculty mentor) has two degrees from an HBCU and the terminal degree from a PWI.

Gasman, Hirschfield, and Vultaggio (2008) contend students enrolled in undergraduate programs at HBCUs receive more mentoring than their counterparts who are enrolled at PWIs. Furthermore, African American students who do earn doctoral and professional degrees are more likely to have graduated from an HBCU than they are from a PWI. Fountaine (2012) reported that HBCUs produce high levels of student–faculty engagement and cultures that foster persistence for African American undergraduate students. Although there is emerging literature on the types of support HBCUs provide to undergraduate students, the literature detailing doctoral-level mentoring is sparse.

Establishing a Mentoring Culture

Mentoring has long been established as a key factor in the success of graduate students at HBCUs (Garrett, 2006). However, thorough examination of the essential support structures for African American graduate students, particularly those attending HBCUs, is generally lacking in recent literature. Furthermore, there is a lack of empirical data that explores the nature of graduate student–faculty mentoring relationships at HBCUs. Carpenter, Makhadmeh, and Thornton (2015)

valued mentorship above all other variables of obtaining a quality graduate education. The authors attributed mentorship to retention, research productivity and completion of the dissertation. Johnston, Keller, and Linnhoff (2014) reported better outcomes of early career success among professionals who experienced doctoral mentorship programs over those who did not. The authors defined mentoring as "dyadic relationships between a senior member (mentor) of a profession or organization and a junior or new member (mentee)" and suggested that faculty who were mentored were better prepared for their careers as higher education faculty and would participate in mentoring relationships.

Healthy mentoring relationships, referred to as functional mentoring, has been touted as critical in preparing graduate students for careers (Johnston et al., 2014). Mentoring research suggests that having been functionally mentored correlates strongly with both success and satisfaction in academia (Carpenter et al., 2015). There are characteristics common to mentors that promote functional mentoring relationships regardless of the mentee's identity. These characteristics include being knowledgeable, experienced, visible, and powerful. It is often assumed that faculty members are credible mentors. However, faculty mentors need to be visible both within their respective profession and accessible to the mentee. It is essential for the mentor to be visible for the graduate student mentee to engage in role modeling. In order to be an effective advocate for their mentee, faculty need also to have some sort of formal power both over the development of the mentee as well as within their respective organization and within the profession (Lee, Anderson, & Burnett, 2017). Additionally, Gaddis (2012) established the importance of trust in building cooperation between mentors and mentees, noting that it is essential to meeting obligations and expectations. Many trust relationships are established organically through gender and racial similarity (Gaddis, 2012).

Same-Race Mentoring

The impact of the mentoring relationship is influenced by several factors shaping the experience. During my doctoral experience at the PWI that I attended, generally, my same-race mentor was better able to discuss issues of race with me being a person of color. My white mentor was focused more on education and career motivations. Spalter-Roth, Shin, Mayorova, and White (2013) explain that many studies on same-race mentoring

emphasize its potentially important role in reducing social isolation and warming up the "chilly climate" of PWI for African Americans.

Furthermore, inadequate cross-cultural mentoring may lead to detrimental effects on the academic and long-term career success of minority students, Spalter-Roth et al. (2013) point out. According to Chan, Yeh, and Krumboltz (2015) even though mentorship has been identified as the most critical variable related to the academic and career development of students, ethnic minorities seeking mentorship often experience several difficulties. Chan et al. (2015) noted a major obstacle facing ethnic minority students they tend to prefer and report more satisfaction with racially homogeneous mentor relationships.

Also, Gaddis (2012) suggests that social homogeneity may be the best course of action to connect students to positive mentoring relationships. We contend that same-race mentoring relationships are more effective, as often the mentors can identify with the circumstances mentees have dealt with. Bang and Reio (2017) also found that positive mentoring experiences and self-judgment of personal accomplishment appeared to be important factors in building the confidence and mastery associated with being creatively efficacious, which corresponded in turn with increases in creative work involvement

Guiffrida's Othermothering Framework

As previously acknowledged, HBCUs are noted for more inclusive and nurturing environments for students compared to other institutions (Gasman et al., 2015). Therefore, Guiffrida (2005) framework of "othermothering" accurately described the nature of the mentoring relationships at HBCUs. Guiffrida (2005) framework of "othermothering" is the unique relationship between an African American mentee and mentor (of similar background). The term "othermothering" dated back to the slave era when mothers and their children were separated and sold to different owners (Collins, 2000). The responsibility of raising the displaced child fell to other mothers who were sold to the same owner or resided on the same plantation (Collins, 2000). The long tradition of raising other people's children was summarized over time as "it takes a village to raise a child." Fries-Britt and Turner's study (2002) of African American students' perceptions of their mentors noted that students defined a good mentor as one who went "beyond the call of duty." The "othermothering" framework encompasses the belief that education in the African

American community necessitates an understanding of the unique need, expectations, and experiences of African American students. These needs include comprehensive career advising and inclusive academic and personal advising. Faculty members of the same race can often assume the posture of family when providing guidance to students (Gasman, Nguyen, Conrad, Lundberg, & Commodore, 2016).

The Genesis

When asked by my colleagues why I had accepted an offer to begin my academic career at an HBCU, I replied "I don't know about you, but my community … my people, I am a HBCU graduate twice…. I must give back." These statements were my reasons for pursuing a career at an HBCU. My whole life is this song, "Let the Work I Do Speak for Me." I wanted to give back by being a creator of knowledge as well as being in a place with young, brilliant minds to help them construct knowledge and empower the next generation and generations after that because if you teach one, they teach ten and that grows. I want that to be my legacy. There are few HBCUs that offer doctoral programs in education and I wanted to make sure that I maximized the opportunity to work with African American doctoral students.

I had a wonderful first semester as I transitioned into the HBCU setting. Fall semester on an HBCU campus is filled with football, homecoming, football rivalries better known as "classics." The campus is filled with HBCU traditions of vendors selling their commemorative wares, fraternity and sororities showcasing their stepping skills, while the aroma of food permeates the campus. I am transported to the days when I was an undergraduate student embracing the HBCU family culture. I also attended a prominent PWI for my doctoral degree and the PWI fall semester is vastly different from the HBCU fall semester.

During my second semester at the university, I taught a master's and doctoral-level course with vigor and excitement. I was confident in my role as a teacher, researcher, and a provider of service. Midway through the semester, three of the doctoral students who were enrolled in the course I was teaching asked to meet with me to get to know me. I can say I was surprised and intrigued. The doctoral students shared how impressed they were with my teaching and the creation of a climate focused on trust and their success. They voiced concerns though about

the lack of a visible mentoring culture including faculty–student mentoring, retention, and doctoral socialization.

I shared my doctoral experiences including the mentoring I received and how supportive the whole concept of mentoring was to me and my career. Then one of the doctoral students said something that completely startled me:

"You have extensive experience in being mentored, now it's time for you to become a mentor. You have been discussing with us some of your experiences in mentoring and professional development. How about choosing us and being a mentor?" I felt a paradigm shift; me the mentor; instead of the mentee; what a concept! I told the doctoral students I needed some time and I would get back to them by the end of the semester.

My doctoral program at the PWI where I attended had prepared me for the professoriate. I was prepared to mentor because it came naturally to me, perfected in my role as a former public-school teacher and administrator. I have reflected extensively on my experiences as a mentee during my undergraduate, master's, and doctoral studies. As a result of reflection on my experiences; both triumphs and failures; I feel that I have gleaned a great deal about how to be an excellent, high performing mentee (and about what mistakes not to make). The resonance of the bells going off in my head resolved into calm silence, and that silence felt good, it felt right, and I knew the doctoral students were right: my next task was to become a mentor. But how? I have had such exceptional mentors, how can I learn to be a good mentor like they are, when they are no longer here? I realize that my experiences with mentoring may be unusual. As a lifelong learner, I have experienced several important mentoring relationships in my academic career, from undergraduate studies through doctoral studies. Upon reflection, I found that my three sustained mentoring relationships at the bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degree levels provided me with more than two decades of experience as a direct participant-observer of the academic mentoring process.

After meeting with the doctoral students, I perused any and all documents related to the doctoral program. The program structure consists of the students meeting on Saturdays in a cohort model, engaged in classes from 8:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. The trajectory of the program included two years of coursework, comprehensive examination, proposal, proposal defense, and dissertation. I was amazed to discover doctoral students were taking up to seven years to complete the program. Furthermore, doctoral

students were not assigned advisors during their coursework and chairs were selected by the program coordinator after the passing of the comprehensive examination. Also, there were few opportunities for research assistantships or graduate teaching assistantships and hardly any support for professional development on the dissertation process and research. In my truth, I did not observe a visible mentoring culture for doctoral students, including faculty–student mentoring.

After reviewing the literature on doctoral student mentoring, I realize that my mentoring experiences at the PWI I attended mirrored what the literature described. In contrast, I found it surprising to learn while reviewing the literature on doctoral student mentoring that it is estimated that only one-half to two-thirds of students report ever being mentored in graduate school (Johnston et al., 2014). This may be why I did not observe a mentoring culture when I began at this HBCU.

A high-quality doctoral program involves a range of educational experiences that extend beyond coursework. While coursework can provide critical content and skills for leadership roles in the doctoral program, coursework alone may not be enough to motivate and retain doctoral students, provide them with necessary experiences associated with future job responsibilities, or socialize them to their new leadership positions (Johnston et al., 2014).

I decided not only will I become a mentor, but I will also start a mentoring and professional development program. Having had direct experience in a positive mentoring experience, opportunities for networking, and dissertation preparation as a participant in a mentoring and professional program during my doctoral matriculation, I sought to establish this type of program at my HBCU. Therefore, I developed a Holmes Scholars Program at this HBCU institution to address some of the program competencies and needs that were not addressed in coursework

Implementation of the HBCU Holmes Scholars Program

Persuaded by the need for significant educational reform efforts to improve K–12 public schools and teaching and learning, the Holmes Partnership® (initially the Holmes Group) emerged in the 1980s to engage in educational reform efforts. This unique program provides mentoring, peer support, and rich professional development opportunities for doctoral students enrolled in colleges of education. After the dissolution

of the Holmes Partnership in 2010, the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) assumed ownership of the Holmes Scholars Program (AACTE, n.d.).

Initially, upon presenting the proposal to start a mentoring and professional development program, the department chair, was not receptive but shared the proposal with the dean. However, the dean believed in mentoring and saw this as a perfect opportunity to bring a much-needed change to the department and support students with a mentor. The dean had knowledge of the Holmes Program and committed seed money to support. There were barriers and they are addressed later in the chapter.

I deliberately chose the first cohort of Holmes Scholars including the three doctoral students who asked me to mentor them. I chose students who demonstrated leadership skills, a willingness to be mentored and who could share the voices of their peers. I wanted a grassroots organic building of the program embracing a student-centered focus. Embedding the principals of the Holmes Scholars Program, the HBCU Holmes Scholars Model encompasses a strategic foundation of mentoring, professional development, scholarship, and advocacy. Themes of mentorship, peer support, and building learning communities are the undergirding of the program for doctoral student success (shown in Fig. 2.1). The doctoral students also engaged in writing the by-laws for the program, setting admission criteria, participating in candidate interviews, and networking.

Mentoring in Action

Mentoring played a prominent role in HBCU Holmes Scholars program through a system that is faculty and student driven. Successful mentoring of doctoral students provides favorable benefits for the mentee which, in turn, will offer positive benefits for the mentor's higher education institutions, and research community (Johnson, 2015). Faculty members who become effective mentors provide a supportive foundation to doctoral students who, without such support, may not be successful in completing an advanced degree (Felder, 2010). I was deliberate in establishing a relationship of trust and respect and committed more than the minimum ten hours per month mentoring to the scholars. I believe my mentoring resembled characteristics of Guiffrida's Othermothering Framework (Guiffrida, 2005).

For the African American doctoral experience, mentorship has been a common topic when discussing the faculty–student relationship (Felder,

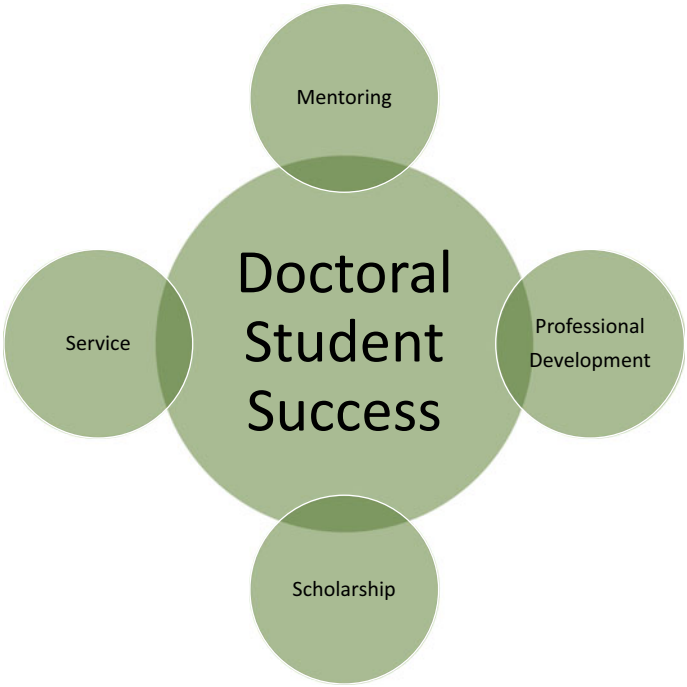

Fig. 2.1 Florida A&M University Holmes Scholars Model

2010) Faculty mentoring has been characterized as: "activities and interactions that may be related to work, skill acquisition, and social or emotional aspects of the mentor or the protégé" (Gasman et al., 2015). This relationship has been addressed as a critical function in the doctoral experience and can be viewed as one of the few formal mechanisms in this process (Felder, 2010).

Professional Development in Action

Communication, teaching, scholarly progress, professionalism, and career exploration was promoted through professional development. Scholars develop professionally through involvement in activities such as dissertation writing sessions, mock interview sessions, leadership skills,

and research and publication workshops. Professional development sessions were scheduled monthly to support the scholars in their matriculation.

Also, a dissertation retreat and research symposium was developed and hosted jointly with an established Holmes Scholars Program at a PWI, which attracted national attention. The retreat's primary focus was the opportunity to share and advance research-in-progress in collaboration with both peers and mentors. Scholars were encouraged to bring their doctoral work, in whatever stage it might be, to review with a faculty mentor. The dissertation retreat was a two-day session, where participants had an opportunity to share their work in research.

Scholarship in Action

The HBCU Holmes Scholars Program model provided a strong foundation for subsequent academic and/or research careers by stimulating students' research and scholarly productivity. Scholars are offered opportunities to participate as reviewers for peer-review journals, participate in poster sessions and disseminate their research findings at peer-reviewed conferences and in scholarly publications.

Advocacy in Action

The program provides insider experiences in the world of education policy. Program participants engaged in the implications of current policy on research and programming that focuses on minority populations. The doctoral students participating in the Holmes Scholar Program had opportunities to interact with influencers of educational policy (Table 2.1).

Barriers

However, there were some barriers. The barriers included lack of financial resources and lack of department and faculty support. Even though the dean had committed resources, there were extraordinary financial pressures associated with the Holmes program. Some of the expenses came out of my pocket. I had to assume the role of advocate including writing grants, seeking support from other campus outlets and working to identify outside funding streams.

Another barrier was that the department did not adequately fund the program and some of the Ph.D. faculty did not support the program. There was a social dynamic in the department that was expressed at department meetings. There were vast differences among faculty as to the type of support offered to doctoral students. Therefore, I had to engage Holmes Scholars Alumni and others outside of the department to serve as research mentors.

Tell Me What's Right

Upon completion of three years of activities, I conducted a formative evaluation. A formative evaluation is the process of examining a program or process to determine what's working, what's not, and why for judging the worth of a program while the program activities are forming (Rossett & Sheldon, 2001). The purpose was to explore the HBCU Holmes Scholars Program from the perspectives of Holmes Scholars' participant voices and reflections. I also wanted to know if the participants shared common beliefs, expectations, and experiences about their participation in the program. A total of 18 FAMU Holmes Scholars provided reflections and perspectives in an informal setting.

Data were collected through the participants' written and verbal responses to two open-ended questions generated for the formative evaluation activity. The open-ended questions were aimed at capturing the participants' points of view. The formative evaluation was conducted during two professional development sessions.

Question 1: How valuable do you think the establishment of the Holmes Program assisted in your doctoral journey?

Some of the scholars attributed their success to the increased interest and assistance of a few select faculty members after the Holmes program was implemented. Faculty support included providing resources, spending time with the doctoral students, providing opportunities for research, explaining the importance and benefits of engaging in a mentoring culture, and providing guidance. Further, after the implementation of the Holmes program, select faculty became advocates for more student mentoring groups that addressed the varied needs of the doctoral students. A scholar stated, "There was hardly any faculty mentoring before the Holmes Program was established – now, there are more faculty who are willing to mentor." Another one explained, "I had a wonderful mentor

who encouraged me to complete the program. She took a vested interest in my well-being often sharing experiences about her experiences as a doctoral student."

A scholar stated:

> … I developed a close relationship with the Holmes Scholar Coordinator. She was the only Ph.D. professor who was engaging in the development of a mentoring culture…She not only helped me in and out of class with my issues regarding courses, but also provided me with insight as well as guidance towards scholarships, internships, and life after the PhD. It is because of her that I was fortunate enough finish in a timely manner.

Question 2: What undergirded the establishment of the HBCU Holmes Scholars Program?

There was a need for more faculty mentoring. The supportive relationship of a faculty member contributes to a student's success. As a scholar noted: "mentoring given by my Holmes Scholar advisor and one other professor was most helpful." When a faculty member is willing to spend time, and provide counsel and guidance to a doctoral student, they are in a better position to navigate university structure, demands, and experiences. Students value faculty who take the time to mentor them by sharing their own experiences and suggesting ideas to become successful.

> Recognizing the value of such support, a scholar stated:
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> Most importantly, the leadership of Holmes Scholar advisor and Holmes Scholars helped to demystify the doctoral experience for me and portrayed it as something attainable.
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> As scholars explained:
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> Before the implementation of the scholars program, faculty would tell us we need to present and go to conferences…, we need to publish… but no one was providing the support and opportunities Now, after the Holmes Scholars program was implemented doctoral students are benefiting from select faculty expertise, encouraged to attend and present at conferences with faculty, and earlier assistance with the dissertation process.
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> Two faculty in the program, developed a personal interest in each of their doctoral students. They are sincerely and genuinely interested in each one of and their main thing is they want you to succeed, since you have invested so much time, energy, and money in a doctoral program.

Doctoral Student Voice

During the first semester of my doctoral program I attended, with my cohort, the McKnight Scholars Conference sponsored by the State Education Fund. The purpose of the program was to foster doctoral degree attainment through a series of activities including financial support, professional development and mentoring. The program's success can be measured by the degree attainment rate of 70% for its members. However, membership in this program was not available for my HBCU cohort; although we had access to attend the annual conference.

I recall wondering how such a program could impact my matriculation. It was apparent that because of the mentoring that was taking place in this program, the doctoral students we encountered were on a trajectory of success and their program completion seemed imminent. Meanwhile, doctoral attainment for many of our HBCU candidates had stalled. My HBCU peers had completed coursework and comprehensive examinations but had not defended proposals or dissertations. This could have been attributed to recent changes of administration, the loss of key faculty or other factors. Nevertheless, our candidates were grappling with completing the dissertation and clearly, the McKnight Program demonstrated strategies for degree attainment.

The faculty that participated in the conference repeatedly offered to speak with students after the conference, regardless of their institutional affiliation. This invitation of mentoring was prevalent and appeared to be one of the reasons for the success of these students. I left the conference encouraged by what I learned and observed, but without a real solution for how I would be personally guided through the doctoral process.

The next semester a class discussion revealed a perspective about our program that some candidates were not expecting. Our professor disclosed the belief that although there were local successes, beyond our campus and community boundaries, our college of education had a low profile in terms of advancing education in the professional development and policy realms. In recent years, our college of education led the nation in the production of Black teachers, and as a result, there remain hundreds of practitioners still working in the field. Faculty members were publishing books and articles, but there was limited engagement in professional development activities whereby leadership on the national stage could be exercised. Representation within AACTE was not proportionate to the size and scope of our college. The faculty and administrators of the

college simply did not attend AACTE functions to an appreciable degree. This was deemed problematic as this organization is perhaps the largest and most active organization devoted to teacher education.

We were engaged in the cohort model and this provided an excellent source of academic and content area support, however, we had limited exposure to the broader education community. Furthermore, we were not actively involved in research projects and publishing whereby we could gain experience under the tutelage of our professors. We viewed these issues as problems, given the unique perspective that HBCU Teacher Education programs generate. It appeared logical to most in the room that HBCU engagement with AACTE could further position our institutions to participate in the improvement of the profession. We also felt that we could contribute to the discussion on the disparate achievement of Black and Latino students in America.

As an educational leader, I saw a connection between my passion for education and what was taking place outside of my college of education. Personally, I felt a charge to participate in the larger discussion that was taking place in the education community, particularly as it related to the preparation of teachers to improve the performance of underserved students and the diversification of the educator profession. With the realization of these perspectives some questions arose; How could we better ensure that we successfully complete our doctoral journey; and how could a group of candidates from an institution with little engagement navigate into the national conversation on teacher preparation and diversity? For about 15 students, the Holmes Scholars program was the solution. Those selected into the program lacked the wherewithal to voice their insights on education, but the various structures within Holmes Scholars helped students to situate themselves in these broader discussions. What began as an attempt to bridge the discourse from an HBCU into the broader educational landscape would lead me into unforeseen opportunities to be mentored and groomed as an educational leader.

Along with five other students in my cohort, I accepted an invitation to join the local chapter of Holmes Scholars established by my professor. The ideals of the organization were intriguing, and I became eager to find out more about the organization. Our group was intentional in preparing good presentations for the Holmes Scholars' poster session at AACTE's Annual Meeting

Upon arrival, at our first Holmes Scholars conference, we immediately felt welcomed into the group of scholars who were in attendance and

representing teacher education and counseling programs from around the nation. Most notable about the Holmes Scholars Program is perhaps the exposure to established leaders and practitioners in the field. It was apparent that the Holmes Scholars were being led by a cadre of experienced and knowledgeable educational leaders who were passionate mentors committed to providing essential guidance to us. These experts ranged from nationally known endowed professors, provosts, school superintendents, Holmes Scholar Alumni, and professors from around the country. The Holmes Scholars organization operates as a multilayered program where mentorship is provided on all levels. As a Holmes Scholar, it is acceptable to seek guidance from any of the professionals that gravitate toward your work. Personal connections were made from the onset and were reinforced by programmatic activities that strengthened our knowledge base about the profession. We felt fortunate to be in a space beyond the classroom that promoted our evolution as scholars and leaders.

What was apparent was the fact that the Holmes scholars were being led by a cadre of experienced and knowledgeable educational leaders who were passionate mentors committed to providing essential guidance to us. It was also obvious that FAMU doctoral candidates needed the type of mentoring that we were receiving through the Holmes program. In fact, most doctoral candidates shared their appreciation for Holmes, citing the nuanced differences in their respective programs. In discussions with other doctoral candidates, some revealed that they experienced greater levels of support than others. Many were dealing with microaggressive behaviors exhibited by students and faculty of other races. Some were not as exposed to a mentoring culture than their counterparts at other universities.

At our HBCU institution, candidates finished the program in seven years on average compared to our peers at other institutions who typically graduated in about four years. There were limited opportunities for conducting research with faculty members. There was also limited professional development on the dissertation process resulting in an increased number of candidates who had yet to defend their dissertations.

As the participation of HBCU doctoral students took root a few things were realized. It was obvious that we were prepared in our content area. Students displayed a knowledge of the best practices of policy and pedagogy. As a result, three students assumed national leadership positions in the Holmes Scholar organization. Often, these students were among those asked to voice their opinions of educational issues about

their experiences as HBCU students. Interestingly, our peers at both PWI and HBCUs expressed concern over dissertation related topics. We all had similar issues, concerns, and observations. However, there was a more demonstrative difference in the area of preparation for the dissertation process. We all had great purposes for our studies but many of our colleagues from PWIs seemed more knowledgeable about research design and methodologies. Also, our PWI peers' research topics were more focused on issues of race. This was not a focus of HBCU doctoral students in the program, as we were not regularly confronted with issues of race. Nonetheless, it appeared that PWI students were receiving more guidance related to dissertation writing than their HBCU peers. Also, the PWI students completed their programs in a considerably shorter length of time than the HBCU scholars.

The relationships forged through participation in the Holmes Scholars Program led to mentorship that assisted me greatly in the dissertation process. I was mentored by my advisor, professors, and deans from other institutions and the AACTE leadership. I was also the beneficiary of peer to peer mentoring that supported my development. My fellow Holmes Scholars were most accessible as I was completing the dissertation and it is unlikely that I would have defended my dissertation without their support. Through peer to peer mentoring, I was able to vet critical elements of my dissertation before submitting questions and drafts to my faculty mentors and dissertation committee. These exchanges helped me to gain from the wealth of knowledge that flowed from other institutions through my peers. This added advantage allowed me to defend my dissertation almost a year in advance of any of my cohort members. To date, the only members of my cohort who have graduated are Holmes Scholars.

sThe influence of mentoring relationship in Holmes extended beyond the dissertation and into the professional development sphere. I was mentored on best strategies for preparing a curriculum vitae, making application and interviewing for positions in the professoriate, negotiating faculty appointments and effective performance in the academy. As a leader in the Holmes Scholars Program, I was positioned to participate in the organization of events and activities that strengthened my ability to conceptualize and execute on a level commensurate with higher education professionals. Throughout my participation, I was regularly groomed by professionals within the organization who would take the time to mentor me on various aspects of educational leadership. This type of mentoring continues to produce results as I have been better prepared for professional roles in P-12 and higher education faculty and administration.

Leading by Example

Observational Learning, the process by which individuals learn by watching others, has been established as an educational construct since 1961 (Bandura, 2008). For the student or mentee, the observational learning process can demonstrate activities required for the attainment of goals. In order for the doctoral students to attain success in navigating within new environments of education discourse, it was necessary to see an example in our leadership. Part of the influence that our mentor maintained with us generated from observing the way she engaged in substantive dialogue with colleagues within AACTE's membership and leadership. Within the organization, our mentor served on various committees including the developmental planning board for the Holmes Cadets, which serves students seeking master's degrees. She also served as a reviewer for AACTE annual meeting presentations and membership chair of the National Association of Holmes Scholar Alumni (NAHSA). Through observation of the activities of our mentors, we developed a sense of belonging to the activities of the organization. Subsequently, conversations on a variety of topics would further prepare us for academic and professional success.

Our mentor regularly engaged in mentorship activities with students across the five types of information illustrated by Lee et al. (2017) (Table 2.1).

Although each type of information is beneficial, perhaps the most substantive mentorship took place in the administrative, professional, and academic realms. Our Holmes Scholar advisor imparted essential knowledge that accelerated our professional growth and development. For example,

Table 2.1 Types of information exchanged in peer relationships

Types	*Examples*
Basic information	housing, dining, utility, technology, health
Administrative information	registration/enrollment, rules, policy, finance, visa
Professional information	research, teaching, coursework, the profession
Social information	small talk, greetings
Personal information	family/significant others, hobbies, personal travel

she provided us with professional development on the dissertation process that our classmates did not receive. As a result, the Holmes Scholars in the program were better prepared and had greater success with comprehensive examinations, IRB submittals and dissertation defenses than non-Holmes Scholars in the program. Additionally, she advocated for students to take active roles in the national conversation concerning teacher education. This charge empowered students to take an active role in improving the image of the school's College of Education and positioned students for academic appointments. Furthermore, the Holmes Scholars Program provided the impetus for other graduate mentoring programs developed at the college.

Implications

The mentoring program established at this HBCU has had quite a few successes. The program was recognized as the first HBCU to be inducted in the Holmes Scholars Program. The program also received accolades for Program of the Year, Mentor of the Year, and Graduate Student Mentor of the Year. In addition, many of the HBCU Holmes Scholars have participated in research competitions and have presented their research at national and regional conferences. Several of the HBCU Holmes Scholars have served in leadership positions on the National Holmes Scholars Council. A highlight of the program was the creation of a partnership with a Holmes Scholar PWI to support a dissertation retreat and research symposium.

All the practices led to success of the HBCU Holmes Scholars participants in the college. Within a recent cohort of educational leadership doctoral students, Holmes Scholars led in all categories including grade point averages, coursework completion, passage of comprehensive examination, proposal and dissertation defense, and length of the overall matriculation process. The implementation and sustainability of the Holmes program at this HBCU endures as the scholars are continuing to not only lead the way but assist other students. Currently, scholars who have defended dissertations are assisting others who may need peer mentoring to complete the educational leadership program.

The implementation of the Holmes Scholars mentoring program at this HBCU provided critical personal and professional development that addressed the needs of underrepresented educational leadership doctoral students. The success of the program was the conceptual framework that

emerged suggesting the program could be replicated at other HBCUs and add to the body of literature. We believe this chapter of highlighting our voices is a distinctive success both on the level of our personal growth and on the level of a contribution to the field of mentoring.

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CHAPTER 3

Stepping Away from My Comfort Zone

Irenea Walker

A mentor provides a unique opportunity to help develop the self-confidence of a mentee or protégé by contributing to their success through wise counsel, and fostering their full potential. A mentor and mentee relationship thrives when both parties have established mutual respect and a genuine bond (Shah, 2017). This indispensable relationship is especially imperative for Black female doctoral students. It is pertinent for the mentor to understand the effectiveness of their role and how it could potentially contribute to the success of the protégé (Mitchell, Eby, & Ragins, 2015). Furthermore, this relationship should be established early on before the student begins the program (Holley & Caldwell, 2012). This sets precedence for the mentee to evaluate if this is the relational support (Ghosh, 2014) they need to be a successful doctoral student. This was especially true for me before I commenced on the Ph.D. journey. Prior to starting, I had several conversations with the departmental program advisor who also served as my mentor while I was in the program. Additionally, each of my mentors were assets who contributed to my success as a Black female doctoral student at a Predominantly White Institution (PWI). Their abilities to adequately mentor me throughout

I. Walker (✉)
University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls, IA, USA
e-mail: irenea.walker@uni.edu

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the doctoral program assisted in developing my confidence as a Black female Ph.D. student at a PWI.

The relational bond between these individuals should be so close that whenever the mentee's stress level exceeds his or her ability to cope, the mentor intercedes by taking the necessary steps to remedy the situation (Samuel & Kohun, 2010). Whenever my mentors recognized the dejected expression on my face, they provided the counsel I needed to charge onward. Their words of encouragement propelled me to the finish line even when those who opposed my success also attempted to steal my victory. I orient this chapter by detailing how my mentors helped foster my success, although the educational environment at the PWI where I obtained my Ph.D. was different than my former educational years. First, I began with an examination of my experiences in predominately Black schools from K-12 and during my undergraduate studies.

Different Educational Environments

The classroom environments during my K-12 and undergraduate years were quite contrary to the environment at the institution where I obtained my doctorate degree. Most of my K-12 and undergraduate peers were African American, thus my early experiences permitted me to be comfortable within the confinements of my educational environment (Cartledge, Sentelle, Loe, Lambert, & Reed, 2001). I attended a predominately Black elementary school situated in a primarily low-income neighborhood where the student demographics were mostly African American. The same was true when I transitioned to middle school and later high school. I not only resembled most of my peers through physical features, but the vernacular was analogous as well. I could easily recognize and adapt to the behaviors, attitudes, and beliefs of my peers (Wegmann, 2017). This prepared me for a smooth transition to the undergraduate institution where I received my bachelor's degree. As a student at an Historically Black College and University (HBCU), the majority of my peers were once again Black or African American. Many of us shared similar viewpoints on politics, social justice, and world issues. The vast majority of my peers communicated and expressed their viewpoints pertaining to certain situations similar to myself. Simply put, I was comfortable in my educational environment. However, my level of ease altered from being comfortable in my educational setting, to an uncertainty within myself and taking ownership of the imposter syndrome (Roche, 2013).

Self-doubt caused me to internally question if I possessed the skills, aptitude, and competence to be a successful doctoral student at a PWI. There were moments when I experienced doubts and loneliness. I was not only stepping away from the physical resemblance of my peers from earlier educational years, but I struggled with adjusting to the racial and social context on campus (Williams & Nichols, 2012). For example, at the HBCU I recall a discussion in my psychology course on child-rearing and my peers and I shared anecdotes of how we were disciplined as children. Our compliance to parental demands was instantaneous and there were no countdown systems. I engaged in numerous discussions which were similar and it allowed me to connect with my peers as opposed to feeling isolated. However, for the first time during my educational studies it seemed as though I was alone on an island. At the PWI my peers' sentiments pertaining to social issues such as education, government, and police brutality were contrary to my own. For instance, during one of my evening classes we were discussing a recent event involving the killing of an unarmed Black man by a police officer. My White peers were explicit in their discourse of individuals who were killed by police officers stating, armed or unarmed they deserved to die for not complying with the officers' request. Statements such as the aforementioned added to my world of solitude. In fact, Black women at PWIs are more likely than any other group to experience marginality and isolation (Ellis, 2001; Graham, 2013). The transitional phase from an HBCU to a PWI generated internal insecurities. However, I eventually overcame my insecurities as a result of positive mentoring relationships. I utilize the theory of Black American Racial Identity (BARI) to elucidate the stages of my Blackness in an educational environment. I intertwine the stages of BARI with effective mentoring practices I experienced at a PWI.

Black American Racial Identity Development

The Black American Racial Identity Development originated from the Nigrescence Model (Cross, 1991), and is used to chronicle my experiences transitioning from an HBCU to a PWI. The term nigrescence is defined as the process of becoming Black. William Cross' Black American Racial Identity was a summation of Black identity development. Cross interpreted the identity development of Black Americans in five stages. First, the Pre-Encounter stage examines an individual's beliefs, views, and values. There are different levels of a person's attitude regarding race that

ranges from low to high. Encounter is the second stage which involves an experience or event that often results in an individual questioning and doubting their self-confidence due to their race. In the third stage of Immersion/Emersion the individual embraces their Blackness and consider themselves equal to Whites. During the fourth stage of Internalization the outcome for responding to racial biases are more settled, seeking positive resolutions is the ultimate goal. The fifth stage is an extension of Internalization with an intent to sustain a long-term sense of Blackness while developing positive relationships with other racial groups (Fig. 3.1).

I make use of this model to convey how my educational background in predominately Black institutions solidified my Blackness resulting in positive relationships and high self-confidence. However, my Black identity and self-confidence dwindled in the beginning as a doctoral student at a PWI. My ideas and thoughts were contrary to my peers which was abnormal compared to my previous educational experiences. My mentality shifted and the complexities of this new environment created uncertainties surrounding my ability to succeed. Nevertheless, meaningful discussions with my mentors helped me regain my confidence and reconnect with my Blackness. I credit positive mentoring relationships, from both White faculty and faculty of color, with inspiring me to believe in myself and recognize my sense of belonging.

I integrate the theoretical model of Black American Racial Identity utilizing the five stages to highlight how positive mentoring relationships altered my disposition as a Black female doctoral student at a PWI while increasing my self-confidence. In section one of this chapter I discussed initial conversations with my mentor advisor and his support for my research agenda. With his encouragement and my enthusiasm to start the program, I was confident in my abilities to succeed. However, this all changed and in section two I shared a specific incident with a faculty member which caused me to question whether or not I belonged. I also discussed events that occurred in the classroom and how it stifled my voice. Yet, in section three I discussed how effective mentoring changed the trajectory for me as a Black female Ph.D. student. In section four

Fig. 3.1 Black American Racial Identity Development

of this chapter, I described how these mentoring relationships allowed me to regain my self-confidence and continuously seek my Blackness. To protect the identity of the individuals and institution described, I used pseudonyms.

Pre-encounter Stage: Proud of My Blackness

In the Pre-Encounter stage of BARI, individuals have either positive or negative beliefs, views, and values about their Blackness. These attitudes are acquired from environments such as the community, church, and school. At the HBCU where I attended, all students were mandated to take African American History before 1865, and African American History from 1865 to current. I learned so much about the successes and defeats of Blacks in America, I was determined to excel. Black pride spread throughout campus and nurtured my confidence as a Black female. This confidence continued prior to me starting the doctoral program and even in the beginning of the program. When I initially emailed Dr. Red, not only did he respond on the same day, but he requested a face-to-face meeting. After the phone meeting, I was excited to embark on this new journey. It was something about the initial conversation with Dr. Red that I sensed he would be a supportive mentor (Brunsma, Embrick, & Shin, 2017).

We discussed my research interests and love for social studies. He was elated to learn the focus of my research was to examine Black elementary students' positionality of American history primarily as it related to the context of Blacks in the United States. Dr. Red expressed that the value of my research would provide a niche for me in the discipline. This created even greater excitement about the prospects of being a Ph.D. student in this program. Not only did these prior conversations with Dr. Red affirm this institution was the right place for me, but I was confident the mentorship would be what I needed to develop into a successful Ph.D. student and future scholar. My mindset before and during the first few months of the doctoral program was that an awareness of my Blackness coupled with effective mentoring would equate to success. As the first African American female in my department I was self-assured, however, situations I encountered in the program slowly diminished my self-confidence.

Encounter Stage: Is This for Me?

During the Encounter stage, a single or several events could abate an individual's positive thoughts and confidence to succeed. After being enrolled at a PWI for a few months, I was nervous about my future success in the program. Negative thoughts constantly scurried through my mind. Unfair treatment from a faculty member added to my uncertainties. My first semester as a Ph.D. student was one of the most challenging and I queried my longevity to complete the program. I met with a faculty member in the college (not in my program), who treated me unfairly, was condescending, and downplayed my concerns. I walked away from this encounter defeated and frustrated that someone could be so dismissive and show little concern for others, especially students of color. In fact, this treatment toward me was indicative of what some doctoral students of color encounter at PWI's (Parker & Flowers, 2003). After my personal situation and learning other doctoral students of color encountered unfair treatment not only at my institution, but at other PWI's as well, I indeed questioned if I would be victorious. I mulled over the various things I would say wrong, especially in communicating with my White peers. I doubted my ability to effectively communicate in this environment, and I believed that my White peers would think of me as unintelligent and not worthy to be in the program. Internal doubts lingered as I engaged in discourse with my peers on a variety of topics.

As a Black female doctoral student at a PWI, I thought about cognized how my opinions would be viewed by others, primarily Whites. I recall a class discussion about former President Barack Obama and one of my White female peers expressed her disdain for him and said he was the worst president in American history. She verbally danced in circles and never pinpointed why he was so terrible, in her opinion. She simply stated, "I cannot say why, but I just do not like him." Other classmates chimed in and expressed similar views. While my classmates never directly stated that their feelings about the former president were due to his race, their tone and examples for why they did not like him were a clear indication. Unsure of what to say, I remained silent. On another occasion, we discussed neighborhood violence in communities of color and some of the racial comments by my classmates were unsettling. One of my peers stated that "those people" are difficult to tame and police shootings are justified. In an attempt to refrain from appearing as the angry Black woman (ABW), I said very little during this conversation. I was not accustomed

to such discourse and differences of opinions. Instead of using this as an opportunity to be a voice for people of color, I allowed the differences of my peers' opinions to silence my own. I was upset with myself for not speaking up for my race. I shared these concerns with my mentors and they provided me with the reassurance I needed to reclaim my self-confidence. Dr. Red shared that these examples were unfortunate realities. He further stated that me pursuing this degree was more than the letters behind my name, but rather how my research agenda is vital in social studies, and education as a whole.

Effective mentoring involves uplifting students during the good and the bad. The situation with the faculty in my college was not good. Thankfully I had not contemplated quitting the program, but it was definitely bad enough that I had to communicate it with Dr. Red. I remember vividly he responded, "well prove him wrong." After hearing this I immediately thought to myself he was right. His words inspired me to charge on and I was able to regain my sense of Blackness. He recognized my potential even when I failed to acknowledge it on my own. I walked away from Dr. Red's office with confidence that I would succeed. I was fortunate enough to have the mentorship of Dr. Red, as well as other mentors who encouraged me throughout this journey. As a Black female faculty at a PWI, I admired everything about Dr. Harris. She exuded love to everyone and I never encountered a person who said anything negative about her. She carried herself with confidence and was well respected throughout the institution and in other educational settings. As I prepared to write the final chapters of my dissertation, Dr. Harris and I met to discuss how I would analyze and make meaning of my data. For some, this may not be a deviation from what is expected of an academic advisor or mentor. However, my data meetings with Dr. Harris resembled that of a teacher standing in front of the whiteboard and a student listening while taking notes. Dr. Harris was the teacher and I was the student. She walked me through concept mapping so I could understand how to structure my data to write the final chapters of my dissertation. I was truly blessed to have her as a mentor. Dr. Red and Dr. Harris are only two examples of how effective mentoring impacted me as a doctoral student. They both played a part in me regaining confidence and acknowledging my voice as equally valuable to my peers.

Immersion/Emersion: My Blackness Is Back

The third stage of Immersion/Emersion is when individuals see themselves as equals to Whites. After discussions with Dr. Red, Dr. Harris, and others who served in a mentor capacity, I gradually dispelled my thoughts of insecurity. These mentors gained my trust which allowed me to share these insecurities in my most vulnerable moments. Dr. Red reminded me of my progression from day one to whenever I discussed moments of doubts. He wanted me to celebrate my progression and focus on my journey. As an African American female Ph.D. herself, Dr. Harris' words of inspiration were confirmation this journey was for me and to not allow people or circumstances force me to believe otherwise. Dr. Red, Dr. Harris, and other mentors validated my existence in the program and although I questioned my ability to succeed on numerous occasions, their words were etched in my mind. These mentors helped me reaffirm the value of my research and its necessity in the field of education. I understood the significance of my research was just as valuable as my White peers' research. They provided invaluable resources and inspiring words not only as a guide through the doctoral process, but as future sources as I navigate throughout my scholarly career (Bracey, 2014; Sinanan, 2016). After these conversations and self-encouragement, I was once again at the pre-encounter stage and my sense of Blackness steered my research agenda.

Internalization: Succeeding Through Collaborative Efforts

Stages four and five transition individuals back to a state of confidence and a strong sense of Blackness. Stage four, or Internalization, occurs when people learn to divert their anger from racists thoughts, to addressing the manifestations of systemic racism (Bertrand, 2014). Additionally, stage four's Internalization is combined with stage five's Commitment, which is the sustained interest and responsibility to continuously succeed. The individual shifts their thinking from the urgency of giving up into developing ways to achieve long-term success. Regardless of the circumstances, the person reaches a resolution and identifies ways to succeed. My resolve involved educating my peers about multiculturalism, I attended conferences to further educate myself, and I used my voice to impart the uninformed. I remained true to my Blackness while also learning how to

address racial undertones and injustices as a Black female Ph.D. student at a PWI. My mentors' advice on how to approach these situations served to not only benefit me as a doctoral student, but as a future scholar.

While the following should be an expectation, my mentors bestowed upon me leadership opportunities and guided me throughout the dissertation process. The networking opportunities Dr. Red provided allowed me to possess leadership roles at conferences, where I gained an in-depth understanding about race and racism and identified ways to properly address it within education. Gaining this knowledge transferred into my research for the dissertation. As I previously mentioned, Dr. Harris met with me on a few occasions to assist with the development of my chapters. The support that stemmed from these mentoring relationships were pivotal in my success as a doctoral student. I was grateful to be surrounded by positive mentors who supported my research and treated me kindly throughout the entire program.

Final Thoughts and Recommendations for the Mentor and Mentee

I mentioned two mentors in previous sections of this chapter, but I had several mentors at my PWI. Each of them served in different capacities and this mixture was precisely what I needed to succeed. Dr. Red initially served as my support system but as time evolved other faculty and staff were just as instrumental to my success. From the onset, I can honestly say that each of the White male faculty members in my program supported me throughout the process. They supported my research on race relations and how it situates in the field of education. It is the responsibility of faculty to foster a climate where underrepresented doctoral students are comfortable with expressing themselves and conducting research on controversial topics such as those centered around race and race relations (Jones, Perrin, Heller, Hailu, & Barnett, 2018). I also developed a close relationship with a faculty member outside of my college. I connected so well with Dr. Hope-Chase that she served as the outside committee member on my dissertation. Since she was in a different college, I was able to examine race from a different academic lens. We studied the similarities and differences of racial injustices in education and her field of study. We even explored ideas on coauthoring future articles. Whereas the majority of my mentors were faculty members, a few of the staff within my college also served in this role.

When individuals think of graduate mentors, they immediately reference faculty, but the staff can be effective mentors as well. Mikayla was supportive of me since the beginning of the program. As the front desk receptionist, I walked by her desk everyday to get to my office. Mikayla and I talked for extended periods of time about everything from my progression in the program to events on campus and world issues. Her wisdom on how to successfully navigate through academia from an administrative stance was invaluable. Other staff who served as mentors were the individuals in the advising office. Part of my assistantship was to serve as the program advisor for my department. Whenever I walked to their suite everyone welcomed me with open arms and answered my questions without making me feel as though I was bothersome. They mentored me as an advisor for undergraduate students, and as a doctoral student, as well as constantly provided encouraging words as I journeyed through the doctoral process. The group even started referencing me as Dr. Walker before I graduated. As I muse over my experiences as a Black female doctoral student at a PWI, both the faculty and staff nurtured positive mentoring relationships that I will cherish for a lifetime.

For African American individuals who chose a PWI to pursue their doctoral studies, I recommend they identify someone at their institution whom they can confide. I was blessed to have my mentor advisor, and several individuals at the institution provide guidance and encouragement to me as a Black female Ph.D. student at a PWI. Thus, my second recommendation is to be intentional when choosing an institution to pursue your doctoral studies. I contacted previous doctoral students and researched the program and university years before I embarked on this journey. It is imperative that African American individuals who are in pursuit of a Ph.D. at a PWI research the program and identify the effectiveness of the relationship or lack of, between advisors and former doctoral students, especially students of color.

For mentors, I recommend continually championing for your mentees. This sounds cliché and repetitive, but it is true. There is no worse feeling for a new doctoral student who experiences isolation, especially an African American student. An individual can sense when others genuinely care, therefore it is imperative that mentors express this verbally and through their actions. If the requisite is providing your personal cell phone number to communicate during the evening or on the weekends, it is worth the investment. The investment from the mentor is the input and the success

of the mentee is the output. I hope this chapter serves as an inspiration for mentees and a resource for mentors on how to effectively guide African American students through the doctoral process at a Predominately White Institution.

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CHAPTER 4

From HBCU to PWI, My Journey to Becoming a Scholar

Frank Conic

As a young student, I did not give much thought to the need for a mentor. I was always highly motivated, self-assured, popular, and a leader; both admired and respected by peers and authority figures. My parents were college-educated and always encouraged me to obtain a college education and aspire to a professional career. My self-confidence peaked as an undergraduate student at Hampton University and as a graduate student at Clark-Atlanta University, predominantly African American institutions, where support, affirmation and encouragement were always available. It did not occur to me that a few years later when I decided to pursue a doctorate at the University of Florida (UF), I would not find the social support network to which I was accustomed.

I still remember how excited I was to learn of my acceptance to a Ph.D. program at the UF. I thought, "This is going to be different." I knew that UF was a top tier research institution, and although research was not exactly my strength, I was up for the challenge. Entering the university

F. Conic (✉)
University of Florida, Gainesville, FL, USA
e-mail: fconic@ufl.edu

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with a focus on bio-statistics, I was confident in my abilities as a mathematician, but concerned about writing. At UF's pre-registration program sponsored by the Office of Graduate Minority Programs (OGMP), I was dismayed to discover that not everyone was convinced that I should be there. My first choice of major was overridden by the Department Chair who, upon our initial introduction, advised me that Bio-Statistics was too "competitive" and I would be wise to select another major. I did. I certainly did not want to be a member of a department whose chair did not have confidence in my ability to succeed.

I encountered similar attitudes from the Dean and faculty of the School of Teaching and Learning, my second choice for a Ph.D. program. While some faculty members in this department extended a welcoming hand, others were skeptical. My abilities, sincerity, motivation, and degree of commitment were scrutinized and questioned. I was accepted into the Mathematics Education Department with the words, "If you make it, you will be first Black male to graduate since the department's inception." Unknown to me at the time, complete alienation from the department was on the horizon. Within two years, I joined the African American males before me in either quitting or facing expulsion from this department. This chapter will chronicle my doctoral journey and highlight missteps made as a result of limited knowledge regarding the context and dynamics within higher education, in general, and my program specifically. Most important, I will discuss key mentoring relationships that not only saved my professional life, but greatly enhanced my personal development, and provided the overall support needed to persevere in pursuit of a doctorate at the UF.

An Uncertain Beginning

I was determined to thrive in my program despite an advisor who was unenthusiastic about taking me on and referred to herself as my "temporary advisor." I surmised that my inexperience in classes with heavy writing components would be an obstacle. I was right. As a mathematics student, I was never required to produce a 25-page paper in a class in addition to reading twenty articles. I was overwhelmed and dropped my first class, which I later learned was my first major mistake. The professor was one of four full professors in the Mathematics Education Department, and as it turned out, dropping his class was a significant misstep. Additionally, I did not get permission from my department chair to drop the class,

which constituted a failure to follow academic advice, lack of integrity, and lack of respect for faculty members. After that, I felt my academic and non-academic actions were heavily filtered through that first week.

Academically, I was labeled irresponsible and unprepared. Incorrect citations, a common mistake by novice scholars, resulted in an accusation of plagiarism. Fortunately, the charge was not upheld by the Dean and I was given the opportunity to make the corrections on my paper. I entered into an agreement with my advisor to adjust and "achieve the level of expectation of a doctoral student." This included meeting with my advisor weekly and being proactive in dealing with issues that arose. These meetings while holding me accountable were ineffective because they were more punitive in nature and did not help to build and develop me as a scholar.

Initially, I was awarded an assistantship for tuition and personal support. After my first semester, my assistantship was canceled because, according to my advisor, my performance as a graduate student was unsatisfactory. Despite promises from OGMP that some funds would be reinstated, they never were. I did not tell my parents that I had lost my assistantship because I didn't want to disappoint my mother. Instead, I taught additional classes at Santa Fe College and borrowed more student loans to survive economically.

The second year I thought things were going better. My assistantship was restored. My classes were approved. I was appointed as a Holmes Scholar. The AACTE Holmes Scholars Program supports students from historically underrepresented communities enrolled in doctoral programs in education. I was also given opportunities to attend conferences and exercised a leadership role among my peers in the College of Education. My grades were good. I assisted in conducting research for my advisor's articles, which sharpened my research and writing skills. I accompanied faculty members on exploratory trips and assisted in the process of gathering data and conducting interviews. In addition, I contributed to a photographic portfolio for the department to showcase individual and group achievements. Based on these examples, I felt the time I spent in the School of Teaching and Learning was not without merit.

In spite of the progress I made, some faculty perceived me negatively and communicated their concerns to my advisor. In the end, it was not one big thing, but rather "a million little things" that ended my time in the School of Teaching and Learning. On May 9, 2013, the Associate Director of Graduate Studies called me into his office and informed me

that my ability to register for any further classes had been revoked. I was confronted with a cumulative list of infractions I had committed over the past two years, along with the message that the professor acting as my temporary advisor was no longer willing to fulfill that role. I was given two options: find another advisor or transfer to a less demanding institution due to my ability to register being revoked. Now, in hindsight, I recognize this as an encounter with academia's "hidden curriculum," the unwritten and unofficial values, beliefs, and norms of the department (Oron & Blasco, 2018). In the absence of effective mentoring, I did not know how to navigate this situation. This was the most challenging situation in my life, thus far. What was I going to do? Going home to face my family, friends and community having failed in my doctoral program was simply not an option.

Dr. Bowie

A mentoring relationship based on friendship, mutual respect and a belief in each other that the relationship will produce positive outcomes.

I had approximately three months to decide my academic future. Shocked, devastated, distraught, humiliated, I was all the above. At my lowest point, a fellow Holmes Scholar suggested that I talk to Dr. Michael Bowie, an African American administrator who was connected to both the OGMP and the College of Education at UF. Specifically, Dr. Bowie was the college's Director of Recruitment, Retention and Multicultural Affairs. Like me, he attended a Historically Black College and University (HBCU), Morgan State, yet earned his Ph.D. from UF in Veterinary Science. A brilliant and well-published man, Dr. Bowie earned faculty status in the School of Veterinary Science and retained that status when he became an administrator.

My early experiences at UF left me jaded and cynical. Apprehensive about contacting Dr. Bowie, I wondered, "What can he do for me, and why would he help me? He doesn't know me." Thankfully, Dr. Bowie and I instantly connected. He reached out to me and met me on my level. He identified with my pain, struggles and frustrations. He did not see me as another Black student "in trouble." Instead, he embraced me as a fellow Black man, a brother, who needed help. He did not judge or condemn me. He listened, and then assured me that there were some

things I could do to continue my Ph.D. program. He gave me his cell phone number and insisted that I call him daily. The ensuing connection was one of several mentoring relationships that transformed my career trajectory, revitalized my outlook on life, and restored my faith in myself and my fellow man. Dr. Bowie guided me through, unarguably, the worst time of my life.

For the reasons listed above, I would describe Dr. Bowie as a *brother*. When a man can reach out to you at your worst point, hold you up until you can stand on your own, then he is not just your friend, he is your brother also. He cautioned me not to give up and reassured me that I was not alone in my predicament. Dr. Bowie saw his role as helping other minorities, particularly African Americans, navigate the system, which he did through sharing his own personal experiences at UF. He helped me analyze my situation and brainstorm solutions. He insisted that I draw up a contract and present it to my advisor and talk to other professors in my department to see if something could be worked out. With every denial, he was there to say, "Don't give up brother. You wouldn't be here if you didn't have what it takes to make it. We will try something else." I know now that he was teaching me diplomacy, tenacity, and humility, qualities I must admit I had in short supply. He personally advocated for me with my advisor and the Dean of the College of Education, to no avail. I finally accepted that I would no longer be a part of the School of Teaching and Learning. Sadly, I closed the door on that chapter of my life. However, today I can walk the halls of the College of Education with my head held high, thanks to Dr. Bowie.

Dr. Oliver

A mentoring relationship where the goal is to help the less prepared person develop his potential and achieve a desired goal.

Dr. Bowie introduced me to another distinguished member of the UF faculty, Dr. Bernard Oliver, Professor of Educational Leadership and Program Coordinator for the Lassiter Research Center. Dr. Oliver, also an African American, had been recruited by UF from Virginia Beach City Schools. He received his doctorate from Stanford University and was considered a leading scholar in educational research. If Dr. Bowie was an optimist, Dr. Oliver was the ultimate realist. He was straightforward

and intense, no nonsense. He reminded me daily to stay strong, stay focused, and "keep your mouth shut." Yes, Dr. Oliver was "old school" and showed tough love. Over the next few years, he would provide counsel in academics and other areas of life. The thing that I appreciated most was his forthrightness. I could always depend on him to give me his honest opinion, and most of the time he was right. After hearing about my situation, he immediately offered to propose me as a candidate in his department, Educational Leadership, and act as my advisor and mentor. Having been in limbo for the past two months, I was quite relieved by his offer, thankful that I did not have to leave UF after all. Dr. Oliver exposed me to the politics of educational institutions and fortified me to weather the storms of discrimination, exclusion, and alienation.

Dr. Oliver taught me three important lessons:

- Do not shoulder all the blame for negative things that happen to you. Racism still exists in society and in institutions of higher education. Everyone here is not your friend. Not everyone wants you to succeed. Recognize there are still many things that will not be available to you because of your skin color. Fix the things you need to fix in yourself but hold other individuals and institutions accountable and when you can, challenge them. That is the only way things will improve.
- Accept responsibility when you are wrong. Do not attempt to justify or rationalize your mistakes, rather search yourself and understand the source of your own dysfunction. Do not compare yourself to anyone else. Learn to accept yourself for who you are and be the best you can be.
- Constantly look for ways and opportunities to enhance your skills and talents in order to gain positive exposure for yourself. Be prepared to take your work, presentation and conversation to the next level.

Dr. Oliver and I spent a lot of time together that summer trying to make sense of the past two years and planning a future where the same mistakes would not be made. One of the major mistakes I made, according to Dr. Oliver, was to accept a Mathematics Instructor position at Santa Fe College, located in Gainesville, against the advice of the OGMP and my advisor. As I mentioned previously, I accepted the position at

Santa Fe because I had not yet been awarded a graduate assistantship and needed the income to cover my school and personal expenses. After I accepted the position at Santa Fe, which was offered to me through the OMGP, I learned that the OGMP had been working with my advisor to put together a package that would be comparable to an assistantship. I ended up splitting my time between both places. At the time, accepting the adjunct position at Santa Fe College seemed to be the right decision, especially given my credentials (M.S. in Mathematics) and experiences as an adjunct professor in Atlanta for three years. Nevertheless, my deepest regret was not being able to reconcile this situation with my advisor and OMGP at the beginning. From that point my relationship with UF administrators and professors was quite contentious. Minor offenses became major transgressions, such as being late to a meeting, dropping a class, not participating in a class discussion, not attending an informal gathering at a professor's home.

The following year I worked closely with Dr. Oliver on several topics that were near and dear to his heart. He was a prolific writer and researcher. I was particularly interested in his research in urban education policies and practices. At that time, my studies were directed toward the achievement gap in mathematics between minority and non-minority students. A directed study with Dr. Oliver helped define my theoretical perspective in reference to urban youth who are behind in mathematics. In 2015, we collaborated on a paper presentation at the American Association of Blacks in Higher Education. The theme of this conference was "Enhancing Success in Higher Education for African American Faculty and Students." This was my first national conference experience as a presenter, and it exposed me to a new level of networking and educational achievement. Dr. Oliver taught me the value of developing peer relationships with fellow students and providing support to others across institutional and racial boundaries. In total, we collaborated on three presentations in 2013–2015. During those two years my confidence level soared. I gained skills in academics and in life. I learned how to negotiate my needs, and to make sure my thoughts and behaviors were in synch with my goals. Although I am not the most eloquent speaker, I learned that I could deliver a well-received presentation based on solid research and genuine concern.

In August 2015, Dr. Oliver took a leave of absence from UF to accept a temporary position as Dean of Education at the United Arab Emirates University in Dubai. Feelings of abandonment started to slip into my

psyche. What would I do without my trusted mentor, my friend, my surrogate father?

Before he departed, Dr. Oliver suggested I consider Higher Education Administration. He discerned that I found my niche in community college teaching and that this may be the place where I would have the greatest opportunity and impact. Dr. Oliver introduced me to Dr. Dale Campbell, chair of the Higher Education Department, and Dr. Pete Villareal, Professor of Higher Education. I began the application process for admission to the Department of Higher Education Administration as a doctoral student with Dr. Campbell acting as my advisor. Learning that I had been accepted to Higher Ed. was like being reborn. I had been given a second chance and I was determined to make it work.

Dr. Campbell

The act of teaching, encouraging and motivating a protégé; demonstrating behaviors that inspire and challenge a person to reach new heights.

When I transferred to the Department of Higher Education Administration I was nearly complete with the coursework needed for doctoral candidacy. I vividly recall my initial meeting with Dr. Campbell. He was an impressive gentleman, engaging and affable. He had been faculty at UF since 1995. His previous experience included Assistant Commissioner for Community and Technical Colleges for the state of Texas, and professor of Education at North Carolina State University.

While Dr. Campbell and I connected on several dimensions, our aligning interest in community colleges would support my scholarship. When we met, I was in my third year of teaching at Santa Fe College, and I had started to shift my focus to developmental education in mathematics among community college students. Dr. Campbell was knowledgeable in this area and helped me tremendously in formatting my ideas. With his encouragement, my papers were accepted for presentation at several regional and national conferences, including National Association of Developmental Education (NADE), American Association of Blacks in Higher Education (AABHE), and the Holmes Scholars Pre-Conference, which is a program of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE). Dr. Campbell epitomized optimism and positivity. He expressed interest and held high expectations for all his students and

their research. A culture of networking and collaboration was fostered through off-campus dinners each semester and coursework that required face-to-face and online students to work together. His actions suggested that a career in education would require meeting and working with people from various backgrounds and cultures. I was challenged, yet inspired by these initiatives.

Dr. Campbell introduced me to the *Futures Assembly Conference* my first year in the Higher Education program. The Futures program was derived from his experience with Dr. James Wattenbarger, his mentor and architect of the Florida Community College System in 1947. They met in the 1970s when Dr. Wattenbarger was Chair of the Higher Ed. Department at UF. Impressed with the work of Dr. Wattenbarger, Dr. Campbell dedicated his tenure at UF to documenting and developing the role of community colleges in higher education.

In 1994, Dr. Campbell spearheaded the first Futures Assembly Conference, which was a tremendous success from the beginning. From hundreds of applications, each year thirty community college programs were recognized as exemplary, innovative programs designed to provide new and progressive pathways to success for community college students. Amid a 50% failure to complete rate of community college students, Futures held a ray of hope to professors, policymakers and college presidents who seemed to be laboring down a path of self-defeat. Futures' attendees were dedicated to improving the failure to complete rate and understood that in order for education to work, it has to be relevant to and empower everyone.

As a mentee, I was in awe of and inspired by Futures and the work of Dr. Campbell and community college leaders throughout the country. I spent countless hours talking to Dr. Campbell, program participants, professors, department chairs, and even college presidents about the challenges this country faces in educating our youth, especially minorities. These experiences solidified my desire to work in the community college setting and to be a mentor to students from elementary school through higher education. For six years, I have been active in Futures as a conference participant and administrative assistant. Dr. Campbell supported a graduate assistantship for four of those years which gave me more time to work on the Futures project and learn as much as possible about its operations. In 2019 I was named Futures Assembly Program Director. I was elated to receive this appointment. The fact that Dr. Campbell had

this much confidence in my abilities as an organizer and leader was mind-blowing. I consider this one of my greatest academic achievements and I will always be grateful to Dr. Dale Campbell for believing in me.

Due to the support I received from Dr. Bowie, Dr. Oliver, Dr. Campbell, and OGMP staff especially Dr. Frierson and Dr. Hathorn, I will earn my doctoral degree from UF in Spring 2020 as a graduate in Higher Education Administration with concentrations in Community College Leadership and Statistics.

Peer and Spiritual Mentoring

This narrative would be incomplete without mention of two individuals who have been there for me through much of my adult life, Dr. Chris Jett and Pastor Lawrence Reeves. These gentlemen represent the impact of peer mentoring and spiritual mentoring on the doctoral journey.

I met Chris Jett at Tennessee State University in 2004, both of us were enrolled in the Master's degree program in Pure and Applied Mathematics. Chris and I were very different in personality. He was quiet, clean-shaven, articulate, and polished. I was the opposite, spontaneous, egotistical, life-of-the-party kind of guy, with t-shirts and braids. Somehow, we hit it off. We found common ground in our small town backgrounds and deeply religious values. Chris graduated from Tennessee State the following year and was accepted at Georgia State University to pursue a doctorate in Higher Education. I ended up transferring to Clark-Atlanta on scholarship to complete my Master's. For me, Chris modeled the relationship building and level-headedness necessary for academic success. Socially, we did not see each other often, however, when I had a question, or a dilemma, Chris was there to guide me toward the more rational and effective solution. In addition to constructive feedback and problem-solving support, this peer–mentoring relationship provided encouragement. Chris urged me to apply for the doctoral program at UF and matched my excitement at the news of my acceptance into this tier-one research institution. Chris and I have remained friends and I still consider him a mentor. He graduated from Georgia State University and accepted a faculty position at the University of West Georgia. Chris is doing well, and we still keep in touch at least once a week.

My spiritual mentor is Pastor Lawrence Reeves Jr., a man of varied background and experiences. After retiring from the U.S. Air force, he

earned a B.S. in Business Administration from North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University, and a Master's in Business Administration with a concentration in Urban Transportation and Marketing from Clark Atlanta University. A charismatic older gentleman, with a stately presence, he commanded the room when he spoke. Professionally, Pastor Reeves was an adjunct professor, business owner, and humanitarian. He and his wife established a ministry in Atlanta that was devoted to meeting the needs of the tremendous homeless population in Atlanta. I was so impressed with his outreach; I knew I had to help. After settling in at Clark-Atlanta I became a member of his church and participated in feeding over 300 homeless men in Atlanta, weekly. I learned the true meaning of Christ's decree to "love thy neighbor."

Pastor Reeves' compassion was also evident through his unwavering support during every trial and tribulation encountered during my graduate experience at UF. Daily calls filled with encouraging words reminded me of how blessed I was to have such an opportunity and assured me that I could make it. He reminded me of how many young men and women I would be able to help in the future if I would just "stay the course." When academic and personal circumstances threatened to break me, Pastor Reeves stepped in to "help me make it make sense," and hold on until the next time.

Reflections and Recommendations

I began this chapter by stating that from grade school through obtaining my Master's I did not feel the need for a mentor. At times I needed assistance, but no formal mentoring services were offered and I did not press the issue. Besides, my parents have college degrees and were able to help me with most questions or problems I encountered. However, the mentoring literature I encountered in the course of writing this chapter has opened my eyes to a rich resource that many students, including myself, missed out on and will continue to lose without exposure and active engagement in mentoring, as early as high school. This is particularly important for Black males who, from early educational experiences through the terminal degree, are especially vulnerable while navigating predominately White academic spaces.

A growing body of literature portrays African American males from elementary to high school as academic underachievers, characterized by unfavorable self-image, and negative self-esteem (Dyrda, 2009; Lynch,

2017; Noguera, 2008). They are continually marginalized throughout their school experience and in society, while having less access to educational resources than White peers. Simultaneously, African American boys with exceptional skills and talents in sports, academics, art or music are expected to perform at a high level and failure to do so can lead to a loss of self-esteem (Flowers & Banda, 2018). For high school, I attended the Arts and Sciences Program for Gifted and Talented. I felt pressure to succeed, particularly when all the African American students in the Math/Science component dropped out and returned to our home school, leaving me as the only Black student in my section. Isolation crept in, accompanied by the pressure that I had to succeed academically (with limited support) to prove I belonged there. My confidence decreased in high school, yet increased in undergrad and graduate school because I was again surrounded by individuals who I felt were invested in my success, rather than my failure. However, the same pressure to succeed, to prove that I was just as good as my non-minority peers and feelings of isolation resurfaced at UF.

Flowers and Banda (2018) conclude from their research on Black and gifted male high school students, that emphasis needs to be placed on Black male identity development to increase the number of Black males who aspire to and can succeed in STEM professions. Their recommendations include the creation of mandatory mentoring programs that focus on first-year college African American male STEM majors. Such programs would develop students' self-concept, self-esteem, and self-confidence and provide enriching spaces that promote inclusivity in the larger environment. Watson, Sealey-Ruiz, and Jackson (2016) further describe mentoring as a way to curb the crisis of Black male failure in education. There is a clarion call for culturally relevant approaches to mentoring where students are advised regarding personal issues such as academics, finances, and self-esteem, and also equipped to deal with ecological issues such as institutional racism, cultural awareness and networking. Mentoring males of color should require the establishment of relationships based on, "an authentic form of caring in which mentors strive to better understand students personally and culturally" (Watson et al., 2016, p. 983). Additionally, in an environment of care and concern, mentoring should support the development of moral, social, and personal responsibility to bolster a foundation for success in college and beyond.

Literature regarding the academic success of Black males in graduate school, specifically Ph.D. programs, reflects the same issues discussed

in reference to high school students in gifted or advanced STEM programs. The need for mentoring emerges as the common thread. Doctoral programs are viewed as training for "the professoriate." Mentoring, therefore, becomes a central component of the identity development and socialization process that ensures equity in doctoral education (Alston, Guy, & Campbell, 2017). Successful African American professionals identify mentoring as an essential ingredient that led to their successful matriculation at a predominantly White institution (Griffin, Pérez, Holmes, & Mayo, 2010). Three factors were identified as having the most positive impact on their trajectory: (1) the mentor's commitment to their academic success, (2) the mentor's belief in their abilities and (3) the mentor's ability to support the development of the mentee's social capital and professional network.

Racism is an obstacle faced by scholars of color that necessitates mentoring support. According to Alston et al. (2017), 10% of full-time instructional Stem faculty are Black, 17% are Asian, and 73% are White, nationally. Low numbers of faculty and students of color is significant because the impression is supported that minorities are not represented in higher education because they do not deserve to be. Race and racism are downplayed as causative factors for inequalities in higher education, Black graduate students at PWIs complain of discrimination in grading and of receiving less constructive feedback, recommendations for scholarships and other benefits and having less one-on-one time with faculty. Minority students feel that racism still plays an important role in the way African Americans are perceived by their peers and faculty. Black students may be treated as though they are less qualified or don't belong because student peers and faculty may believe their presence is to fulfill diversity quotas. These attitudes create an enormous amount of pressure on Blacks to excel, which was my experience in a mathematics-focused doctoral program. Stereotypes concerning Black males and mathematics achievement still circulate in academic and non-academic circles. Blacks are assumed to be less competent in STEM areas and to lack the academic abilities to compete in the classroom and the global market (Alston et al., 2017). As a result, complaints of isolation, marginalization, and racism are prevalent among STEM graduate students (McGaskey, Freeman, Guyton, Richmond, & Guyton, 2016).

The message is clear, the need for mentoring and increased social support on all levels of education is urgent. Research shows that early mentoring is helpful in several ways—(1) Mentoring provides information about

what is expected, (2) Mentoring contributes to a rise in self-esteem of students by showing them they are capable of mastering the content, (3) Mentoring leads to higher grades by teaching students assertiveness, negotiating skills, and proper communication with professors in resolving disputes (McGaskey et al., 2016). Because many institutions do not routinely provide mentors, few students are able to find support within their programs, others have to reach across department lines and even institutional boundaries for mentoring. Peer networks provide a structure for scholars to form their own social network to provide mentoring and support services (McGaskey et al., 2016). In addition, organizations such as the Holmes Scholars are an essential part of the mentoring process. While the number of Black faculty in PWIs is insufficient to keep up with the demand for mentors especially in STEM fields, Holmes Scholars can fill in the gap by increasing the size and scope of scholars' social networks so that needed resources are available to underrepresented doctoral students where ever needed. Non-minority faculty in PWIs may also be invited to serve as mentors to minority students. This was certainly my situation at UF. I still consider Dr. Campbell a valuable mentor and a close friend. I am still amazed by his ability to look beyond the shell of hurt and anger in which I had walled myself, and see a human being, talented, passionate, and deserving of the opportunity to obtain a Ph.D. and fulfill my lifelong dream. I suspect that there are more non-minority individuals like Dr. Campbell who are willing to invest in a student struggling against unforeseeable winds of institutionalized racism still very prevalent in societies today. We have to make those connections.

Four themes emerged as I perused the literature on mentoring and reflected on my lived experiences regarding mentoring practices. (1) Mentoring can take many forms—organized programs, social networks, or informal contacts, and may be based inside or outside of the targeted department(s). (2) Mentors may be faculty, counselors, or professionals who may or may not have an affiliation with the institution. The mentor should have experience and/or professional expertise in the mentee's area of study. (3) Mentors should be prepared to take on several roles—advisor, teacher, guide, confidant, and friend. (4) Mentoring is building a relationship where the mentor has confidence in the mentee's ability to succeed and assumes responsibility for the success and challenges of the mentee by creating opportunities to enhance his research skills and providing social capital building experiences in his field of study.

In this chapter, I discussed several mentoring relationships that transformed my career trajectory, revitalized my outlook on life, and restored my faith in myself and my fellow man.

As a result of effective mentoring, I have been exposed to the politics of educational institutions, as well as fortified to weather the storms of discrimination, exclusion, and alienation. Practically, mentors have guided me to the appropriate program, sharpened my academic and research capacities and provided leadership opportunities. Peer and spiritual mentors provided the professional connections, guidance and encouragement I needed to persevere. The mentoring relationships I formed in and outside of UF were invaluable in guiding and sustaining my career focus.

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CHAPTER 5

The Ultimate Measure: A Caribbean Woman's Dream and Journey to Surpass Expectations and Overcome Academic Obstacles

Shalander "Shelly" Samuels

Introduction

Dr. Martin Luther King once said "The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy". This has been my mantra that empowered me towards my academic journey in the United States, commonly thought of as "the land of opportunities" one must find ways to create his own success and make it a reality, especially in the field of education (Ladson-Billings, 2009). The process of earning a doctoral degree often focuses on theorizing and conceptualizing practice, while also forcing students to self-reflect in order to ensure that the journey is

S. "Shelly" Samuels (✉)
Orange County School District, Orlando, FL, USA
e-mail: samuelss@seminolestate.edu; Shalander.samuels@ocps.net

Seminole State Community College, Sanford, FL, USA

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as impactful as the end result. My journey to successfully earn a doctoral degree was anything but traditional. My story is one of tenacity, a characteristic that fueled my drive through seemingly insurmountable obstacles in this process.

Part One: Humble Beginnings

I am a first-generation college student, as my parents neither attended nor graduated college. I grew up in a single parent home where my mother worked tirelessly to provide for our family, sometimes balancing two jobs. Her strength and tenacity provided me with the motivation to work equally as hard to ensure that I achieved honest success. Immigrant students are often inspired to work harder than native students as they aim to achieve a better life than in their home country (Lunday, 2012). I was focused, worked hard and excelled throughout high school. Where I failed in academia in my native country, Jamaica, I was able to conquer the concepts in America.

Despite my academic success, I was at a disadvantage because my parents and I lacked insight into the college planning process. Limited knowledge of college admissions, scholarships, and financial were roadblocks on my academic journey. Notwithstanding, I achieved my associate degree after five years of arduous labor. Working full-time and being a student was taxing but I was determined to make my parents proud, as they had already sacrificed so much for me. It took a total of seven years for me to finally receive the bachelor's degree which I had so long desired. This life has never been easy and nothing has ever been handed to me. I have always fought diligently for what I wanted. After taking 7 years to earn a bachelor's degree, I wanted to quickly complete my master's degree and did so in little over a year. Then, destiny summoned me toward a terminal degree. I developed the most grit and perseverance through the completion of my terminal degree; a journey that helped me build resilience for the future.

Part Two: Overcoming the Imposter Syndrome with Mentoring

I always knew I wanted to become a professor. Early on I discovered my gift of sharing knowledge with others and a continuous feeling of excitement at the prospect of engaging with learners as they absorb and

grapple with knowledge. Although I had little understanding of how to become a professor, I persisted and committed to creating the opportunities to realize my dream. I worked and put myself through school for almost ten years before I became a K-12 teacher. My first stint at teaching was at a school that was my last choice. I had no desire to work there. Quite frankly, it was the only school that I hoped would not call. As fate would have it, this school called first. Ironically, Brass Knuckles Middle School (pseudonym) is my favorite teaching assignment, to date, as it provided lifelong experiences that I will take with me forever. However, at the beginning I felt like the imposter my students perceived me to be. Their initial rejection fueled my feelings of inexperience and not belonging. The students treated me like they treated many substitutes—without care, respect, or regard. They would constantly pose questions about when I would leave or attempt to embarrass me, scare me, or push me to quit; yet, I never did.

Internally, I often felt alone, unqualified and, quite frankly, like I didn't belong. Teaching was difficult because I thought I didn't have the knowledge to instruct or make a positive impression on my population of students. I didn't understand them, and they didn't understand me. I am not referring to academic knowledge here; I didn't understand their culture and experiences, which prevented me from being able to effectively teach them. The notion that students will automatically react to same-race mentors is false. Considering the various ethnic and cultural experiences and beliefs that exist among people in the African Diaspora, simply being Black did not automatically qualify me to cater to the needs of my students. Disappointment crept in through the feeling that I worked hard to possess a degree that failed to help me succeed with students who looked just like me. Nevertheless, I persevered until their attitudes changed. Reciprocal feelings of love began to occur. I started feeling loved and they began to feel I loved them in return. I provided mentorship and support. In the same way, I was being mentored. Without the support and mentorship of my colleague, I would not have succeeded with my middle school students. Peer to peer mentorship was a solution for one of the many challenges in my early career (Dennison, 2010). I stayed at Brass Knuckle Middle School because of the strong support system among my colleagues and I. They became my family and helped me succeed. The foremost factor in achieving success in my early teaching career is the mentorship I received. My peers guided me and helped me navigate being an effective educator, one who could effect change (Felder,

2010). If I didn't have mentors who cared about my success at that school I wouldn't have been successful, because of the mentorship and support I received I thrived there. When my students came with their plethora of problems—from having babies while in the eighth grade; seeing (on two separate occasions) my students on the local news getting arrested for felonies; to parents showing up to engage in physical altercations—I was able to handle them and remain focused. Through all of this, my peers were there for me to help me feel better, to nurture my emotions, to help me feel acknowledged, and not feel like I was an imposter (Parkman, 2016; Craddock, Birnbaum, Rodriguez, Cobb, & Zeeh, 2011).

Over those five years, the school's administration changed and so did the support that I gave and received. I realized more than anything that I needed to get started with my program before I got too engrossed in realities of my career. My first step in transitioning to the Ph.D. was to meet with advisors to gather information regarding available programs. At these initial meetings I once again felt like an imposter because I perceived my questions on how to start the Ph.D. program to be met with apathy and negativity. On two occasions, I met with advisors and received the same treatment; one male, the other female, both Caucasians. I was first discouraged from requesting an assistantship to finance my education and was not offered other options, even at my request. I was then advised that I would not be able to attain a Ph.D. if I did not attend the program full-time. Without an assistantship or other financial aid support, neither was an option for me because I had to work. Overall, the advisors did not show much concern, neither did they care that I did not know much about the process. Whether or not they discerned my need for guidance is unknown, as a first-generation student, there were many things I didn't know. Regardless, from their interactions with me, I perceived their dispositions to be generic, insincere, and curt. It was in their voice, in their eyes, and now on me, as someone who didn't belong, an imposter, like I didn't belong (Gardner, 2013; Hoang, 2013). Despite limited support from the program's point of contact, I applied for the doctoral program and successfully gained admission. Yes! I was ready to work—making it my mantra then to take things in stride. As my journey was non-traditional, I more than some colleagues more than ever needed a mentor to help guide me on this new journey; I had none. Where were the mentors to guide this potential candidate? I often wondered why interested students were not given mentors to guide them through the application process

prior to beginning the program. Research shows that an advisor or supervisor is an integral part of the process for students to succeed (Bagaka's, Badillo, Bransteter, & Rispinto, 2015; Barnes & Austin, 2009).

Enslaved in a Free Country

After my first semester, I attended a Christmas social at the home of my program's coordinator. During the gathering, she invited us to speak with her about our journey and our aim. I was excited to have a quick one-on-one discussion with her. Once I explained my teaching position and my intent, I was shocked to hear her response—"What are you doing in this program? This is not where you are supposed to be!" Once again, I felt like an imposter, as if this was not where I was supposed to be. My excitement about this conversation quickly turned into doom and gloom. I was saddened to say the least. The only other words I heard her say were, "they always do this. They always just throw people in my program that have no business there. I am going to email another coordinator because you would be better fit for that program." The discussion ended with her being quite annoyed that "they" had placed me into her program without her approval. I was subsequently asked to join the Curriculum and Instruction Doctoral program instead, which would not begin until the next Fall. This meant that I had just wasted some more time and hard-earned money in a program for which I was deemed unfit. This situation provides insight on how discontinuity within advising and admissions negatively impacts students by fueling feelings of not belonging and prolonging degree attainment, which can increase costs. As a first-generation student without the guidance of a mentor, here I was making more mistakes, learning the hard way, enslaved in a system controlled by others.

During my first class in the new program, another Caucasian female told me, yet again, that I would not be successful in the program. This time, she was my professor. I wondered if she was right. Was she assessing the quality of work that I presented early in the program? Was she intimated by my deep melanin? Did my accent distract her? She went on to say that it was her duty to sieve through the weak students who weren't going to make it through the end of the program; the ones who didn't belong. Another professor, also a Caucasian female, penalized me for attending the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education's Annual Meeting and dismissed my explanation for my required

attendance. Through the semester, I noticed that those whom professors deemed unfit, targeted, and diverted attention from, were women of color. At one point I was barely making it and I did not know what my next steps were. However, I never complained because I wanted to earn a doctorate so badly. I was silenced by the understanding that these professors were the only ones who taught the courses. Their disposition increased my determination to succeed. I often shook my head at how, in a country that is supposedly free, I felt enslaved by the professors who dangled my academic destiny in front of me. As a part-time student, I was in dire need of on campus support when the traditional school hours were over. After leaving work in the evenings, many university offices were closed, meaning there was no one to address my queries. Therefore, it took extended amounts of time for me to find help, as I was not present during the day to build relationships or to identify an advocate. I learned the most from the mistakes I made. I was without knowledge of professors' availability or individuals on campus I could truly talk to, who would understand my plight. There was limited knowledge available to specifically assist untraditional, part-time students. I often felt more ill-equipped than my peers who had the knowledge to succeed in the program. I realize now that I encountered the *hidden curriculum* active within graduate programs.

Part Three: Seeking Help

As a doctoral student I needed the guidance of a mentor (Adams, 1992; Mullen, Fish, & Hutinger, 2010) due to multiple frustrating factors that deterred my imminent success. One, I was a first-generation student who lacked the necessary knowledge. Two, I was ill-informed due to attending as a part-time student. Three, from the onset, I lacked the necessary physical and emotional support from the institution.

Eventually, I met a professor, Dr. Ivy League, who I hoped would be my mentor. She was a professor of stature, with stunning poise and eloquence, she was a woman of color. I was impressed by her expertise and excited by our similar research interests. After months of seeking an appointment with her, we met and I was finally able to express my desire for her mentorship. Many months and failed meetings later I accepted the fact that we would not work together. She did not become the mentor I hoped she would be. I made the mistake of thinking that someone who looked like me would automatically see and meet my needs. Similar to my teaching career, I found support from a peer. I met a young man who politely introduced himself as the president of an organization on campus

called the Holmes Scholars. He sold it to me and it sounded interesting so I accepted his invitation as I desperately needed to find some guidance. I almost felt like a superhero showed up shouting—"HELP IS ON THE WAY!"

Part Four: Finding Help in Unlikely Places

I often sought refuge and mentorship from people who looked like me because I had been shunned by others and believed people of color would better understand my plight. To my dismay, black and brown people were not always the pinnacle of support either. They also didn't always nurture and encourage, return calls and emails, or show up to agreed meetings. I knew I had to stop thinking about support and associating it with race.

My first mentor in the doctoral process was a Jewish professor I met during undergrad and with whom I remain in contact. He always made me feel like I could do well and I did. During my academic journey I sought his assistance because I felt he believed in me, which was evidenced by his level of support and care. He made me feel known. He said each student's name when he spoke to them and he always gave us stickers to for our efforts. His tangible support helped me navigate the transition between doctoral programs, as well as the dissertation stage.

I assessed the value people placed on me through their actions and attitudes, which resulted in the realization that not all bodies are equally valued; not all people are looked at the same. Sometimes as students we often internalize what other "seasoned scholars" think about us. Many researchers argue that all students should be given an equal education and have good, supportive environments that are nurturing. Among this same group of individuals can be found those who refuse to help students in need. It appears that networking and collaboration among budding scholars is used to elevate one's professional platform. Unfortunately, my reality was that I had nothing to offer them, so I usually scurried along like the imposter that I was. I didn't feel like I belonged (Parkman, 2016).

I worked in isolation until I was accepted into the Holmes Scholars Program. This program was a mentoring support system created to help marginalized students succeed through the doctoral process. The Holmes Scholars created the opportunity to meet scholars who set high expectations and provided support. I entered a room filled with scholars of color and I immediately felt welcomed. Through the Holmes Scholars Program, I met two mentors, Dr. Carolyn Hopp (then coordinator) and

Dr. Metcalf-Turner. When I had neither a mentor nor Chair, Dr. Metcalf-Turner whom I met at a dissertation retreat, welcomed and guided me. She was a straight shooter, but I always felt she had my best interest in mind. She sacrificed some of her Saturdays across time zones to ensure that I completed my first year successfully as a doctoral candidate, and not only cared about my academic life, she also supported me personally. She mentored me by helping me develop the tools necessary to elevate my scholarship, she held me accountable and made sure I was performing above the expected standard, for those things I am thankful to Dr. Metcalf-Turner.

During my second year, Dr. Hopp was assigned as my Dissertation Chair and she was instrumental in helping me see my program to completion. She was a listening ear, a support and a guide for me and the other Holmes Scholars in the program. She was what I envisioned a mentor to be, someone with a vested interest, who devoted the time and energy she felt was needed by mentees; guiding us differently, but equitably.

Part Five: Recommendations

In a modern democracy, it is expected that we become thriving and successful citizens. As such, it is the expectation that students are supported as they continue their education (Gutmann & Ben-Porath, 2014). Maintaining balance while concurrently completing a terminal degree and working full-time can be quite the task. The academic mentoring that I received from those who dared to guide me to the finish line was instrumental as I gained much knowledge and insight. As a first-generation college graduate, I had no idea of the trials to expect and how to overcome them. I had no family member who could prepare me in a personal way to succeed, which meant I had to work harder to create the intellectual community I needed to succeed. For me, this support came through peer mentoring, peer mentoring was helpful in keeping on track and staying focused (Bagaka's et al., 2015; Jacelon, Zucker, Staccarini, & Henneman, 2003)

As a nontraditional student, my reality included working all day, then school all night—it was difficult. When I sought to connect with the program administration, there was a lack of openness and encouragement, direction and support. Everyone seemed nonchalant and dismissive and there was no attempt to invest in my success. It is important to have individuals representing the institution who can effectively engage with

new students and that universities create consistency in the functioning of educational departments. This will ensure similar implementation of effective strategies across departments and that all students graduate with the same level of exposure and experiences afforded to graduate students. To neglect and ignore those issues presented by students who work full-time is to do them a disservice.

Scholars who work full-time while completing their terminal degrees might consider the following:

Research shows that systemic issues are a major factor contributing to the attrition of doctoral students (Patterson, 2016). We must consider the heightened isolation for some students throughout this stressful and often intense, especially distant learners. Moreover, we must consider issues like unsupportive professors with little time to effectively assist students during this stressful period. The start of an academic program requires a significant amount of support and lack thereof can significantly affect academic outcomes, including program completion. Mentoring should be considered as a critical support for students, particularly those who work full-time. New and innovative mentoring strategies may be conceptualized for these nontraditional students. The existence of such development is critical given that part-time students are a growing population of graduate students in the United States (Gardner & Gopaul, 2012).

Students should consider the following in order to be successful:

- Grit and resilience are necessary traits for successfully completing your program, as there will be obstacles that will arise that might challenge and interrupt one's progress.
- Don't wait to be assigned a mentor, seek mentors from wherever you can. Look within and outside of your institution for guidance, you'll be surprised how often the help you get comes from other institutions. Find mentors who have your best interest at heart and possibly similar research ideas to allow for collaboration.
- Seek support from peers, especially those who have recently experienced the process you are completing, they can be a source of help during a time of insurmountable adversity.
- Do not be socialized into believing that this is an impossible journey. Find organizations or groups with those who are like-minded (sometimes it's necessary to create your own groups).

- Create a support system inside your program of study to help achieve balance. Having support systems comprising individuals who understand the process is helpful, because they can serve as advocates and sounding boards.
- Create a support system outside of your program of study to help give you a break from the responsibilities of a developing writer and a researcher.

The mentoring I was afforded assisted me in different aspects of my doctoral journey and came from administrators, few faculty, and primarily peers. Through peer mentoring groups, I received support and cultivated skills. I learned how to submit journal articles as well as do editing based on feedback received on submissions.

Mentors should consider the following in order to maximize impact:

- Good mentors guide students in making connections with others who can strengthen and advance their scholarship.
- Good mentors invest personal time and energy in students' academic development.
- Good mentors teach persistence through personal examples of academic struggle and triumph.
- Good mentors understand the context of varying situations and build bridges from where a student is to where they want to be.

I aim to be the mentor that introduces my mentees to conferences, journals, and a myriad of opportunities beneficial to their careers. It is my goal to bridge all the gaps I experienced throughout my process and to *be* the change necessary in higher education. The Holmes Scholars program presented me with the foundational experiences I needed to create a formula for success. I will sit at the table of success and eagerly create opportunities for those following, while surpassing all goals set and being the best me I can be. Mine is a story of success, a nontraditional path taken and successfully completed by the grace of God. Through persistence and unwavering support from peers and mentors, I found my way to my success.

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CHAPTER 6

Pulling as We Climb: No Sister Left Behind

Natoya Coleman and Eshe Price

Our Problem

As Black women who are Ph.D. students, instructional faculty and administrators, at a predominantly White institution (PWI), we recognized that there was a need to support our intersectional identities. Historically, Black women are underrepresented in higher education faculty positions and Ph.D. programs, however, in this chapter, we examine our unique context—a college of education in which the top leadership positions are held by Black women. Not only do these Black women lead, but they interact with one another and with us as faculty members and Ph.D. students in a way that is meaningful and intriguing. In this chapter, we examine these interactions and explore how different forms of mentorship support Black female scholars with handling the pressures of being Black women in higher education. In order to fully explore the dynamics of our mentorship experiences, we begin with a brief narrative of ourselves and our mentors to explain each person's positionality within this context.

N. Coleman (✉) · E. Price
Rowan University, Glassboro, NJ, USA
e-mail: Colemann@rowan.edu

E. Price
e-mail: Pricee@rowan.edu

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Who Are We?

Eshe

I am a Black American of Barbadian heritage and second year Ph.D. student specializing in Urban Education who began working at the institution a year prior to beginning the doctoral program. I was hired as ¾ faculty member and professor in residence (PIR) in a local elementary school. As a PIR, I teach a nine-credit load. Prior to my role at the PWI, I was an educator and supervisor in urban education. I'm a Holmes Scholar and active as a graduate student representative for a special interest group in the American Educational Research Association.

Natoya

I am a Black woman and second year Ph.D. student specializing in Urban Education. I am the PIR at a local middle school, an instructor, and supervisor of student teachers. I am also a Holmes Scholar and a member of the Holmes Scholar Conference Planning Committee. Prior to this position, I taught English Language Arts in urban schools for 10 years, was an Academic Coach, and wrote district-level high school English curriculum for grades 9–12.

Who Are They?

Michelle

Michelle is the first Black female Dean in the history of the College of Education at our institution. She has been in her position for five years and prior to this served in administrative positions at other predominantly White institutions. Under her leadership, the College of Education instituted a Ph.D. program and a center for research. She is a Holmes Scholar Alumni and a member of a National Pan-Hellenic Greek Sorority.

Regina

Regina is a biracial Black woman, full professor, and director of the leading research center in the College of Education. She has held this position

for three years, and came to the university, with tenure, to help establish the Ph.D. in education program, and secure millions of dollars in grant funding. She is currently advising three Ph.D. students as their dissertation chair, is the coordinator of the Holmes Scholars Program, and is in partnership with 11 local school districts who sought the university to begin working to ensure that their schools are equitable for all students and staff.

Kelly

Kelly is a Black woman, tenured professor and director of the local school partnerships for the university. She is an alumna of the College and grew up in the area surrounding the university. Her office manages the student teaching assignments and professional development school network. Under her oversight, the number of partnerships with outside school districts has increased and is steadily growing. Before becoming an administrator, she was a professor and school liaison, at the university, and has been employed at the university for more than 20 years. She is also a member of a National Pan-Hellenic Greek Sorority.

Each of us offer different perspectives on what it means to be a Black woman in higher education, on the value of mentorship, and how it is enacted in our lives. We represent different destinations on the journey, as we ascend through the various realms of leadership in higher education. In this chapter, we will examine our experiences in order to understand how, within this unique context, mentorship is enacted as a system of support for the pressures that exist within a predominantly White institution.

Pressures of Black Women in PWI

The underrepresentation of Black women in higher education faculty positions continues to be a current issue in higher education (McChesney, 2018). Of all full-time faculty in degree-granting postsecondary institutions in fall 2016, Black women were only 2% of full professors, 3% of associate professors, 4% of assistant professors, 5% of instructors, and 3% of lecturers (National Center of Education Statistics). Of the US population, about 2% have attained a doctorate, about 7% of that number are Black (Survey of Earned Doctorates, 2017). Black women in Ph.D. programs are situated at the bottom of institutional, social, and economic hierarchies (Benjamin, 2018). Both labels of "student" and "instructional

faculty" place this group at the bottom of the academic hierarchy and the label of "Black woman" places this group at the bottom of our society's social hierarchy. The two labels combined are significant factors in the economic hierarchy. Considering the combination of marginalization Black women experience for their overlapping identities, the journey for Ph.D. degree completion can be filled with institutional, social, and economic barriers. Barriers related to Blackness can include tokenism and racial-battle fatigue, while barriers related to being a woman can include the lack of respect and invisibility. There are certainly barriers that can overlap for Black women, ultimately the result is inhibiting retention, academic success, and tenure.

Mentorship

The trajectory of Black women in higher education is one that necessitates intentional mentorship relationships. In fact, often-times the Black woman in higher education is trailblazing and creating a new path for the women who will follow. Mentorship relationships are valuable, despite the ethnic background of the mentor and mentee, however there is a powerful significance in the influence that a Black woman mentor can have on another Black woman in higher education (Crawford & Smith, 2005).

Our Purpose

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the experiences of Black women at a predominantly White institution and the role of mentorship in their development. Black women, whose practice is guided by a larger vision to disrupt oppressive White norms in higher education, actively center the stories of Black women, enact pedagogies that respond to the needs of all students, and commit to the actions or practices that meet needs on the ground level, as they work toward achieving those goals. One of those, we argue, is pulling up other Black women, as they climb toward reaching their goal, through mentorship. Through the lens of Black Feminist Consciousness (Collins, 1989), which rejects dominant descriptions of Black women and instead, asserts a self-definition that centers the duplicity of knowledge that Black women possess, we will examine how visionary pragmatism informs these intentional mentorship relationships.

Our Process

We set out to explore mentoring relationships between Black women in PWIs. More specifically, we examined the following with regard to our mentoring experiences while in higher education as students or administrators: (a) how we define mentoring and sisterhood, (b) our experiences with mentoring, (c) the significance of mentorship in reducing pressures within a PWI, and (d) how we support and mentor each other.

We are all located in the same college of education (COE) at a predominantly White, high research activity (R2) institution in the northeast region of the United States. There are several qualities that make this context unique: (1) Three Black women hold high-level administrative positions in the COE, (2) Two of the three Black women administrators are full professors, (3) Fifty percent of the admitted Ph.D. students in the COE are Black women, and (4) Of the five Black women we examined, three are Black women administrators and we are the two Ph.D. students and faculty members in the same COE.

Our Practice

As a result of our analysis, two overarching themes emerged: (1) The Typology of Mentorship and (2) How Mentorship Reduces Pressures for Black women who are faculty in Higher Education. Within the first overarching theme, there are five sub-themes: (a) Role Model, (b) Advisor, (c) Supervisor, (d) Critical Friend, and (e) Sisterhood. Within the second overarching theme, there are two sub-themes: (a) Partnerships and (b) Trailblazing. In the first overarching theme, we discuss how we define mentorship and our experiences based on our definitions of mentorship. In the second overarching theme, we discuss how mentorship has helped to reduce the inherent pressures at a PWI.

The Typology of Mentorship

We begin by compiling the various manifestations of mentorship in order to suggest a typology of mentorship to guide this exploration. We found a myriad of ways that mentors and mentees interact with one another and elevate the following: (a) Role Model, (b) Advisor, (c) Supervisor, (d) Critical Friend, and (e) Sisterhood. As sisters, the mentor and mentee share helpful hints on how to be better women in life and on the job.

Michelle shares, "for me sisterhood is a kinship, it's a different kind of connection that I can have with different kinds of women." Along with sisterhood, the critical friend, as mentor, highlights areas where the mentee needs improvement. The role model is someone that a mentee can observe from afar to see what is possible. The advisor mentors the students in their scholarly development and considers their holistic and academic needs. Finally, the supervisor is a mentor who guides specifically as it relates to a work assignment. It is particularly important to distinguish the different types of mentors; noting and enacting these distinctions will impact the success of the mentor/mentee relationship (Osborn, Waeckerle, Perina, & Keyes, 1999).

Role Model as a Mentor

Hopefully, you see in me a model for the opportunities that you have. Michelle

A role model is a person looked to by others as an example or to be imitated. There was a recurring theme about a role model as a mentor, that was seen in interactions between Ph.D. students and administrators, as well as between administrators. "Role model" and "mentor" are labels commonly put together in discussions of mentorship but uniquely, they defined a role model as an indirect, rather than a direct, form of mentorship. For example, when we asked her about the ways in which she mentored us, doctoral students, Michelle expressed, "Hopefully, you see in me a model for the opportunities that have you have."

Michelle acknowledges that she does not provide direct mentorship to us outside of the monthly Holmes Scholars Program meetings, but by being a Black woman in an administrative role in the college, at a PWI, she represents the possibility for our professional future in higher education and thus, is a role model. She hopes that other women can see the possibilities as a result of her presence, and this approach is informed by her own experiences with mentorship, which she also references.

Similar to Michelle, we expressed that in order to benefit from having a role model as a mentor, we must also play an active role in this mentorship relationship, which includes observation and application. For example, Natoya states, "I do consider Michelle as a mentor because she's someone I'm watching." She further explains how she observes other Black women that she's identified as a mentor, but does not have a relationship with,

> There are people that are my mentors and they don't even know it. I wouldn't be able to call them on the phone if I tried. But I'm really watching them seriously. I'm seriously watching their moves, paying very close attention to their moves.

Eshe expresses her definition of a role model as a mentor and how she observes and applies what she admires in other Black women,

> I will say that I've always admired women of color from afar, so whatever I saw them doing, I feel like I tried to model myself behind that. So, I've never been explicit about saying, "What did you do?" or "Give me advice," or whatever the case may be. I would rather say that I'm pretty observant, and things that I admire about people, I tried to model myself after that. I consider Michelle to be a role model, someone that you can kind of admire from afar. She doesn't offer me direct mentorship.

In reference to her own experience with role models as mentors, Michelle reveals,

> All of my mentors I've had close relationships with, but I've been able to see them as a model for what I could be and take pieces of what they can give and use it to help me get better.

In this case, Michelle does not explicitly declare her Black feminism because she *does* it. Therefore, we found that watching *what* she does and *how* she does it, is *a* framework for surviving, coping, and resisting oppression at a PWI. Michelle, a role model as a mentor, offers Natoya and Eshe a reimagining of themselves as Black women and the roles they have the opportunity to play in the world and at a PWI. Her praxis validates the thoughts and experiences of the Black female Ph.D. students, while disrupting the oppressive norms existing in higher education.

Supervisor

> *It took me a long time to realize that office business is the office business…* Kelly

A more direct and formal type of mentorship, supervision, happened both within the interactions between administrators and Ph.D. students as

well as between administrators. In this context, we associated mentorship relationships with supervision to highlight the administrative roles in the organizational structure in the COE. Between the five women, there were three levels of professional hierarchy (power). Michelle was the immediate supervisor of Kelly and Regina and Kelly was the immediate supervisor of Natoya and Eshe. When we discussed our experiences with mentorship, the role of supervision represented the formal professional training and evaluation received from mentors. We expressed that the complexity of being supervised by another Black women, and their changing roles between both the mentee and mentor, frequently move them throughout the typologies of mentorship. Most importantly, the role of a supervisor as a mentor involves a power dynamic that is not present in the sisterhood or a critical friend. Although this mentorship type includes a power dynamic, it is not absent of the commitment of the supervisor to personal development. In fact, the supervisor, mentors in such a way that cultivates the critical skills necessary to assist with navigating the oppressive structures of the PWI within their designated work assignments.

Kelly explains how she struggled with moving in and out of mentoring roles because she did not compartmentalize work issues with Michelle. Kelly states, "It took a long time for me to recognize that the office business is the office business, but once we leave the office I'm not thinking about that anymore." Although she struggled with the frequent transitions, she praises Michelle for mentoring her in that way. She states, "I don't know why it was so hard, but you (Michelle) are a very good mentor in that way." The hierarchical power in the mentoring relationship required that the women create barriers around work-related issues in order to maintain the sisterhood and friendship.

Advisor

> *But I feel like you (Regina) have made investments in (Natoya). Not just 916 … my student ID. And I think that has made the mentorship relationship more impactful.* Natoya

In higher education, an advisor is typically an expert in the field who helps students plan a course of study. In this study, Natoya and Eshe, as well as the other administrators, made it clear that Regina's role of

mentorship was through advisement. Regina's mentorship was both formal and informal and focused on developing the whole person. This is evident in Natoya's comments, "But I feel like you (Regina) have made investments in (Natoya). Not just 916 … my student ID." Natoya is communicating Regina's embodiment of the Black feminist ethic of care in her value of individual expression, her attentiveness to the emotions of her students, and her capacity to empathize with her students (Collins, 1989).

Eshe expresses the same ethics of care shown by Regina when questioned about her experiences with mentorship. She explains how Regina is her first point of contact for topics which she is not directly connected. In addition to her ethics of care, Regina is instrumental in the development of the students' scholarly development as she advises them on their teaching and research. Given her status as a full professor, Regina can offer her experiences with successfully navigating higher education as a Black woman. Regina admits that her role in mentorship is officially advising. With a smirk she states, "I guess that means I get to ask the hard questions."

Critical Friend

> *We help sharpen, I feel like, each other's tools. And so, it's sisterhood, it's mentorship, it's relationship. It's scholarly development. There's so much intertwined in the conversation.* Eshe

Another type of mentorship that existed between students and administrators was the mentor as the critical friend. This kind of relationship is one that is sustained over time; it is built upon trust and is reciprocal and not hierarchical (Stieha, 2014). The critical friend is one who shares her perspective and critiques the work of her colleague in a way that confronts, corrects, redirects, and heals. These interactions may leave one feeling wounded, but are only meant to guide. A critical friend comes into the relationship with an expressed set of experiences and expertise, and sets intentions to sharpen their friend's vision and understanding (Stieha, 2014).

Michelle, when speaking about her interactions with a critical friend, explains,

> I would get laid out too by someone who was a mentor and friend, and it hurt, but she was right. She was right. It hurt, and I sucked it up. I would be angry with her in the car, and then she'd be like, "Girl, we going to have Sunday dinner." I'm like, "Uh-oh." I learned then to take criticism, constructive feedback and separate work and friendships.

Michelle's response to the critical conversation embodies the full intent of the critical friend. It is to interrupt and address in ways that are impactful. We bore witness to experiences of being "checked" and redirected by a critical friend and mentor, and have learned now, to appreciate these interactions. The critical friend utilizes her concrete experiences to guide the process of experiential learning, challenging the notion that formal education is the only route to knowledge (Collins, 1989). This method of mentorship, the critical friend, is valuable for the Black woman in higher education, because there are always lessons to be learned, meetings after the meeting, and conversational undertones that must be explored. We expressed the benefit of having the critical friend to discuss these issues within a safe space but add that this relationship requires a willingness to receive occasional harsh feedback from a peer and not allow that to negatively impact the relationship.

Sisterhood

Ph.D. Student to Ph.D. Student, Administrator to Administrator

Sameness, likeness in race, gender, and adversity, creates a bond that is seen across all of the women in this chapter. While sisterhood and mentorship are not synonymous, we shared several enlightening scenarios where our "sameness" caused us to forge a familial connectedness that extended beyond the work of the university. Michelle explains,

> If I didn't have people I could call or I could text … you know? When I'm experiencing something, I could text, "I heard something [crazy at the] college-wide meeting…." I could text Regina, and I know she's going to make me laugh… you know? It's going to get me through that situation or same with Kelly. I can't manage all of this, so let me text her, and she's going to encourage me, pray for me. There are reasons why I reach out to certain people, because I'm looking for certain things, and if I didn't have that, it would be unmanageable.

We spoke about the advantages of having a sister in the same room, and how presence is encouraging and empowering, enabling us to resist oppressive structures in our various roles. We express the value of being able to reach out to sisters for certain things, related to work, and life, to help manage the load. Eshe, when talking about sisterhood, explains,

> Natoya is new to this area, and so am I, but not as new. I've been here just a little bit longer. So, I think that because I'm aware of what it's like to pick up and be placed somewhere else, it's really important for these work relationships to be so strong. Or this PhD journey, because it's very much how I, we, identify now. Even if you ask me who I am, probably the first thing that comes to my mind, is I'm a student. I'm a PhD student. And how important it is to have someone who understands that identity, because my husband's not gonna get it. I can't talk to my daughter about … you have to be able to debrief with someone who is in it with you, because otherwise, who are you gonna talk to?

Eshe and Natoya work closely, in similar positions, and this sameness allows them to find solace in knowing that someone else understands the complexities of their life.

How Mentorship Reduces the Pressures

Mentorship between Black women helps to reduce the pressures at a PWI, which aligns with a key feature of Black feminist thought. We shared individual stories about how a relationship with other Black women supported their professional or scholarly growth while resisting common challenges Black women face based on their intersecting identities. Collins (2000) theorizes that while Black women face common challenges, their experiences are unique and individualized. This is clear when we talked about how the mentorship of Black women reduces the pressures of being in an oppressive environment at a PWI.

Together, Natoya and Eshe express the difficulties of navigating White spaces, more specifically their role and expertise being questioned by students and local community members. Natoya acknowledges that without the support of Eshe, she would have struggled significantly more. Eshe began working at the university a year before Natoya so she was able to share the nuances and politics in their positions as Ph.D. students and faculty members.

Similarly, Kelly and Michelle share stories about how White men were barriers for their professional or scholarly growth. For Michelle, her dissertation chair did not support her research which had a focus on social justice. She recalls when another professor that was a Black woman pulled Michelle into her office and told her, that White man would "hold her there (as a student) forever" if she didn't figure out how to involve him as her dissertation chair. Kelly did not have that same support and allowed the Chair of the department, a White man, to delay her promotion because he did not feel she was ready to go up for tenure. Collectively, we offer diverse responses to common challenges faced by Black women in higher education and collective wisdom about surviving and thriving in PWIs.

Partnership

Partnerships with other Black women emerged as one of the strategic ways we are able to navigate our various roles at a PWI. These partnerships occur on different levels for the student participants and the administrator participants. At each of the levels, we make reference to the various strategic partnerships as intentional means for survival.

Eshe and Natoya reference the Holmes Scholars meetings as one of the ways that administrators partner with students to support their development. Within the Holmes meetings, administrators facilitate dialogue and provide resources based on the students' needs as well as what they deem to be important based on their wisdom and insight. Natoya recalls, "she (Michelle) has also mentioned in Holmes' meetings how you guys [administrators] support each other in your roles. So, that is a model for other (Black) students on how to support one another." Additionally, the Holmes Scholars meetings facilitate informal mentorship and partnership opportunities, simply because of the time spent together and sheer accessibility of the administrators, at these meetings, on a regular basis. Their presence allows for the students to ask questions, solicit support and even propose opportunities to join efforts on projects. Additionally, the students share that working together in partnership as students was instrumental in navigating the pressures Black women face at PWI's.

The administrators talk about partnerships as it relates to selecting and maintaining an ally in order to navigate the pressures. Michelle explains,

> I knew that I needed to make her (Kelly) an ally and…and then when I met her, it was going to be easier than I thought because I was like, "Okay. I actually do like her." But I knew I needed someone in the inside because that's what I learned at my previous job is that as an administrator you have to have a faculty ally who's going to tell you when something's going down …… watch out. They're coming after you. And so I chose her. Then we became friends.

Selecting an ally is a conventional strategy used in organizational leadership, but what makes this account unique is that the ally here is a fellow Black woman administrator, which allows the partnership to cross the identity intersections, resulting in two Black women administrators, working together in partnership to move the College of Education in a direction toward access, success, and equity. As a result of their partnership, they have become friends.

Finally, the mentor/mentee relationship, within itself, is a valuable partnership. We found that within this partnership, the efforts of the mentor to support the mentee are reciprocated by intellectual exchanges, opportunities to read new literature and explore various topics, which support the development of future scholars. This will in turn benefit the institution and becomes a reciprocal relationship and partnership.

Trailblazing

The context is an example of Black women blazing trails. In this environment, the administrators, as mentors, pave the way for students by being the leading "Black female voice" in a predominantly White environment. Natoya shares,

> I think a lot of the worries of the uncovering of the masks if you will, we may not have to face, because the Michelle's and Regina's … you are in leadership and you kind of blaze a trail a little bit, as far as exposing … Or we don't have to be the Black voice, we don't have to be the Black representative of Black women, because our leadership is Black women.

When a mentor walks in the fullness of her identity, as Black women in higher education, she paves the way for other Black women faculty members to freely express all of the intersections of their identity as Black women, as sisters, as friends, as scholars, and as human beings. This visionary pragmatism courageously breaks down barriers and blazes the trail for

the fullness of the Black woman to exist in an environment that has historically forced Black women to sanitize who they are to survive in the dominant culture. Kelly shares this about her experience with Regina:

> You (Regina) were in the face, and I wasn't used to that here. That's how [this university] has definitely shifted from 20 years ago to now. I love where it's going, but when I met you, I was like, "I don't know. I don't even know if this is going to work here." But then I thank you for this working because 20 years ago, this would not have worked, but we were a totally different institution 20 years ago. I feel like I can be more myself now then I could be before because of that shift.

Here, Kelly talks candidly on her initial thoughts about Regina when she came to the university. As a veteran to the environment, Kelly uses phrases like "in the face" and "all of this" to describe Regina's unfiltered approach to dealing with problems and confronting oppressive systems, structures, and behaviors. It should be noted that while Regina identifies as a Black woman, she is fair skinned, and her racial identity can be considered ambiguous. As an act of resistance, she leverages this privilege to disrupt and create access for those who do not have the option to wear their identity. Regina explains,

> If we are in a meeting and complaints are coming about students, I can say, "you do realize that all of those students are black women?" And the faculty or staff involved will hear that differently than if Michelle or Kelly made the same observation. From them, these people would be like, "oh, y'all just sayin that because those are your people."

Ultimately, her entrance into administration with tenure allowed her the freedom to express herself, unapologetically, with immunity to any resistance that would come from the dominant oppressive culture. It is Regina's pragmatic stance accompanied by a position of power and racial ambiguity that creates room for other Black women to exist freely.

Our Position

We entered this study hoping to understand our own experiences managing the intersections of our identity as Black female Ph.D. students and faculty members at a predominantly White institution. We focused on creating a space for the administrators to talk about how their experiences

with mentorship in their career influenced the way they mentored Ph.D. students. However, as we examined the conversations, we found that the most poignant mentorship interactions were not those between administrators and students, but the critical friend mentorship relationships. This was an unanticipated outcome.

We were also surprised by the absence of the voice of one of the administrators, Regina. We found her to be directly influential and supportive of our journey, however, her voice was not as prevalent in the conversation. She admitted that she is "like the Auntie," but she does not offer many examples as to how this is enacted in practice. We attribute this, in part, to the way that the discussion flowed, resulting in Kelly and Michelle participating more in the conversation, but we also entertain the question of how her racial ambiguity impacts her social interactions with other Black women.

Mentorship varies in the way that it is enacted, mentorship is reciprocal and requires that a person expands outward in order to achieve inner growth. The Typology of Mentorship illustrates the various roles that mentors and mentees play in each other's lives. It highlights the importance of knowing what type of mentorship relationship is forming, and what expectations are reasonable for the particular relationship. Two of the five types of mentorship relationships, sisterhood and critical friend, are reciprocal in nature. These relationships are not solely dependent on the mentor depositing, but require that the mentee also add value to the relationship by way of producing quality work, participating in insightful conversation, and simply being a good human. The other three, role model, advisor, and supervisor, require that the mentor offer intangibles to the mentee, and that the mentee posture herself in a way that allows her to receive and grow from what is being shared. Both the receiving and reciprocal models have the vision of the Black feminist educator as the guiding light, and the pragmatic agenda inciting them to action.

Finally, our exploration affirmed that mentorship requires the outward expansion on the part of both mentors and mentees, toward one another, to achieve personal growth. As explained in visionary pragmatist writings, the effect of individual expansion is life-bestowing connection (Hamington & Bardwell-Jones, 2012). The visionary pragmatist understands that these connections empower both the giver and the recipient, but require that the Black feminist comes out of her shell, focusing not only on the work that is to be done, but on the relationships that she builds and the connections that she makes along the way. While disrupting dominant structures is the ultimate goal of her research and praxis, she is acutely

aware that she must not leave any sister behind on this journey, so she aims to pull her sisters along as she climbs.

This chapter affirms the necessity of Black women administrators and visionaries assuming leadership positions in higher education. We explain the powerful role that each of the mentors plays in our development as students and faculty members, as well as how they support each other as administrators. This is all possible because of the vision of Black female leadership, and their willingness to extend themselves to the work of disrupting oppressive structures. Such an example is a model for Colleges of Education, broadly, and demonstrates the power of sisters sitting in a space and making room for other sisters. We also affirm the necessity of Black women mentoring as a critical friend in higher education. Each of us speak about peer mentoring as critically important to our development throughout the various stages of higher education. Privileging the importance of mentorship, Black women should be intentional about the ways in which they mentor as a supportive technique to their mentee. With more intentionality as it relates to mentorship, by naming exactly what is transpiring, mentorship can be more effective. Mentors can support their mentees with more precision, and mentees have a clear understanding of what to expect, and what they should offer in the mentorship relationship. Globally speaking, this chapter offers institutions a possible approach for creating strategic mentoring opportunities within their graduate programs for Black women and offers the language, within the typology, for articulating expectations within the mentorship opportunities.

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PART II

Working Scholars

CHAPTER 7

The Importance of New Paths in Mentoring for Graduate Students in Their Search for Academic Opportunities After Graduation: An Auto-Ethnography

Paula Belló

The need for mentoring in higher education does not finish at the end of graduate studies, for students in general, and for minority students in American universities, in particular. It is well known from the literature the particular difficulties international students might face in these academic settings. Instances of difficulty can include building professional networks, understanding research-academic culture, getting protection from harmful situations, and obtaining specific career guidance.

The very competitive international job market sets enormous challenges to everyone competing for a job post at different levels of the academic hierarchy. These demands can result insurmountable for international students, who, among other limitations (lack of culture-specific knowledge, differences in methodology in networking, difficulties, and

P. Belló (✉)
Académica de la Escuela de Pedagogías en Inglés, Universidad de Talca, Linares, Chile
e-mail: paula.bello@utalca.edu

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limitation with the English language) need special paperwork and/or sponsorship to work legally in the United States of America (USA).

Therefore, alternatives to the lack of mentoring on the side of the professorship can be peer mentoring and mentoring circles. These experiences have been discussed in the literature with varied results (Colvin & Ashman, 2010; Darwin & Palmer, 2009). In academia, experienced graduate students might be in the position to offer mentoring to their peers, who, in turn, can further mentor each other. Thus, mentoring can become beneficial for mentors and mentees and open a path of peer collaboration, which can be multidimensional and very rewarding in the future.

The autoethnographic narrative serves as a means of expression and empowerment of the writer (Pivato, 1996). Thus, experiences can be analyzed at multiple layers of consciousness, connecting personal experiences to the social culture of both author and reader (Ellis & Bochner, 2000). This narrative intends to share personal experiences within the challenging world of academia in the USA.

On Becoming a Ph.D. Student

When I arrived at the University of Central Florida (UCF) as a new student in the Ph.D. in Education program, Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) track, in 2013, I was a nontraditional one. This means that after finishing my studies I finally understood that, as a foreigner from South America in her forties, who had worked as a teacher of English for 20 years and who had abandoned a well-established job to pursue her dreams of finishing graduate studies at the level of Ph.D., the general perception was that I belonged to a minority group of senior doctoral students.

However, by pursuing doctoral studies, I was not only going to fulfill my dream of participating in the academic life of an American higher education institution, but I was also going to participate in academia actively by having a part-time job as a graduate teaching assistant. Arrangements had been made so that I would be working with an assistant professor, whom at the moment of my arrival, I had not had the chance of meeting or learning much about. I wrongly believed that the Ph.D. in Education Program at UCF was only going to require my involvement as a student, i.e., attending classes and accomplishing assignments. Different from my experience as an M.A. student, this time, I was also going to fulfill extra

duties as a graduate teaching assistant. Nevertheless, however thoroughly I could have prepared for the new experience, it would have never been sufficient for the reality that I was going to encounter after starting my studies.

I recognized that the lack of preparedness regarding different aspects related to university life in the United States, the specific work and research carried out by professors, and the culture of the institution was my fault. I also recognized my naïve attitude and my erroneous belief that my excitement and love for academia were going to supply any lack of deeper and more complete information. Nevertheless, today, memories of those first moments of my doctoral student life still live in me. The more I reflect on them and how I learned from direct experience, the more I can elaborate on their meaning and importance in my life today.

One morning, I arrived earlier than usual to my supervisor's office. Soon after my arrival, a senior professor whose office was opposite to the one I was at, came in very upset looking for my supervisor, who had not arrived yet. She immediately told me her mother had passed the night before and wanted to share the news. After my supervisor's arrival, we pitied the professor for her loss, and that was the first time my supervisor introduced her as her dearest colleague and mentor. I recognize I had heard about "mentorship" before during my M.A. studies, but I had not got deeper into the topic. In my lack of understanding, I believed "mentorship" to be some kind of help that someone with seniority offered a novice in academic or professional activities. However, that informal conversation with those professors was my introduction to "mentoring" at UCF, where the academic culture installed included peer mentorship among academics. At that moment, I started my discoveries. Associate professors had created the culture of mentoring new assistant professors who had recently accessed the faculty force, and specifically the college of education's faculty. The senior professor had participated in the search committee that elected my supervisor. Afterward, and for a year, the senior professor had been mentoring my supervisor in her process of adaptation to the new institution and her job. I always remember my supervisor's face of satisfaction and relief when she confirmed with a big smile, that the senior professor was "Her Mentor."

Recapitulating on the topic of mentoring, it was historically described as a relationship between academicians (or business managers) and their students (or newcomers into the business world) thanks to which there was a slow development in the latter's responsibility, self-direction, and

successful decision- making (Blackwell, 1982; Darwin & Palmer, 2009; Healy & Welchert, 1990). Some researchers studied mentoring to support adult development and the realization of the mentees' dreams and visions of their future lives (Valadez & Duran, 1991). This development could usually be achieved by means of building shared wisdom and connections with colleagues and providing protection from harmful situations and clear guidance (Levinson, 1977). Wilbur (1987) and Zey (1985) described the benefits of mentoring relationships in different settings, both predicting career success and newcomers' adjustment to new work settings. Moreover, Zey (1985) had already posed a particular interest in establishing mentoring programs to support minorities in new work or academic settings in his seminal work.

Who Becomes a Mentor?

As I have stated in this story, I had been assigned to work as a graduate teaching assistant to an assistant professor who had been working in that position for a year. She became my supervisor from that moment on. She used to call me her research assistant, basically because of the tasks she had assigned me to do, including data organization, filing, and analysis. Assistantships were assigned by the College of Education at UCF and provided clear benefits for assistants. Some of these were particularly helpful since they provided a source of funding, which was fundamental for international students. Assistantships mainly support faculty in their teaching demands, especially of those assistant professors who are adapting to their new work setting. Supervisors and assistantships could be assigned according to demand, but mentorship relationships could only develop from those relationships between supervisors and supervisees who experience affinity and the conviction that academic work can be better carried out by means of mentorship.

When did my supervisor become my mentor? I think it was the result of development, as well as her decision soon after our work together started. The moment she might have felt her relationship with her academic "supervisor" started to change after her first year at the institution, she named herself my mentor. At that moment, more academic opportunities appeared for us to show our work together. Departing from her work with students in the classroom that I observed, we developed presentations and literature research on topics of shared interests. These included

narrative pedagogy, reflective, reflexive practices, and dialogic interactions, both face to face and in online classes.

Long afternoons of shared work in a shared space, helped my supervisor and I have intimate conversations about our previous studies, experiences, and familiar backgrounds. Identifying herself as a Latina of Puerto Rican origin, she expressed her empathy toward me: "I think that the fact that you are a non-traditional, Latin American student, brings us together as supervisor and supervisee," she commented. One afternoon, while discussing a presentation at a seminar, where she had invited me to present with her, she revealed her thoughts and state of mind. Emphasizing the fact that I was going to overcome the obstacles and difficulties related to the presentation, she stated forcefully: "You will do it successfully. I know it as your supervisor….and as your mentor." Our affinity might have enforced this mentorship relationship of mutual understanding as "non-traditional." On the contrary, studies conducted to examine cross-gender and cross-race relationships between mentors and minority mentees (Goldstein, 1979; Morrison & Von Glinow, 1990), offered findings signaling cross-gender and cross-race mentoring relationships to be the least beneficial for women and minorities.

Mentors and Mentees Benefit from Mentoring

In general, mentors–mentees' relationships have been proved successful for both (Burke & McKeen, 1997; Darwin & Palmer, 2009; De Vries, 2005; Ehrich, Hansford, & Tennent, 2004; Higgins, 2001; Kram, 1985). Benefits for the mentors have been investigated since the seminal work developed by Kram (1985), who studied how senior executives mentoring protégées developed a sense of competence and self-respect in their work. Further research in academia has reported improvement in professional development, self-confidence, and satisfaction with the academic career (Burke & McKeen, 1997; Darwin & Palmer, 2009: De Vries, 2005; Ehrich et al., 2004; Higgins, 2001). Moreover, the mentoring relationship can increase research productivity and professional recognition for mentors if the mentees fulfill their jobs as expected (Johnson, 2002).

Aguilar-Gaxiola, Norris, Carter, and Reed (1984) analyzed four dominant roles of the traditional mentor, namely role-modeling, professional socialization, advocacy, and emotional support, areas that are being discussed along with this work. In my experience, my mentor introduced

me to the rest of the well-known faculty at the college; and recommended which seminars and conferences to apply for. She also granted me access to academic groups and activities, such as proposal presentations and dissertation defenses, where she demonstrated her knowledge and skills acquired along with her academic career. More importantly, however, were our interactions on different topics of common interest, namely our qualitative research projects, and possible new pathways to be followed in research, mainly with teacher candidates and in-service teachers. Her advice on how I could best conduct research and tasks were also very much appreciated, as well as her emotional support in moments of melancholy when homesickness affected me.

Emotional support, especially when mentees experiment feelings of sadness, isolation, or homesickness (in the case of international students), becomes a mentor's most valuable job. When they go beyond advocacy and defending mentees' legal rights, to care for the mentee as a person whose well-being in new and demanding environments is fundamental for the success of the task started by both, it is possible to start moving from pure helpfulness and guidance to real mentorship in its full meaning. The development of agency in the mentoring activity was evident from the beginning, as well as my mentor's positioning of ownership in the mentoring role. Erikson, cited in Healy and Welchert (1990), stated that mentoring helped mentors fulfill their educational needs as they transmitted knowledge, experience, and advice to mentees. It also helped them transcend from their everyday preoccupations in their jobs to care for and support someone else develop in the academic world.

As time progressed, I understood the benefits of learning from the job I had been assigned, as well as from my supervisor's role. At the beginning of my doctoral studies, I felt I needed to be a perfect student, earn As in every assignment, and read every single article assigned, even more than once. However, my supervisor and mentor warned me against this attitude at the beginning of the first semester and tried to help me understand these were self-imposed demands that I did not need to comply with. I remember one of our dialogues about the reading of assigned articles and how I still needed to reread them looking for some specific information. Her response was emphatic: "No, there is no time for that in grad school!".

She was right! My mentor was very precise in clarifying how deceitful self-demands can be, especially because an increase in student workload, did not guarantee success in the tasks being accomplished. After deep

reflection, it would be much more important to consider that graduate students focus on specific topics of interest that will probably be included in their dissertations, and look for opportunities to participate more in academic activities with their mentors, including dissertation defenses, academic presentations, research projects design, data collection and analysis, and of course article writing. It is recommendable that, as beginner academicians, graduate students who hold graduate teaching assistantships understand their positions as a springboard and the best opportunity possible to peek into a future academician life. Carter, cited in Valadez and Duran (1991), suggested that the most successful and beneficial mentor–mentee relationships commonly occur between faculty and students who share common goals, perceptions, and views of the world.

Mentor–Mentee Relationships and Shared Goals

So, were there shared goals, perceptions, and views of the world between my supervisor and me? In previous conversations, we had agreed that our backgrounds had common points; however, how about our goals for the future? It took me sometime between the first and the second semesters to understand the work, demands, and objectives of assistant professors in general, and of my supervisor in particular. The tenure-track position poses specific demands that are well known to academicians, and they include participation in research projects, grant search, and grant applications to secure funds, publications in scholarly journals, plus the thorough yearly evaluations in which peer academicians and authorities participate. However, the news was that, my supervisor was not only under the pressure of those requirements, but also her plight was complexed as she belonged to an underrepresented minority faculty group. At that moment, the mentoring culture established at the university became more apparent to me. At the same time, understanding the university's population composition was fundamental, and not only the students' population distribution but also the faculty's. UCF's website (College Factual, 2019) announces that enrollment has increased by over sixty percent from 2000 to 2018, and the student enrollment level has reached 68,571 students. However, both the students' and the faculty's population cannot precisely be considered diverse, since an amount of 32,754 students (i.e., 47.80%) of the total population is "White." Moreover, "International" students amount to 2719 (i.e., 4%) of the total student population (College Factual, 2019).

In regard to faculty, the university reports that nearly 20% are minorities (College Factual, 2019). This was a crucial situation for a tenure-track assistant professor belonging to a minority group of professors whose efforts amounted to double of any other academicians in the same hierarchical position. I remember that our most common conversation topics revolved around: (a) difficulties minority or newly arrived faculty experimented to find acceptance into research teams, (b) difficulties to find colleagues with common lines of research to organize research projects, and (c) difficulties to find insertion into writing teams to produce articles on those research topics to fulfill the required number of publications in the tenure career. On the other hand, I personally had two main objectives at the moment of arrival at the institution. One of them was to complete my Ph.D. program successfully and graduate from it within the stipulated time frame. The second objective was to fulfill my duties as a graduate teaching assistant successfully. Later I learned that both these objectives were joined together since their fulfillment was necessary to keep my student status and stipend.

It was clear that our objectives coincided with our desire to do our jobs successfully, have access to a new academic community, and secure a successful door for a desired job in the future. However, how long could these common points persist if the time frame for the assistantship was three years maximum? Could the mentoring relationship be extended beyond that? Along the three years of my doctoral studies and my work as a graduate teaching assistant, I could barely stop and think about these issues. Therefore, when the time came for the completion of my degree, the closure of my job as an assistant, and the farewell to the mentor–mentee relationship with my supervisor, I realized that the mentoring of doctoral students is an intensive task which might have a short life. Even when it is true that there is an impact of the mentoring relationship on the mentees, as well as on the mentors (Kram, 1985), the special relationship established between supervisors and supervisees (who also become mentors and mentees) is prone to lessen in intensity as the everyday work diminishes and finishes.

Objectives and Needs of Minority Students in Academia

Throughout the sharing of my lived experiences, I have reflected on how much more difficult it would have been to enhance my networking at the college of education and beyond had I not had the support of my mentor

in my socialization. Moreover, her assistance in helping me understand the new research-academic culture, for which I existed in, opened my eyes to the need to rely on the help of the more knowledgeable, in this case, represented by her, my supervisor and mentor, as well as other recognized faculty at the college and university. The crucial importance of networking also gained renewed attention. Connecting with people in my area of expertise, both in higher hierarchical levels or among peers, has always been important, as well as an everyday activity carried out since the days of studying and teaching. In academia, however, it acquired relevance because a successful networking process, within the correct group and setting, can become fundamental for the desired job within academia.

During the time of my studies and our work together, my supervisor's offer of clear guidance and protection constituted a safe frame within which to operate. This became especially important when the time came to start applying for my first academic job posts. One day my mentor came to the office with what she explained was a surprise for me. It was a document with an excel chart that had been previously passed to her by her supervisor. "This chart was created by my supervisor at graduate school," she explained. "She had created it to annotate all of her applications to job posts," she added. The chart was a great example of a well-organized job search, including annotations of the job posts applied to, the interviews conducted, the campuses visited, and the job positions offers received. The application of this model proved to be valuable in my own experience, as well. Among these multiple benefits, the mentoring relationship constituted a role model to imitate in the future, and I know today that the best way to thank her would be by "passing it over" as she used to say, as she had personally done.

Despite the positive experience and efforts to keep the mentoring association and its benefits, I found it hard to keep a fluid relationship after graduation. However, the need for mentoring continues to be fundamental for newly graduated doctoral students, and mainly for minority, international students. After doctoral studies, it is expected that the previous mentor–mentee relationship, based on a supervisor–supervisee, professor–student relationship, changes, and adapts itself to a new reality. Even though mentorship had supported me in the previous stage as a doctoral student, I had to realize the paths my mentor, and I needed to follow were quite different after graduation. Whereas her demands as an assistant professor continued being the same as described before, my needs as a novice adjunct employee had changed completely. I understood it as a

natural development that our mentor–mentee relationship had to change. However, there was not a single day I have not remembered the tears cried, the dialogic interactions lived, and the lessons learned together.

I learned about the challenges of the very competitive American job market, even at the postdoctoral level, very early in my job search. Difficulties in my case included some logical limitations concerning language and accent. English is not my native language. Nevertheless, and most importantly, the need for special paperwork and sponsorship to work legally in the USA became a special constraint. This was particularly true related to the need to receive legal advice as to how to proceed with special documentation, payments, and deadlines at the United States Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS), information which was accessible to some people on campus, but not primarily to most of the faculty like my mentor.

The competition with American academicians who have developed the same expertise has made the job quest an incredibly challenging situation. However severe, I have always considered that being a foreigner would not diminish my possibilities to get a job in the American job market. I have prepared myself. I have studied the English language thoroughly, have studied education, and taught in various international educational institutions. As well, I have studied my native language, Spanish, at a high proficiency level, dealt with language learners in different learning settings, and been a language learner myself of both English and German as foreign languages. Moreover, I have pursued further studies, discovering new interests, skills, and passions along the way. Examples of these are my passion for researching and developing qualitative studies, especially on teacher education and teachers' job and professional development. Having become a global citizen is an asset in my academic education that has guided me to develop different kinds of mentoring relationships.

Accepting the fact that faculty mentors would not always have: (a) the complete necessary information to support their mentees to understand external pressure and conditions; (b) the existing widespread network to support their mentees' insertion in desired academic circles; or (c) the extensive time to support mentees along their career development has allowed me to think about alternative ideas to the lack of mentoring on the side of the professorship once the relationships mentor–mentees lose their "everydayness." The alternatives I would like to discuss further are those of "peer mentoring" and "mentoring circles."

Peer Mentoring as an Alternative

I remember a landmark conversation I had with a friend of a friend, who was a master's student at that moment and came originally from Chile. He had himself gone through the process of getting his Optional Practical Training (OPT) work permit and had all the updated information in regards to the requirements and paperwork. "You have to start the process for the OPT three or four months before graduation," he explained, "so that the permit arrives around your graduation, and you can secure a job post for that matter," he asserted. This piece of advice turned out to be one of the greatest along my career. It arrived right on time to open my eyes to begin the process of the OPT work permit before my graduation. The USCIS confers the OPT work permit to F1 status students, i.e., students with a student visa. They should be studying a degree-granting program or have finished their study programs. The permit allows students to work for one year after the F1 visa expires and even longer in STEM areas, namely Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics. The main objective is that students gather practical experience related to their fields of expertise.

Heirdsfield, Walker, Walsh, and Wilss (2008) assert that peer mentoring and peer mentoring programs, in particular, grant new transition students in higher education support and guidance by students who have already developed knowledge and experience in academic settings. This support enhances new students' access to academic and social connections, affects their transition to university positively, and improves a sense of belonging, retention and skills development (Glaser, Hall, & Halperin, 2006). In different levels of education, the activity of mentoring among students has proven to be real, successful, and more influential than any other relationships established in educational settings (Colvin & Ashman, 2010; Goodlad, 1998; Heirdsfield, et al., 2008; Luczak & Kalbag, 2018). Colvin and Ashman (2010) described the roles performed by mentors as they were discussed by participants in their study on peer mentoring. These roles include: (a) connecting link: peer mentors help mentees get involved in general students' activities on campus; (b) peer leader: peer mentors develop leadership skills to motivate the development of their mentees in the academic setting, (c) learning coach: peer mentors fulfill a crucial role in student recruitment and retention within their programs of

study, (d) student advocate: peer mentors fulfill the roles of helper or liaison to support mentees with personal or academic needs, and (e) trusted friend: peer mentors offer unquestionable help in case of need.

During graduate studies, I found myself playing the roles of learning coach, student advocate, and trusted friend, especially with one of my cohort colleagues who was considerably younger than me. Whenever we had to deal with complex or demanding courses or tasks, especially those dealing with topics that were outside our area of expertise, we used to meet to face the academic demands in collaboration. The difference in age and experience offered me opportunities to mentor my classmate, and transmit her my experiences with complex projects, disciplinary routines, and work under pressure. I especially remember our meetings in the evenings, after our duties as graduate teaching assistants had finished. "This evening, my Hong Kongese roommate will come to explain the topics we did not understand in statistics last night," I announced one day, and we both breathed with relief. "Moreover, I will have to help Kim tomorrow since she cannot meet with us tonight," I added, hoping I would understand and remember the explanations to be able to pass them on to another colleague. Statistics 1 was a challenging course for scholars who had been educated as teachers of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). As such, external help was always welcomed, adding up to a chain of peer mentoring that went on from receiving information and passing it on to others who needed it. Mentoring can occur among peers of the same cohort or from different ones. There are also cases in which more advanced students mentor students lower in rank, i.e., senior students mentoring freshmen students, or graduate students mentoring undergraduate ones. In any case, this activity can be beneficial for both mentor and mentee and open a path of peer collaboration, which can be very rewarding in the future.

Mentoring Circles: The Holmes Scholars, a "Home" for Peer/Circle, Mentoring

Collaboration among peers has been another critical pillar along with my education since I started undergraduate studies. During graduate studies, it became fundamental as a strategy to face extreme academic demands and pressure to accomplish a myriad of duties as a student, a graduate teaching assistant, and the various other tasks included within those roles. Collaborative atmospheres benefit the development of peer mentoring

among colleagues who undergo similar experiences, face similar difficulties, and seek common goals. Such is the case of the group of Holmes Scholars who belong to the Holmes Program developed at UCF. For almost thirty years, the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) Holmes Scholars Program has supported historically underrepresented populations of students pursuing education studies at AACTE member institutions (AACTE, 2019a). The program holds a high reputation because of its contribution to the education of higher education faculty of African-American, Hispanic, Native American, Asian-American, and foreign origin. Over these years, 600 graduate students have benefited from the program, and more than 200 are employed in tenure-track and leadership positions. Moreover, it is expected that many more will benefit since the expansion of the program in 2015 when it started to support students in lower levels of education, i.e., from high school up to master's levels (AACTE, 2019b).

My supervisor and mentor also started my contact with the Holmes Scholars Program at UCF. A Holmes Scholar herself, she had participated actively in the group as a graduate student at her institution and mediated between the coordinator professor and the authorities so that I could be given the opportunity of belonging. Admission to the group came in 2014. Furthermore, it allowed me to have two very active years of mentoring support through Holmes Scholars. The group acted as an essential network, support, and reference group, conformed by graduate students "of color" as they call themselves, mainly African-American and Hispanic scholars, whose access to and retention in higher education would have been much more difficult without the support of this contention group. The University of Central Florida (2019) announces that the Holmes Scholars Program on campus works hard to: (a) diversify faculty and students in different educational settings, i.e., colleges of education, K-12 school environments, and others, (b) represent the interests of and grant a voice to the Holmes Scholars group, (c) support social and academic relationships among Holmes Scholars, and (d) sustain the mission and objectives of AACTE. An example of such support was the accommodations we were offered on campus, which were suitable to work every day, as well as to share our work, listen to and support each other, and why not start long-lasting mentoring relationships.

Darwin and Palmer (2009) explain that the dyadic model in which a mentor (usually an experienced faculty member) works together with a mentee (that can be a junior faculty member or a student) is the most

commonly applied mentoring model in higher education. However, the researchers also discuss that the availability of mentoring opportunities in diverse academic settings is quite scarce, and this fact makes this traditional relationship little auspicious. Though dyadic mentoring programs offer significant advantages to both mentors and mentees, as discussed above, the pairing can result problematic, or become difficult to carry out. Furthermore, relationships can become complicated (Darwin & Palmer, 2009).

Thus, the option of establishing relationship networks between a mentor, or multiple mentors and a group of mentees has been brought to the forefront instead. These networks would enable mentees to rely and learn from the support of one or various mentors, as well as from their peers, to understand the changing reality and needs existing more easily, both in academia and the world of work (Darwin & Palmer, 2009; de Janasz, Sullivan, & Whiting, 2003; Palermo, Hughes, & McCall, 2011). The latter refer clearly to the origin of mentoring circles in the mix of mentoring and peer-learning group strategies, emphasizing the importance of learning through user feedback and advice favored by the circles' spirit. Learning does not only come from the mentor or mentors, who transfer their knowledge, but also from the peers making mentoring multi-directional and more egalitarian (Darwin & Palmer, 2009).

Darwin (2000, 2007) and Karalis (2006) have pointed out the advantages of mentoring circles in their research publications. According to them, there are personal and institutional benefits from the practice of mentoring circles. On the one hand, individuals: (a) gain access to networks, thus reducing academic isolation, (b) obtain greater connectivity to favor team problem solving by fostering closer, richer relationships, (c) increase confidence and commitment building self-esteem, (d) develop career progression and flexibility (e) acquire and share knowledge, (f) engender diversity of opinion, and (g) understand institutions' systems, culture, and organization. On the other hand, institutions also offer and receive benefits from mentoring circles as they collaborate in (a) supporting individuals build confidence in the workplace, (b) changing stereotypes, and (c) developing and transforming the culture of the workplace.

The Holmes Scholars group offer the innovative approach of mentoring circles to its members with a coordinator who plays the role of a "multiple mentor" for each one of us, and also with a structure in which senior scholars approach the junior ones to offer support, guidance, and the

opportunity to speak up for our own desires and positionalities. Nevertheless, most importantly, I value the multiple directionalities of mentoring options since the mentoring activity transcends beyond formal circles and mentoring structures. My relationship with my colleague and coursemate Kim, who was always finding opportunities for collaboration outside of our formal class called "Collaboration," was an example: "We can present our work on collaboration between scholars in the next Holmes Scholars conference on diversity" she told me one morning. "How about meeting two or three mornings this week?" she continued. "I will explain how we can prepare a more appropriate PowerPoint presentation." She certainly knew the nuances of such presentations within the Holmes Scholars Program since she had been a member longer. "Moreover, our coordinator's advice will help us a lot in the preparation." The coordinator, an experienced scholar, was the most consulted Holmes Scholar on campus. She guided the whole group once a month, creating a space for self and group reflection, as well as for communication among peer scholars.

During my years at UCF, those meetings were the perfect setting in which the scholars could further connect with each other, as my colleague and I had done thanks to sharing the offices where we worked every day. Opportunities appeared to pass the experiences lived and their teachings forward. A recurrent topic at those meetings was the scholars' dissertation processes and their unique nuances, needs, and obstacles. Thus, the Holmes Scholars Program at UCF and other universities, such was the case of the Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University (FAMU), made it a priority to mentor the scholars through the dissertation process by means of organizing collaborative "dissertation retreats." Those meetings became exciting opportunities for enlarging the benefits of mentoring circles while emphasizing the contact with Holmes Scholars colleagues from different educational institutions. Many academic conversations as the ones with my colleague Amanda were favored then when we could both have "dialogic interactions" (Gergen & Davis, 2003) about the needs we had to solve to find a definitive path for our dissertations. Little did I know then, that this enriching connection was going to survive the years and distances, so that this same colleague would offer me opportunities to write in collaboration to continue learning how to navigate academia and its demands.

Some Lessons Learned

Though I am far from being an expert in mentoring, I hope my autoethnographic narrative can be enlightening for graduate students who are just beginning or about to begin their academic journeys. First of all, prospective graduate students need to prepare thoroughly before starting studies at any institution. Even when students might have chosen a well-known institution, graduate schools have their own requirements, culture, and opportunities that students need to know about beforehand. Another critical piece of information would be to know how assistantships are assigned and if the institution supports a mentoring culture. As remarked above, it is not always evident that supervisors–supervisees will become mentors–mentees. However, it is always good to know whether the professors in the institution are prepared for offering such opportunities to students. Whenever possible, graduate students should embrace any mentoring opportunity from faculty as it is a unique way to learn to navigate academia with the least harm possible. Graduate students may have excellent opportunities to accomplish much more than just graduate courses work, and those opportunities need to be taken advantage of since the first day.

Graduate students will undoubtedly benefit from enhancing their networking. Therefore, it is fundamental to meet every professor in the college, including those outside their field of expertise. By enhancing networking circles, graduate students increase their opportunities to participate in research projects, in which their supervisors or mentors might or not participate. This activity becomes fundamental in their education as future researchers, but also as future presenters of their own research studies results. This is why it is recommendable to keep informed of seminars, congresses, and professional meetings where research studies can be discussed or learned from, as well as; networking can be enhanced. Graduate students can prepare for mentoring as much as possible beforehand. A brief search can unravel a myriad of materials for self-preparation so that it becomes easier to recognize, analyze, and spread the potentialities and benefits of mentoring among the population under their influence. It would also be advisable that graduate students enhance every mentoring opportunity, be it peer mentoring or mentoring circles so that this culture be spread as much as possible in their institutions and benefit as many students as possible.

Conclusion

Beyond granting me access to academic circles and remarkable knowledge about my field of expertise, my graduate studies opened my eyes to the knowledge of myself through a continuous process of self-reflection. This narrative helped me understand my experience, elaborate the process of career decision- making and redefine the direction toward the future of my academic life, considering my positionality and autonomy developed along the path of having had so many enriching mentoring experiences. Opening my eyes to diversification in this path was fundamental to take advantage from new perspectives in mentoring and apply my learning process to become more productive in my academic career, while I sowed a path with mentoring opportunities for others who would also flourish thanks to positive mentoring and learning experiences.

Kram (2004) in Darwin and Palmer (2009) refers to the evidence existing that learning is fostered when individuals work together with supervisors, professors, senior managers, and peers. Thus, Vygotsky's sociocultural theory of learning in social settings with the presence of both, more knowledgeable individuals and peers learning together (Wertsch, 1985), offers a suitable theoretical framework within which to understand mentoring. My personal narrative offers a perspective on the topic of mentoring. However, there are many more research studies that need to be conducted in regards to the benefits, demands, and obligations generated by different mentoring models. Darwin and Palmer (2009) set the discussion around the need to overcome the individualistic and paternalistic traditional view on mentoring to open doors toward collaborative relationships favored by mentoring circles. This pattern can become the avenue to transform academia from a very competitive, exclusive setting into a more participative and inclusive one.

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CHAPTER 8

The P in Ph.D. Stands for Persistence: Navigating the System During the Dissertation Process

Jessica L. Martin and Kimmerly Harrell

Introduction

Finding a doctoral student who has not had any issues in their doctoral program would be like finding a needle in a haystack. The doctoral journey is racked with highs and lows. Nearly 50% of all doctoral students who begin their degree do not finish it (Cassuto, 2013; Sowell, Allum, & Okahana, 2015). According to the National Science Foundation's results from their annual Survey of Earned Doctorates, only 5.4% of the doctorates earned in 2017 were to Black students (*Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, 2018). The specific challenges are numerous: lack of funding, lack of support, and systemic sexism, and racism, just to name a few (Castelló, Pardo, Sala-Bubaré, & Suñe-Soler, 2017; Protivnak & Foss, 2009). However, one area that can affect the success of doctoral students of color is the barriers that are presented to them by the administration present in

J. L. Martin (✉)
Lamar University, Beaumont, TX, USA

K. Harrell
Louisiana Tech University, Ruston, LA, USA

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their respective universities. University administration is the group of people who are responsible for the daily operations of the university, inclusive or exclusive of academic responsibilities. This group can be just as influential in the success or failure of students due to their intimate and intricate involvement in university processes. Unfortunately, for students of color, learning to navigate the intricacies of how to interact with university administration can be a foreign concept. Studies have shown that mentoring can be a crucial key for graduate students of color to develop the skills needed to be successful in their graduate studies and learning university culture (Patton, 2009). This is especially true for Black/African American women who find comfort in Black female mentors who can relate to them "in a unique way" (Patton, 2009, p. 530).

As academics, we understand the value of learning from the findings of sound research. In this chapter, we will explore and analyze our own experiences with administration throughout our dissertation process.

We also share the stories of two Black women who were presented with administrative challenges in their doctoral journey and how mentorship helped them to find solutions that created a bridge to graduate successfully.

Kimmerly's Story

I began my doctoral journey in the fall of 2013. I had spent eight years working as a Speech-Language Pathologist and was excited to have the opportunity to attend a Ph.D. program full-time. The first two years of my Ph.D. program consisted of classes, working as a graduate assistant, attending and presenting at conferences, and collaborating with my major advisor to create a summer reading program for high school students. My advisor and I had a good relationship and worked closely on various projects. I planned to graduate in the summer of 2016.

In the fall of 2015, I completed my dissertation proposal and began to collect data in the spring of 2016. By the early summer of 2016, I had collected data and was working on chapters four and five. I had a great statistician who invested quite a bit of time in helping me to analyze all of my data. However, my dissertation chair was not on the same page as the statistician and I. Nevertheless; my first dissertation defense date was scheduled for June 2016. It was a very stressful time. My dissertation chair kept saying that my stats were not correct, even though the statistician had approved of them. It was during this time that challenges with regard to

my health emerged. I went to a doctor's appointment on a Friday and had some vitals that were irregular. So irregular, that the doctor ordered me to see the Cardiologist that following Monday. At the beginning of 2015, I had already been diagnosed with hypothyroidism and high blood pressure. My stress levels were always high, but I had never been told to seek immediate help from another specialist. Two days after meeting with the Cardiologist, I met with my chair and a committee member to face the news that was both unexpected and troubling. My chair informed me that I was not going to be able to defend my dissertation in accordance with the timeline we initially constructed. Additionally, her announcement solidified that I would not graduate, as anticipated, in August. Initially, I was very emotional and upset. Moreover, their news brought about affects that went beyond affecting my academic status. My parents rented a house for my family and other invited out of town guest to stay in for graduation. Also, a significant portion of my family had secured air travel arrangements. I was unhappy, yet, after talking to my parents, I felt better about taking the extra time and doing what I needed to mentally and physically recover. I even found out that I would continue to receive my departmental assistantship and another fellowship for the semester. The aforementioned news was a big relief. My new proposal date would be pushed to October. To put things into perspective, the fall proposal date would allow me the opportunity to graduate in December of 2016.

I continued to meet with my statistician and worked on analyzing my data. About a month outside of my proposal, and as a precaution, I met with my committee. Present during the phone discussion was my chair, statistician, and another committee member. During the call, my statistician explained some of my data results. However, my chair did not quite understand her explanation. At a point during the conversation, my chair recommended going back to make certain changes with the data. My statistician immediately stated that changes could not be made to the data. Her concerns were of an ethical nature. I thought that it was very odd for my chair to recommend something like that because even I knew that you could not arbitrarily go back and selectively run a statistical test to fabricate outcomes. Little did I know, that was one of many red flags. Nevertheless, I continued to work, and my chair continued to question my results. One week before my scheduled October defense, my chair phoned me at 7:30 p.m. Her call was unusual. Moreover, I in the doctoral student office working on my dissertation defense slides. Her call was heartbreaking. She stated, once again, that I was not going to defend the following

week. I was also not going to graduate in December. As I recalled it, she took issues with my data. In particular, she felt that the numbers just were not right. Her rationale for canceling my defense for the second time was I needed more time to fix my data. I hung up the phone and immediately called my parents. They had been able to move the house reservation to December with no charge. I was concerned about them losing their money now that there was not going to be a graduation. After talking to them, I left campus and went home and just cried for about an hour. My department was not going to give me my assistantship for the spring of 2017. Thus, I was more than likely going to have to leave school to go back home and finish writing my dissertation.

At the beginning of December, just a week before I would have graduated, I met with my committee to come up with yet another game plan to graduate in May 2017. My chair was supportive and later sent me an email stating how impressed she was with my attitude regarding the situation. Just before Christmas, I packed up my apartment in Orlando and went back home to Atlanta. At the time, I was ready to go and be with my family. However, I would later regret leaving Orlando before graduating. The previous Black doctoral student in our program had met the same fate, lost her assistantship, and had to move back home to finish writing. Once she moved home, she had extreme difficulty communicating with her chair (who was also my chair) and could not get clear guidance on her statistical analysis from her chair. She was forced to create her own intervention while other Ph.D. students were handed interventions to use for their dissertation. It got to the point where she had to request another faculty member from our department to serve on her committee and assist with her methodology and preparing her final manuscript. By the time she defended her dissertation, she had already spoken with the Dean in regards to her experience with her chair. Even though I saw how her situation played out, I was trying to remain confident that I wouldn't have the same problems.

In January of 2017, my committee and I set another date for a proposal defense in March, which would allow me to graduate in May. I was in constant contact with my committee members, especially my statistician. I even came back in February for a few days to meet with her, and we sat for hours in her office, rerunning my stats. At the recommendation of my chair, I met with one of the on campus dissertations editors. His feedback did not surprise me. He recommended minimal revisions. I came back to Atlanta extremely confident concerning my dissertation.

I also felt ready to defend in March. Then, once again, my March date was canceled, and an April date was set. At this point, I was not too stressed because I felt like I still had a good chance of graduating in May as long as I defended by the graduate school defense date deadline. Then my worst fears came true. My April defense date was canceled. Despite my efforts to incorporate my chair and to leverage her advice, she remained unsatisfied with my statistics. She kept telling me, "I wasn't explaining it well enough," even though my statistician, the expert, thought otherwise. Not defending in April meant not graduating in May and not being able to start the fall tenure-track position, I had accepted earlier in the spring. What made matters complicated, my chair recommended me for the position. Furthermore, my committee knew I had accepted the role.

The biggest blow came on May 6, 2017. I was at Six Flags with my nephews and former sister-in-law and decided to look at my emails while waiting for them to finish their ride. There was an email from my chair. I figured she emailed me regarding the next steps or to give feedback on the last edits I sent her. Instead, she was emailing me to say that she would longer serve as my chair. I went numb at that point. I knew I could not cry because there were too many people around. I immediately sent a text to my mentor back in Florida and forwarded her the email. I also sent texts to two of my close peers who attended school with me and knew of the whole ordeal. I went home after Six Flags and shared with my parents what had happened. I did not respond because I needed to pray and gather myself. If I responded immediately, it was going to be an emotional response. And one thing I had definitely learned in the Ph.D. program was not to respond emotionally to difficult situations. After a couple of days passed, I emailed my chair and thanked her for informing me of her decision and for her guidance up to that point. I started to contact my other committee members and my mentor to see what recommendations they had concerning the next steps; this is where it really got interesting.

I went to Orlando to meet with my former chair, committee members, and the department chair. At this meeting, my former chair sat across from me, and she did not say one word. I was uncomfortable that she never looked at me or even acknowledged my presence. The department chair told me that not having a chair was pretty much my fault. He agreed with the decision of my chair and stated that I did not do what she asked me to do regarding the stats. I had one committee member who came to my defense. My statistician, who was in the meeting, told my department chair and everyone else in the room that my statistics were good and

that I understood my stats and was able to explain them, apparently, that was not enough for my department chair. Once the meeting was over, I felt my eyes welling up and my heart pounding so fast I thought it would jump out my chest. When I hit the door to the parking lot, a flood of tears ran down my face. I cried all the way to my car. I drove over to the building, where my mentor's office was. As I sat in there waiting for her, one of my committee members who had been at the meeting walked in. She apologized and stated that she had never seen anything like that before. By the time my mentor arrived, I had calmed down enough to tell her what happened. She had been talking with the Dean of the college, and they had a plan. The way our program was set up, my actual department was in the College of Health and Public Affairs, but our Ph.D. program was in the College of Education. Therefore, the Dean of the college of education actually had the last say.

I came back to Atlanta and told my parents what happened. They were upset and wanted answers. I started communicating via email with my department chair and seeing what my options were to graduate. He and my former chair stated that I could change programs and get another degree and still be able to work in our field. I thought about that option for only a few minutes and then replied with an absolutely not. No way would I start another Ph.D. program after spending the last 3 ½ years completing one. I had a fully completed dissertation, chapters one through five. Then they said I could graduate if I found another professor in the department to serve as my chair. My mentor and I immediately reached out to the one Black professor in our department. He knew what was going on with my situation. I sent him my dissertation, and he said he would look over it and get back to me. A couple of days went by, and he spoke with my mentor and said he could not do it because he did not have time. My mentor reminded him that the dissertation was completed and that the only thing needed was my defense. He then began to give her all these reasons as to why he couldn't do it and what he had going on. He also took that opportunity to complain to my mentor about how my previous chair did not know enough about research to run a Ph.D. program and how she should not chair dissertations. After he declined to help me, I sought additional help. I reached out to my committee member, who was a Latina professor in our department. She and I had a good relationship and worked very closely on different projects. We had actually spoken a week prior via Skype; she was encouraging me and giving me some direction on how to proceed. I asked her to be my chair and

gave her a couple of days to think about my request. She emailed me later that week. She declined to be my chair and recused herself from serving on my committee. At that point, I did not have a faculty member from my department to chair me. I also no longer had any committee members from my department. My emotions moved from frantic desperation to furiousness. It was very obvious that the individuals in my department had gotten together and decided not to support me. No one was going to help me complete the program. What they decided to recommend was that I find someone to chair me that is in my field of study, but worked at a different institution. By this time, my mentor and the Dean decided that enough was enough. The Vice President for research for the university was contacted and was now involved in my dissertation dilemma, as well as the Vice Provost. My father, a veteran university administrator in his own right, and I had also been in contact with the Associate Dean in the College of Health and Public Affairs. In fact, the Dean was out while most of this was going on. However, the Dean was supposed to be brought up to speed with everything once he returned from his vacation. My father sent an email to the Dean and cc'd several other university officials. He asked the Dean to provide some assistance with the situation and to provide an explanation for what was going on. The Dean never responded, and we later found out that his lack of attention and support of this situation led to his termination with the university.

The Vice President and Vice Provost took over at this point. The fall semester started. I also had not graduated. Further, I was unable to start the tenure-track job I had accepted. News arrived that the Vice President would not allow another professor from a different institution to chair a dissertation. The rationale for the instruction was direct: our university had plenty of people who were qualified to do the work. The Dean of the College of Education, and my mentor recommended a professor in the College of Education whose area of research was aligned with mine. In all actuality, he probably should have been on my committee to begin with. My department chair and my former chair were not pleased and tried to disqualify this professor, but the Dean's decision was final. However, I did need another person from my field. My former chair then tried to recommend one of the girls that completed the program before me. This particular person was one whom I had no relationship with and whom I had reached out to for assistance for a class I was teaching and was no help whatsoever. She was my former chair's golden child. I knew she was being recommended so that my former chair could still have her hand in

interjecting her opinion about my dissertation. Plus, this person had never worked in academia and was not currently working in academia. Instead, I asked the only Black Ph.D. student who had graduated from our program to be on my committee. She had been through this same experience with my former chair. They actually had stopped speaking after she graduated. Nevertheless, she and I had the same research area and interest. Likewise, she already knew the information covered in my dissertation study. After that was settled, the Vice President advised the people in my department to have no further contact with me. The College of Education was going to handle everything concerning my defense and graduating in December 2017. I was still going to graduate with my Ph.D. in communication sciences and disorders, something that my former department was trying to keep me from doing.

I met with my new chair and two committee members from the College of Education that had been with me all along. We also had a phone conference to include my new committee member in my field who was working at another university in Virginia. We set a defense date, and I started making plans to graduate, albeit again. However, the preparation process was different this time. I knew I was going to defend and graduate. I had confidence in my new chair and my committee. I defended in October 2017. I was told that my former department chair wanted to come to my defense. However, the Dean of the College of Education empathically insisted that he not attend. As an alternative, he could be outside of the room and tell me congratulations, but he was not allowed inside. Surely enough, after I completed my defense and waited outside for my committee to decide, there he was. He had this big fake smile, and unsuccessfully attempted to make small talk with my parents and me. Out of respect for him as a professional, I shook his hand and told him thank, then proceeded to speak with my mentee who had come to support me. I could tell it was an awkward experience for him, but I could have cared less.

After all of the trials and tribulations, I walked across the stage on December 15, 2017. Graduation would have been impossible without my mentor. She was the one who rallied the troops in our college and got everyone involved. When I started my Ph.D. program, I was sure that I would have long-lasting relationships with the faculty in my department. I just knew that my former chair and I would go on to publish, present, and collaborate on numerous projects after I graduated. That is not the case. However, I remain a loyal alumnus to my institution, to the College

of Education that stood up and fought for me. To the office of the Vice President and Vice Provost that stood up and made right what was wrong.

Jessica's Story

I started my doctoral journey in the fall of 2012. I decided to pursue a Ph.D. after years of working as a rehabilitation counselor and noticing that there was a need for better trained counselors out in the field, especially those working with people of color and people with disabilities. I was quite excited to start my program and interact with my new faculty. Like most doctoral students, I had initial feelings of imposter syndrome and that perhaps I was even an admission error. I was a member of a cohort of eight, and I believe that we all felt that way, even if we expressed it differently. The first administration speed bump came at the end of my first semester in the program. My mother passed away on January 2, 2013. As a result, I missed the first week of the second semester due to her funeral. I returned to school the week after and continued my classes as normal. However, I was quickly surprised to find many faculty members asking me if I needed to take a semester off. I was familiar with the statistics. I knew if I stopped, it would be highly unlikely that I would return. I decided to continue, and I feel that continuing in my program was key to my healing process. I met two mentors during this time. One was a Black female professor who was serving as the coordinator of the university's Holmes Scholar program. The second was a Puerto Rican female professor who had just started at the university. Each of them served a unique capacity in helping me stay afloat.

I continued through my first year and first summer in the program and started to reach out to prominent members of my faculty to ask to join them on research projects. I remember one specific incident where a faculty member was working on a project focused on Black youth with disabilities. Since this is an area that I have extensive knowledge and experience in, I figured that I would be a great addition to his team. His response to my request was, "I really want to work with people who will work hard." He did not say no or yes, but his response affected me greatly. I could not figure out what I had done or not done; that would suggest that I would not work hard. Needless to say, I did not get to work on that project. However, I continued into my second year and started to craft my dissertation topic in my qualitative research class. During this time, I also started to consider whom I wanted to ask to be my dissertation

advisor. I approached the same professor as before to support me in my dissertation study. I asked him to be my advisor because he was known to be a strong researcher. Additionally, I felt that his knowledge could help me tackle a topic that was and is severely under-researched in my field. He stated that he was full advising one other student. He also mentioned that he did not have the capacity in his schedule to serve on my committee either, even though I had not asked him to serve as the latter. In fact, I asked three professors in my department and was turned down by each of them for various reasons. It was then suggested that I work with a specific professor who was not known for having a good track record with follow through on working with other students and faculty members. When I brought up my concern about not having the same level of support as other students in my cohort, I was told that was just how things work out sometimes.

One afternoon, I was speaking with one of my mentors about my situation. I was afraid that I would not be successful in completing my dissertation if I was unable to get a supportive advisor to work with me. She suggested that I find someone outside of my program, whom I trusted, and who could support me. I had not considered looking outside of my program, but I started to compile a list of professors who had supported my classwork. One professor stood out above the others. He was a tenured professor who was currently teaching my qualitative research class and had given me several compliments on my research and writing. It took me over a week to email him as I had felt crushed from my previous attempts to ask other professors to chair me. He responded to my email within hours and stated that he would be happy to be my chair. He did state he was apprehensive about the process since he was not in my field. Yet, he was happy to take the journey with me. Shortly afterward, I advised my department chair of my decision to have a professor outside of my department to chair my dissertation. I made my argument that since he was a nationally known expert in qualitative methodology, he was more than qualified to serve as my chair. I was told that no other students had ever picked a chair outside of the department and that I would need to look for a professor in the department to chair me. I felt devastated. I had already been down that road, and I felt that my road to success was purposefully blocked. I approached my mentors again with my new dilemma and my feelings of frustration. I started to believe that I may not get an opportunity to do a dissertation. One of my mentors asked a simple question that changed everything. She asked, “Have you looked at

your handbook?" At no point had I even considered or thought of referencing the program and college handbook about issues such as this. The college handbook stated that dissertation advisors must be a professor in the college and approved by the graduate college. Since my qualitative research professor had chaired several dissertations before mine, he was already approved by the graduate college. I presented this information to my department and was allowed to move forward with my study and with my selected chair. I graduated within my graduation timeline, a feat that I did not think possible if I had chosen someone else to chair me.

Where Are We Now?

I am currently in a tenure-track position as an assistant professor. I ended up accepting the job that was previously offered to me when I was scheduled to graduate in May of 2017. When I began my position in the spring of 2018, the first thing I did was find a counselor. I still had so much anger and bitterness, and I needed to figure out how to let it go. I was fortunate enough to find a Black female counselor who was actually a tenured professor at my institution. She has been a lifesaver. In the fall of 2018, when our university had its annual campus wide faculty and staff kick-off, they introduced all new faculty and staff. When they got to my name, I heard, "Ms. Kimmerly Harrell, department of communication sciences and disorders." As I stood up, I felt warm all over. I was boiling. At the end of the gathering, I could not get out of the building fast enough. I felt the tears welling up in my eyes. When he introduced me as Ms. Kimmerly Harrell, the only thing I saw was my former department chair calling me Ms. Harrell and not Dr. Harrell. He was so adamant about me not finishing my Ph.D. in our department. For a while, every white male was the enemy. Every time I thought someone was "disrespecting" my degree or displaying any type of microaggression, I saw my former department chairs face. At this point, I knew I needed to continue in counseling. Today I am in a good place mentally and physically. Coming to this university was the therapy I needed after leaving my Ph.D. program. It is not the ideal location, but I have a department and Dean who supports everything I do and desire to do. I also have opportunities here that I am not sure I would have at a larger institution.

After graduation, I, Jessica, completed a one-year postdoctoral position at my university. My second year out of the program, I ran a grant-funded program for youths with disabilities and did adjunct teaching. I was able

to secure a tenure-track position during my third year out of the program. I did have offers prior to year three, but I turned them down for various reasons. I learned the importance of finding a program with a good fit during my experiences in the doctoral program and wanted to make sure that I had that in place when I went into my academic career. I have continued to see the professors who did not support me at academic conferences, and unfortunately, a couple have chosen not to acknowledge my existence even when standing in a group with my cohort and peers. I will admit that it initially bothered me, but over time being ignored has driven me to become a mentor to students in my program and other doctoral students of color coming through the program after me. It has also encouraged me to be a presence in academia so that others are aware that you can struggle and still survive to move into a tenure-track position.

Moving Forward

In sharing our story, we realized that we both had a collective learning experience that gave light to some of the suggestions that we have for future scholars. While we had different challenges, we both shared the experience of being discouraged by several faculty members in our journey. However, we also had the shared experience of finding mentors to support us in the face of being discouraged by their own colleagues.

There is much to be said regarding the value of mentoring, particularly with students of color. The stories told in this chapter provide insight into how mentoring was the catalyst in the author's journey to completing their programs. We have compiled some suggestions/recommendations that may be helpful to aspiring doctoral students and academic faculty members who may find themselves working with students of color.

1. It's important to have a community of liked minded individuals as you go through the doctoral journey. Having support from your family and friends is essential. Just as important is having colleagues in the trenches with you. The Holmes Scholar program at our institution was a lifesaver. The program was designed specifically for doctoral students of color, and our institution provided office space for us to access 24 hours a day. Some institutions may not have a Holmes Scholar program. If not, search for other programs/groups on campus that cater specifically to doctoral students of color.

2. Do not be afraid to work with mentors of the opposite sex and race. While many Black women feel that having a Black female can help them navigate race in the academy (Patton & Harper, 2003), you can't diminish what someone from a different race or sex can contribute to your experience. This is especially important if you attend an institution where Black faculty are far and few in between. Focus on finding a mentor who is genuinely concerned with helping you be successful as a student and as a future academic.
3. There needs to be more awareness among faculty about the way that doctoral students of color are treated. Our stories highlight several microaggressions that seemed to be linked to our identity as Black women. We were supported by faculty members who did not express such microaggressions. However, there should not be a culture where others are forced to pick up the slack and lack of care of their colleagues. Departments should have a place where students can discuss their concerns in a safe manner, especially when students come from a marginalized population.
4. Make self-care a priority. You may hear stories of students having health challenges while pursuing their doctorate. It is easier said than done but make time to get exercise in and eat healthily. Also, do not be afraid to seek out mental health care. During our doctoral program, we both sought counseling from the campus counseling center. Having a space to speak with an unbiased professional helped Kimmerly to work through some of the anger she was beginning to harbor against people in her department. She also had to seek counseling after graduating to work on healing and forgiving those in her department who tried to hinder her from graduating. Jessica went to counseling to deal with the loss of her mother and how to deal with the stress of being a high-pressure doctoral program.
5. Use your resources! The administration is created and managed through policies and procedures. Learn about these policies and how they can work for you. Do not be afraid to ask questions about things that others refer to as traditional.
6. Lastly, as cliché as this may sound, you have to believe in yourself. If you are given the opportunity to pursue your doctorate, know and believe that you belong there just as much as anyone else. It's not uncommon for students of color to feel like an imposter, especially if you're attending a predominantly white institution, and you're the

only student of color in your program. You deserve to have a seat at the table.

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CHAPTER 9

Transitioning from Student to Academic: The Role of Mentorship in the Evolution from Doctoral Student to Assistant Professor

Shaywanna Harris-Pierre

As a first-generation college student, my experiences in higher education have been new and intimidating. I have, however, utilized my resources and taken advantage of opportunities to gain knowledge and advice from my professors in order to more efficiently navigate my journey to the PhD. Specifically, I developed relationships with friendly and approachable professors, volunteered to serve as a teaching assistant, and to assist in research projects in order to further develop relationships and gain invaluable experience relevant to advancing professionally.

While obtaining my PhD, I recognized the importance of having various mentors to support me in my development personally, and professionally in the roles of teacher, researcher, and in professional service. As I graduated and moved to another state to begin my career as a Counselor Educator, I found myself needing to establish an additional support system and mentorship team, which proved to be a challenge. This chapter will provide an overview of the role of mentorship in my processes of

S. Harris-Pierre (✉)
Texas State University, San Marcos, TX, USA
e-mail: S_h454@txstate.edu

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completing a PhD and beginning a tenure-track academic position. Moreover, I will speak to the challenges I faced in finding mentors, the need as a faculty of color to have mentors and be a mentor, and specific considerations when developing mentorship relationships.

College Experience

Growing up, my parents stressed the importance of lifelong learning. Therefore, even before I knew what profession I wanted to pursue, I knew that higher education would be in my future. As I grew, I decided I wanted to impact the world through a mental health vocation. I realized that I had a passion for relationships and mental health and I decided to pursue a degree in psychology. I knew as I began my undergraduate degree that a PhD was in my future. Not only was it made very clear to me that a graduate degree was necessary in order to provide psychotherapy in the way in which I wanted, I also was very passionate about pursuing a terminal degree to make my parents proud and to prove to myself that I could do it.

As a first-generation college student, it was—and in some ways, continues to be—difficult for me to navigate the world of academia. Throughout my journey, I have faced financial, emotional, and professional challenges. For example, being the first in my family to attend college meant that my mother and I had to navigate the financial aid process with minimal understanding of the best way to go about securing grants, scholarships, and loans to finance my education. Of course, with some of our social supports, like friends and church members, we were able to navigate the process. I experienced a culture shock, however, when I attended my undergraduate institution and met so many different people from varying backgrounds. Although I attended a Historically Black College/University (HBCU), there were times in which I felt isolated and experienced the impostor syndrome due to my status as a first-generation student. I believed everyone else at my university was somehow better prepared for college than I was because they were not first-generation college students. I did experience some self-doubt as a result of these feelings, however I also used my friends as resources, learning from them along my journey. Little did I know the experiences I was having with the impostor syndrome were completely normal and would show up at numerous times throughout my academic journey. My constant challenge

with the impostor syndrome, however, would be overcoming the impostor syndrome in an effort to open myself up to learning from my new and intimidating experiences. In each of my stages of navigating higher education, from my bachelor's, to my master's, PhD, and now my career as an assistant professor, I have faced a different version of the impostor syndrome. In each stage, I have learned that finding a mentor and developing a strong support system of individuals who genuinely care about me and my success is paramount to me achieving my goals and being able to serve as a mentor for others.

As an undergraduate student, I knew I wanted to pursue a doctoral degree. It also became apparent to me throughout my studies that in order to pursue a graduate degree, I would need to have some research experience. As a Type A perfectionist, who likes to follow the rules in order to achieve my goals, I always paid special attention to any clues that would give me insight into how to be successful in my journey toward the PhD. Furthermore, as a first-generation college student, I felt as if I were always at a knowledge deficit when it came to my next steps in my education. Therefore, I actively sought out information regarding my goals and what steps I needed to take in order to achieve my goals. Whenever a professor would mention anything about the process of pursuing a doctoral degree, I would pay close attention and build my goals and plans around what I needed to do. Furthermore, I would ask my professors and peers what I should do in order to move forward toward my goals. For example, in one of my psychology statistics classes as an undergraduate, my professor shared an opportunity that allowed me to join her research team. In addition to gaining some research experience, my professor also explained that serving on a research team would enhance my graduate school applications. I joined the team and enrolled in an advanced statistics class in an effort to make my future graduate school application as strong as possible. In this experience on my first research team, I developed a curiosity for research I did not have before. I learned a small bit about the process of research. I also learned that research did not have to be boring, as I had assumed based on my previous experiences with research and the scientific method in high school. Moreover, my experience on the research team allowed me to become closer to my professor, for whom I served as a teaching assistant as well. Having the ability to interact with this professor outside of my classes allowed me to build a better relationship with her and ask her questions about the process of obtaining a doctoral degree, what drove her to a career in

academia, and what her experiences were as a Black woman in the professoriate. This mentor–mentee relationship served as my first experience with mentorship. The importance of networking and establishing mentorship relationships were not stressed to me growing up. Therefore, my mentoring relationship with my professor opened my eyes to the importance and benefit of having a mentor and the process of actively seeking mentorship. I am eternally grateful for my professor and attribute my success in navigating my undergraduate degree to her advice and mentorship. I also attribute my continued interest in research throughout my master's program to my undergraduate mentor as well.

Graduate School

I decided to pursue a master's degree before my PhD because I had been made aware through my research that most counseling PhD programs required a master's degree before entering a PhD program. I had decided that counseling was the area in which I wanted to take my career after discovering toward the end of my psychology program the difference between psychologists and counselors. I reflected on the professional responsibilities of each profession and decided that the way in which I sought to help people improve their mental health was through marriage and family therapy. Thus, I researched marriage and family therapy programs and applied to the first program that appeared on the list. I had no reference for choosing a good graduate program for my master's degree, but in my research of the program I ensured they were accredited and would prepare me for licensure as a counselor and admissions into a PhD. In hindsight, I could have incorporated my mentor in my decision-making process as well by asking her opinion, however, I was still learning what it meant to have a mentor and how to effectively build and maintain a mentorship relationship. Similarly, I made my decision on my own. Luckily for me, my master's program was a great next step in my academic and professional journey.

In my master's program, I continued to seek mentorship and opportunities to grow and learn. I knew that I wanted to attain a PhD, and in order to do so, I needed to network and develop relationships with my professors in order to gain more mentorship and learning. I researched the interests of faculty members in my master's program and scheduled a meeting with the faculty member with the research interests I found most appealing. Because my research experience was limited to data entry

from my undergraduate experience on a research team, I wanted to get a better understanding of what the entire process of completing a research study looked like. Fortunately, the faculty member I met with was receptive to mentorship and provided an opportunity to learn with him and assigned work projects that helped me learn the research process. I was tasked with finding articles for a literature review, sitting in on planning meetings for the study, and connecting with community collaborators. It was in this experience that I learned the importance of community partnership in research and my passion was sparked for conducting outcome-based research. I also learned in this mentorship relationship that, at that time, I needed a lot more guidance and direction from my mentor. In hindsight, I can see that I was completing the tasks that my mentor asked of me. Relatedly, I saw the benefit of the activities I was asked to complete. However, at the moment, I was not clear on the purpose of a literature review which prevented me from learning as much as I could have in doing my literature search. As a result, I took what I learned from mentorship relationships to modify the way that I teach and mentor my current students. I seek to educate my students on the process of research and, specifically, the details of the study that the student is working with me on in an effort to ensure that the student understands exactly what they are doing and why they are doing it.

Specifically, I find it interesting and enlightening that the literature on first-generation students suggests that first-generation students are less likely to assist faculty in research, or communicate with faculty outside of class than non-first-generation students (Kim & Sax, 2009). This is enlightening for me as I will use this knowledge in my future work with students by providing opportunities for my students to assist me in my research and using my research mentorship as an opportunity not only to receive assistance in my research, but to serve as a mentor for students who may not have actively sought the opportunity to serve as a research assistant. It is my hope that I will be able to provide ample opportunity for research while maintaining an open and approachable demeanor to my students so that students who may be less likely to volunteer for a research team due to a lack of understanding or fear due to first-generation status will feel welcome and take advantage of communicating with me as their professor.

Once I was admitted into a PhD program, I knew I would need assistance in navigating the doctoral process. I was completely unaware of what to expect in obtaining a PhD. As such, I wanted to take advantage

of any and every opportunity that was presented to me. My professors stressed the importance of research and publication, and the collaborative nature of research with faculty members and doctoral students. Additionally, in my PhD program faculty presented numerous opportunities to succeed in producing collaborative research. All of the aforementioned opportunities came with a significant level of individual accountability. For instance, I quickly realized that I needed to be selective and intentional in selecting the opportunities that I accepted. In that way I was ensured that I would burnout. Fortunately, I met a peer in my very first semester of the program who became a great friend and peer mentor. This colleague and mentor of mine was two years ahead of me in my PhD program. Moreover, my peer mentor helped me to become acquainted with the do's and don'ts of being in our PhD program. One of the first pieces of advice I received from her was not to take on too many opportunities. She also noted that every opportunity was not equally beneficial. Her words of caution were the advice I utilized in selecting opportunities for which I pursued. This advice helped me navigate my first year as a PhD student in that I learned early on not to overwhelm myself by engaging in too many activities. Moreover, as a Black woman, I was able to relate to my peer mentor culturally. It was invaluable having her guidance and support through the program because as a Black woman, and more specifically the only Black person in my cohort, I often felt culturally isolated and unsure of who to trust. Likewise, my peer mentor introduced me to the Holmes Scholars program at my university. I was able to connect with more peer mentors and mentors from various levels of academia with whom I developed strong relationships. The Holmes Scholars program gave me confidence in my abilities to enter the world of academia while also providing me with a family with whom I could share my experiences as a PhD student of color at my university. Further, on a national level it was great to be able to connect and network with other PhD students around the country. I had an opportunity to share similar academic experiences and genuinely build friendships. I even enjoyed spending time with other doctoral students from different institutions which made the doctoral journey easier. In fact, I would not have been able to make it through my doctoral program without the mentorship I received from peers and professors.

Professional Mentorship

Presently, I enjoy serving as a mentor for professional peers and current students. Each of my mentorship relationships has taught me lessons in how I need to be mentored and how I would like to mentor others. Having awareness of the struggles I experienced as a first-generation student in asking for and seeking mentorship. I am now deliberate in reaching out to my students and letting them know that my door is always open if they need to talk about anything or have any questions. Additionally, as previously mentioned, when mentoring students in research specifically, I try my best to ensure my students are aware of the foundation upon which their research activities are built. That is, if a student is entering data, I explain to them the purpose of the study, how the data were collected and how I will analyze the data so that the student understands how their role is connected to the rest of the study.

As I began my academic career as an assistant professor, I was faced with adjusting to a new university, a new position, new students, and a new form of the impostor syndrome. I was contacted very soon after beginning my first semester by some of the Black students in my program. They expressed their excitement to have a Black faculty member in the program and wanted to set a time to meet with me as a group. This invitation warmed my heart and also scared me. As a brand-new faculty member who had not yet established a support system at my university. I was unsure of how I could help or mentor these students who were reaching out to me. I felt an immense sense of the impostor syndrome and fear. Yet, I knew that in order for me to be a good mentor to students who had reached out to me specifically for mentorship, I needed to establish a professional support system.

I immediately sought community in the Black faculty group on campus. Through this organization, I was able to meet faculty members who have opened their arms to me as mentors. I am still new to the world of tenure-track professorship. However, in my first year as an assistant professor, I learned so much about the subtle nuances of academia. For example, one of my new mentors expressed to me the importance of "being visible" on campus. What she meant by that is that in the tenure and promotion process, I will be evaluated by faculty members both inside and outside of your program and department. Therefore, it is important to be physically present on campus and visible in order for the people who may potentially be evaluating you to know who you are. This advice

was not something I had heard from anyone before, and I may not have learned this information as it is not formally written in the promotion and tenure guidelines. Had I not received advice from a mentor, I may have placed myself at a professional disadvantage regarding the tenure and promotion process. This example highlights the importance of mentorship beyond the doctoral program to also include mentoring support for junior faculty, especially junior faculty of color.

Further, researchers and scholars continue to highlight the importance of mentorship for minority faculty members. Aside from the potential systemic prejudices that may inhibit the granting of tenure for minority faculty members (Grasgreen, 2011), there may be other factors that impact the attainment of tenure for minority faculty members. The same might also be true concerning the hiring of faculty members of color in the first place. For example, in her book *Faculty Diversity: Removing the Barriers*, Joann Moody (2013) outlined thirteen cognitive errors that may lead to the dismissal or prevention of the hiring of faculty members of color. These cognitive distortions include: (a) assumptions based on first impressions, (b) judging one's background through the lens of elitism, (c) raising the bar for specific individuals who are deemed from an unacceptable group, (d) eliminating prospective candidates through premature ranking, (e) the longing to "clone" the current faculty members by dismissing candidates who are different, (f) using the term "good fit" to describe candidates who make current faculty members feel comfortable and culturally at ease, (g) provincialism-only weighing references that the search committee members know personally, (h) making assumptions about the client based on their background, gender, or family makeup, (i) using rhetoric rather than evidence when evaluating candidates, (j) framing interactions with candidates based on previous judgements in order to create a self-fulfilling prophecy, (k) focusing on one minor pretext and allowing it to overshadow the positive attributes of the candidate, (l) assuming character over context in that negative attributes or interactions are attributed to a candidates character rather than the context of the situation, and finally (m) giving in to the momentum of the group. These issues may mask themselves as short interactions that, in some cases, may make sense to the selection of a faculty member. However, it is just as important to note that these distortions can likely play a role in the institutional barriers for faculty members of color. Moreover, the aforementioned cognitive distortions do not only affect faculty members of

color in the hiring process, they also can play a role in the selection of faculty members for tenure and promotion.

The relationships I've forged throughout my academic journey have been invaluable in helping me to navigate the world of academia as a tenure-track assistant professor. I am looking forward to continuing to be mentored by these senior faculty members as well as mentoring my students and, as I gain experience, newer faculty members.

Future Research

Studies outlining the experiences of first-generation college students highlight the importance of social support, familial support, and the act of seeking support throughout the pursuit of a higher education (Gardner & Holley, 2011). However, there is a dearth of literature highlighting the unique experiences of minority first-generation college students as social experiences related to race and ethnicity play a significant role in the process of feeling a sense of belonging which impacts student's overall satisfaction in their collegiate experience (Gardner & Holley, 2011; Holley & Gardner, 2012). Gardner and Holley (2011) brought to light the experiences of first-generation college students pursuing a PhD and as a first-generation college student, I related a lot to their findings. PhD students in the Gardner and Holley study expressed feelings of isolation, impostor syndrome, and a feeling of being on the "outside"—not understanding the subtle nuances of academia—which further enhanced the sense of isolation. Moreover, in an article outlining their experiences as doctoral students of color, Abukar et al. (2018) highlighted the importance of peer support for minority doctoral students, specifically through writing groups. As expressed earlier in this chapter, my personal experiences with peer mentorship and mentoring my peers were important in my personal and professional growth. Future research should focus on the experiences of mentorship for first-generation and minority doctoral students, outlining the social, financial, and cultural challenges this population specifically faces.

Implications for Practice

Based on my personal experiences as a minority first-generation PhD student and now as a Black female faculty member, university administrators may implement programs geared to providing mentorship for minority

students of color and first-generation students seeking a PhD. Professors, faculty members, and university administrators should also complete professional development training to become aware of how the needs of first-generation minority college students may be met. Further, Professors and faculty members may be more aware of how some students (especially minority students or first-generation students) may be more or less likely to ask for assistance (Gardner & Holley, 2011). It is also important for faculty to understand the importance of offering support to students who reach out and offer opportunities for mentorship. The ramifications of negative experiences with professors may negatively impact the completion of a student's degree due to lack of support and potentially hinder students from continuing their pursuit of the doctoral degree.

Universities and search committees should also be mindful of Moody's 13 cognitive distortions that may play a role in the diversification of faculty. Priming search committee members on the 13 distortions may increase their awareness of the distortions and, potentially, reduce the likelihood of the distortions occurring and preventing a highly qualified, candidate of color (or faculty member of color) from being hired (or being granted tenure). Moreover, a concentrated effort and dedication to diversifying faculty on the part of university administrators would allow more opportunities for mentorship for faculty members of color, increasing the number of faculty members of color in academia. Further increasing the likelihood of faculty members of color achieving tenure and promotion.

Due to systemic norms of a university, it may be necessary for faculty members to advocate for changes in hiring procedures that address the 13 distortions that impact the diversification of faculty. Faculty groups may petition the upper administration to change hiring procedures, while providing research to support the positive impact of diversity amongst faculty members. Also, on a smaller scale, faculty members may develop close relationships with their department chairs and college deans and share some of their concerns about faculty diversity in an effort to enact change within the department or college.

Conclusion

Overall my experiences have shown me the importance of seeking opportunities for mentorship, taking advantage of potential mentors, and providing support and mentorship to others. With my status as a first-generation college student, I faced some unique challenges throughout

my doctoral process. For example, I was faced with severe impostor syndrome and anxiety surrounding whether or not I deserved to be in my program or if the work I was doing was sufficient. Moreover, at times I was faced with a sense of loneliness as I was not able to share the weight of my experiences with my family because they did not quite understand the unique challenges of a PhD program. Thus, my relationships with my peers and academic mentors were of paramount importance in my success. Having mentors to assist in my journey allowed me to remain persistent in my progress. There were many times throughout my PhD program in which I needed to talk to someone who understood the challenges of the PhD program. It was in these times that I confided in my mentors and peers. Of course, my family members were always supportive and there for me to lean on, however, my mentors and peers were able to relate to my issues and provide insight and advice on my challenges. My mentors have given me professional and emotional support and guidance without which, I would not be where I am now.

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CHAPTER 10

Traversing the Muddy Waters: Considering the Non-traditional Working Journey of a High-Achieving Black Female Working Scholar

Whitney Watkins

Introduction

Pursuing one's professional career can be an intimidating process. There are different factors to consider in these pursuits, including navigating political environments, adapting to work culture, and nourishing collegial relationships once a position has begun. Traditionally, completion of doctoral degree in the field of higher education results in the quest for a full-time, tenure-track, faculty position. This trajectory is typically groomed during the doctoral process and executed following graduation. Despite this being the general next step for recent doctoral graduates, my journey was a bit more non-traditional.

I was born and raised in Miami, Florida. I was a high-achieving student who always pursued my academic responsibilities with the utmost enthusiasm. I relished in academic competition to write the fastest or answer

W. Watkins (✉)
Barry University, Miami Shores, FL, USA

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the most math problems correctly. For me, being successful was never a specific goal, it was a part of my identity. I enjoyed the recognition which came on the other side of hard work and dedication. In high school, I was class president for three years and I still attribute that experience to some of my most memorable life changing milestones. I had a high respect from and for my peers and this desire to connect with others, ultimately, introduced me to the field of student affairs and, later, higher education. After my undergraduate years at Florida State University, I continued my graduate work with high hopes of postsecondary administrative pursuits. I thought I wanted to be a Dean of students. It was not until I started my doctoral program that I was introduced to the prospect of being a faculty member. The coordinator for my program at the time asked me if I ever considered it. To be honest, I never had. After considering all things I enjoyed related to student growth and development, being a faculty member seemed to satisfy my professional ambitions. Thus, the grooming began and I grew more attached to the idea of becoming a professor. In fact, upon graduating with my doctoral degree, a large percentage of my professional pursuits were for faculty positions. However, God had other plans.

In the following sections, I discuss how and why I pursued a non-traditional career after completing my doctoral degree. The first section discusses some of my life and career milestones which served as a foundation for my professional path. These experiences occurred prior to the start of my doctoral program. The following section elaborates on why I decided to pursue a doctoral degree. The subsequent section describes some of the mentors who and mentorship experiences which made a positive difference during my doctoral journey and beyond. Finally, the last section explores my reasons for pursuing a non-traditional career path following graduation, as well as, additional implications.

Life and Career Milestones

Decision Making and Culture Shock

As my professional and personal journeys evolved, I encountered milestones which both challenged me and encouraged me. One of my biggest signposts was starting my master's degree program in Higher Education Administration at Indiana University in Bloomington, Indiana. At the time, I thought choosing a master's program was the most difficult decision I ever made in my life. It is amusing how much clarity

hindsight offers. Particularly, when I consider how miniscule that decision seems now, given the many decisions I have had to make since then. I was young and had not had many experiences by which to gauge life's difficulties. I weighed out the pros and cons of school in Indiana and school in Georgia, where I was also accepted. When I moved to Indiana, a state where I had no immediate family, with weather conditions of which I was incredibly unfamiliar, it was a momentous life experience for me. It was the first time I felt like a decision-making adult. Also amusing, in hindsight, was my definition of "adult" then compared to my definition of "adult" now. The two are very different.

At the time of making my decision, I was incredibly nervous. However, with the blessings from my parents and close friends I trusted, I took the leap and never regretted it. My time in Indiana exposed me to my first lived experience of life outside of Florida. I met individuals unique to anyone I ever encountered and the regional culture was a shock.

Specifically, I was made incredibly aware of my Blackness. Cole and Arriola (2007) discussed the impact of Black student experiences on White campuses and how this hyper-identity of their race can play a vital role in their lived experiences. I can recall a particular instance when a friend of mine and I walked to a local parlor for pizza. In route, we encountered two White female students heading into campus. We were unfamiliar with the location of the restaurant, so we stopped them and asked for directions. Upon their approach, I noticed one of the students chatting with the other in a very mild-mannered way, until she spoke to us. After we asked for directions, she responded with behavior which was stereotypical of Black women. I felt embarrassed and offended after they walked away. It was then, more than any time previously, that I understood how Black women are often perceived. Moreover, this experience opened my eyes to a glimpse of a reality which I had not yet faced. Overall, I appreciated being in Indiana because it taught me more about myself than I anticipated. Also, it connected me to a diverse group of colleagues who I now call friends.

The Infamous Job Search

I remember rounding out the second year of my master's program with the infamous job search. It was my first time searching for a full-time professional position, so it was both exciting and intimidating. At that point, I was determined to find a job outside of the residential life field

given the wealth of experience I already had. I was convinced that if I was going to be marketable as a well-rounded student affairs professional, I had to diversify my resume of experiences. I had a deep passion for student leadership development, but I had never encountered any opportunities to explore that area. I felt I was beginning my search behind the starting line while others, with past leadership experience, were first onto the track.

Nonetheless, when I applied for entry-level positions, I consciously avoided residential life jobs. I attended The National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) Placement Exchange career fair and was granted several nonresidential life interviews. Ironically, during my job search process, I was approached by an acquaintance who worked at an Historically Black University (HBCU) in North Carolina for their residential life department. She told me they had several Community Director positions open, and she thought I would be a perfect fit. Despite my hesitation to reenter the residential life field, I applied for the position anyway. Thereafter, I was called for an on-campus interview, which was the only one I received despite applying for six leadership development positions. After a successful interview, I accepted the job offer from North Carolina, and I took it as a sign that I was meant to continue in residential life.

The decision to say yes was not done without high consideration. I have always been incredibly strategic when approaching my professional life goals. I invite new opportunities into my life which, ultimately, help me expand my experiences. Thus, since I had never worked at a small institution or an HBCU, I took the chance. The experience changed my life. It taught me that I have a passion for Black student success. It also taught me the importance of making and maintaining connections with genuine and sincere people.

Overall, my three years of work experience at a public HBCU located in the northern regions of North Carolina, though initially unexpected, was exactly what I needed. Before accepting that position, I prayed for God to reveal the purpose for me being in that role. He did just that. Nearing the end of my time in North Carolina, I switched gears. With time, I grew a confidence in myself and from others which prepared me to pursue my doctoral degree. Further, in the next section, I outline my doctoral experiences at the University of Central Florida (UCF) from program entry to my most cherished mentorship experiences.

Why I Decided to Pursue a Doctoral Degree

A doctoral degree was always something I assumed was only attainable by high-level administrators, world leaders, and brilliant scholars. The first time I academically doubted myself was when I decided to pursue my doctoral degree. I always excelled with my grades and stood out as a stellar scholar in the classroom. However, I did not feel confident in my ability to finish a program, and I had been out of school for three years which increased my anxiety. I questioned if I was too rusty to effectively contribute to classroom discussion, and I had never done the type of research I assumed doctoral candidates needed to understand. My perception of what was necessary to retrieve a doctoral degree was heavily influenced by societal ideals and media-related figures in education who were highly accomplished.

When I worked in North Carolina, I was on a three-year contract. Thus, the peak of my consideration of a doctorate came nearing the close of my third year. I knew what I wanted, and though I was not completely confident in my pursuit, my job was ending. My choices were either to find another full-time job with the thought of school lingering in my mind or to take a leap of faith and apply for doctoral programs. In addition to my job ending, I was motivated by the idea of being closer to home. I felt like a stranger in every place I lived outside of Florida. I resented the lonely life I was living so far away, despite connecting with amazingly caring individuals. Nevertheless, I felt a longing to surround myself with people who knew and deeply understood me. Being away did not afford me the opportunity to go home as often as I would have liked. As a result I missed many life events shared by my family and friends. I felt like an outsider whenever I went home. After three years of service to my beloved department in North Carolina, and for the first time in my career, my personal life grew in priority alongside my professional life. It was time for me to address the matters of my heart.

For so many years, I juggled professional pursuits with personal ones. I was always told by other higher education and student affairs professionals that given my young age, it was important for me to keep my options open when job searching and to cast my net wide. I appreciated the sage advice from trusted professionals in the field over the years. However, I found my own voice getting lost in the process. What was to be gained if I was living a life in a faraway land alongside none of my family and close friends with whom to share my successes? That reality started to sink in

hard for me. At the nearing of my last year in North Carolina, I had lived away from home for almost ten years already. Despite the advice of trusted professionals, I felt compelled to follow my heart and move closer to home.

After conversations with close friends from back home and trusted friends in North Carolina, I reflected and processed the fact that being closer to home was not a bad thing. I previously equated going home to giving up and being a failure. Success, for me, meant being away and experiencing what the world had to offer. I figured I was meant to explore and prioritize my professional and educational pursuits before, ultimately, going back home. Home seemed like the end goal. However, when I considered doing my doctorate, the home became a high priority, though I still wanted to start a reputable program.

While searching, I was unfamiliar with the higher education programs in the Central to South Florida areas. My fondness for personal independence and space prompted me to more so consider graduate schools in the central Florida area. Essentially, I would be three and a half hours from home. This decision was ultimately made in agreement with my own consultation of program quality, proximity to home, and liveliness of the city. As a result, I heavily pursued the University of Central Florida in Orlando, Florida, given it met all of my preferred criteria.

Matriculation into My Doctoral Program

As aforementioned, it took a lot of convincing and self-talk for me to pursue my doctoral degree. I had a colleague and friend in North Carolina who played a huge role in the application process for my doctoral program. While constructing my personal statement for the application, she encouraged me every day.

There was a conference room in our departmental office and I spent many late nights sitting in that space with my feet propped up and my personal statement glaring at me from the projector screen. I hoped it would write itself. My colleague was always there when I needed her, and she consistently reminded me of my worth and potential as a doctoral scholar. Having a peer mentor like her was key to the successful completion of both of my doctoral program applications. At that point, I realized how important it was to have people in my life who knew what I was capable of, even when I did not know it for myself. When I was

riddled with self-doubt, her confidence in my abilities was unmatched. Moreover, I completed and submitted my doctoral program applications.

Ultimately, I decided to heavily pursue the UCF program in Orlando, Florida because of the proximity to Miami, the bustling nature of the city, and the overall better program fit. I submitted my application and was adamant about getting into the program at UCF, so I consistently contacted the program coordinator at the time. As any inquiry arose, I emailed the coordinator and inquired about the intricacies of the program. I wanted him to understand how badly I wanted and felt I needed to get into that program. Admission to the UCF program was my plan and I did not have my sights set on anything else.

In addition to becoming familiar with the program coordinator, I discovered UCF had a mentorship program for doctoral students of color. This piqued my interest. Not only would I be able to pursue UCF's higher education program, I would have an enhanced level of support from the doctoral student mentoring program. I researched who the contact person for the program was, and I emailed her to find out more about the program. To my pleasant surprise, she called me and we spoke several times after she made the connection between us and my previous institution in North Carolina. Her father had previously been the Chancellor of the institution and, as such, having that common ground with her solidified my decision to pursue UCF even more.

After several exchanges of communication with the program coordinator, I was admitted into UCF's program and was planning my departure to Florida. I was thrilled and humbled by the opportunity for my academic acumen to have been recognized as worthy of program admission. My motivating colleague in North Carolina was excited for my next steps, but she was sad to lose me in my role. Thankfully, our hearts knew no distance, because she and I are still good friends today. My parents and friends from home were also excited for me to be closer.

When I was officially admitted to my doctoral program, my intention was to be a full-time student. Thus, I planned to attain an assistantship. I told myself that if I was going to get a doctorate, I was going to continue my streak of being debt free from school. I matriculated through my undergraduate and master's degrees with no loans, so I was determined to maintain that trajectory. Therefore, I searched for opportunities to fund my tuition.

As a prospective doctoral student, I applied for almost every assistantship opportunity except residential life. Again, my intention was to

expand past my residential experience. I had a passion for student leadership development and I interviewed for an assistantship with a program whose mission was student success and leadership. I prayed for a positive response because I was excited for the prospect of working with a program which fueled my passion. I attended the prospective students' weekend, and I was the only doctoral student there which, I assumed, would be of detriment for me. This was not the case, as I was offered a full assistantship with the leadership development program. I was so happy to finally have the opportunity to work in the field I grew a passion for. I had an amazing experience with my assistantship and learned a lot about myself as a teacher and mentor. Overall, I enjoyed my time at UCF in its entirety.

One highlight of my entire UCF experience was becoming an Order of Pegasus recipient, which is the highest honor a student can receive. I was one of 21 students from a campus of over 60,000 who were chosen based on their scholarship, service, and contributions to the university. I was so honored and proud to be selected. I never anticipated that the work I had done over the years would actually matter to other people. I was just doing my job and trying to make a difference in students' lives. It just goes to show that God's purpose for your life can never be predicted.

Further, I was so pleased with my time at UCF. I was wise to save money during the three years of my professional experience in North Carolina. Thus, I could afford to pay my student fee costs for school. At the point of application to my doctoral program, my main focuses were being closer to home, finishing my degree before the age of 30, and not taking out student loans. I thought way less about not having full-time work for three years which, in general, is a more non-traditional mindset at the doctoral level. I wanted to finish my program in the quickest way possible, so I chose to work part-time. I continue today with no regrets about my decision to go back to school full-time for my doctorate. I learned a great deal about myself and I learned a lot from others regarding the importance of following both dreams and instincts.

Mentors Who Made a Difference

According to Thompson (2008), a lack of mentorship for scholarship and role models of success can cause a lack of retention in students and faculty of color. Given this, I prioritized finding a mentor during my doctoral program. I always wanted at least one strong mentor figure, but I never

encountered an individual who, I felt, was a right fit for me. I had my own ideas of what mentorship should look like and who a mentor should be. I was convinced that something was wrong and missing from my academic and life processes because I had not yet found someone to call mentor. I connected with individuals who guided me and gave me advice during both my undergraduate and master's journeys, but were they really mentors? I assumed all my mentorship and sage advice was meant to come from one person. I realized later I was wrong.

During my professional, full-time working years in North Carolina, I honestly felt lost and jealous of others who had mentors. I tried attaching myself to individuals on a superficial level hoping it would sprout into a mentorship relationship. I even wondered if I was meant to have a mentor given it had not yet happened. I had friends and colleagues who had mentors they built relationships with for years, either through their professional pursuits or church, or in a number of other ways. I was jealous and felt deprived. It was not until I started my doctoral journey that my definitions of mentor and mentorship changed.

Peer Mentors

As I received insight during the time in my doctoral program, my definition of mentorship changed drastically. I always thought a mentor was someone who had to be much older with a plethora of more experience than I had. As a doctoral student, I had more peer mentors than I did older and more seasoned professional mentors. My same colleague who encouraged me during the personal statement stage of my doctoral application was one of the friends who helped mentor me during my doctoral process. We lived in different states and went to different schools, but she always believed in me and continued to encourage me to do my best. Given our collegial history, she knew my capacity for success and she always reminded me of why I should believe in myself. She was a rock for me along my journey and continues to be a great contributor to my life.

I also understood and better appreciated the role my best friend played in my journey. She knows me better than anyone else. When I was discouraged during my doctoral program, she knew what to say to level me out. She was my consistent reminder of the reality of life. She helped me remain aware of life outside of school. She helped me remember that my doctoral journey, though important, was a small percentage of my overall

life experience. I had to learn to enjoy my life experiences and cherish time with family and friends. She often spoke to me and mentored me through occurrences in my life which had nothing to do with school. She was a calming force for me. She listened to my graduate school woes, but she always helped changed the subject to remind me that I was only in the doctoral process for three years. I gained strength, encouragement, and a lot of tough love with every conversation we had. Currently, she still teaches me lessons which are invaluable reflections of her own life that I learn and grow from constantly. I am grateful to her and her mentorship.

Also, during the second year of my doctoral program, I was introduced to a colleague who was older than me but was in the first year of his program. I did not predict the friendship would flourish from our first meeting. He was well traveled and so learned in his approach to life and academia. I never imagined that my friendship with him would turn into a beautiful mentorship experience. I often approached him when I had to make confusing decisions. I was mature in my educational journey, but I was way less mature in the things I knew about life. He was an international student who came from a culture of care. His feelings were always expressed, genuine, and amazing demonstrations of his character. He was not afraid to show love and affection to his friends and I admired this about him. He taught me so much just by being himself. When he graduated and left back to his country, I was very sad, but I was always comforted in understanding the reciprocal mentorship we built together.

Mentorship in the Workplace

During my doctoral assistantship, I was mentored by my immediate supervisor. Through this experience, I also learned that mentorship could be demonstrated by simply modeling admirable behavior. My former supervisor is one of the most humble, respectful, and kind-hearted people I have ever met. She was considerate simply because of her nature and not for selfish gain. I often felt she was too nice and gave people more credit than they deserved. However, it was all a testament to her character. I learned from the grace she gave others.

During our entire relationship, she was mentoring me, unintentionally. I took heed to her graceful approach to every situation. I learned how to have conversations with people and be heard yet kind. I learned to live by my faith and inject it into my daily interactions with people. From her, I truly learned that I was the only reflection of God and faith some people

would ever know. Thus, it was my responsibility to demonstrate God's love to everyone in every situation; even if their reciprocation was poor. Her mentorship was and is appreciated, as I carry those lessons with me.

Academic Mentorship

Considering the academic component of my doctoral program, I had a mentor who I cherished dearly and continue to cherish. She was the advisor for the aforementioned mentoring program for doctoral students of color. When I met her, she was a 67-year-old firecracker. She is a mentor who valued me, specifically, as a Black woman pursuing a doctorate. She did not overly focus on my race and gender, but she made sure I knew to appreciate who I was and the importance of me getting a doctorate. She carried a level of grace that was unmatched by anyone I had ever previously encountered. Her way and thoughtfulness with words was always tactful and appreciated. She had a reputation on campus for elevating the environment around her because she brings such poise and grace. She is an individual who, in addition to serving as an amazing role model, specifically helped me during the research portion of my dissertation journey. I originally thought I was specifically tethered to my dissertation chair throughout the process but, with permission, I was able to explore her expertise regarding my dissertation topic.

She grew to be an individual whose opinion I radically respected and sought. Further, over ten years prior to my encountering her, she was the first doctoral student to receive the Order of Pegasus, an honor that I later received, myself, prior to graduation. It was comforting to have her as a sounding board when considering life's paths. Her insight was invaluable. Now, whenever I consider large- or small-scale professional decisions, she is one of the few people I consult and whose opinion I value.

An additional mentor I had during my doctoral journey is an incredible ball of energy, opinions, wisdom, political navigation, and honesty. She was spot on at giving both solicited and unsolicited advice, and I appreciated both. She often served as my gauge to ensure I was living up to my fullest potential. Prior to her, I never had anyone call me out on ways in which I could perform better, academically and professionally. I took strong heed to her insights, as she always established an expectation of respect from others, including myself. I grew to feel like a daughter to her and I appreciated that distinction.

Table 10.1 Mentoring exemplars

Mentors who made a difference	
Personal mentors	Peer mentors, family mentorship, and support
Workplace mentors	Immediate supervisor
Academic mentors	Professorial mentorship

Further, I remember the first piece of serious advice she gave me. She told me that I need not be afraid to be bold. She listed numerous positive qualities about me and she said I have to own my characteristics. I have to be bold. I have to carry my head high and know my worth. That was one of the best pieces of advice I ever received.

Lastly, Table 10.1 outlines the different types of mentorship I received throughout my doctoral journey.

Taking the Non-traditional Career Route

Nearing the end of my doctoral journey, I was poised with a vat of sage advice, enhanced research and writing skills, and a confidence in my abilities as a professional. I had convinced myself that the faculty journey was what was next in line for me. After graduation, I moved back home to Miami, Florida in search of what was next. When I started my job search after my doctoral program, I was certain college professorship position offerings would come in overwhelming droves. Again, I had a plan. It was as if I had drawn a picture of my future in permanent marker, never to be erased or changed.

I felt my passion for teaching and college student development was enough to make me competitive in the world of the professoriate. Coupling this passion for teaching with my desire to stay close to home created a recipe for unexpectedness. I scoured higher education and student affairs job websites, applying for nearly 100 positions. I was originally determined to stay in Miami and be closer to home with family and friends. Despite this desire though, I had a hard time deciphering whose voice I was hearing most loudly during my search; God or myself. I claimed a desire to follow God's plan, but my own thoughts did not align. Following countless days and hours of job searching in Miami for positions in higher education and student affairs, I hit an exhausting wall.

My search expanded, and I found myself on the human resources website of a small private college in Central Florida. After praying about it and considering the decision logistically, applying for the position seemed like a great idea. It was a field of work with which I had no professional experience, on a campus type with which I had not been made familiar. Though it was not in Miami, I grew an excitement for the experience the position would offer me a few short hours from home, living in a city with which I was familiar. Thus, I applied.

I was both excited and nervous about pursuing the opportunity. Working as the Director of a federally funded Trio program was not a part of the plan. Though, despite my uncertainty about the position being both something new and out-of-the-box, I felt poised to pursue the role. I prayed after being offered the position and God provided confirmation that my time to be a college-level faculty member was not ready for debut. I understood that the gravity of what I could learn from this role outweighed my plan to dive into a professorship.

After starting the position, I gradually realized that my purpose in that position was to make a difference in the lives of my students. I was connected to a group of brilliantly experienced young people whose stories I could never accurately portray. I learned of their journeys of both hardship and triumph. The majority of my students were both first-generation and low-income. Encountering them daily fueled me with a level of care which motivated me to learn more. I genuinely loved them and they taught me more about myself than I anticipated.

Further, my position with the federally funded Trio program challenged me as a professional. I was not well versed in the intricacies of the programming format and federal policies, but I possessed a high level of understanding, diplomacy, and overall relatability to the students. After some time in the role, I understood why it was important for me to pursue this unchartered water.

Despite my target student population being high school students, I understood the incredible importance of learning the precollegiate stories of soon-to-be college students. I took an opportunity which opened a door to a multitude of lived experiences which will, ultimately, aid in my classroom delivery as a professor. This position taught me how important it is to also bring stories of truth into the classroom to inform the curriculum. I was building my capacity as a professor without even realizing it. My purpose in this role gradually, and I felt continually, encouraged

me because I listened to God's voice and not my own when He told me to move.

At first, I honestly felt like a failure for not securing a high-paying faculty position after graduation, but I later understood that everyone's paths are unique. I also had moments when I questioned the validity of my doctoral degree if it did not help me attain a faculty position immediately after graduation. I had friends who secured faculty positions, and I could not understand why my path ran differently. With time, however, all things were revealed.

Today, as a result of accepting the Trio program position, I oversee a dual enrollment program, working collaboratively with high schools to secure partnerships which allows their students to earn college credit. Prior to my position in Winter Park, I never imagined the high school student population to be a group with whom I enjoy working. Ultimately, I underestimated the impact such a fulfilling and challenging position could have on the trajectory of my career. Pursuing a non-traditional route, professionally, earned me a high level of experience I did not previously have and which I will take into the classroom upon the start of my future professorship. I am thrilled that I decided to follow God's plan, for it has been a necessary journey for my overall growth.

Implications for Practice

It is important to consider everyone's journey to be their very own. One implication from my story is the vitality of trusting your gut. When I had to choose between going to school in Indiana and school in Georgia, going to Georgia made logical sense. I was more familiar with the weather in Georgia, the master's program was reputable, I had secured an assistantship, I was familiar with the culture, and my sister lived less than an hour away. I consciously decided not to follow what "made sense" but to follow where my heart led. In the following sections, I outline implications for practice for different groups of individuals, all of whom play a vital role in the lives of doctoral students.

College Program Coordinators, Administrators, and Faculty

It is important for college program coordinators, administrators, and faculty to encourage their doctoral students to trust their own instincts when making both academic and personal decisions. I was both appreciative and

overwhelmed by the advice I received from seasoned scholars. Casting a wide net during the job search was a consistent reminder drilled into my head. Moreover, it made searching for professional jobs confusing. My heart's desire conflicted with the insight from others. Therefore, it is important to encourage students to pursue the path best suited for them.

It is also important to support graduate students in their journeys. During the time in my doctoral program, I can say with certainty that I would have felt misdirected without the support of faculty and other administrators. Though it can be overwhelming, advice from a respected scholar in the academy holds a high level of importance when making decisions which affect the future. Therefore, coordinators, administrators, and faculty should consciously build relationships with their students, so the shared advice and inspiration can be personalized to the journeys of each doctoral student.

Family and Friends

For the friends and family of doctoral students, it is vital to support them during all decision-making processes. Making the choice to start a doctoral program is cumbersome, as is the job search process following graduation. Remind your student that they are capable of success and have the capacity to finish their program respectably and effectively. It is also important to serve as a sounding board for your student. The voices of my family and friends resounded in my mind, daily, during my doctoral journey and beyond. Their voices reminded me of who I am. Family and friends offer a touch of reality which is incredibly necessary during these processes.

Also, offer understanding to your student. Doctoral students encounter a journey that only a small percentage of the world pursues. The road can be lonely, so offer as much support and positive energy as possible. Doing so will provide a necessary balance for the student when they have to make important decisions. According to Cokley (2001), "Psychological development for college students involved the process of successfully negotiating the demands associated with various domains of student life (i.e., academics, interpersonal relationships, identity, etc.)" (p. 1).

You will be successful. It is important, first, to believe in your capacity for success, and this will help manifest success into your life. When considering family and friends in your journey, decide what role you want them to have. Family and friends can make amazing contributions to your journey, but they can also be detrimental. It is important to understand the type of support you need from your family and then determine if that support is attainable. With this, communication is paramount. When I started my program, I made it a priority to ensure my family and friends understood the gravity of what I was undertaking. Once they understood my journey, I trusted them with my feelings, guilt, disappointment, and triumphs. Specifically, my family was my rock. My parents were amazingly and continually supportive of me the entire time, and I have never known two people to be prouder. Even after I graduated from my doctoral program and was disappointed in not finding a job "fast enough," they encouraged me not because I was Dr. Watkins but because I was their daughter and they love me. Make sure you know what you need from your family and understand to what extent they can offer you that support.

During your doctoral program, it is important to exercise self-care. This is a concept which is often glorified but not practiced. First, self-care and balance manifests themselves differently in individuals. For me, I defined self-care by being serious about my fitness journey and involving myself in activities outside of academia. Skill building is critical to prioritize during the journey, and skills can be acquired in a multitude of ways. Exercising regularly demonstrated for me how to center peace and health into my life. Advising a student organization, facilitating alternative break trips, and regularly presenting at leadership development conferences helped to balance the doctoral life that often felt out of my control. Overall, it is important to treat yourself with a high level of respect and relevancy. Explore your desires and capacities, and take risks you never imagined you would take. You will be surprised by the praise, accolades, and support which can follow you when you prioritize your own growth.

Further, when you graduate from your doctoral program and secure a position, it will be a process to become acclimated to your new professional environment. Navigating university and political systems can be challenging but necessary. Considering my professional position at the private college in Central Florida, I spent a lot of time navigating both

the collegial atmosphere, as well as, the high school atmosphere. It was a juggling act steered by the importance of relationship building. Have confidence in your capacity to build relationships. Understanding an institution's culture is acquired most accurately from the people who experience the culture every day. Once the position is secured, never stop learning.

Overall, it is also important to make the doctoral journey a time to remember. It is vital to pursue mentorship and value the individuals who add to your experience. Mentors are meant to guide and provide feedback on life's great trajectories. Every student should work to build fruitful and organic relationships with experienced personnel with whom they can relate and from whom they can learn. Growing out of studenthood is a process, and if it takes a village to raise a child, it takes an academy to groom a scholar.

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CHAPTER 11

Effective Mentoring for Diverse Leaders

Tia N. Dumas

In the graduate education literature, there are many terms used to define mentoring relationships (Creighton, Parks, & Creighton, 2007; Davidson & Foster-Johnson, 2001; Gardner & Barnes, 2014; Nettles & Millett, 2006). In this chapter, I recognize that mentoring can generally be described as a reciprocal relationship between an advanced career professional and a protégé aimed at promoting the career development and fulfillment of both (Kram, 1983, 1985; Kram & Isabella, 1985). Kram (1983) is credited with introducing the conceptual model that highlights the career and psychological functions that shape the successive phases of this relationship. In the first phase, *initiation*, the relationship begins; In the second phase, *cultivation*, interpersonal bonds strengthen, and the nature of the relationship can be characterized by the degrees of trust and acceptance. *Separation* is the next phase of the mentoring relationship and usually occurs when a protégé starts to feel independence in their role and/or the relationship is altered by things like transfers or promotions. Finally, in *redefinition*, friendship marks the fourth phase of the relationship and both the mentor and the protégé continues to be a supporter of the other and takes pride in their accomplishments.

T. N. Dumas (✉)
The Graduate School, Clemson University, Clemson, SC, USA
e-mail: tdumas@clemson.edu

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The development of my mentoring relationships was all the more profound because my mentors understood the criticality of having, at a minimum, an awareness about intersectionality and that the interaction of my racial, gender, and socioeconomic identities might shape and inform my experiences with my colleagues, my classmates, and my faculty. They understood that my existence—then and in the future—could not be distilled to any one of my particular social identities nor the summation of them, but rather the multidimensionality of their crossing. Crenshaw (1989) first introduced the concept of "intersectionality" to describe the various ways in which race and gender interact and situate Black women's experiences in the workplace. She posited that many of the experiences Black women encounter cannot be understood by examining race or gender separately, but instead by examining how the intersection of racism and sexism impact our lives. Crenshaw (1991) later clarified her definition of intersectionality and extended the concept to include other social factors, such as social class and sexuality, indicating that there are many and varied social identities that are critical to understanding how individuals experience society. Over the last thirty years, the concept has evolved to include newer definitions and does not focus on any particular social identities implying that every individual in society exists at the intersection of multiple identity axes and, therefore, can experience both social privilege and social oppression simultaneously (Gopaldas, 2013).

Culturally sustaining pedagogy (CSP) is particularly useful in better understanding how my mentors socialized me into my doctoral program and into my identity as a Black female scholar. Paris (2012) coined the term to describe research and practices that seek to "perpetuate and foster - to sustain - linguistic, literate, and cultural pluralism as part of the democratic project of schooling" (p. 93). Paris (2012) noted the significance that access to opportunities afforded to the dominant academic culture should not come at the expense or dissolution of the cultural practices of communities of color. Stated differently, my mentors did not explicitly or implicitly ask me to check my ways of being as a Black, middle-class, second-generation, female graduate student at the back door to our education building in order to gain access to traditional spaces and dominant cultural norms. Instead, they encouraged me to bring forward my intersecting identities, my privilege and my oppression, into my workplace, into my classrooms, and into my scholarship while using their privilege to help me gain access to people, places, and spaces I might not have otherwise (Paris, 2014).

This chapter chronicles some of my experiences with an effective mentoring relationship at a predominantly White institution (PWI) through the lenses of intersectionality and culturally sustaining pedagogy. I use pseudonyms to protect the identities of individuals I reference in this chapter, and I problematize some of my experiences from a position of respect and compassion for individuals at different points along their professional and personal journeys. The first section describes my personal background and my orientation to doctoral education. The second section foregrounds the origins of a special mentoring relationship in my first two years of my doctoral program. In the third and fourth sections, I analyze this relationship through the lenses of intersectionality and culturally sustaining pedagogy as well as by contrasting it with other relationships in my workplace. The final section briefly describes the design of an inclusive professional development model for graduate student success. My hope is that my lived experiences, theoretical lenses, and professional practices will lead to a new appreciation of mentoring and a deeper understanding of the unique experiences of scholars of color.

The Beginning

I began my doctoral studies in a fall semester as a full-time working professional and a part-time student. At new graduate student orientation, which was structured as a one-day information session complete with faculty speakers and a student panel, I remember feeling confused and not as prepared for doctoral study as I had once thought. I simply did not understand the language being used to communicate the expectations faculty held for student success. What were "comps," "candidacy," and a "PI?" Was I supposed to be on an assistantship or a fellowship and, worse, did I miss a major application deadline? Why did a research "agenda" sound like a twisted plan to challenge breakthrough findings and why was I the only part-time student attending orientation? By lunchtime, doubt had made itself home in my psyche and I started questioning whether I was a good fit for my program. I can recall asking the organizers if I attended the event by mistake because I could not easily identify with any of the faculty or students in attendance. My pride prevented me from asking any other students if they felt as uncomfortable as I did and, candidly, most of them seemed inconvenienced by the event—as though orientation was contrived to steal precious time away from their scholarly pursuits. Was I supposed to be conducting research already, I wondered? What else might

I not know and who could I turn to for help? I felt like I was a new character in J. K. Rowling's fantasy-fiction series, Harry Potter, and the Sorting Hat, an enchanted hat that groups wizards into different houses at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, mocked me for believing that I actually belonged.

Whether my recollections of the new graduate student orientation are accurate or not, I have no doubt that the organizers were intentional about supporting all of the new doctoral students and successfully onboarding and transitioning us into doctoral education. And while I gained entry into doctoral education, which was a feat in and of itself, I did not know the rules of this new game and therefore felt sidelined and unable to play. As a child, I only knew of one person with a doctorate. My father earned his doctorate when I was 12 years old. My understanding of the part-time doctoral student experience was informed by the countless nights, twilight hours, and long weekends he spent typing his dissertation in a dim-lit closet near the stairs in our two-story home. We did not own a writing desk, so he built a four-foot wide by four-foot tall cinder block and plywood makeshift desk so that he had a designated space to study. It was just sturdy enough to support his computer, printer, and lamp, and small enough to fit in the closet—as evidenced by the scrape-marks the surface corners left along the wall. My father was a career educator and he returned to school as a mid-career professional to earn his doctorate in education (Ed.D.).

I did not understand why he pursued the doctorate or what the benefits might have been for earning the degree, but as a tween I observed his grit, perseverance, and resilience. I learned from his example that what was worthwhile to him in life—family, an education, and a career—would take an inordinate amount of commitment and faith to uphold, especially in times of adversity, tragedy, and loss. Even today, I am awestruck by what my father was able to accomplish while working full-time and being a loving husband and supportive father to six children. It would appear to be a "no-brainer" that I would turn to him for assistance and support as I began my own doctoral journey. Admittedly, I was too embarrassed to ask him for help. Not because I could not seek my father's guidance and insights, but rather because I expected myself to maneuver the doctoral landscape with autonomy, precision, and ease. In fact, I was oftentimes reminded by other students of color and my White colleagues of the many built-in advantages I benefited from that were also described in the extant literature about minoritized populations and student success: I was

a second-generation graduate student; I came from a two-parent household; we were a working-class turned middle-class family; I had already earned a master's degree; and I had a record of personal accomplishments as a student leader and scholar-athlete. Like plotting data points on a graph, I could see that as I accounted for each of my personal background traits the likelihood of my success in graduate school increased. Therefore, I concluded that I was not allowed to experience insecurity and self-doubt. Furthermore, I decided that I should not share the feelings of unworthiness I was experiencing with my peers or my colleagues because not only were they unjustified, they could be perceived as downright appalling.

I did not shy away from these feelings, but I did not fully embrace them either. Instead, I accepted their presence and focused my attention on my desire to contribute to the larger academic community. I sought to advance the work of scholars and practitioners whose efforts had given me an understanding of the nature of multicultural academic advising for the primary purpose of supporting minoritized populations of students at PWIs. My personal experiences became the impetus for my dissertation research and my future professional practice. I wanted to create change for people, processes, and paradigms and I knew that I needed guidance and mentoring to serve as transformational tools for my growth.

The Hallway

The sound of her quick walk in her two-inch black pumps on the tile floor was comforting. I could always anticipate Jane wearing a tailored skirt suit, flashing a friendly smile, and extending a warm greeting in the hallway. She was a tenured, full professor in our college and highly regarded among faculty and graduate students. Although Jane identified as a White woman, a majoritized population within colleges of education, she looked and sounded different from any other professors I would see in the building. It wasn't because she wore heels, skirts, or makeup, but because she walked like she was about something—like she had purpose. I was impressed with Jane's ability to evoke change in policies and procedures that advanced the mission of the college while also being student-centered and seemingly down-to-earth. Oftentimes I would tell myself that upon graduation, I would emulate Jane's style and charisma. She gave me hope that I, too, could be respected for the unique pathway I would create for myself and for those who followed. More importantly,

Jane understood the critical role our teaching pedagogies play in supporting the development of students of color. One morning, our paths crossed in the building hallway and she paused not only to greet me but to speak with me. Jane asked me about my role in the college and if I enjoyed my work. While it was a brief exchange, it was much more than a transactional moment. Jane wanted to speak with me again and asked for me to schedule a meeting with her. I immediately scheduled a meeting, uncertain as to what to expect and what her intentions were for taking an interest in me, especially after many months of friendly salutations in the hallway. But I was intrigued that someone—a woman with a purpose—would be curious about me.

After meeting with me to discuss my professional and academic interests, Jane created an independent study opportunity for me. Although she was not faculty in my department, we discussed empirical studies and research methodologies, study habits, and how to create a professional wardrobe. I conducted literature searches about topics of interest and Jane and I would meet periodically to discuss my progress, expected outcomes, and the anticipated impact of my work. She would ask me about my upbringing and how my educational experiences might shape my own scholarship and practice, and she would share her memories of her youth with me as well. Jane would oftentimes inquire about my working environment and whether or not I felt supported by my colleagues and my boss. At first, I was hesitant to share any information about my colleagues or boss with Jane concerned that it could be perceived as less than favorable and impact my professional trajectory. However, as I soon learned, Jane was genuinely getting to know me and attempting to identify and assess the impact of particular factors on my growth. By simply asking me about my experiences, I began to critically examine my own conditions and I found a voice within myself I had not paid much attention to previously. By way of inquiry and conversation, Jane was teaching me how to identify and express my needs so that I could advocate for myself.

The Office Space

Jane's approach to teaching me critical inquiry is underscored by the ways in which I advocated for equity in my workplace. The observations I made as a child about my father's part-time doctoral student experience ran in stark contrast to the ones I was making about one of my White male colleagues. Skilled, funny, and ambitious, Brad regularly left his office light

on and his office door wide open during work hours but was oftentimes absent from the office during the workday. He boasted of his progress toward the completion of each of his dissertation chapters and of the partnerships tenure-track faculty were forging *with him* (and not vice versa) with the goal of writing and publishing together. I admit, I was slightly jealous of the ease with which I perceived Brad to perform his job duties and advance through his doctoral program. Impressed, I wondered if my own doctoral experience would be reflective of the tireless grind my father experienced or as seemingly painless as Brad gloatingly described. I reminded myself to stay in my own lane and to focus on my own development, but that became more challenging as my working conditions changed.

Our boss, Elizabeth, was an outspoken proponent of her employees utilizing the tuition remission benefit to earn a degree and advance our careers. She would describe the positive impact earning a doctorate had on her career and her family, and she would encourage all of her employees to strive for advanced degrees. Elizabeth's words of encouragement and commitment were celebrated and I, especially, wanted to take advantage of the opportunity to earn my degree while working professionally full-time. I respected the support she extended to Brad, such as flexing his work hours, offering to read and proof his assignments, and promoting his research among the office staff, college leadership, and at national conferences. It quickly became evident to me that I was not having similar experiences as Brad and I began to question why not.

In spite of my workload increasing exponentially, I was excelling professionally and being recognized regionally and nationally for my innovative approaches in our field. I arrived to work early, stayed late, and worked on the weekends. I voluntarily took on new tasks, created new programs and systems, and did not complain about the lack of resources with which to execute these projects. Elizabeth did not check-in with me to ask me about my student caseload or progress at work, nor did she offer to assist me with any of my assignments. Perhaps, I thought, her approach to supporting me looks and feels different than her approach to supporting Brad. I had not expressed to her that I, too, wanted to be acknowledged for my contributions at college leadership meetings, but I also did not understand why I needed to ask her to openly support me when she was so willing to do so for Brad. I began to feel alone in my role. My loneliness was a latent feeling, but it was one that grew stronger over time. I needed help, and while I had several wonderful colleagues who helped

me when they were able and with whom I shared student concerns and laughter, I needed comprehensive, structural, and organizational support. When I reached out to Elizabeth for support, for adjustments to my work hours and fewer students on my caseload, I was shamed for inquiring. Her verbal denials manifest into awkward and uncomfortable interactions. For instance, Elizabeth ignored me in the hallways and passively silenced me at staff meetings by removing my updates from the meeting agendas. She would walk by my office and peek in the door at the end of the workday giving me the impression that she was watching my time on the job. At office gatherings Elizabeth would recall her doctoral experiences and discuss the barriers and oppression she faced coming from an impoverished upbringing, identifying as a first-generation college student, White woman, and mother. I applauded Elizabeth for her tenacity and hoped that, in some small way, she might be able to empathize with the challenges I was experiencing. Furthermore, that she might want to remove some of the barriers I was facing in my first year to support my success. But instead, I was fiercely reminded that my experiences were shaped by my intersecting identities and that my counternarratives disrupted—and possibly threatened—not only the office culture she attempted to foster, but the ways in which she made sense of her own experiences.

In hindsight, the isolation I began to experience in my office space may have been in response to the discomfort Elizabeth felt when my personal accounts challenged her own stories. I was suffering from marginalization at work and it became even more severe the more I advocated for myself. The dual conditions Elizabeth created for men and women, White employees and people of color, undermined her espoused commitment to education and equity. And while I was not the only student in my college to experience bias or who was subject to discrimination, I was one of a few students of color who raised our concerns with the college leadership. We asked our leadership how they envisioned our success without mentors with whom we could identify. While not required for effective mentoring relationships, we highlighted the significance for students of color to connect with faculty mentors and leaders who might share similar identities and who can empathize with our stories. How does one find such mentors when there is a dearth of racial and ethnic representation in one's college? I did not accept the notion that I should surrender to the advising available to me—no matter the quality—because there were no other Black women in the college. I was also unwilling to concede to the subjugation of my work conditions by Elizabeth. I summoned my courage and asked Jane if she could address the systemic inequities our faculty and staff perpetuated every day.

The Intersection

I shared my discontent with Jane. She did not validate my feelings, nor did I expect her to do so. Jane understood that the conditions in which doctoral students of color were learning and working were essential to our development and our success as early-career scholars and professionals. She accepted and confirmed my experiences as my truth. It was not apparent to me at the time, but I believe Jane must have been so keenly aware of her own strengths and limitations that she knew when to expand our mentoring dyad into a mentoring circle. Jane played an instrumental role in the construction of my constellation of support. Not only did Jane serve as a connector to academic and human resources, but she became my *sponsor*; someone who is able to support and protect you while using their influence on your behalf. They are able to harness their power to "shape the story about who you are (and the importance of your work) behind closed doors when people are talking about you and you're not there (Rockquemore, 2015)."

Jane invited me to serve on college committees and to attend campus-wide receptions with other faculty and administrators. She offered me advice about how to navigate the politics in my office space and urged me to be a spectator to my thoughts in the process. Jane later partnered with my faculty advisor and, together, they encouraged me to apply for the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) Holmes Scholars Program. Jane modeled for me how to speak to and engage with donors, state and national legislators, and leaders at other institutions. She demonstrated the courage it takes to cultivate the potential in someone else and the leadership it requires to make changes that will deconstruct systemic power and privilege. Jane recognized my potential as a scholar had created access to new and different opportunities for me. I started to attend national meetings alone, facilitate task teams within the college, and lead research projects with faculty. If I were being honest, I knew then that our relationship was moving into another phase of its life cycle. I could feel the slow and gentle release of Jane's support and protection. I was separating from Jane, but I did not feel the need to grieve the loss of our relationship as I knew it. I had a deep respect for Jane and rejoiced in the beginning of our new friendship. For this, I will always be grateful.

Jane, Brad, and Elizabeth played important roles in the first two years of my doctoral program. Each helped me develop a deeper understanding

of how my intersecting identities shaped my perceptions, my choices, and my decisions. I desperately sought to connect with other Black women scholars in my college, but our college sorely lacked diverse racial and ethnic representation. Jane did not perceive my way of being as a student of color as a deficiency to overcome, but instead as an asset in academe. She showed me how someone with identities different from mine could accept that my experiences were uniquely different from hers, and that she may not be able to solve or fix my challenges, but that she could use her privilege to open doorways to dominant cultural customs. It would be disingenuous if I said that Jane would become the mentor I needed to further develop my Blackness and my identity as a female scholar among older White men. She did not. But she did connect me to the mentors who later would.

Improving Institutional Support

My recollections of my mentoring experiences in the early years of my doctoral program shaped both my research and my professional practice. At times, Jane struggled to make immediate impacts in her role because of the institutionalized barriers (e.g., financial resources, implicit bias, and outdated policies) she faced. To improve the nature of individual mentoring relationships, faculty scholars, practitioners, and administrators must address the organizational and structural changes that impede the development of these relationships leading to desired educational outcomes. In my professional role today, I attempt to address and dismantle the structural barriers preventing effective mentors, like Jane, from optimally supporting scholars of color. I am responsible for developing a robust portfolio of professional development opportunities for graduate students and postdoctoral scholars at a PWI and Carnegie-designated R1, public institution.

Employers and graduate schools aim to narrow the gap between workforce needs and graduate student training. While the majority of graduate students, PhDs more specifically, gain employment outside of the academy, too often their training and preparation is narrowly focused on academic research skills at the expense of developing transferable skills valued by academic and nonacademic employers alike (Denecke, Feaster, & Stone, 2017). The call for enhanced and broader professional development for graduate students and postdoctoral scholars is a high priority, particularly for trainees in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (Denecke et al., 2017).

To better prepare trainees for careers within and outside of the academy, I created GRAD 360°: a comprehensive model of professional development for graduate students and postdoctoral scholars. The model is grounded in a competency-based and learner-centered framework called "The Tiger 9." GRAD 360°'s events, ranging from small and large group workshops to boot camps, retreats, and institutes to formal mentoring programs, is designed to support the holistic preparation of trainees leading to professional practice in any employment sector. Furthermore, it was developed to augment experiential learning and career preparation occurring in programs of study and units across the University. GRAD 360° is aligned with the mission and goals of the University's Graduate School, the institution's ten-year strategic plan, and widely supported by relevant stakeholders, including faculty, staff, industry partners, and trainees.

The Tiger 9 focus areas (see Fig. 11.1) encompass the transferable skills at the core of graduate education and essential for professional preparation in any employment sector. The Tiger 9 focus areas include:

Fig. 11.1 Grad 360° Tiger 9 Focus Areas (Adapted from the Clemson University Graduate School. By Tia N. Dumas. Copyright 2019)

- Leadership and Management
- Teamwork and Collaboration
- Teaching and Learning
- Oral, Written, and Intercultural Communication
- Social and Global Responsibility
- Career Development and Exploration
- Personal Health, Wellness, and Financial Literacy
- Research and Innovation
- Professionalism and Ethics

Trainees are encouraged to engage with GRAD 360° by first creating an online account and profile and then completing an individual development plan (IDP) to assess their values, interests, and skills. The IDP serves as a tool to help graduate students explore their academic goals while also empowering them to speak with their faculty advisors about their personal and professional development. Together, students and their faculty advisors can determine strengths and areas for growth that will help the student accomplish their goals. This may include attending regional and national conferences, going to the gym frequently, and participating in a GRAD 360° event monthly. Finally, graduate students will be able to track their transformation by managing events for which they have registered and attended and by uploading materials that support their development in their online account (Fig. 11.2).

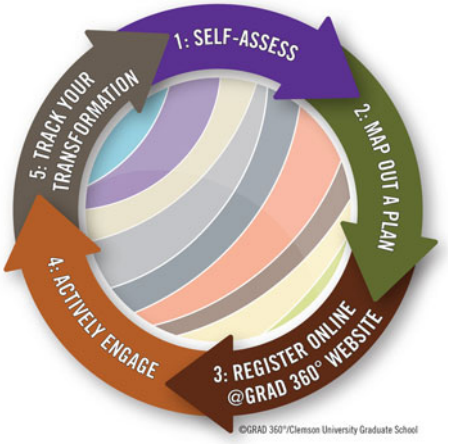

Fig. 11.2 The GRAD 360° Engagement Process (Adapted from the Clemson University Graduate School. By Tia N. Dumas. Copyright 2019)

Conclusion

This book chapter chronicled the experiences of my involvement with effective mentoring through the lenses of intersectionality and culturally sustaining pedagogy at a predominantly White institution (PWI). The coaching, acceptance, and confirmation I experienced in my first two years in my doctoral program supported my conceptualization of a university-wide model of inclusive professional development for graduate students and postdoctoral scholars. The intersecting identities Holmes Scholars bring to our classrooms and to our workspaces should be protected, sustained, and developed in our mentoring relationships. It is essential that the next steps in both our storytelling and our research be conducted in a variety of settings, inclusive of scholars with varied personal and professional backgrounds, and with regard for the evolving practices and ways of being within communities of color.

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PART III

Preeminent Scholars

CHAPTER 12

Principled Mentoring: The Impact on Underrepresented Scholars Within America's Colleges of Education

Carolyn Walker Hopp

The times in which we are born, raised, and nurtured define who we are…and who we will become. Those times are sometimes tranquil and peaceful, sometimes trying and turbulent. It is also during these times that we develop the "selves" that make up our identity. For a Black female born in North Carolina in the mid-1940s, whose remembrances of my environment began in the early 1950s, and who endured middle and high school in the late 50s and early 60s, the times were anything but tranquil. Jim Crow's south was alive, well, and pushing back on any progress that African Americans tried to make. As students during the time of "separate, but equal," we focused on our education and its importance for our future, which was essential since there was no guarantee that segregation would ever end. Luckily North Carolina was replete with historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs). But Brown vs Board of Education (1954) provided impetus for high school graduates attending

C. W. Hopp (✉)
College of Community Innovation and Education, University of Central Florida, Orlando, FL, USA
e-mail: Carolyn.hopp@ucf.edu

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completely segregated schools in the mid-60s to integrate the excellent white colleges and universities not only in the south but throughout the country.

In our reflections about growing up in a completely segregated environment, my childhood friends and I came to the realization that we were sheltered from the outside world in which we had little opportunity to engage in the advantages of the privileges of "the other." School books without racial epithets were rare; school supplies were at a minimum, but our teachers were *extraordinary*. They often did not use books rife with racial slurs—but their lessons were rich, fun, and packed with learning. Our schools were immaculate, lunches were prepared with loving hands, and they were delicious—and hot—every day. It is now that we realize that the development of the selves we needed to nurture…began in that segregated environment: our self-identity and integrity, our intellectual selves, and our emotional selves that would shape the rest of our lives.

Mentoring as a Calling

This narrative will describe those critical moments in my life that shaped my views of mentoring and defined my work as a teacher and mentor. It is the work of Parker Palmer (1998), whose treatise, *The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher's Life*, that spoke to the very depths of my soul and helped me to explore those parts of my being that drove my work.

I am many things, first and foremost a mother, but I have always been driven by my passion to teach. Palmer, a professor in higher education, links identity and integrity of the teacher as the foundations of knowing ourselves. He notes, "…if we spoke about who we are as teachers, a remarkable thing might happen: identity and integrity might grow within us and among us…" (pp. 12–13). As I delved into this notion, I realized that it required a deep understanding of who I was as an individual. So, I had to know the moment *I* knew who *Carolyn really was*.

Palmer describes identity as those forces that constitute life, genetic makeup, the nature of parents who give us life, the culture in which we are raised, people who have both sustained us as well as done us harm, the good and ill we have done to others and to ourselves, the experience of love and suffering (p. 13). Integrity, according to Palmer, is working

within an individual truth that drives decision-making, your sense of fairness and equity, strength of character, trustworthiness, and responsibility (p. 13).

Intellectual and emotional selves are interwoven in the practice of teaching and learning. Intellectual selves also represent the way we think about teaching and learning—the form and content of how people know and learn, and the nature of our students and our subjects (p. 4). Emotional is the way we and our students feel as we teach and learn—feelings that can either enlarge or diminish the exchange between teacher and student (Palmer, 1998, pp. 4–5). My reflections on my work—the why and the how—rest in the self-identity, the intellectual, and the emotional layers as a teacher and mentor.

Self-Identity

I was born and raised in Durham, North Carolina on the campus of North Carolina Central University. I had a very happy childhood; the campus was my universe, albeit very sheltered. Most of my early development occurred in the late 1940s and early 1950s in Jim Crow's south (about which I had little to no knowledge—nor what it meant). Durham was completely segregated but still flourished as a college town. Everyone was civil, but race relations, though civil, were still tense. I began first grade in September 1953. In May 1954, the decision in Brown vs Board of Education declared separate, but equal, unconstitutional. Segregation of our schools was to end with "all deliberate speed."

Education was always at the forefront of our family conversations. Excellence was always the expectation, and my teachers were always well aware that my father was a college professor; hence, I should be an "A" student. (This was always a conundrum for me. I thought "Bs" were ok, but apparently not.) I happily went about my way enjoying school, being a part of Jack and Jill, Brownies (junior Girl scouts), and my dance lessons. I was always encouraged to engage in those activities that were meaningful to me. Throughout elementary school, staying busy and active made me happy.

In junior high school, eighth grade to be exact, I was elected to the position of secretary of the student council. I was thrilled to be an officer, which also meant that I could attend the State Student Council conference at North Carolina State University in Raleigh, the State Capitol. I

eagerly prepared for the conference, to which Black *and* White students were invited to represent their schools.

My parents drove the short 20 miles to the campus to leave me for a week of what I thought would be great discussions about how to make student councils better, or how to fundraise successfully. As we drove through campus, I was in awe of the beauty of the buildings and wondered if I would be housed in one of them. As the car slowed to read the names on the buildings, we came to a stop in front of a medium-sized 2-story building. We had arrived.

We all got out of the car, retrieved my really heavy, overly packed bag, and found the registration desk. My parents left me in the hands of the conference organizers. We kissed goodbye and off they went. It was then that I noticed something really odd. Although there were students from both Black and White high schools, the Black students went through a different entrance to get to their rooms. I dutifully followed directions and went where I was told; dragging my bag up the stairs while the "other" students were assisted with their luggage. But I still kept thinking to myself: What difference could it possibly make what door we went through? I would soon find out.

I went to my assigned room and began to unpack. I decided to take a shower and freshen up for the evening's activities. So, I gathered my toiletries and headed for the showers. I walked in and found several White girls in line for the showers in front of me. One of them turned and saw me, let out a blood-curdling scream, and ran from the bathroom. I did the only thing there was to do. I ran with them—screaming all the way.

"What happened?" I asked.

Suddenly, one of the girls walked up to me and said, "Your bathroom is downstairs."

I responded. "But this bathroom says "Girls."

"YOUR bathroom is downstairs!"

"Oh," I said. I walked back down the hallway and looked down the stairs. It was dark dank, and the lights did not work. I went back to my room, packed my bags, called my mother, and asked her to pick me up. She asked no questions. I dragged my bag down the steps and waited in silence. She and my brother arrived about 40 minutes later.

It was a long ride home. No one spoke. Once we were back home, I unpacked my bags, and mustered the courage to tell my mother what happened. In my sheltered upbringing, I had never encountered such blatant racism. Ironically, the concept had never been discussed. There

was never any advice about how to navigate what some called the "racist mine field." But at the time, it was hitting head-on, and I did not know what to do about it.

But one conversation with my mother changed my entire perspective on *who I was.* After I went into detail about the situation, my mother uttered four words that shaped my perspective on race and discrimination at that time—and throughout my life: "It's not about YOU." The conversation ended. We never spoke of the situation again. When I lost my mother in the late 70s, I remembered that we had not discussed what had happened at that conference in 1959 and how it had impacted my life. She never knew how long it actually took me to truly grasp what she meant. But I finally did. It's about who you are as a person, how you act and react…or in Palmer's (1998) words, "…forces that constitute life, genetic makeup, the nature of parents who give us life, the culture in which we are raised, people who have sustained us and done us harm, the good and ill we have done to others and to ourselves, the experience of love and suffering" (p. 13). My mother's words finally made sense: know who you are and be guided by your strength of convictions, your strength of character, and what will drive you to be the best you can be. And teach others to do the same. It was much later in life that I realized the impact of that lesson.

My memory of what I had experienced in 1959 was always the point to which I returned. It hit me like a lightning bolt. It WASN'T about me. I was being brought up to have integrity, to treat all people with dignity and respect, and to realize that education was essential to success and achievement. If I lived my life honoring these things, it didn't matter about the color of my skin. If someone had a problem because of what I looked like, it was NOT about me. Others' prejudices and misunderstandings about me—were their challenge… not mine.

I can safely say that my parents were ahead of their time. I realize how difficult it must have been to not be angry, or to refrain from speaking negatively about White people in the south in the 50s and 60s. I owe my success in life to Dr. Leroy. T. Walker and Katherine Walker, loving parents who wanted their daughter to be strong, have a positive self-image, and to regard everyone as individuals—and not judge them "based on the color of their skin, but on the content of their character." What they left out of that lesson was that I had a responsibility to teach that to my students.

Intellectual Journey

I need look no further than my upbringing on the campus of North Carolina College (NCC, now North Carolina Central University) in Durham, North Carolina to begin the story of my journey to the Ph.D. The campus was a mecca of academic pursuits, the arts, and literature, with lectures and performances by such luminaries as James Baldwin, historian John Hope Franklin, and Maya Angelou. I spent little time thinking about the completely segregated environment in which all this was happening, in spite of the fact that it was the *real world* in which this mecca existed. I did not take for granted the mindful, thoughtful, and deep thinking to which I was exposed, which shaped my future, although unbeknownst to me at the time. I thought everyone grew up as I did. In my naiveté, I thought my parents grew up in the same environment as my brother and I. Little did I know.

Throughout elementary and junior high school, everything in my life was as it should have been—or so I thought. My father was a professor of Physical Education, Anatomy and Physiology, and Biomechanics. His career began as an instructor at North Carolina College (NCC). He was hired by Dr. James Shepherd, who founded the College in 1910. My father began his career at NCC in 1942, after my parents relocated from Columbia, South Carolina, where they attended Benedict College and were married. LeRoy and Katherine Walker moved in with the Jeffers family, along with their newborn son, LeRoy Walker, Jr. After only a few years, the Walker family was able to move to faculty housing on campus. I was born in 1947. We lived on campus until 1959. My father always told me that Dr. Shepherd was his first real mentor. My father often said, "He always believed in me, that I had potential to do more…." That statement is what has driven much of my teaching and mentoring practice. It is the foundation of my belief system about a teacher's promise to students: they have to believe they can always do more.

The college environment was all that I knew. It was my normal. Education was talked about at the dinner table, at meetings, at social events. I always thought that people talked about education so much because it was the "topic of the day." It wasn't until later that I fully understood the importance of those conversations. Outside of the environment of NCC, or other HBCUs, education for us was not possible. White universities in the south were not integrated. As a young child, I suppose I knew this, but it didn't impact what I envisioned for my future until I realized my

aspirations to attend Duke University, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, or the University of North Carolina, Greensboro would not be realized…if the culture of the south remained the same.

My father pursued his master's degree at Columbia University, New York. I began elementary school while he was going through this process. I always asked my mother why my dad traveled so much. All she said was, "He has to go to school." I did think it was odd that he wasn't going to school closer to home. He completed his master's degree and decided to continue his studies to earn a Ph.D. at Columbia. This was a turning point for me.

My mother was a great support for my father as he pursued his doctorate in biomechanics. I had no idea how much time was required to attain the doctorate. I do remember vividly those trips to the mailbox with my mother. She had a tight grip on my hand as we walked to the campus post office to check the mail. She pulled brown manila envelopes curled up in the tiny mailbox. She put them under her arm, and we trekked back to our apartment. She put the envelopes on the top shelf of the closet…along with all the others. After a few days, she would pull one of the envelopes from the shelf and begin to type for a few hours on onion skin paper. I knew it was frustrating because if she made a mistake, she would have to start the page over. I wondered why. "There is no erasing on onion skin paper," she would say, and walked away from the typewriter for a while. This continued for a few years. As I recall this time in my life, I don't remember any "pomp and circumstance" when my father completed his doctorate. It was not until many years later that I found out why.

Lessons from Oppression

Self-identity intersected with integrity became my driving forces. That conversation with my mother solidified my perspective on my identity. But I had not been really tested. Knowing who you are and having that notion be challenged are indeed, different. Watching my father reach the pinnacle of his career as an administrator and as the first African American to be head coach of the track and field team for the United States in the 1976 Olympic Games were milestones. Dr. LeRoy T. Walker retired as Chancellor from North Carolina Central University in 1986. He began his Olympic coaching career at the Helsinki Olympic Games in 1952 and had his first Olympian in 1956—and 10 more after that. The 1996 Centennial Olympic Games were in Atlanta, Georgia, my father's home

town. Prior to the 1996 Games, he was elected President of the United States Olympic Committee, one of the most powerful organizations in the Olympic movement. It was a significant achievement for the grandson of Georgia slaves. My father was my inspiration, my first mentor, and my great love. An additional significant event was the publication of his biography, *An Olympic Journey*, which was published during the Centennial Olympic Games. When I received my copy, I anxiously began to read a story with which I thought I was familiar. But I made a startling discovery.

I read about times during which he pursued his education. As I read about my father pursuing the doctorate, the story revealed that he had to do two Ph.D. degrees! I read on. At Columbia University he completed his master's degree in 1953 and began his doctoral studies. He completed all requirements, including comprehensive and language examinations. The next words practically leapt off the page. He was told that they would never allow a Black man to earn a doctorate from Columbia. His long-time friend and mentor, Dr. Brown, urged my father to join him at New York University (NYU). My father enrolled at NYU but was only able to transfer 6 credits—out of 106 completed at Columbia. He practically started over.

I was in tears reading this part of his story. In all the years that my mother and I marched to the mailbox, she never complained. Much to my surprise, nor did he. That was the real irony. I never heard him utter a disparaging word about anyone or the situation—*ever*. During my visits to our home, I was always drawn to the "wall of fame" to look at the numerous plaques and certificates of recognition given to my father. On this particular visit, I focused on his master's and doctoral diplomas. I found myself actually angry about what he had endured. I finally worked up the courage to talk to my father about his story.

"I read about your experiences at Columbia and NYU. Why didn't you ever tell me? So, what did you do – how did you react when you found out that you could not earn a doctorate from Columbia?"

He paused. "Well, I knew I would have to do what was required. I had to move on and keep my eye on the prize."

"That's it?" I replied.

"What else was there? I was not going to be deterred from reaching my goal of earning the doctorate in biomechanics. I had to do what was required. I don't want you to ever forget that."

As I reflected on this conversation, the calm with which my father explained his reaction to these events was mind-boggling. In my mind, he was being deprived of his right to earn a degree for which he had done all that was required except writing the dissertation. The color of his skin was the culprit. The perpetrators did not expect for LeRoy T. Walker to be a scholar. But the more important lesson was in his words to me. "I had to do what was required." I was hearing first-hand what Palmer referred to as those times in discovering your identity that you experience circumstances that will do harm, where you experience suffering. My father stood tall and persevered. It was a remarkable mentoring moment. I soon discovered that it would be the single moment to which I would refer often in mentoring students through difficult situations.

The Emotional Self

You can't teach to make a difference without experiencing feelings that can "either enlarge or diminish the exchange between teacher and student" (Palmer, 1998, p. 5). This is an essential lesson for the teacher and mentor to understand that requires a strong sense of self. Learning this lesson came from one of the best teachers I ever had. Although I attended segregated schools all of my life, I know that I received an excellent education. My father's mantra, "Excellence without excuse," was imprinted indelibly on my brain. Excellence in all that we did, in how we lived our lives, in school work—everything—was an expectation. I had always been a good student. Everyone knew which of the students at W. G. Pearson Elementary School were daughters and sons of university professors, doctors, lawyers, and other professionals in the community. Unfortunately, I was under the impression that I could rest on my laurels and skate through school on my father's reputation. I was sadly mistaken.

The question for us as teachers is not if, but ***how*** we influence our students. It is a question about a relationship: Where are our students going, and who are we for them in their journey? (Daloz, 1999, p. 5).

The most significant event of first grade was the life-changing decision of Brown vs Board of Education, May 1954. It was the talk of the community. At the time, I was unaware of its life-changing nature. I asked my mother what the excitement was all about. She replied, "Life as we know it will not be the same." I was in high school before I realized there were 4 words that should have driven the decision of Brown vs Board of Education: "With all deliberate speed." Separate, but equal,

was declared unconstitutional and was to be remedied "with all deliberate speed," which meant that separate, but equal segregated schools were to be abolished. Under normal circumstances, there would no longer be segregated schools. We were still waiting for the change when I graduated from high school more than 10 years later.

Fortunately, our teachers never let up on teaching us to pursue excellence in our education. We all had our favorite teachers. Going into third grade, we waited with anxious anticipation for the class lists that would reveal our 3rd-grade teachers. My mother and I walked to W. G. Pearson School on the Friday before school opened. We perused the list together. We looked for my name on the first two lists. Carolyn Walker was not there. On the third one, my name was at the bottom of the list (W's were always at the bottom). My eyes went back to the top of the list to look for the teacher's name. Miss Foster. I closed my eyes and looked again. The name had not changed. It remained Miss Betty Foster. I was devastated. Her reputation preceded her: no nonsense, really hard, did not tolerate misbehavior of any kind, and willingly called parents. I begged my mother to change my class. By the smile on her face, I concluded that she was very happy that Miss Betty was going to be my teacher. My mother completely ignored my protests, so off to third grade and to Miss Betty I went.

One of the most significant lessons that I learned from Miss Foster was the power in always doing only your very best. It was excellence or nothing. The one time that I submitted subpar work, it resulted in the following conversation after school.

"Do you think you spent enough time to complete the assignment?"

"I guess not," I said under my breath.

"Absolutely not!" Miss Foster rose slowly from her chair. She was an ominous figure who stood 6' tall—a giant in my eyes. She walked over to her desk and returned with my half-done assignment.

"This is not quality work. There is nothing excellent about it. If you intend to go further with your studies, on to college, and to become a professional, this work is completely unacceptable." Miss Foster was clearly more upset than I was. Then she asked the most difficult question.

"What would your father think of this?" I had no response.

She sighed a long sigh. "You have great potential, Miss Walker, and much is expected of you. But you must expect more of yourself. I am returning this work to you to do over and return to me in 2 days."

She must have noticed the shocked look on my face. It was at that moment that I realized that she was truly concerned about my progress that extended beyond submitting work on time. She wanted me to do the work *well*. She uttered words that I have never forgotten: "There is no shortcut to excellence." This mantra I added to "Excellence without excuse."

Mentors Who Evoked Us

The power of our mentors is not necessarily in the models of good teaching they gave us, models that may turn out to have little to do with who we are as teachers. Their power is in …a truth we can reclaim years later by recalling their impact on our lives (Palmer, 1998, p. 21). There is a bigger question that Palmer poses to the mentee: What was it about *you* that allowed great mentoring to happen? I remember I was an open book. The times in which I was raised required that I—as millennials say—"stay woke." Listening and learning was required. Looking back, I realize that I was blessed with mentors at every stage of my life and at every point where my identity, my intellect, and my integrity needed to grow.

Lessons that Transcend

My professional teaching career began in public education. As a new middle school teacher, I was amazed at the daily trials and tribulations of my students. I wanted to have more open conversations with them. I greeted students each day with "How's the day so far?" Class didn't begin for 5 min after they were all seated so they could finish their conversations that began in the hallway. These rituals became expectations in my space with the students. They opened up to me about all kinds of things. I cherished the conversations but never repeated them. My integrity would not let me. Students gathered in my classroom before and after school. I urged them daily to pursue excellence…it was excellence or nothing. I became known as that "cool" teacher. My colleagues teased me and greeted me with "Hey, Cool" on occasion.

Mentoring is a mutuality that requires *more than meeting the right teacher*; the teacher must meet the right student. In this encounter, not only are the qualities of the mentor revealed, but also the qualities of the student are drawn out in a way that is equally revealing (Palmer, 1998, p. 21). This thought nagged at me. And then I met Tom.

After reflecting on my career, I turned to Tom's story. Tom was at my classroom door every morning at 6:45 a.m. I learned that he loved to draw, and I asked if he was taking art classes from our nationally known art teacher, or if he joined the art club. He became silent and didn't answer. A few days later, he finally let me know that he cared for his profoundly disabled sister directly after school and he only had time for his classes. Tom also let me know that he did not like to write, which he demonstrated one day in class.

A few days later, we were discussing a short story when I noticed Tom was doodling…again. The bane of a teacher's existence is that student who does not pay attention. After class, I asked Tom why he insisted on doodling instead of taking notes. He asked, "Do you want to see my drawings?" I reluctantly agreed. Much to my surprise, he had doodled everything we discussed in class! Tom revealed himself, his qualities as a thinker, and as an artist. At that point we made a pact. I urged him to use his drawings to write what they meant. It would be good practice. He agreed. I knew that once we had made that connection, I had to do something so he could experience art every day. I made arrangements with the art teacher for him to attend an art class once a week instead of my Language Arts class. Tom went on to become a graphic artist with the *Seattle Times*.

It is a mistake to think that mentoring opportunities are planned or made immediately clear. But it does take *seeing* the student and going deeper than the work or the subject. More importantly, you have to *want to know*. Tom taught me an invaluable lesson that I always remember. The student *can be the teacher*. It takes openness and vulnerability. I return to the importance of identity and integrity. I am strong enough in my own skin to become vulnerable; to allow emotion to guide my work with students…to mentor them.

Mentoring in a Community of Learning

After many years in public education, and many fulfilling experiences with my students, I returned to the university to complete my doctorate in Curriculum and Instruction in education. Much to my own surprise, I was drawn to focusing my research on school culture and its importance to student achievement and teacher effectiveness. As I determined how to go about the research process, I was afforded the opportunity to work on an urban teaching grant and to work in an urban–rural middle school.

Additionally, in developing my research questions, and reading the work of Palmer and Laurent Daloz, among others, I turned to the concept of mentoring as a foundation for changing school culture. I was excited to let my faculty partner know my decision. She quickly replied, "That's not viable research. Schools don't care about mentoring." I was more than surprised. I was disappointed. The faculty member's response was an indication of many things, including a clear lack of understanding of mentoring as a deeply personal process and not just an action. I wondered what other faculty members thought. Did this portend what faculty really thought of mentoring?

Prior to this encounter, I had been reading Palmer's work. Ironically, he noted that education, particularly higher education, was a world of competition for grades, and divisions of status and power. For community to exist even in the classroom, there should be an interdependence between student and teacher. Students are dependent upon teachers for grades, but for what are teachers dependent upon students? If we cannot answer this question, "…community cannot exist. We are trained to work in utter autonomy…a mode that makes us largely independent of our students…we do not need them to succeed" (Palmer, 1998, p. 139).

This is the environment in which I attempted to place mentoring at the forefront of my research. It would prove to be a daunting task. I had no idea how deeply entrenched autonomy and independence were in higher education. Becoming a College of Education Holmes Scholar revealed to me just how deep was the divide.

Holmes Scholars—Origin and Goals

The College of Education was a member of the Holmes Group, a consortium of Research I, predominately white institutions (PWIs). One of the main goals of the Holmes Group was to increase diversity in the professoriate, specifically professors of color. To meet this goal, colleges of education nationwide who were members of the Holmes Group committed to increase the number of doctoral students from historically underrepresented diverse groups. Their initial efforts were successful in recruiting diverse students, which they called Holmes Scholars. However, the faculties in the PWI colleges of education were mostly white, and there were no mentoring models in place to ensure diverse student success. Although well-intentioned, as the number of Holmes Scholars increased, there was not an increase in formal mentoring. When the Holmes Group dissolved,

the American Association for Colleges of Teacher Education (AACTE) opted to continue to support Holmes Scholars as well as the original goals of the Holmes Group. AACTE not only increased the number of membership colleges and universities, but the organization also increased the number of Holmes Scholars. However, a standard model of mentoring was not in place, hence Holmes Scholars experienced varying levels of mentoring, or none at all.

As the first Holmes Scholar at my university, my experience was quite positive. As a disclaimer, I was a 25-year professional who had a defined sense of identity, clear goals, and a foundation of teaching and mentoring. As the college added Holmes Scholars, the majority were much younger and at earlier points in their professional lives. These facts do not preclude that, at no matter what age, pursuing the doctorate was an experience that leveled the playing field. We all needed mentoring through the process. As I progressed through the program, it became obvious that there was trepidation among faculty not only about how to advise or have conversations with diverse students, but also what to expect in terms of performance. Even when I was a student, faculty were very comfortable coming to me when there were challenges with diverse students. I was always dumbfounded when I was asked questions such as, "How should I grade *these students*?" Or if there was a challenge with a student, "Can you help me talk with…?" My response was always, "Well, how do you talk with any other student? Or grade any other student?" These experiences with faculty helped me to realize that mentoring diverse students could not happen until faculty became more comfortable—and more knowledgeable about—working with diverse students. There are the "social justice warriors" who assume they are working to eliminate inequality and lack of access and opportunity simply by being present or writing about their perspective. Although faculty will not have had the experiences of diverse students, it is essential for faculty who mentor diverse students to acknowledge that disparities exist in the environments in which some diverse students are raised, and that there is a lack of access to opportunities for economic growth and excellent schooling, all of which significantly impact their educational experience, preparation, and potential success in both undergraduate and graduate programs. Self-identity looms large when it pertains to knowing who you are, your strengths, and your shortcomings. There are key questions students should ask: Am I prepared for doctoral work? (It is NOT master's PLUS). What will I really need to work on?

Recognizing Potential

I became a Research Associate after completing my doctorate, after which I became an instructor, followed by Director of Clinical Experiences. It was also my great fortune to mentor Holmes Scholars. For the last 5 years of my career as a faculty member, I was the Holmes Scholars Coordinator for the college. I am often asked by faculty colleagues, how do you identify students that might have the potential to do doctoral work, especially diverse students? In my work with Holmes Scholars, I realized that traditional methods of identifying potential would need to change. Paying attention to how students express themselves, or how well they can articulate their ideas would become essential indicators of potential to do doctoral work. What immediately came to mind was that faculty discovered that preparation of diverse students could not be assumed to be comparable to that of majority students that made up the largest percentage of applicants to college programs. The challenge to faculty was to determine what processes were in place to work with students who might need assistance in writing, organization, or time management. It goes back to acknowledging the disparities in access, environment, and opportunity. Palmer (1998) reminds us that, in even in higher education, teachers and students must become a community of learners, mentors, and students working together to bring out quality in student work to achieve excellence.

Potential Unleashed

I am reminded of when I first met one of the best students I have had in my 20 years in the college. I first met Dee as a master's student in the Urban Education program. She came into class, sat in the back of the room, talked to no one, and waited for class to begin. I have always focused on what Palmer (1998) calls a "subject-centered classroom" (p. 120) that honors students' needs "to be introduced to a world larger than their own experiences…a world that expands their personal boundaries and enlarges their sense of community" (p. 120). I engaged the class in a conversation about the realities of school. Apparently, someone made a comment with which Dee disagreed. I noticed her agitation and asked for her response.

She proceeded to eloquently rebut the comment and offered a well-crafted response that informed the entire class based on her own experiences in the classroom. Students asked her questions that she answered with excellent detail and information. At that moment, I realized that I wanted to know more about her and that we needed her in our doctoral program! I asked to speak to her after class. A few minutes into the conversation, I inquired if she had thought about pursuing her doctorate. She immediately replied, "No, ma'am. I am DONE after this degree." I let her know that I thought she had real potential to become a doctoral student. She just gave me the eye roll and left. As time passed, we developed a warm relationship. I worked with her in her classroom and noticed she had a true passion for teaching and a real knack for research. She was finally convinced to apply for the doctoral program. We had an incredible mentor–mentee relationship during her doctoral studies. Dee also became a Holmes Scholar. I was her dissertation chair and she wrote an outstanding dissertation. The more confidence she had in herself, the more her work improved. Now, we are colleagues and friends, still working and growing together. This is the work of mentors. It is a natural progression. Faculty must *see* students in their own element, not just in their offices or in formal meetings.

What is important about this story is that potential in diverse students is demonstrated in diverse ways. Articulating deep thinking is a key attribute for a doctoral student. Higher education faculty should consider this when interviewing potential doctoral students.

When Things Fall Apart

The true nettle of a mentor is tested when things fall apart, when students get into tough situations, or are challenged by coursework, relationships with faculty, or meeting program expectations. The most difficult situation that I have ever faced with a student tested me in ways that I never expected.

After completing a doctoral program, successfully completing and defending comprehensive exams, proposing research, selecting a faculty committee, writing a dissertation, and preparing for a dissertation defense, the student was informed by the Chair that she could no longer work in the position of chair. This decision stopped all progress toward the doctoral degree. The problem was more complicated because the degree was in the College of Education, but the program was in another college. I

was informed by the student, a Holmes Scholar, who only asked what to do. The dissertation committee did not know of this development. I was at a loss as to how this could happen. It is times like these that test how far a mentor will—or should go—to assist a student. After much thought and multiple conversations with the student, I decided that it would require much more than a mentor intervention. I had to do what was required.

Faculty would need to be involved, and I needed to talk to the Dean of the college. As a mentor, I was going "out on a limb," but I determined it was necessary. Once the Dean was involved, it became an entirely different situation. More importantly, I was directly challenging a faculty and department decision. That it was a diverse student complicated the situation even further. An additional complication was that the degree was in the College of Education (COE), and the program was in another. Once I spoke to the Dean of COE, the situation was shared with program faculty, the dissertation committee, and the program college Dean. The solution would have to be decided between the Deans. Unfortunately, the problem eventually required intervention at the university level. After much discussion, which included the idea of changing degrees and programs, solutions were offered but were not acceptable. Each one would delay conferring of the degree. As a mentor, I advised the student to remain steadfast and let university administration review the problem. As a result of a thorough review, it was determined that the problem placed unreasonable duress on the student, who was allowed to reconstitute a committee, defend the dissertation, and is now an Assistant professor.

I learned a lot about myself in working through this challenge, and it went beyond mentoring. It was a question of integrity. We must teach our students to self-advocate. But when they do, and ask for support, mentors must advocate *for* them. Sometimes that takes a leap of faith. The litmus test for this challenge is how—and *if*—the mentor is willing to advocate for the student.

Three Generations

My doctorate was conferred in May 2001. What I did not know until the week before graduation was that my father was to receive an Honorary Doctorate in Public Service. On that day, the president of the university invited my father to hood me. I could not have imagined when I began this journey that this defining moment would be shared with a man that had successfully mentored so many students to completion of their

degrees, and who had endured the ultimate humiliation of being denied a doctoral degree because of the color of his skin. He had endured and overcome the obstacles placed before him. Somehow, through it all, he looked for the good in others, and he taught his daughter to do the same.

It was a proud moment that I will never forget. Ten years later, my daughter, his granddaughter, received her Ph.D. in exceptional education from UCF. My father was present to see the third generation of the Walker family earn a Ph.D., a rare accomplishment for an African American family.

Legacy

In 2012, I lost my father. He lived a full life. He was the ultimate mentor and a great father. To my mother, Katherine, my father, LeRoy, Miss Betty Foster, Dr. Mike Robinson, my dissertation chair, and many more along the path of my journey who held me up and molded me as an individual, simply saying thank you is not enough. I have been successful because of their belief in me. I listened, I learned, and I am paying it forward. The power of our mentors is in their capacity to awaken a truth within us, a truth we can reclaim years later by recalling their impact on our lives (Palmer, 1998, p. 21).

For students of color, the challenge is great, and is sometimes amplified by the lack of belief that they *can succeed* in a doctoral program. It is a great burden to bear—going into the unknown of doctoral study without assurance that there will be a champion to accompany the student on the journey. Recalling the words of Daloz (1999), The question for us as teachers is not IF, but *HOW* we influence our students. It is a question about a relationship: Where are our students going, and who are we for them in their journey? (p. 5).

I remember the words of Carter G. Woodson (1933) in his timeless work, *The Mis-education of the Negro*: The differences of races, moreover, is no evidence of superiority or inferiority. This merely indicates that each race has certain gifts, which the others do not possess. It is by development of these gifts that every race must justify its right to exist (p. 11).

It is incumbent upon mentors to *see and nourish these gifts.*

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CHAPTER 13

Creating the Research Pipeline Through Mentorship and Self-Advocacy

Andrew P. Daire

My Journey in Three Stories

Before migrating to the United States from Jamaica, I distinctively remember my mother sitting my brother and me down and telling us, "We are moving to a country where Black people are treated as second class citizens. You will have to work twice as hard to be seen as equal and three times as hard to even have a chance of being viewed as better." I was 10 years old. This was not just a one-time message, it was a message that I was reminded each and every moment I was introduced to racism and other uncomfortable, negative and minimizing experiences that left me feeling hurt. I now know those to be microaggressions. As I experienced micro and macro-aggressions along the way, I was reminded of that initial message about needing to work two to three times as hard. Basically, "no excuses allowed." I share this not as an example of how we should address issues of racism and micro/macroaggression with others, particularly our children. However, this is an important part of my

A. P. Daire (✉)
Dean's Office, School of Education,
Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, VA, USA
e-mail: apdaire@vcu.edu

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story and journey. I learned the value of working hard and striving for excellence and without excuses. However, this belief was developed from and further enhanced a belief in meritocracy, which I have grown to realize as not entirely accurate and short-sighted in an American culture and context.

A second story that reflects an important part of my journey involves my first professional position after completing my master's degree in counseling. I worked in the student counseling center of my alma mater, Stetson University, where I completed my undergraduate and master's degree. Mental health counselors need a specific number of clinical supervision hours over the course of three years before applying for state licensure. My supervisor at the time and the counseling center director, Dr. Judith Wright, was an instrumental mentor in my life. She utilized a style of clinical supervision that focused on my personal and professional growth and development to best serve the clients with whom I worked. I remember moments when I realized that I was unconsciously gripping my chair with both hands in a manner similar to being on a roller coaster ride. This was a behavioral manifestation of the roller coaster ride of powerful and sometimes uncomfortable insights that I was realizing during the supervision process. I truly learned to appreciate the power of critical reflection through developing greater comfort with the discomfort that oftentimes accompanies insight and the growth that followed. These powerful supervision experiences and the resulting impact on my professional and personal development helped me realized the impact that a caring and competent role model and mentor can have in one's personal and professional life.

A third experience occurred after I received two major federal funded grants, a five-year $1.6 million grant and a four-year $3.6 million grant. Since both projects were part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Administration for Children and Families (ACF) Healthy Marriage Initiative, I received approval from the ACF Program Officers to combine and implement both grants into a $5.2 million dollar project to develop and test interventions that would strengthen family stability primarily for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) recipients. Our team implementing this large grant project, which included myself as the Principal Investigator (PI), another faculty member who served as co-PI, master's and doctoral level trained mental health counselors and marriage and family therapists, masters level graduate assistants, and undergraduate research assistants felt a sense of "arrival"

with the funding, scope of the project, potential impact, and the clout and reputation it brought us in the university and in the field. For the next nine months, we successfully ramped up the grant, we were successfully recruiting and serving participants, and our federal program officer was pleased with the work being done. We were quite proud of ourselves to say the least. Toward the end of the project's first year, ACF announced that we needed to provide more rigorous inclusion screening of participants to ensure that they were living at 200% or below federal poverty guidelines level. Our team, which included counselors and social service professionals at the master's and doctoral level, all thought we understood poverty until this decision was made.

We instantly saw a drop in recruitment efforts and subsequent enrollment. We immediately began experiencing challenges related to recruitment, program service delivery, retention, and follow-up. The team became frustrated and was oftentimes heard complaining that participants "were not really committed to getting help," "they are not wanting to change," and "they really don't want to improve their situation." We were failing, we had not arrived, and we were not proud of ourselves. We then realized that all of the training and degrees we received did nothing to prepare us to work with historically marginalized populations living in poverty, particularly generational poverty.

For members of the team and me, we moved from a sense or feeling of arrival and competence to an immediate feeling of incompetence. Some began to blame the client, e.g. "blame the victim," for intake no shows, for not showing up for services and for what we interpreted as not valuing what we had to offer. We then began a process of intensive all-staff trainings on understanding poverty, privilege, power, racism, and how implicit bias can adversely impact the process of true and meaningful impact. We began to critically reflect on how our programs and other programs, with the stated intention of helping similar populations, were structurally developed in a manner based on our privilege and implicit bias. As counseling and social service professionals, we realized that no place in our training prepared us to understand and address the aforementioned contextual aspects of working with those who are recipients of historical and systemic marginalization. I, and most of my colleagues, left that experience with the realization that intensive training is needed to understand poverty, privilege, racism, and implicit bias if you desire to work with economically and historically marginalized populations. We

developed an intense resolve on the need for critical reflection. Additionally, we developed the need for bold and aspirational thinking and efforts to make a difference in the lives of those living in generational poverty, many of which in urban and major metropolitan areas reflect underrepresented minority populations. Many of us left with a fairly intense resolve to ensure equity, inclusion and *true* social justice. Not just talking about social justice but, for us as social scientists and interventionists, developing evidence-based interventions to move the needle for those who have been historically marginalized and those impacted by poverty.

These three experiences were powerful, formative, and helped me develop an unwavering work ethic, the need for bold thinking in addressing real needs for historically marginalized populations through a critically reflective lens on examining our own privilege and implicit bias, an unwavering belief in the power of openness to feedback, and an understanding of the role strong mentorship plays in this process. These experiences, and the dispositions that I developed as a result of thinking carefully about them and how they have influenced my attitudes and behaviors, aided me in navigating the inequities and disproportional experiences that other underrepresented minorities at all levels (e.g. students, faculty, staff, administration) and I oftentimes experience in the academy. Observing and experiencing the inequities in opportunities, experiences, and recognition continue to be personally frustrating but is also motivating. However, providing and receiving mentorship continues to be one of the most beneficial strategies to most effectively navigate the sometimes perilous waters of the academy.

Core Value

There have been quite a few formative experiences in my life but, when reflecting upon the development of my core values, I always end up at the three aforementioned experiences. They created a foundation that influences how I perceive, approach, and interacted in and with the world around me. As a researcher, the "message" on work ethic translated into work that would make a meaningful difference and "move the needle" on an important issue, which I viewed as an impact. In addition, the underlying message of "twice as good" or "three times as good" does influence trying to go above and beyond and striving for distinction. Again, I am not condoning the appropriateness of that family message but only sharing how it influenced me. In my various roles, particularly in that of a

leader, this evolved into my first core value and belief that we must *strive for excellence, innovation, and impact* in what we do.

Striving for excellence is definitely a journey with no arrival point. The lack of an arrival point contributes to *excellence* being a difficult concept to measure or evaluate. My development from childhood into adolescence and throughout adulthood shapes my perception of excellence. In academia, I have learned some strategies that provided me insight into my striving toward excellence including quantity and quality of my research, and refereed journal publications and conference presentations; quality of my instruction in the classroom; quantity, quality, and impact of my service to the unit (i.e. department, school/college, and university) and professional organizations; and external recognition through prestigious awards. As scholars in the broad field that encompasses education, we are social scientists so impact also should include making a difference in the lives of individuals and institutions that serve individuals. However, more powerful indicators are the ones that come with critical reflection. Some potentially tough questions to aid in this critically reflective process include:

- *Evaluate yourself against what or whom others have identified as strong, outstanding, or excellent. How am I in comparison?*
- *Am I achieving or on my way to achieving desired goals?*
- *When last have I asked a trusted person who will provide me honest feedback to rate my performance?*
- *Have others provided me feedback on things I need to work on and have I put that feedback into critical reflection and action or did I make excuses to minimize or discredit the feedback?*
- *How do I respond to feedback that is uncomfortable?*

As researchers and scholars in academia, I believe that innovation and impact must accompany our efforts toward excellence. For those with doctoral degrees, striving for a doctoral degree, and working or aim to work in a research institution, we are charged with addressing problems of significance through our line of research. Thus, we must obtain a deeper and more scientific understanding of challenges plaguing our particular research area, develop innovative ways of better understanding the

problem, and/or develop innovative solutions toward having a meaningful impact on the identified problem. Thus, excellence, innovation, and impact can serve as a useful guide for your work efforts.

My second core value is that I must be *bold and aspirational* in my pursuits. On one level, this is quite similar to striving for excellence, innovation and impact. If excellence is the direction I am striving toward then bold and aspirational is the area of desired excellence. For example, in identifying my area of research focus, I ask myself if I am acquiescing to the status quo or am I striving for significant and meaningful impact? I can strive for excellence in my desired choice. However, does my desired choice reflect being bold and aspirational? Researchers in almost all (not all) areas within a college and school of education would fall under the umbrella of being a social scientist. And, the problems and challenges that plague our society and our respective fields are definitely *not average*. Thus, we are not going to move the needle on addressing these significant problems and challenges by average thinking and average efforts. I've recognized the importance of being bold and aspirational in my desires and intent. When I consider those who have changed how I think about issues (e.g. Martin Luther King, Jr.), our understanding of the world (e.g. George Washington Carver, Ghandi), or the universe (e.g. Albert Einstein, Steven Hawkins), they were bold and aspirational in their thinking. Who among you reading this chapter will have that type of impact? Will I have ever have this type of impact? I imagine it will be those among us who are bold and aspirational, and who also strives for excellence, innovation and impact.

My last core value I attribute to Dr. Judith Wright, who was a pivotal mentor in my life. That value is in the *personal and professional development of others*. As a leader or mentor, I have the opportunity to impact knowledge on content and processes toward helping others become more successful in their endeavors. However, whether a direct report/team member or protégé, there is much to teach supervisors and mentors in understanding context and culture, understanding their privilege and power, and in being empathetic, which are critically important soft skills that those of us in positions of authority need. Thus, the mentor–protégé relationship should be bidirectional, as should the leader–team member relationship. As a leader and mentor, I want and work toward advancing the personal and professional development of my direct report/team member or protégé. However, I have found it beneficial when my protégé or direct report/team member desires for my personal and professional

development as the leader or mentor. In other words, I believe we should all, within our organizations and groups and regardless of our roles or power, should work toward the personal and professional development of those around us. I have witnessed and experienced how this approach and core value improves those around me and improved me as a direct report, protégé, leader and mentor.

As a leader, these three core values have gone beyond being leadership values, they are values I hold dear in all aspects of myself. Regardless of role (e.g. parent, partner, friend, colleague, faculty member, mentor or dean), I *strive* for excellence, innovation and impact. I *strive* to be bold and aspirational in my initiatives, projects, and goals. And, I *strive* to positively impact the personal and professional development of those around me. I emphasize *strive* because it is a continuous journey with various levels of success. However, I do know that I am striving for the best that I can be.

By striving for excellence, innovation, and impact, you are ensuring that you are doing your very best with a recognition that average is not acceptable. Being bold and aspirational in your intent affords you the space to think innovatively about your area of research interest and desired impact to ensure that you are moving a needle on an important issue. Finally, by having the personal and professional development as a priority for those around you, particularly those on your team, you support excellence around you, which amplifies excellence within yourself.

Mentorship and Self-Advocacy

As a dean, I realize that one of the most important and challenging decisions is in the hiring of tenure track faculty members. In hiring faculty, department chairs and deans must consider if the candidate is ready to hit the ground running, particularly in the area of research and scholarly productivity. Candidates who have served on research teams, published lead and co-authored publications in national refereed journals, presented refereed presentations and papers at national conferences demonstrate research and scholarly productivity. This level of demonstrated productivity generally comes with strong mentorship from a strong mentor. However, a gap exists in underrepresented minority (URM) candidates who have "*demonstrated success*" in the various aspects of research and scholarship opposed to "*shows research potential*." We can make a difference through solid mentorship and self-advocacy.

How Inequities in Faculty Representation Result from Inequitable Doctoral Student Experience

The need exists for mentorship pipelines for underrepresented minority doctoral students in colleges and schools of education. Significant gaps exist in the number of URM faculty in academia (Smith, Esau, & Garcia, 2012). Yared (2016) found that 36% of minorities (African-American, American Indians/Alaskans Natives, and Hispanics) drop out of their doctoral programs while 20% do not complete their degree in seven years. *Inside Higher Ed* (Tate, 2017), examining data from a six-year review of graduation rates with a sample of 2,824,569 doctoral students, reported similar findings with Asian and White doctoral students completing at a rate 20% higher than their Hispanic and Black counterparts (Asian—63.2%, White—62%, Hispanic—45.8%, and Black—38%). TIAA Institute (2016) conducted a study indicating that URM faculty comprised 12% of faculty in 2013 but only 10% were tenured. Myers (2016), in his study on diversity at large state universities, found that only 3% of faculty were Black/African-American and 4% Hispanic at universities with "very high research," e.g. R1. At universities with "high research," e.g. R2, each of the two groups represented 4%. However, the number drops with Black/African-American full professors only representing 2% and 3% for Hispanic at R1s and 3% for each group at R2s. The results suggest that disparities exist not only in completion rates for URM doctoral students but also in the hiring rates and success through the academic trajectory toward full professor.

Having experienced being an underrepresented minority doctoral student, faculty member, institute director, associate dean, and now Dean, I have witnessed (and even experienced) the disparities and inequities in formal and informal opportunities, many of which stem from implicit bias, afforded to URM doctoral students. This is seen throughout the professional trajectory but is most concerning at the doctoral student preparation level where the inequities are abundant. Underrepresented minority doctoral students are less likely to be invited on publication writing teams or to join grant writing teams, and are less likely to receive the graduate research assistantships with productive faculty, particularly on funded projects opposed to a GA position in a university office. In addition, they are oftentimes not at the "table" for important informal opportunities compared to students representing majority populations. This places URM students at a distinct disadvantage during the job search

process when deans have to make decisions on candidates that can "hit the ground running" and who is most likely to be successful, which is usually measured as research productivity and success with tenure and promotion. These gaps that exist in formal and informal opportunities lead to gaps in skill development in research, evaluation, scholarly writing, grant writing, and research design and methodologies.

To help paint a picture, I have witnessed numerous white doctoral students being afforded the formal opportunity of a graduate assistantship assignment on a federally funded research grant, affording them the informal opportunities of being on grant writing teams, exposure to hands-on research design and methodology, exposure to various aspects of project implementation, and serving on publication writing teams. While many underrepresented minority doctoral students' first exposure to hands-on research design and methodology might be during their dissertation. In their job search cover letter and interview, the white doctoral student has been afforded the opportunity for significantly more practical experiences (more) refereed publications and presentations, and concrete examples when responding to questions regarding research and scholarship during the interview process resulting in them presenting as the stronger candidate. I have seen this far too often when serving on search committees as an assistant, associate, and full professor and also as a dean, who in most cases makes the final decision regarding hires.

Why We Cannot Rely on Accreditation Bodies or Standards

Accreditation bodies for various education degree programs provide clear standards regarding cultural diversity, however, they lack in addressing equity. One accreditation body, the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Education Programs (CACREP), accredits master's and doctoral degree programs in counseling and its specialties. CACREP standard II is on *Professional Counseling Identity* and subsection II.F. speaks to *Social and Cultural Diversity*. More specifically, II.F.2.h states that programs must document where "strategies for identifying and eliminating barriers, prejudices, and processes of intentional and unintentional oppression and discrimination" are covered in the curriculum. Although this is a curricular expectation, to what extent do programs critically reflect on their practice with underrepresented minority doctoral students and the experiences those students are afforded compared to other students? Section IV, *Evaluation in the Program*, calls for evaluation

of the program, assessments of students, and evaluation of faculty and supervisors. However, no place in this section does it address examining for implicit bias or differential experiences afforded to underrepresented minority students and students of color. Additionally, section IV.F calls for program faculty to "systematically assess" students on their progress throughout the program but does not call the program to evaluate for differences in the opportunities provided, afforded or in the productivity and performance of different groups of students with the aim to identify disparities and inequities in program experiences between those groups.

The field of special education does not have an accrediting body although they do have the Higher Education Consortium in Special Education (HECSE) that identified features of high-quality doctoral programs in special education. However, it does not explicate specific standards. Additionally, no accreditation body exists nor standards in educational leadership or teacher education at the doctoral level requiring critical reflection or adherence to equity standards for doctoral students. However, at the undergraduate level, the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) serves as the primary accreditation body for educator preparation. Standard 2, Clinical Partnership and Practice, speaks to ensuring teacher candidates have experiences with diverse student populations and Standard 3, Candidate Quality, Recruitment, and Selectivity, indicates that program must have a plan for recruitment of diverse candidates who meet employment needs. These are important examples regarding why we cannot rely on accreditation standards to ensure equity in the experiences and opportunities afforded to underrepresented minority students at any level in the education field. Additionally, many of us can share examples in which programs are not holding their faculty or departments to the task of ensuring equity of experiences among their students. Thus, it is incumbent on the underrepresented minority student to develop specific knowledge in what is expected and needed to be successful in the job search process and as a faculty member, including deliverables or work products, to develop specific self-advocacy skills to best identify and obtain necessary experiences that will strengthen their experiences and productivity as a doctoral student, and to seek effective mentorship. The development of this knowledge, skills, and deliverables will lead to greater success as a doctoral student, in the job search process and in the academy.

Mentoring Considerations

Mentorship is a beneficial strategy for supporting underrepresented minority graduate students and faculty (Kosoko-Lasaki, Sonnino, & Voytko, 2006). Each university, school, or college, department, and program differs in culture, climate and faculty make-up. As a doctoral student, you are oftentimes entering an unfamiliar environment and situation resulting in the opportunity to benefit greatly from mentorship. In this section on mentorship, my hope is to expound on some things I found valuable in being the recipient and provider of mentorship.

It's not a right, it's an opportunity. For the mentor, mentoring is not a right or benefit of being at a particular stage, place or in a particular position. It is a chance or opportunity to positively impact someone's life and trajectory through your knowledge, experience and skill set. Thus, a mentoring relationship should not be entered lightly, should not be required or mandated, and should require one's dedication and commitment. For the protégé, the opportunity for mentorship is a chance and opportunity to have someone pour into your success. Treat mentorship as a personal gift of one's time, knowledge, experience and talents and respect the decision, time and emotional sacrifice, and responsibility the mentor has in your success.

Bidirectional nature of the mentor–protégé relationship. As mentioned in an earlier section, the mentorship relationship allows for personal and professional development for the mentor and the protégé. Thus, both individuals should be open to learning and growing from each other's unique knowledge, experiences and talents. Both should challenge each other and be challenged in understanding the context that each resides. However, be critically reflective and ensure that challenging the other is not a direct result of or in response to the uncomfortable feelings that usually precedes the growth resulting from the needed feedback and insight.

Mentors should understand their strengths and limitations (e.g. research, scholarship, teaching, etc.). Mentors sometimes experience pressure stemming from the inaccurate belief that we have to provide mentorship in all areas or be an expert in all areas. Providing mentorship in a particular area we do not have sufficient expertise or have not been successful can do damage. Mentors can empathize in a challenge or journey, which is validating and beneficial, but should shy away from providing technical advice that could be disadvantageous to our protégé. The protégé, on the other

hand, sometimes inaccurately believes that they need to receive everything from us as a mentor. In those situations where our protégé needs mentorship in an area that we don't have sufficient expertise, I suggest we help the protégé seek out other mentors so we can collectively afford them the necessary support, guidance, and technical knowledge and skill development to achieve their desired goals.

Share your core values. We are all at different levels in awareness and understanding of core values that guide us personally and professionally. It is important for both mentee and protégé to identify and share their core values with each other. However, this is not an opportunity to force or expect the other to embrace your particular core values, but an opportunity to learn and grow from what each brings to the table.

The mentor and protégé do not have to be of the same race or gender. I will begin by stating that I fully believe that persons of your same race and gender can provide unique benefits from shared experiences in the mentorship process stemming from shared lived experiences. However, I also fully believe that there is much, including technical knowledge and skills (e.g. research, manuscript development), one can learn from someone quite different from them. However, I do not believe a mentor can effectively mentor an underrepresented minority doctoral student without a keen understanding and appreciation of inequities, bias, power, and privilege that exist in the academy. The mentor should recognize and possess a deep understanding and appreciation of the disparities that exist between majority and minority student experience. In addition, they must be critically reflective of their own power, privilege, racism/racists beliefs, and bias along with comfort in engaging in conversations on these topics.

Effective Self-Advocacy: Direct Advice for the Doctoral Student and New Faculty Member

Whether during the job search process, third-year review or promotion and tenure, biases oftentimes exist in the evaluation of underrepresented minority candidates. Although many in higher education, particularly in colleges and schools of education, tout a commitment to social justice with a desire to address inequities, rarely does it ever result in compassion, understanding or consideration during the job application or promotion and tenure review and evaluation process that, for many underrepresented minority doctoral students and assistant professors, they

received less formal and informal mentorship, opportunities, and experiences as their white counterparts. Thus, it proves necessary for underrepresented minority doctoral students and new faculty members to be aware of what experiences they should be receiving, what deliverables they should have at particular review periods, what they should be doing at each stage in their professional journey to be successful, and self-advocacy to receive the highest level of preparation and support.

Identification of career goals, aspirations and the type of institution or position, i.e. research vs. teaching, to best achieve. Many doctoral students, and even faculty, believe that research or being at a high research activity institution is best for impact. However, effective teaching is also needed to move the needle on important issues and to achieve high levels of impact. Although it should occur before one applies to doctoral programs, it is important for doctoral students to identify their career goals and aspirations, including the type of university they would like to work after their doctoral studies, early in the process. This affords ample time to identify expectations, experiences, and work products necessary for the best preparation and positioning for success.

Identify the expectations of desired institution for new faculty hires and success. After identifying the type of institution you would like to work after completing your doctoral studies, develop a list of top schools/colleges of education for that institution type. Then find out their expectations for their new hires or those who are successful in promotion and tenure. There is a direct and indirect strategy to this process. The direct strategy is to connect with a faculty member, department chair or dean in person at a conference, via email, or appointment request for a few minutes to discuss institutional and school/college expectations. Many, although not all, will be open to this type of conversation particularly from a doctoral student. Be specific in your questions. For example, what are the refereed publication and presentation expectations *you would prefer to see* in applicants for assistant professor positions? Or, can you describe how a successful candidate looks with respect to publications, presentation, teaching, and other experiences when being considered for an assistant professor position at your institution? A less direct strategy is to review the vita of their new hires. Their vita will provide the year they began their position, the years in their doctoral program, and you can examine the number of publications, presentations, teaching/coteaching opportunities, and other experiences that occurred during the time they were a doctoral student. Conducting these analyses for a few

of their recent hires affords you valuable information on what they look for in new hires. In addition, you can conduct a similar review of recently tenured faculty members. Most vitaes indicate the year of promotion to associate professor with tenure and the year they were hired. You can conduct similar analyses of publications, presentations, teaching, and types of institutional and professional service that occurred during their time as an assistant professor to obtain a general gauge of expectations. This, of course, is in addition to reviewing promotion and tenure guidelines but is it fairly uncommon to find one that provides specific details in the number of publications, presentations, etc.

Developing an innovative, impactful and fundable line of research. If you are seeking a faculty position in a research-intensive university, your research interests, and, more importantly, your line of research are quite important. Deans and department chair want to know that your research area is one that is innovative and impactful, which are core requirements for many federal sources, e.g. NIH, NSF, and IES. Additionally, externally funded research affords funding to support research costs, funding of doctoral and other students, allows faculty to "buy out" or reassign their time to research, which save the unit salary dollars, and brings prestige and recognition to the school/college and university. In addition to your research interests, being able to articulate a line of research demonstrates a level of maturity and focus on one's research. For example, one candidate might indicate a laundry list of research interests that may or not even be related to each other, which is not a good thing because it demonstrates a lack of focus, opposed to a short list of two to three areas that relate. However, a stronger presentation is one's line of research. For example, "My line of research examines factors that contribute to 'X' (something important in our society that is of interest at a national level) and the impact of 'Y' (innovative intervention, approach) in reducing/improving 'X'". Personally, my line of research examines factors that contribute to the couple and family stress and family fragmentation in economically and historically marginalized populations and the impact of brief couple and relationship education interventions that decrease stress and strengthens family stability.

Seek out a mentor. The previous section outlines some considerations for the mentor–protégé relationship. It is best if the doctoral students make it their responsibility to identify a mentor or mentors to position them toward success. Consider your strengths and areas of growth along with the experiences and deliverables needed for success in the next "big

evaluation," whether this be the job search and interview process or some aspect of the tenure and promotion process.

Connect with productive faculty and ask specifically for what you need. Hopefully, you identified productive faculty in your area of interest prior to selecting your doctoral program and that it was part of the process of selecting the particular institution. However, it will be important to ask faculty member(s) to join publication writing teams, opportunities for refereed presentations, opportunities to join grant writing teams, and formal or informal time to talk and learn about needed skills to be productive and successful. It is also important to periodically reintroduce yourself to faculty and make yourself available for meetings. For example, "Good afternoon Dr. Smith. As you might remember, I share your research interest in interventions to increase STEM engagement for middle-school girls. Congratulations on your new NSF grant in this area and I wanted to know if we could discuss how I might become a part of your research team. Please let me know when you can meet and I will make myself available." Keep in mind the old adage, "Closed mouths don't get fed!"

What to do when you encounter inequities. Unfortunately, you will see and experience inequities. Depending on the culture of your unit, you might be able to share these concerns with your advisor, a mentor, or an administrator. If you do, be clear and objective in stating the specific observable issues, ideally in behavioral terms, your feelings and concerns, and what you would like to see different. However, it is most important to ask for what you would like to receive. This section affords a guide to identifying what you need with recommendations for those wanting to be in research institutions but is better to detail specific requests (e.g. I would like to be part of a publication team and the opportunity to work on a grant writing team) as opposed to vague requests (e.g. I would like the same experience as others).

Produce! It is quite easy to get caught up in superfluous conversations on ideas and what one wanted to do but reviews of vita during the initial screening to determine which candidates should receive a phone interview focuses on deliverables. They focus on what you have done. It is highly unlikely that someone will call you to inquire why your vita reflects a lack of refereed publications, presentations, teaching experience, or service involvement. Most likely, you will not receive a call inquiring on why your vitae was not formatted properly, why your cover letter only stated you were applying for the job opposed to connecting your experiences, skills, and deliverables to the required and preferred qualifications

posted in the position announcement. There generally is no opportunity for self-advocacy when search committees are reviewing your documents. Your best option is to be productive and productivity equals marketability which leads to options.

What mentors and administrators can do. Mentors and administrators are important advocates for underrepresented minority students. You are in a position to ask tough questions and advocate harder for critical reflection. Request your program, department or school/college develop equity evaluation process to ensure all doctoral students are afforded similar opportunities. Many doctoral programs evaluate doctoral students annually so the opportunity exists to evaluate doctoral student productivity by group. Faculty oftentimes like to pontificate on the various stages of the research process for each student but, at the end of the day, this level of pontification does not occur when comparing candidates for jobs. So, it is best to focus on core deliverables that are reviewed in the job search process. In other words, compare their refereed publications and presentations, teaching and co-teaching opportunities, type of graduate assistantships (e.g. research or administrative), and formal and informal opportunities.

Programs, departments, and schools/colleges, or even individual faculty, can develop and communicate clear annual expectations for their doctoral, i.e. Ph.D., in the areas of refereed publications and presentations, and provide the students the necessary supports and structures to ensure goal attainment. For example, for my doctoral students, I establish clear expectations and benchmarks of two national refereed publications under review by May of their first year (one no lower than fourth author the other no lower than third author), two national refereed publications under review by May of their second year (one first author and second no lower than third author), and two national refereed publications their third year (one first author and the second no lower than third author). I also work as part of a research team so there are ready opportunities for collaboration. Additionally, I expect two refereed presentations per year with at least one being at a national conference and lead presenter on at least half. We then do monthly checks toward attainment of these deliverables. With acceptance rates and revise and resubmit process, this generally allows for a doctoral student to have three to five refereed publications, with the first author on two to three, and at least six refereed presentations, with lead presenter on at least three. If there are differences in productivity between my doctoral students, I then need to critically

reflect on what I am doing, what they are doing, and if I am providing *equitable* support (not equal) to ensure their success.

A third recommendation is to advocate on behalf of your doctoral student when you see injustice and inequity or when they report it. Unfortunately, the level of proof that underrepresented minorities have to provide for those in power to recognize or believe is a microaggression within itself. It is generally not a question of whether inequitable opportunities exist, it is a question where are places that it exists.

Conclusion

Being a doctoral student is a challenging process regardless of race, gender, and socioeconomic status. However, higher academia is an institution with privilege and power at its core so it is not surprising that inequities exist for those populations that historically have had less power. It is not surprising that there is an underrepresentation of faculty from historically marginalized populations in the academy, particularly at the associate and full professor level. Additionally, disparities exist in the formal and informal opportunities and experiences afforded to underrepresented minority doctoral students contributing to different levels of preparedness and competitiveness in the job search process. This preparedness also impacts readiness for success in the academy. In order to be successful, one must identify how success is measured; identify the specific skill sets, tools, and strategies; and ensure that they receive what is needed to be successful. Mentorship is an important role in this process. However, while many work to address the inequities and disparities, self-advocacy proves imperative to ensure you receive what is needed to be successful.

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CHAPTER 14

Lifting Scholars' Voices: An Analysis of Scholars' Reflections on Mentoring as Support in the Academy

DeShawn Chapman

As a full-time teacher and a part-time master's degree seeking student, I sat slumped down in my seat on the first night of a new semester. I was fatigued, mildly interested in the upcoming course content and weary of learning about teacher leadership on an urban education track from another white, female instructor. The door opened and I sat straight up in my chair. In walked a distinguished, brown-skinned, silver-haired older woman. The way she navigated the room, her style and words, embodied the phenomenal woman described by the poet Dr. Maya Angelou. Dr. Carolyn Hopp would be the second and last African American instructor I encountered during my collegiate journey from undergrad through the doctorate. Her presence opened another realm of who I could be in the field of education.

I am from a tight-knit family that straddled the working- and middle-class. My parents came of age in Alabama during the 1950's and 1960's,

D. Chapman (✉)
Center for Higher Education Innovation, University of Central Florida, Orlando, FL, USA
e-mail: Deshawn.Chapman@ucf.edu

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although my mom spent her early formative years in Los Angeles, California. Both activists in different ways, my mother marched with Dr. King (and got fired as a domestic worker for doing so) while my father worked hard, kept his head down and enlisted in the military upon high school graduation in search of a better life. Their message to me and my sisters was to work harder than your peers and your good work will speak for itself, which they modeled as entrepreneurs. However, in adulthood I learned that hard work was not enough. I was at a disadvantage without professional relationships to guide my development and social capital for access and influence.

Outside of my family, Dr. Hopp would become my first mentor. She verbalized things she saw in me that I did not see in myself and her mentorship has literally changed the trajectory of my academic and professional career. Broadly, Dr. Hopp encouraged me to pursue a doctorate, supported me through the process, helped me to discover and have confidence in my voice and developed my scholarship as my dissertation chair. I witnessed her position and influence in the college protect me and her advocacy elevate me. She seemed to instinctively assess my strengths and weaknesses and provide resources and opportunities for development. Post graduation, we've redefined our relationship; she is still my mentor and champion, but also a collaborator in the work we endeavor to do in the community as colleagues.

As a postdoctoral scholar I directed First Star Central Florida Academy, a college and career preparation program for high school-aged youth in foster care. In this role I was mentored by my supervisor, Dean Pamela Carroll and the Assistant Dean of Research at that time. The effectiveness of these mentoring relationships was predicated on my ability to articulate my needs. Dean Carroll graciously used her professional influence to sustain my work literally (through funding) and figuratively by opening doors and introducing me to potential collaborators. Although the program was in her office, she referred to it as "your project." The autonomy, yet open door policy, she provided felt uncomfortable at times because of my own self-doubt and naivete in academia, but it strengthened my ability to develop and pursue my own ideas. On a personal note, Dean Carroll's attendance at my wedding and interest in my son, who was born during the final year of my postdoc, made room for my intersectionality as a Black female scholar, wife and mother. While learning to balance both has been a challenge, her support encourages me to embrace both my personal and professional roles. During my postdoc, I also learned

with my first male mentor. The Assistant Dean of Research addressed my inexperience by unveiling the hidden curriculum in higher education. He provided mentorship regarding research and grants, helped me flesh out ideas in programing and scholarship, and most importantly, advised me on how to prioritize scholarly activities to establish a competitive edge for future employment in the academy.

While mentoring is a source of support, it is not a complete buffer against the undertones and overt experiences with racism and elitism that are embedded within the culture of the academy. The first professor in my doctoral program dismissed my research agenda of studying the racial achievement gap and performance of Black students in k-12 with a disparaging comment, "it's been around forever and nobody ever solves it, but you can work on it if you want to," and a shoulder shrug as she walked away. I changed my topic and began to struggle with connecting the course content to my lived experiences, at which time the professor suggested that perhaps a doctorate was not for me. In anger, I changed my topic back, did exceedingly well in the course and connected with a mentor who supported my increased research interest in Black education.

I accepted a postdoctoral fellowship with the expectation that I direct a college prep program for youth in foster care and conduct research on its efficacy. It all seemed simple until I found myself in more of an administrative role that overlapped non-profit management, case management and research production requirements. I often felt like my work was significant in that it changed lives but would not lead to professional advancement for me. Postdocs are supposed to lead to faculty appointments, mine did not. At times I felt discouraged for not being on a tenure line, but I also had to acknowledge my desire to use my doctorate practically even if it meant being outside of the academy, temporarily. In addition, I'd been gifted with a beautiful young family that I wasn't willing to compromise. Having a mentor who was my supervisor and lead college administrator was challenging for me. I grappled with my professional work independently and was at times unsure of how to articulate my need for support without the fear of seeming incompetent. Currently, I manage the educational aspect of a significant university initiative aimed at supporting the educational ecosystem, from early childhood through adult education, within the city's first historically Black neighborhood. I have the same mentors, each for different things, and I better know how to manage our relationships.

While my personal experiences were not horrific like some in the literature on Black students, faculty and professionals in higher education, they were an indicator of a larger narrative that we wanted to explore through the production of this book. Dr. Amanda Wilkerson and I recognized that opportunity and advancement were not equally distributed or a result of merit, but rather associated with social and/or professional networks. Moreover, we became increasingly cognizant of network connections to racial, gender and socio-economic dynamics among individuals within the institution. The stories shared in this work demonstrate the intersectionality of scholars' identities as people of color, international students, full-time and part-time students, first- and second-generation students, males and females, wives and husbands, mothers and fathers. We too belong in this space that is often white, male and stale.

Mentoring as a Source of Support

The impetus of this book was to elevate mentoring as a critical source of support for underrepresented scholars in the academy. Through narratives from doctoral students, working scholars and preeminent scholars, the power of mentoring has been elucidated. Overall, the evidence provided suggests that mentoring is both desired and effective in guiding students through the doctoral process and supporting working scholars' advancement through higher education as junior faculty members and administrative professionals. In fact, many authors sought (and are seeking) mentorship and, knowing the power of the process, engaged in mentoring others. Preeminent scholars recognized disparities and inequities in the preparation of underrepresented doctoral students and identified the effects of such on scholars' retention in doctoral programs, securing of jobs after graduation and matriculation through the tenure and promotion process. Given the unequal power and privilege distribution within institutions of higher education, authors provided aspirational and practical advice on mentoring and self-advocacy to effectively support scholars.

In the absence of mentoring, scholars presented issues with program selection, socialization into the academy, vulnerability to toxic departments/programs and retention. With the existence of formal mentoring practices, scholars at all levels benefited from scholarly development, professional socialization and advocacy. Specific elements include:

Scholarly development:

- Demystification of the doctoral process
- Dissertation support
- Teaching
- Career development
- Faculty appointments
- Job search training
- Research productivity
- Role modeling

Professional socialization

- Institutional adjustment
- Networking
- Social capital building

Advocacy

- Validation
- Policy knowledge
- Development of self-advocacy skills
- Mentor's professional influence

The stated topics impact the number of underrepresented scholars who enter and persist through doctoral programs, are hired for faculty and administrative roles and who are successful in those appointments leading to career advancement, tenure and promotion.

Mentoring Through Isolation and Trepidation

Much of the literature on mentoring underrepresented doctoral students and junior faculty includes stories of hardships. With optimistic intent we aimed to share stories about how mentoring supported scholarly advancement, particularly in association with the Holmes Scholars Program. However, in highlighting mentoring success stories we encountered descriptions of intense obstacles faced by scholars. Telling their

stories seemed to be cathartic for some, a way to express what they may not have been able to communicate in previous contexts. Such accounts reveal a climate in higher education that is sometimes hostile for underrepresented scholars. The narratives presented here provide evidence of inequity in support for scholars of color and between men and women, as well as for international scholars.

Working scholars were included in this book to provide insight into mentoring practices postdoctorate, as both a mentor and/or a mentee. Our intent was for these narratives to support the career advancement of scholars working in professional roles, along with the attainment of tenure and promotion for junior faculty. Interestingly, authors in this section wrote about being a mentor to others while identifying new sources of support for themselves. This is further evidence of two things, the first puzzling and the second promising. First, is there quality mentoring support for junior faculty and novice university professionals? Second, the narratives indicate that an aspect of mentoring is cyclical. Authors who experienced positive mentoring most often wrote about mentoring others. Mentors drew on previous mentoring experiences, both positive and negative, to actualize their own mentoring identities. As such, increasing mentoring experiences at the beginning of the doctoral pipeline can result in an increased number of faculty members and professionals from underrepresented groups that are available and interested in mentoring.

An understanding of who scholars are and how their various identities impact their academic experiences at the doctoral level and beyond is important for developing effective mentoring structures. Chapter authors described rich experiences prior to their doctoral journey. Foreign-born immigrants and international students bring diverse perspectives, languages and experiences. HBCU graduates described entering programs with high self-confidence having flourished in a familial context that builds self-esteem. Scholars wrote of drawing strength from relationships with family and close friends, who are described as having the ability to help one touch base with reality and remember who you are. Some are first-generation scholars while others walk in a rich legacy of academic pedigree. All are professionals in their field and possess strong practical knowledge. These valuable past experiences bring scholars to the door of the academy, and in conjunction with new encounters, influence their development. Understanding scholars' experiences is critical to developing appropriate supports. Cultural isolation and being a first-

or second-generation student emerged as themes that weigh heavily on scholars' experiences in the academy.

Cultural isolation was discussed in the context of racism, microaggression and stereotype threat. In the most intense cases, scholars recounted the impact of being the only person of color in their program, such as feeling pressure to succeed and prove their ability to compete with white peers; tempering responses as not to fulfill stereotypes in ideas, dialect and disposition, as well as a rejection of tokenism. In addition, academic scrutiny and limited constructive feedback caused scholars of color to perceive that a doctorate was not for them. Students and junior faculty identified challenges in aligning research interests with peers, finding acceptance onto research teams and being unsure of whom to trust. Relatedly, authors referenced the imposter syndrome in multiple contexts and associated with multiple identities (not limited to ethnicity). It exists at each level despite authors' assets, past experiences and practical knowledge. Effective mentors evidenced an understanding of the intersectionality between race, gender and socio-economic status; validated scholars' experiences; reminded them of their potential; supported research ideas; provided guidance on how to communicate through tense situations and reminded scholars to "be visible" and not jeopardize academic opportunities, particularly tenure and promotion.

Being a first- or second-generation college student became evident as a significant part of scholars' identity, serving as source of pride, as well as trepidation. This status contributed to limited knowledge of the academic processes and networks within the academy, as well as financial and emotional challenges. Scholars reported taking less initiative to seek out opportunities due to fear, limited understanding and a false belief that academic success is achieved alone. This characteristic requires a unique skill set in mentors, in that they must recognize scholars' apprehension and be willing to seek out opportunities to mentor.

Since contributing authors range from doctoral students to university administrators, this work highlights characteristics of effective mentors and their practices from both the mentee and mentor perspective. Most often, mentors described themselves as wanting to give back and develop the next generation of scholars; it is a part of their legacy. From the perspective of protégé's, mentors were described as sources of emotional and tangible support. Of chief importance was the mentor's ability to build the scholar's academic capacity, thereby increasing their self-efficacy. Future research on mentor characteristics should consider the

effectiveness of cross-race versus same-race mentoring and cross-gender versus same-gender mentoring. This issue was frequently raised in the text without a definitive conclusion.

Where Do We Go from Here?

In "*Where do we go from here: Chaos or community*," Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., outlines why, in 1967, equality was still a dream despite civil rights legislation. He explains that a loose and insufficient collection of legal status is not a strong enough framework to withstand obstruction by segregationists. King adds that prejudice, discrimination and bigotry are interwoven into political, social and economic institutions and that transformation will be deferred unless these influences are challenged. In the same way, sparse diversity and inclusion programs and hiring initiatives by well-meaning university administrators are ineffective to bring about significant progress in diversifying higher education if university departments support the persistence of homogenous people and ideas, and white fragility is secure. A diversified faculty will create and sustain mentoring opportunities, for which there is a current dearth.

After the doctorate it can be hard to sustain relationships with previous mentors. Moreover, institutional and departmental norms complicate mentoring for underrepresented scholars in administrative roles and junior faculty. Limited financial and personnel support, and a lack of established mentoring programs, are often contributing factors.

This work has documented how critical mentoring relationships are for advancing underrepresented scholars through doctoral programs and for tenure and promotion. Through the descriptions of effective mentoring practices and the presentation of numerous frameworks to guide program development, this work offers practical implications to support scholar advancement through mentoring. In addition, the Holmes Scholars Program is offered as an initiative of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education that supports the development of mentoring programs at member institutions. Multiple authors credit the Holmes Scholars Program with proving guidance on scholarly productivity, a national stage to communicate research, leadership experiences, opportunities to collaborate with peers across institutions, and of course mentoring from a faculty advisor at their home institution and potentially renowned faculty across the nation who are a part of the network.

Underrepresented scholars benefit from the presence of faculty members, administrators and other institutional leaders with similar demographic characteristics, who can serve as role models. However, more importantly, scholars are in search of mentors who recognize how their individual identities intersect with the realities of academia and who can support their academic and personal development through the doctoral and career advancement process. In reference to policy, increased advocacy for changes in evaluation processes that occur within school and colleges, as well as hiring practices is paramount. Cluster hiring is a solution that can be more widely practiced. In addition, incentivizing implicit bias training may make faculty more aware of prejudices and predispositions resulting in more equitable practices on search committees.

As Predominantly White Institutions become Hispanic Serving Institutions (HIS) and Minority Serving Institutions (MSI), mentorship on all levels of the academy must be scrutinized. This book provides insight into barriers experienced by students and faculty as well as interventions by mentors that supported their development. Paralleling King's reflections on equality, I end with the thought that while we cannot resolve issues of mentoring and faculty diversification immediately, we are making choices that will determine our ability to achieve this goal in the future. "We cannot afford to make these choices poorly" (King, 1967, p. 202).

Reference

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