2019

Race Matters: Administrators Perspectives on Affirmative Action in Higher Education

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Abstract

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Abstract

Legal challenges and statewide bans regarding the use of affirmative action as an admissions policy have affected the way higher education administrators must comply with these mandates to receive federal funding. The purpose of this study was to examine the perspectives and experiences of college and university administrators at public and private U.S. colleges and universities regarding the implementation of race-based and race-neutral admissions policies. Critical race theory provided the framework for the study. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with 9 administrators at U.S. institutions of higher education. Data were organized, sorted, and coded to reveal 4 themes: holistic evaluation process, financial aid/scholarships, strategic alliances, and targeted recruitment. Findings may be used to influence programming and policies that lead to higher levels of acceptance and enrollment of racial and ethnic minority students at colleges and universities throughout the United States.

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to the many people of color who were denied access to institutions of higher education, my family included.

Acknowledgements

I would first like to thank God for helping me through this journey, putting the people whom I needed in place to help make the successful completion of this dissertation possible. This process has had many ups and downs for me, but it is my family and the memories of the humble, bold, and strong people of Mound Bayou, Mississippi that both started and helped me to climb this great mountain. As such, I am acknowledging and thanking these individuals for inspiring me to take this journey. I would like to thank my chair, Dr. Kristie Roberts-Lewis, and cochair, Dr. Gloria Billingsley, for their guidance throughout the writing of this dissertation. I would like to thank my wife, Carrie, for her unwavering love and support; I truly appreciate all that you have done to make this possible. A heartfelt thank you also to my children for putting up with me throughout my dissertation journey. I want this to serve as a motivation for each of you to be the best version of yourself. Lastly, I would like to thank my friend and mentor, Dr. Kevin Hylton, for his encouragement and support throughout the writing of this dissertation.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Affirmative action as a public policy was enacted to address problems of access to education and employment for racial minorities and women (Aguirre & Martinez, 2003; Chen, 2017; Garrison-Wade, Diggs, Estrada, & Galindo, 2012; Lim, 2016; Wicks-Lim, 2014). Affirmative action in the context of higher education is the consideration of a student's race and gender as criteria for admission to academic institutions who might otherwise be denied admission (Jones, 2007). The *Brown v. the Board of Education* (1954) decision led top administrators at liberal arts colleges to begin a commitment to the cause of racial equality on college campuses (Stulberg & Chen, 2013). College and university administrators in charge of admissions policies began giving some special consideration to the circumstances of racial minorities and women who had been excluded from access to opportunities (Bowen & Bok, 1998; Stulberg & Chen, 2013). The chosen admissions policies of college and university administrators were of significance and led to major educational strides for racial and ethnic minorities, especially African Americans. These gains included an increase in the median years of education received by African Americans and an increase in the number of degrees awarded to African Americans (Graves, 2014; Harper, Patton, & Wooden, 2009).

College and university administrators, whether acting on the contribution to social change (Stulberg & Chen, 2014) or trying to meet federal mandates to desegregate (Lim, 2016), faced increasing difficulty on how to promote racial and educational equality on the campus they served. Legal challenges over the next several decades, regarding the use of affirmative action as an admissions policy, for colleges and universities became increasingly unclear. Legal challenges over the next several decades, regarding the use of

affirmative action as an admissions policy for colleges and universities, made it unclear how affirmative action should be used in the admissions process unclear. The use of affirmative action also presented difficulty for college and university administrators as a mechanism to maximize the diversity of students on their college campuses (Aguirre & Martinez, 2003; *Grutter v. Bollinger*, 2003). There are various state-to-state provisions that must be met (i.e., federal mandates against segregation), but there are bans or legal cases that have affected the way higher education administrators must comply with these laws and mandates.

College and university administrators in charge of meeting federal mandates calling for the desegregation of public institutions have had to move from a race-based affirmative action admissions policy to race-neutral strategies that an institution may consider and employ as part of its broader efforts to achieve its mission-based diversity goals (Lipson, 2007). There are federal guidelines that mandate a diverse campus setting to receive federal funding (Bickel, 1998; Lim, 2016; Moreno, 2003). In addition to federal guidelines (e.g. Brown *v.* Board of Education's, 1954), there are also court-sanctioned guidelines requiring the compliance of strict scrutiny when using race as a factor (e.g. Regents of University of California *v*. Bakke, 1978) with state-to-state variation in bans eliminating the use of race (e.g. Prop 2, Prop 209). These guidelines direct what administrators cannot do regarding their admission policies to increase racial diversity. However, these guidelines do not prescribe how to design and develop programs and policies that ensure racial diversity on their campuses, while keeping within the confines of the law. Very little is known about the perspectives of college and university administrators on affirmative action and their experiences with implementing

the race-neutral admission policies that ensure equal access of racial and ethnic minority students to institutions of higher learning.

This chapter provides an overview of the study. The background provides a historical context for affirmative action. An examination of some of the court cases related to affirmative action is used to provide the context for this study. A brief discussion of the statement of the problem and research questions that derived from the identified problems follow. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the methodology and research design, as well as an identification of terms and the limitations and delimitations of the study.

Background

In 1896, the law of separate but equal doctrine began with the passing of *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896). This doctrine dictated separate facilities for African Americans and Whites. According to the Courts, *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) did not violate the 14th Amendment that guaranteed equal protection under the law. This doctrine not only meant separatism in public sectors, but also denied African Americans access to the best and highest quality of opportunities in employment, housing, and education (Lim, 2016). It was not until 1954 when the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People sponsored a litigation team headed by the late Thurgood Marshall who overturned separate-but-equal education (Lavergne, 2010; Lim, 2016). The Supreme Court decision under President Eisenhower, in *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), overturned *Plessy* (1986) and legally ended efforts to maintain the racially charged separate-but-equal contract. The landmark decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) called for the desegregation of all public-school systems in the United States “with all deliberate speed”

(*Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, 1954, p. 483). In its unanimous ruling, the court stated "that separate facilities were, by definition, unequal and therefore unconstitutional" (*Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, 1954, p. 483). With this ruling, the court implied that all forms of segregation were illegal, thereby setting the stage for the civil rights legislation of the 1960s and the emergence of affirmative action (Lim, 2016). The *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) and *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* (1954) cases reflected the court's decisions related to programs that are explicitly designed to disadvantage racial minorities (Barnes, Chemerinsky, & Onwuachi-Willig, 2015).

Lim (2016) indicated that U.S. presidents issued several executive orders to establish Federal guidelines for affirmative action. Within this larger civil rights movement, it was deemed necessary to consider race to break the hold of segregation and exclusion, leading to what became referred to as affirmative action in higher education admissions (Jones, 2007). According to Sabbagh (2012), affirmative action is defined as

> any measure that allocates goods — such as admission into selective universities or professional schools, jobs, promotions, public contracts, business loans, and rights to buy, sell, or use land and other natural resources — through a process that takes into account individual membership in designated groups, for the purpose of increasing the proportion of membership in designated groups, for the purpose of increasing the proportion of numbers of those groups in the relevant labor force, entrepreneurial class, or student population, where they are currently underrepresented as a result of past oppression by state authorities and/or present societal discrimination. (p. 1124)

Affirmative action in the context of higher education is the consideration of students based on race and gender for admission to academic institutions who might otherwise be denied admission (Jones, 2007). With the *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) decision and the height of the southern civil rights campaign of nonviolent direct action, top administrators at liberal arts schools began showing commitment to the cause of racial equality. These administrators believed their institutions could and should contribute to social change, and enacted admission policies centered on affirmative action (Stulberg & Chen, 2014).

College and university administrators in charge of admissions policies began giving special consideration to the circumstances of racial minorities and women who had been excluded from access to opportunities (Stulberg & Chen, 2014). These administrators, whether acting on the contribution to social change (Stulberg & Chen, 2014) or trying to meet federal mandates to desegregate (Lim, 2016), would face increasing difficulty on how to promote racial educational equality on the campus they served. In legal challenges over the next several decades, the use of affirmative action as an admissions policy for colleges and universities became increasingly problematic, which presented difficulty for the administrators at universities to employ affirmative action (*Fisher v. Texas I & II*, 2016; *Gratz v. Bollinge*r, 2003; *Grutter v. Bollinger,* 2003; *Hopwood v. Texas*, 1996; *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke,* 1978).

Affirmative action as a public policy was enacted to address problems of access to education and employment for racial minorities and women (Aguirre & Martinez, 2003; Chen, 2017; Garrison-Wade et al., 2012; Lim, 2016; Wicks-Lim, 2014). Debate began when opponents of affirmative action voiced in courts that the policy discriminated

against majority group members (*Gratz v. Bollinger*, 2003; *Grutter v. Bollinger*, 2003; *Hopwood v. Texas*, 1996; *Regents of University of California v. Bakke*, 1978). In 1978, the use of affirmative action policies in higher education as a preferential policy (i.e., quota system) in admissions was deemed unconstitutional (*Regents of University of California v. Bakke*, 1978). Administrators would no longer be able to use affirmative action as a quota system and would need to find other ways to meet federal guidelines and social change for equal opportunity.

Supporters of affirmative action have argued that it is defensible because diversity has educational benefits (Hurtado, 2007). Justice Powell used this argument in his deciding opinion for *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke* (1978), and since then the benefits-of-diversity argument has been most popular among administrators at selective institutions when arguing in favor of affirmative action (Chen, 2017). The Courts found that the use of affirmative action is permissible, but strict scrutiny was essential to its application in the admissions process (*Gratz v. Bollinger,* 2003; *Grutter v. Bollinger*, 2003; *Regents of University of California v. Bakke,* 1978). Eight states currently ban race-based affirmative action at all public universities (Hinrichs, 2012; Potter, 2014). California, Washington, Michigan, Nebraska, Arizona, and Oklahoma passed bans through voter referenda; in Florida, Governor Jeb Bush issued an executive order creating the bans, and in New Hampshire, the legislature passed a bill banning the consideration of race (Hinrichs, 2012; Potter, 2014). In some states, including those with such bans, higher education administrators changed from race-based affirmative action policies in college admissions to race-neutral recruitment programs for women and racial minorities, with the aim directed at diversification (Hinrichs, 2012; Potter, 2014). Texas

and Florida have enacted race-neutral policies that were intended to diversify college campuses without the use of race-specific quota systems. However, in Texas, there was a failure to increase diversity at the University of Texas at Austin; in 2016, the Supreme Court upheld the basic ideas of affirmative action asserting that race could remain a factor considering a student's admittance into a university (*Fisher v. University of Texas Austin*, 2016). The Court also cautioned universities to review their affirmative action programs and suggested that not all programs could stand up against reverse racism challenges (Fisher *v*. University of Texas Austin, 2016). Supporters of affirmative action were frustrated that the High Court did not use the case to end all challenges to using race as a factor in selecting students (Jaschik, S., 2016; Barnes, M. L., Chemerinsky, E., & Onwuachi-Willig, A., 2015). Although Florida does not allow race as a consideration to admission into its schools, some schools allow race-based scholarships.

These legal battles and statewide bans have led to major changes in affirmative action practices in institutions of higher education, which have created challenges for administrators related to the promotion of racial diversity on campus (Lim, 2016). Certain institutions are further along in their diversity efforts than others, and the process is neither linear nor uniform across institutions (Chen, 2017). Officials have tried various strategies to increase diversity, but the failure to systematically implement affirmative action policies is contributing to the underrepresentation of minority students (Chen, 2017; Harper & Hurtado, 2007; Milem, Chang, & Antonio, 2005; Turner, González, & Wood, 2008).

The work of higher education enrollment administrators is complex given that numerous institutional aims are at play in any enrollment policy, something public dialogue does not always recognize. There are various state-to-state provisions that must be met (e.g., federal mandates against segregation). However, bans or legal cases have affected the way higher education administrators must comply with these mandates/laws (Chen, 2017; Hinrichs, 2012; Lim, 2016 Potter, 2014). Higher education administrators in charge of campus diversity initiatives, policy formation, and implementation have had numerous legal challenges that have changed the way they can recruit and admit students to ensure a racially diverse campus community (Harper et al., 2009). Some administrators in charge of making sure they meet federal mandates that call for desegregation of public institutions have had to move from a race-based affirmative action admissions policies to race-neutral strategies as part of their broader efforts to achieve mission-based diversity goals (Harper et al., 2009). Federal guidelines mandate a diverse campus setting to receive federal funding court-sanctioned guidelines that requires the application of strict scrutiny when using race as a factor (*Gratz v. Bollinger,* 2003; *Grutter v. Bollinger*, 2003; *Regents of University of California v. Bakke,* 1978), and state-to-state bans eliminate the use of race (e.g. Prop 209, Prop 2). The federal and court-sanctioned guidelines inform administrators in charge of racial diversification what they cannot do. However, these guidelines do not prescribe how to design and develop programs and policies that ensure racial diversity on campuses while keeping within the confines of the law. Very little is known about the perspectives of college and university administrators on affirmative action and their experiences with implementing race-neutral policies at their institutions to ensure diversity. What is known is that at selective universities across the country, top

administrators and faculty have come to defend race-based affirmative action (Lipson, 2007). The administrators at these selective universities were committed to their role in campus diversification and felt that there had been a substantial increase of paperwork and time commitment to the admissions process due to the inability to use race as a factor in the admissions process (Lipson, 2007). Lipson (2007) indicated that administrators professed strong support for race-based affirmative action and racial diversity at the University of California, Berkeley; the University of Texas at Austin; and the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Researchers have focused on race-neutral previously implemented policies (e.g., percentage plans, class-based affirmative action, partnership programs, and financial aid) and how those policies have had a negative effect on enrollment, leaving minority students underrepresented, unsupported, and unsuccessful in many postsecondary U.S. institutions (Alger, 2013; Bastedo & Jaquette, 2011; Gandara, 2012; Harper & Hurtado, 2007; Howell, 2010; Lipson, 2007; Milem et al., 2005). However, researchers have not explored the experiences of college and university administrators in implementing race-neutral policies and programs, and administrators' perspectives on the outcome of these policies. Additional research is needed to understand the experiences of college and university administrators to aid them in designing and transforming affirmative action policies at selective campuses across the United States (Lipson, 2007).

Statement of the Problem

Little is known about the experiences of college and university administrators who use race-neutral admission policies to ensure equal access of racial and ethnic minority groups to institutions of higher learning, while still meeting federal mandates of

affirmative action. Most of the studies conducted have addressed the effects that affirmative action bans or the loss of race-conscious affirmative action policies have had on racial diversity on college campuses (Backes, 2012; Colburn, Young, & Yellen, 2008; Garces & Mickey-Pabello, 2015; Hinrichs, 2012). However, scant attention has been given to the experiences of college and university administrators who use race-neutral admission policies to ensure equal access of racial and ethnic minority groups to institutions of higher learning.

In the development of race-neutral admissions policies, the perspectives and experiences of college and university administrators may be a helpful resource to colleges and universities as they continue their quest to recruit and admit students of racially diverse backgrounds. These perspectives may also be helpful in focusing program implementation. I sought to inform discussions regarding legal compliance and to elicit robust inquiries and conversations among college and university administrators charged with establishing, implementing, and evaluating institution and admission policies.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the experiences of college and university administrators with implementing race-neutral policies in their admissions criteria to ensure equal access of racial and ethnic minority groups to institutions of higher learning, while still meeting federal mandates of affirmative action. Understanding the perspectives, experiences, challenges, and successes of college and university administrators in their program development may be a helpful resource to colleges and universities in focusing program implementation as they continue their quest to recruit and admit racial and ethnic minority students.

Research Questions

Two research questions were developed to guide the study addressing college and university administrators' experiences with implementing race-neutral programs to ensure equal access to historically underrepresented racial and ethnic minority students. Subquestions were developed to help answer the research questions.

1. What are college and university administrators' experiences with implementing programs to ensure equal access to historically underrepresented racial and ethnic minority students?

- How do college and university administrators manage evolving changes to affirmative action while ensuring equal access to historically underrepresented racial and ethnic minority students?
- How are college and university admission policies modified when changes are made to affirmative action either due to state-mandated bans or court mandates?
- Who are the persons at the college and universities who are involved in formulating admissions policies to ensure equal access to historically underrepresented racial and ethnic minority?
- What are the strategies that have been utilized to address any decrease in racial and ethnic minority students as a result of changes in race-based affirmative action?
- What are the perspectives on affirmative action of the administrators who are in charge of implementing programs to ensure equal access to historically underrepresented racial and ethnic minority students, on affirmative action?

2. What are the effects of the restriction of race in the admissions criteria relating to the number of racial and ethnic minority students who are accepted and enrolled in colleges and universities?

- What impact has restrictions of race in the admissions criteria had on the racial and ethnic diversity of college and university campuses?
- What impact has restriction of race in the admissions criteria had on race and ethnic relations among students on college and university campus?
- What impact has restriction of race had on the attitudes and beliefs of administrators in charge of college and university diversity?

Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by the critical race theory (CRT). CRT was developed by Derrick Bell, Alan Freeman, and Richard Delgado in the mid-1970s in response to the slow progress of civil rights in the 1960s (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). CRT is used to understand how victims of systemic racism are affected by cultural perceptions of race and how this understanding and recognition can counter prejudice. The CRT framework on educational equity emphasizes that race is a relevant component to be explored when an individual critically reflects subconsciously or consciously on personal experiences that define his or her identity (Ladson-Billings, 2009a). CRT has two basic propositions from which all other ideas emerge (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). The first proposition is that racism is the norm in U.S. society and that current color-blind notions of understanding race do not acknowledge the racism that exists. The second proposition is that the perpetuation of racism benefits the dominant group: Whites. CRT proposes that race is socially constructed and that the attempt to categorize people based on race is a

way of assigning traits to social groups that will benefit the dominant racial group (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). CRT uses the notion of race frames, or lenses through which individuals understand the role of race in society (Warikoo & de Novias, 2014), to give context to cultural frames of race. Cultural frames shape individuals' interpretations of the world around them as well as their behaviors. Small, Harding, and Lamont (2010) defined cultural frames as lenses "through which we observe and interpret life" (p. 14). A frame structures how people interpret events and how they react to them. Frames impact the interpretation of social phenomena by making certain aspects prominent and obscuring others (Warikoo & de Novias, 2014). Critical race theorists point to research showing how race impacts contemporary U.S. society, including a critical examination of racial data in fair housing; employment and unemployment; credit and loan applications; public suspicion; consumerism; prison population; executive power in all sectors of government, business, and academia; poverty; and health care (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). Examining the history of affirmative action policy through a CRT lens provides insight into the current attitudes in higher education to alleviate systemic discrimination of minorities.

In this study, CRT and its use of race frames and the tenet of counter-storytelling guided the research questions. Counter-storytelling is a framework that legitimizes the racial and subordinate experiences of marginalized groups (Ladson-Billings, 2009a; Parker & Villalpando, 2007). Counter-stories have been used to analyze the climate of college campuses and provide opportunities for further research on the ways that an institution can become inclusive and not superficially diverse (Hiraldo, 2010). Counter-stories and race frames have been used in previous research on affirmative action in

higher education. Given the gap in the literature regarding attitudes of college administrators, I designed research questions to explore whether those in charge of policy changes continue to see a need for affirmative action policies or feel these policies are no longer needed in higher education institutions. The study was guided by the use of race frames and counter-storytelling in the data collection strategies. I examined patterns based on cultural frames to determine whether there is a general trend toward acknowledging needs for policy change in favor of or against affirmative action policies in higher educational institutions.

Nature of the Study

I used a phenomenological design. A qualitative approach is used to facilitate probing for underlying values, beliefs, assumptions, and experiences (Creswell, 2007). A phenomenological design was employed because it enabled the study participants to share their experiences implementing race-neutral admission policies while ensuring equal access to racial and ethnic minority students and meeting federal mandates of affirmative action. I chose a phenomenological design to facilitate in-depth data collection related to the phenomenon of race-neutral policies as experienced by college and university administrators (see Creswell, 2009). A phenomenological design was most appropriate for this study because I sought to capture the lived experiences of the participants through in-depth interviews (see Creswell, 2007).

The study participants included senior-level college administrators employed at public and private predominantly White institutions (PWI) colleges and universities. Participants were vice presidents, chief diversity officers, directors, and administrators in charge of admission policies or diversity initiatives. I did not include professors as part of

this study because they generally are not involved in student affairs activities at most colleges and universities. Participants were recruited from colleges and universities throughout the United States.

I used a nonrandom purposive sampling approach (see Creswell, 2007). I employed this sampling due to the sensitive nature of the topic under investigation. According to Barbour (2008), "the goal of a qualitative sampling is not to produce a representative sample but is rather, to reflect diversity and to provide as much potential for comparison as possible" (p. 53). The sample size for a qualitative phenomenological study is generally small. Creswell (1994, 2007) explained, "the procedure of phenomenology involves studying a small number of subjects through extensive and prolonged engagement to develop patterns and relationships of meaning" (p. 12). A sample of at least eight participants was the goal for this study to ensure representation of different types of university administrators based on variation in university and participant demographics. With CRT as the guiding framework, I examined whether there were any patterns based on participants' cultural frame. The recruitment of participants yielded a convenience sample of 10; however, there was an unusual circumstance that was encountered in which the interview was not captured on the audio recorder due to technological glitches and this participant's information was not included in the data set because there would be an issue of trustworthiness. Therefore, although the original solicitation of participants yielded a nonprobability sample of 10, the final sample consisted of nine individuals.

I used a purposive convenience sample of college and university administrators. Participants were recruited from a higher education administrator's LinkedIn group

comprising 54,265 members (LinkedIn.com, n.d.). Individuals who work in higher education and are in charge of admission policies or diversity initiatives were eligible to participate in the study. I contacted candidates via email and obtained consent prior to them completing an initial sociodemographic survey (see Appendix A). After completion of the initial survey, I emailed the candidates who met the selection criteria and arranged an interview time at the participant's convenience.

The data collection method used in this study was personal interviews with college and university administrators in charge of admission policies and implementation of campus diversity policies. I conducted interviews using an interview guide (see Appendix B) which contained open-ended questions to allow participants to express their views. The interview guide facilitated the collection of detailed information and allowed participants to convey their perspective of affirmative action in higher education as according to their experiences. Each participant was interviewed once for approximately 60 minutes. I conducted interviews over the phone based on the participants' location and availability. With permission from the participant, I audio-recorded each interview to capture the participant's perspective on the need for affirmative action. I transcribed all audio-recorded interviews verbatim. Following Creswell's (2014) recommendations, I organized, coded, and grouped data into initial descriptions or categories before selecting and further developing the final thematic findings. To maximize the quality and trustworthiness of the findings, I employed rich descriptions to strengthen credibility, confirmability, and dependability (see Creswell, 2014).

Definition of Key Terms

Affirmative action: Measures or practices that seek to terminate discriminatory practices by promoting the consideration of race, ethnicity, sex, or national origin in the availability of opportunity for a class of qualified individuals who have been the victims of historical, actual, or recurring discrimination (Jones, 2007). According to Jones (2007), "affirmative action in the context of higher education is the aggressive consideration of students based on race and gender for admission to academic institutions who might otherwise be denied admission" (p. 12). The equalization of opportunity for some students requires that some students be treated differently (Dong, 1995).

Color-blind philosophy: The widely held belief that racial discrimination is a thing of the past and that everyone who works hard has an equal chance to become successful in the United States (Bonilla-Silva, 2010).

Community-based organizations: Organizations that have obtained 501(c) (3) status and that are physically located in and primarily serve members of their local community. The objective of these organizations is to provide social services at the neighborhood level. Organizations included in this study were small agencies representing community and youth development, family service/multiservice organizations, and religiously based and basic-needs organizations (see Terrana, 2017).

Counter-storytelling (counter-stories): A framework that legitimizes the racial and subordinate experiences of marginalized groups (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 2009a; Parker & Villalpando, 2007).

Cultural frames: The lenses through which people observe and interpret life with cultural meaning. A frame structures how people interpret events and therefore how they react to them (Small et al., 2010).

First-generation student: Those who are the first in their families to attend postsecondary institutions (Ward, Siegel, & Davenport, 2012).

Latinx: The term Latinx in this report refer to people of Hispanic descent. While many other sources use terminology such as: Hispanic, Chicano/a, Latino/a, this word is used to be inclusive of all people who identify with one of these terms. Latinx is a gender-neutral term that includes men, women, and individuals who do not identify within the gender binary of masculinity and femininity (Salinas Jr., C., & Lozano, A. 2017).

Pell Grant. The largest need-based grant program in the United States. The student's eligibility for the Pell Grant is based on financial need (Schudde & Scott-Clayton, 2016).

Perspectivelessness: The notion that the law and legal education contain no particular perspective but are, rather, representative of a universal perspective. However, critical race theorists suggest that there is an assumption of perspectivelessness in legal academia that perpetuates both a White normative perspective and ignores the relevance of the long history of racism in the law (Crenshaw, Gotanda, Peller, & Thomas, 1995).

Privilege: The idea that one group in a society enjoys certain unearned advantages not available to others and that group members (Whites) are largely unaware of the unequal benefits they possess (Ferris & Stein, 2016).

Postracialism: The sense that race simply does not matter as much as it mattered in the past. Postracialism is a set of beliefs that coalesce to posit that racial discrimination is a rare and aberrant behavior as evidenced by Americans' pronounced racial progress (Barnes, Chemerinsky, & Jones, 2010).

Race consciousness: The perspective that race matters (Oluwole, 2013) and is necessary to level the playing field.

Race frames: The lenses through which individuals understand the role of race in society (Warikoo & de Novias, 2014), such as ethnicity and gender.

Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (SEOG): A federal grant for undergraduate students with financial need. The SEOG program is administered by the financial aid office at each participating school. Not all schools participate (McCann, 2016).

Systematic racism: A way to organize society based on inequality between races that is perpetuated by institutional structures such as the justice and educational systems that favor one race over another through advantages, privileges, and head starts (Scott, 2012).

Work study: Part-time positions are offered through colleges that pay at least federal minimum wage. The total award and hours available are based on a student's level of financial need, the school's total funding, and when the student applies (McCann, 2016).

Assumptions

The first assumption was that the study participants would answer the interview questions honestly. The participant's name and the school in which he or she was

employed were confidential. A second assumption was that administrators in charge of diversity initiatives would support campus diversity initiatives for job security purposes. Also, both pro-affirmative action and anti-affirmative action organizations concede that the diversity consensus is a real phenomenon among university officials, and commitment to racial diversity is rising to the top of the list of desired attributes for top administrators of selective higher education institutions (Lipson, 2007). A third assumption of this study was that participants were aware of previous and current changes in affirmative action policies.

Scope and Delimitations

I intended to address how diversity initiatives have changed over time. I also explored how the changes in diversity initiatives have impacted the work environment and mind-set of those in charge of federally mandated racial diversification initiatives. The study focused on administrators in charge of diversification who were chosen because little is known about the impact and attitudes of administrators at colleges and universities. Also, I explored how administrators in charge of diversification have dealt with challenges of meeting campus racial diversity without using race as a factor. The scope of this study was limited to administrators in charge of implementation or formation of diversity initiatives. I chose these administrators because they were the most informed individuals on the subject of affirmative action in college and university admissions. I did not include faculty or administrators who were not involved in establishing or implementing affirmative action policies in the admissions process. Findings are not generalizable to all institutions of higher education.

I collected data using a semistructured interview guide. I conducted one-on-one interviews with college and university administrators who volunteered to participate in the study. The study addressed strategies used in creating a racially diverse campus environment and was delimited to four-year college and university program admissions. I tailored questions to each of the university officials based on their knowledge of their role in setting, applying, or influencing affirmative action policies on their campus. I asked participants about their attitudes regarding race-based affirmative action, race-neutral affirmative action alternatives, and their peers' attitudes.

The results of qualitative studies are not usually generalizable to other study settings. However, the lessons gleaned from this study may be useful to individuals in similar situations. Lodico, Voegtle, and Spaulding (2010) explained that transferability is the degree of similarity between a study site and other sites as determined by the reader of the study, based on the detail and vividness of the descriptions provided by the researcher. Through descriptions of the context, participants, university location (state), and university/state policies, readers may find many similarities between the research site and their site. Readers of this study may also identify with the research questions as being similar to concerns from their sites about how to address concerns of meeting racial diversity on their respective campuses.

Limitations

The limitations in qualitative studies are that findings may not be generalizable to all college and university administrators and the institutions where they work. I used purposive sampling of administrators in charge of campus diversification and focused on institutions that had personnel in charge of implementation or policy formation related to

admissions. Given the small sample size, the findings may not be generalizable to all university administrators and university organizations. The attitudes and opinions of the individuals and the institutions they represent may not be representative of all university organizations, as each institution may have its own guidelines and goals, as well as laws that vary from state to state.

There were no personal or professional relationships between myself and the participants. Furthermore, there was no conflict of interest regarding my work environment and that of the participants because I was not employed at any of the participants' institutions. I am of African American descent, which may present unintended researcher bias (see Patton, 2015). However, I was trained in the courses at Walden University to maintain objectivity throughout the interviewing process.

Significance and Social Change Implications of the Study

One of the primary significances of this study was the effort to establish knowledge and improve awareness of the experiences and practices of university and college administrators with implementing race-neutral policies at their institutions to ensure equal access to historically underrepresented racial and ethnic minority students without violating federal affirmative action mandates. Many studies have addressed race-neutral policies (e.g., percentage plans, class-based affirmative action, partnership programs, financial aid) and how those policies have had a negative effect on enrollment, leaving minority students underrepresented, unsupported, and unsuccessful in many postsecondary institutions in the United States (Alger, 2013; Bastedo & Jaquette, 2011; Gandara, 2012; Harper & Hurtado, 2007; Howell, 2010; Lipson, 2007). However, researchers had not examined the experiences and practices of college and university

administrators with implementing race-neutral policies at their institutions. Lipson (2007) noted that additional research is needed to understand the experiences of college and university administrators in designing and transforming affirmative action policies at selective campuses across the United States. I sought to address the gap in the literature on the experiences of university and college administrations in this regard.

This study was also significant because the findings may assist other college and university administrators in establishing and implement race-neutral admission policies. The findings may indicate ways in which colleges and university administrators can ensure equal access to historically underrepresented racial and ethnic minority students without violating federal affirmative action mandates. Additionally, findings may increase awareness of the challenges with using race-neutral policies, in addition to providing insight as to whether the current affirmative action mandates might need to be modified.

A positive social change implication of this study was that the findings may influence programming and policies that lead to higher levels of acceptance and enrollment of racial and ethnic minority students at colleges and universities throughout the United States. Having higher levels of racial and ethnic minorities at colleges and universities would result in more racial and ethnic minority students having an opportunity to earn baccalaureate and graduate or professional degrees. My intention was to generate findings that may play a role in improving the quality of life for all Americans, including racial and ethnic minorities.

Summary

This chapter addressed affirmative action as a policy responsible for breaking the segregated character of the United States and promoting fairness. Studies have shown the impact on the loss of race-based affirmative action at various institutions. Many of these studies addressed the effects that affirmative action bans, or the loss of race-conscious affirmative action policies, have had on racial diversity on college campuses. However, researchers had not examined the perspectives and experiences of those in charge of implementing race-neutral policies in their admissions criteria to ensure equal access of racial and ethnic minority students.

I used a phenomenological design to examine participants' experiences with implementing race-neutral admissions policies while ensuring equal access to racial and ethnic minority students and meeting federal mandates of affirmative action. The phenomenological design allowed for in-depth data collection by focusing on this phenomenon as experienced by the college and university administrators (see Creswell, 2009). CRT guided this study, which uses race frames and counter-storytelling to legitimize the racial and subordinate experiences of marginalized groups (see Ladson-Billings, 2009a; Parker & Villalpando, 2007).

The study was significant because of the lack of research on college and university administrators' use of race-neutral admission policies at their institutions. Study findings may contribute to the literature by addressing the experiences of university and college administrations in this regard. Findings may be used to influence programming and policies that could lead to higher levels of acceptance and enrollment of racial and ethnic minority students at colleges and universities throughout the United

States. Chapter 2 focuses on the historical changes affirmative action has undergone in relation to court cases, empirical research on administrators' views on affirmative action, and programs they have used as a result of the court-ordered policy changes.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The purpose of this study was to examine the experiences of college and university administrators' implementation of race-neutral policies in their admissions criteria to ensure equal access of racial and ethnic minority groups to institutions of higher learning, while still meeting federal mandates of affirmative action. Understanding the perspectives, experiences, challenges, and successes of college and university administrators in their program development may be a helpful resource to colleges and universities in focusing program implementation as they continue their quest to recruit and admit racial and ethnic minority students. Most of the studies conducted have addressed the effects that affirmative action bans or the loss of race-conscious affirmative action policies have had on racial diversity on college campuses, or what implementation of race-neutral policies could mean for the rest of the United States (Backes, 2012; Colburn et al., 2008; Garces & Mickey-Pabello, 2015; Hinrichs, 2012). I sought to inform discussions regarding legal compliance and to elicit robust inquiries and conversations among college and university administrators charged with establishing, implementing, and evaluating institution and admission policies.

This chapter begins with the theoretical framework, critical race theory (CRT), followed by a brief history of affirmative action. Affirmative action provides the background on which the objectives of this dissertation are based. I describe the historical context of its formulation and utilization in higher education to increase enrollment of underrepresented students, especially African Americans. Also included in this chapter is an overview of the court cases that have shaped institutional implementations regarding affirmative action policies and the legality of how and if affirmative action can or should

be applied. This is followed by a review of the literature related to the challenges that administrators in charge of affirmative action policies have faced in how they achieve mission-based diversity goals while combating legal policy challenges. I also review empirical studies that addressed administrators' use of race-neutral strategies that an institution may consider and employ as part of its broader efforts to achieve its mission-based diversity goals.

Literature Search Strategy

The literature review utilized several library databases including ERIC, EBSCO Host, Academic Search Premier, and CREDO. I also searched databases that include conference proceedings. Key words related to affirmative action policies included *affirmative action*, *higher education*, *Black*, *minority*, *minority enrollment*, *colleges and/or universities*, *civil rights*, *social justice*, *critical race theory*, *policies*, *racial attitudes*, *diversity*, *diversity in higher education*, *administration*, *administrators*, *diversity policies*, *discrimination*, *racial discrimination*, *critical theory*, *social justice*, and *social change*. I only included articles and books published in English that specifically referenced the key variables and related concepts of this study between 1950 and 2017. I obtained additional papers not found as part of the database searches through a review of the reference lists of published articles.

Theoretical Framework

The critical race theory ([CRT], Bell, 1992; Crenshaw et al., 1995; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Outlaw, 1983; Williams, 1991; Wing, 1997) was used as the theoretical framework for this study. According to CRT, racism is endemic in American life. CRT emerged from the civil rights movement and legal scholars who embraced

reformist civil rights ideas combined with activist analytical political engagement (Johnson-Bailey, Valentine, Cervero, & Bowles, 2009). During the mid-1970s and through the 1980s, Derrick A. Bell Jr., Alan Freeman, and Richard Delgado were discontented with racial reform in the United States regarding the more subtle forms of racism and felt that new theories and strategies were a necessity (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Bell (1980, 2008) developed CRT as a race-based critique to address covert and subtle forms of racism within the legal system. Along with Bell (1980, 2008), a noted group of legal scholars including Charles Lawrence, Richard Delgado, Lani Guinier, Mari Matsuda, Patricia Williams, and Kimberle Crenshaw began to question the role of law in maintaining and constructing racially based social and economic oppression (Liu, 2009; Lyn & Adams, 2002; Taylor, 1998). According to Gordon (as cited in Ladson-Billings, 2009a), CRT originated from the critical legal studies (CLS) movement. Furthermore, CRT failed to both address the "effects of race and racism in U.S. jurisprudence" (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004, p. 26), the perceived delays in civil rights advancements (Matsuda, Lawrence, Delgado, & Crenshaw, 1993; Stanley, 2006; Taylor, Gillborn, & Ladson-Billings, 2009), and the reemergence of hostility toward legal policy, such as affirmative action (Taylor, 2009). The primary goal of CLS was to expose and challenge the idea that legal reasoning was "neutral, value-free, and unaffected by social and economic relations, political forces or cultural phenomena" (Brown & Jackson, 2013, p. 12). CLS sought to deal with the color-blind, microaggressive, and institutional forms of racism that were emerging. It was from this overarching premise of CLS that CRT developed through the initial founders, Derrick Bell and Alan Freeman (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, 2017).

CRT's main function is to examine the role of race and racism in the perpetuation of social disparities between dominant and marginalized racial groups (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 2009a; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). As a theoretical framework, CRT is used to examine the "unequal and unjust distribution of power and resources along political, economic, racial, and gendered lines" (Taylor et al., 2009, p. 1). CRT is a movement comprising scholars and activists committed to challenging and disrupting racism and its associated social, legal, political, and educational consequences (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Patton, Ranero, & Everett, 2011). CRT was a necessary means to highlight and recognize racism in law and institutional policy practices in the United States.

Two primary tenets of CRT are that the nature of race and racism are ever-changing and that racism is not necessarily the product of biased actions, but can be the artifact of seemingly liberal, neutral, or normed rules and actions (Johnson-Bailey et al., 2009). Five components of a critical race perspective as asserted by Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) are (a) a central focus on race and racism, (b) a direct and overt challenge to hegemonic discourse, (c) a commitment to social justice, (d) an honoring of the experiential base of marginalized people, and (e) a multifaceted disciplinary viewpoint. Further, CRT embraces subjectivity and political standpoint as acceptable and appropriate stances for analysis, believing that scholarship is never neutral (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). A literature review of CRT by Tate (1997) revealed several defining elements:

1. CRT recognizes that race is endemic in the U.S. society, deeply ingrained legally, culturally, and even psychologically. The new question would ask

how these traditional interests and cultural artifacts serve as vehicles to limit and bind the educational opportunities of students of color.

2. CRT crosses epistemological boundaries. It borrows from several traditions, including liberalism, law and society, feminism, Marxism, poststructuralism, CLS, cultural nationalism, and pragmatism, to provide a complete analysis of "raced" people.
3. CRT reinterprets civil rights law in light of its limitations, illustrating that laws to remedy racial inequality are often undermined before they are implemented. Interestingly, multicultural education and some multicultural perspectives are built on or closely associated with the civil rights laws developed in the 1960s. Thus, an important question that critical race theoretical perspective seeks to answer is what limitations these perspectives have and how can they be reinterpreted to the advantage of traditionally underserved students of color. (Tate, 1997)

The key impetus for this study was the first component referred to by Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995). This component highlights the permanence and intersectionality of race and racism, which posits that racism is deeply ingrained legally, culturally, and psychologically, and intersects with sex, class, national origin, and sexual orientation (Bell, 1992, 2008; Crenshaw, 1991; Solórzano, 1997). CRT posits that institutional racism is defined as privileged access to information that results in loss of power and voice within education programs for racial minorities (Bell, 2008; Castagno, 2008).

CRT includes the notion of race frames, or lenses through which individuals understand the role of race in society (Warikoo & de Novias, 2014), to give context to

cultural frames of race. Cultural frames shape individuals' interpretations of the world around them as well as their behaviors. Small et al. (2010) defined cultural frames as lenses "through which we observe and interpret life" (p. 14). A frame structures how people interpret events and therefore how they react to them. Frames impact the interpretation of social phenomena by making certain aspects prominent and obscuring others (Goffman, 1974).

CRT highlights the premise that most group members in society construct social reality in ways that promote their self-interest, as stories are constructed and shared through the eyes of the victor. Delgado (1995) explained that the inequality that exists between Blacks and Whites is not necessarily vindictive and intentional, but derives from the mindset by which the dominant group perceives situations based off of the cultural frame or viewpoint that they hold. CRT allows for the voice of the minority to be heard with the use of counter-stories, which are the stories and perspectives of those victimized by racial oppression. The use of CRT shows that the use of counter stories may begin a process of correction in the system of beliefs and categories by calling attention to neglected evidence, reminding the dominant society of a common humanity (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017).

One viewpoint of CRT is that the moment legislative mandates were passed and policies enacted promoting the elimination of inequities, majority society members opposed affirmative action, as it went directly against the majority (i.e., White) group members' self-interest (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). This can be seen in policy changes and narratives of judges in cases such as *Regents of University of California v. Bakke* (1978), in which diversity became the compelling interest, or *Hopwood v. Texas* (1996),

which held that racial preferences in student admissions are virtually always unconstitutional. The self-interests of Whites can be seen in the dismantling of affirmative actions' original intentions and the self-interest of a colorblind or race-neutral system being promoted as diversification initiatives became paramount within the courts' narratives. Orfield (2001) wrote that "affirmative action survival may turn on just one question- whether the value of diversity is sufficiently compelling to justify race as a factor in deciding whom to admit to colleges and universities" (p. 308). Using economic data, Orfield showed that there are long-term positive economic consequences that might be attributable to sustaining diversity.

CRT theorist Crenshaw (1988) argued that everyday institutional practices embody White norms that are camouflaged by a stance of cultural neutrality presented by perspectivelessness. Delgado and Stefancic (1995, 2017) emphasized counter-storytelling and narrative as elements of a distinctive voice employed by people of color. Counter-storytelling can be used in legal narratives or presented in personal memoirs, such as that of presidents.

In November 2008, then U.S. Senator Barack H. Obama was elected the 44th President of the United States. As he was the first person of color to be elected president, the national media proclaimed that the United States had entered a "post-racial" era, leading many people in the United States to surmise that racism no longer existed at an institutional level but was enacted exclusively at the individual level (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Ladson-Billings, 2009b). This is reminiscent of what scholars refer to as a color-blind ideology—one that rationalizes contemporary racial inequality as the result of nonracial dynamics (Bonilla-Silva, 2010). Critical race theorists use counter-stories to

challenge the narrative that the dominant White majority holds by offering the notion of a unique voice of color. Delgado and Stefancic (2017) expressed that the voice of color thesis embraces that because of their different histories and experiences with oppression, Black, Indigenous American, Asian, and Latinx writers and thinkers may be able to communicate to their White counterparts' matters that Whites are unlikely to know about the current racism in legal policy, the educational system, and other subtler forms of racism that are 'ordinary' and go unacknowledged.

This literature review principally explored CRTs view of the rhetoric of racial transcendence in a "post-racial" era, and the current discussion regarding race-neutral or color-blind policy enforcement when addressing issues of affirmative action in higher education. Ladson-Billings (2009a) discussed the CRT approaches to education, including equal and equitable education for all students, the consideration of the harmful effects of colorblind and race-neutral curriculum, and the exposure of racism in the educational system. CRT was used in this study to explore the attitudes and insight of upper-level college administrators' views on the need for affirmative action in the current movement in higher education. Also, I used CRT to determine the perspectives of college and university administrators on whether or not there is a continued need for affirmative action in higher education, and whether the race-neutral policies are addressing the needs of the prospective minority student population, or if the need for a color-conscious policy would better benefit the minority population. I then focused on the cultural frame of the interviewees to examine if racial identity had any bearing on the perspective they provided. The use of storytelling versus counter-storytelling was also explored with the use of open-ended interview question technique.

I used the CRT (Bell, 1992; Crenshaw et al., 1995; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Outlaw, 1983; Williams, 1991; Wing, 1997) as the theoretical framework to guide this study. CRT sets forth that racism is endemic to American life, a critique that emerged from the interstices of the writings of the Civil Rights Movement and legal scholars who embraced reformist civil rights ideas combined with activist analytical political engagement (Johnson-Bailey et al., 2009). The literature review also provides an examination of the use of CRT on the lived experiences of college and university administrators who are responsible for implementing affirmative action policies while ensuring they achieve diversity goals.

Ladson-Billings (2009a) discussed the CRT approaches to education including equal and equitable education for all students, the consideration of the harmful effects of colorblind and race-neutral curriculum, and exposure of racism in the educational system. The authors used CRT to explore the experiences of college administrators in dealing with the challenges faced in meeting the goals of race-neutral policy changes and understanding what is being done to overcome the continued obstacles of campus diversity, primarily in relation to ensuring that historically disadvantaged groups are being admitted, without violating the law. They used CRT to guide the exploration of the perspectives of college and university administrators in charge of diversity initiatives. Ladson-Billings (2009a) explored the participants' perspectives to assess participants' views on the need for affirmative action in higher education, and whether the race-neutral policies are fully able to address the needs of the prospective minority student population; or if they feel a race-conscious policy would be the best way to increase racial diversity on college campuses. Additionally, CRT aided in facilitating a better understanding of the

cultural frame of the interviewees, examining whether their racial identity may have any bearing on the perspective they provide.

History of Race-Based Legal Cases and Legislation

Zuriff (2002) indicated that it was Executive Order 11246 that required federal contractors "to take affirmative action to ensure that applicants are employed without regard to their race, creed, color, or national origin" (p. 59). The Civil Rights Act of 1964, the creation of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), and Title IV mandated the desegregation of public elementary, secondary, and postsecondary educational institutions (Lim, 2016; Stokes, Lawson, & Smitherman, 2003). These institutions needed to provide equal educational opportunities to all students without regard to race or they risked losing their federal financial assistance (Bickel, 1998; Moreno, 2003). Although primary and secondary schools were at the heart of the Title IV Act, the precedent also applied to postsecondary institutions. As a result of this mandate, many colleges and professional school administrators' started to recruit minority students as a part of their education mission. Affirmative action began as a race-specific policy. Initially, affirmative action in education meant (a) recruiting minorities from a wide base to ensure consideration of groups that have been traditionally overlooked, and (b) using admissions slots in education to assure minority representation (Anderson, 2004; Lim, 2016).

Stulberg and Chen (2013) conducted a historical study and found that with the *Brown v. Board of Education's* (1954) decision, top administrators at liberal arts schools began showing commitment to the cause of racial equality. The findings of this study also indicated that liberal arts schools believed their institutions could and should contribute to

social change, thereby enacting admissions policies centered on affirmative action policy. Almost all leading colleges and schools came to believe they had a role to play in educating minority students (Stulberg & Chen, 2013). University officials began to initiate active recruitment programs, incorporating race in the admissions process by accepting qualified Black students that ranked top of their class who may have had lower test scores (e.g., SAT, ACT) and no access to advanced placement coursework, unlike most accepted Whites (Stulberg & Chen, 2013). The administration was successful in the strategy they employed, because, these policies increased admissions for African Americans and Hispanics at Predominantly White Institutions ([PWI]; Garrison-Wade & Lewis, 2004; Lim, 2016).

Despite the success obtained by administrations in creating racial diversity, between 1973 and 2016 students challenged administrations' policies in cases such as *Fisher v. University of Texas* (2016), *Gratz v. Bollinger* (2003), *Grutter v. Bollinger* (2003), *Hopwood v. Texas* (1996), and *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke* (1978). These students used the Civil Rights Act of 1964 as the basis for 'reverse discrimination' lawsuits and impacted the way administration could use race in the admissions decision-making process (Lark, 2012; Maramba, Sulè, & Winkle-Wagner, 2016). The findings in each of these landmark cases had a major impact on how administrators could meet the federal mandate in ensuring equal access to institution of higher education by all historically disadvantaged people.

The *Regents of University of California v. Bakke* (1978) case indicated that race was used as a "plus" factor (e.g., the administration that Harvard Law School uses successfully) and would withstand the strict scrutiny test (p. 316). Although the goal of

attaining a diverse student body was considered compelling, the administration in charge of diversity initiatives were required to implement affirmative action policies that could withstand 'strict scrutiny' (*Regents of University of California v. Bakke*, 1978). In an effort to not violate the new law, administrators had to make changes to the admissions policies they had in place (*Regents of University of California v. Bakke*, 1978). Administrators also faced additional challenges in *Hopwood v. The University of Texas Law School* (1996), in which a federal judge ruled that race could not be used as a basis for giving preferential treatment to minority law school applicants in Texas (Kronley & Handley, 1998; St. John, 1998). The court required those in charge of admissions programs to review applicants individually instead of using race as a proxy (*Hopwood v. The University of Texas Law School*, 1996).

In addition to court cases, administrators continued to modify their admissions policies as bans in several states (i.e., New Hampshire, Arizona, Nebraska, Michigan, Washington, California) outlawed the use of racial preferences and embraced the idea that 'colorblind' admissions standards were needed to ensure academic excellence (Garces & Mickey-Pabello, 2015; Lipson, 2007). These bans created challenges for administrators to identify and establish ways to achieve the broader goal of racial diversity as required by the federal government, without taking race into account. The overarching findings of the court held that race-conscious admissions processes may favor "underrepresented minority groups," but also must consider many other factors evaluated on an individual basis for every applicant (*Grutter v. Bollinger*, 2003, p. 334).

The vagueness of how to employ affirmative action in higher education and state laws banning the use of race-based affirmative action proved to be challenging for administrators in charge of meeting racial diversity on college campuses. Interestingly, while all of these changes have occurred, scant attention has been given to the experiences of administrators who are in charge of creating and implementing affirmative action policies and programs. There is a dearth of studies on how the changes in affirmative action policies have impacted university administrators and the ways in which they have created and implemented policies that (a) takes race into consideration in order to meet federally mandated racial diversity goals (e.g., desegregation), (b) find a way to do this without taking race into consideration to maintain lawfulness, and (c) continue their institutions' commitment to helping historically disadvantaged groups gain access to higher education opportunities if that is a part of their school's commitment.

Theoretical Framework and Its Recent Uses

Critical race scholars recognize the centrality of experiential knowledge as a strength and means for informing research (Brayboy, 2005; McCoy & Rodricks, 2015) and use a variety of methods including storytelling, family histories, biographies, chronicles, epistolaries, narratives, and testimonies (Bartlett & Brayboy, 2005; Solorzano & Yosso, 2002; Sue et al., 2007). There are several recent examples of the usefulness of CRT as a framework in exploring historical analysis of policy changes in higher education and policy changes in the evolution of affirmative action.

One example is a study by Harper et al. (2009), who employed CRT as an analytical framework for understanding how White supremacy and racist ideologies have shaped and undermined various policy efforts. Harper and colleagues explored the

policies that have affected the enrollment and degree attainment rates for African American students throughout the lifespan of higher education. Davis, Gooden, and Micheaux (2015) also utilized the CRT with a hybrid methodology employing empirical and theoretical elements of content and textual analysis. Davis and colleagues (2015) drew on the tenets of CRT and analyzed the extent to which the standard language addressed, or failed to address, issues of race, racism, and culture. Davis et al. (2015) were interested in exploring "if the explicit consideration of race is present in the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) and Educational Leaders Constituent Council (ELCC) standards" (p. 335). They explored the implications of a school leadership landscape reliant on a collection of color-blind leadership standards to guide the preparation and practice of school leaders.

A study by Teranishi and Briscoe (2008) provided the most current example of the use of the counter-stories/narratives. Teranishi and Briscoe's study examined how race and racialized ideologies are manifested in high-stakes college admissions, the debate over affirmative action, and the college choice behavior of Black high school students. The authors allowed for the voices of Black high school students in California to describe their lived experiences with Proposition 209 and how their behavior changed as a result. Similarly, a recent qualitative study conducted by Gaxiola-Serrano (2017) incorporated CRT in an educational framework to focus on the racialized K-12 experiences of four Latina/o graduate students who started their postsecondary career at a community college. Gaxiola-Serrano's (2017) study attempted to better understand what led Latina/o students to enroll in community colleges after high school.

Literature Review Related to Key Variables and/or Concepts

Initially, in higher education, some colleges and universities took a proactive stance of instituting affirmative action policies. These included having a fixed number of positions for qualified minority applicants; adjusting scores for minorities who sought admission; and expending time and finances, some in the form of scholarships for outreach to recruit underrepresented students (Crosby & VanDeVeer, 2000). Researchers have mostly examined the effects of bans or loss of race-conscious affirmative action policies on racial diversity on college campuses, or potentially could mean for the rest of the United States if race-neutral policies were employed. Some of these studies discussed students' perspectives on affirmative action, applicants' attitudes on states that have enacted bans on affirmative action, or schools that openly express not using race as a factor in the admissions process (Harper & Griffin, 2010; Hartlep, Ecker, Miller, & Whitmore, 2013; Oh, Choi, Neville, Anderson, & Landrum-Brown, 2010; Teranishi & Briscoe, 2008; Wilkins & Wenger, 2014). Only a few researchers have directly examined the perceptions and lived experiences of those in charge of admittance and retention of racial campus diversity (Garces & Cogburn, 2015; Gichuru, 2010; Kezar, 2008; Lipson, 2007).

The empirical research in this area is very limited, as information is being developed daily. Therefore, three empirical studies are included in this literature review and one dissertation which directly assessed the views of university administrators regarding affirmative action policies. Given the dearth of specific research related to the lived experiences of university administrators with regards to affirmative action policies and programming, this literature review included studies in which the various approaches

that university systems have used to address diversity in the context of the continuously changing affirmative action policies are explored. A few researchers have focused on the strategies used within university-systems to keep their institutions diversified. These studies are significant because the authors explored how administrators addressed the challenges faced despite not explicitly exploring the views of the administration.

Additionally one study is included in this review that examined what Black male minority students at an elite institution have found to be the most beneficial programs enabling them to access the institutions they have graduated from. I included this study because it described both programs and partnership programs that administrators have used to reach a racially diverse student body. Knowing the importance CRT places on the use of counter-stories, this empirical study is relevant because the researchers' examined the programs successfully used by university administrators to reach its underrepresented minority student populations.

There are very few empirical studies in which the perspectives of university administrators on affirmative action are explored. Lipson (2007) conducted a qualitative study that sought to explore the views of upper level university admissions officials on policy transformation. The study specifically sought to understand *why* university admissions officials embraced diversity at their respective colleges. The sample included 39 officials and top administrators at three selective public universities: UC-Berkeley, UT-Austin, and UW- Madison. The respondents were not selected through a random sample, and as such were not necessarily representative of the entire population of university officials who played important roles in developing or reforming race-based affirmative admissions policies.

Lipson (2007) utilized in-depth interviews, archival analysis, and admissions and enrollment statistics between 1999 and 2004. All respondents were asked about their attitudes regarding race-based affirmative action and their perception of their peers' attitudes. The findings suggested that at selective universities across the country, top administrators and faculty have come to defend race-based affirmative action. The administration overwhelmingly supported racial diversity and race-based affirmative action policies. The results showed that of the 39 respondents interviewed across the three campuses, 79.5% explicitly voiced their support for race-based affirmative action, whereas only 17.9% voiced their opposition. When asked about their perceptions of the organizational culture of university officials, all agreed that the vast majority of university admission officials were defenders of affirmative action, which was consistent with the interview results. At both UC-Berkeley and UT-Austin campuses, the administration highlighted that the move toward individual assessment and away from formula-based admissions led to a massive increase in the workload of these largely pro-affirmative action admissions officers. The university officials succeeded in increasing the budgets for their admissions staff, however, they were required to review all forty thousand applications twice at UC-Berkeley, an unfathomable workload. All three universities projected a commitment to racial diversity and advertised themselves as being racially diverse (Lipson, 2001, 2007).

Lipson (2007) found that the administrators were very troubled both by the post-ban drop in representation of African Americans and Latinos, and also by the news headlines that reported the drops. Lipson indicated that many administrators were concerned that African Americans and Latinos blamed the university itself for the drops

instead of attributing the bans on race-based affirmative action to former California Governor Pete Wilson, colorblind legal mobilization, voter opposition, or other external factors. Another concern addressed by administrators interviewed was the creation of an unstable system and a backlash of communities of color if administrators did not find a way to close the gap between Whites and students of color, given that both California and Texas were soon to be a majority, minority state.

Although Lipson (2007) described the administration's frustration at that time, with the workload increase, they still held positivity towards racial diversity and dedicated support for race-based affirmative action. The author found that university officials at UC-Berkeley, UT-Austin, and UW-Madison were not fearful that their campus' academic reputation would decline, but were fearful that drops in racial diversity resulting from bans on race-based affirmative action would scar their university's image and hurt the university's student quality, enrollment sizes, and financial health. Lipson further indicated that these schools were more progressive and liberal than most schools and were not necessarily representative of the entire administrative university population. What the study did not ask was what policy changes they attempted and challenges they faced considering the limitations of not using race to promote racially diverse campuses.

There have been several strategies that administrators have employed to increase racial diversity on campus while remaining race-neutral. Prior to 1996, every public university in the Association of American Universities (AAU)—an organization of the nation's leading research universities—employed affirmative action to ensure diversity among its entering freshmen classes (Colburn et al., 2008). In 1996 voters in California

adopted Proposition 209, a ballot measure that amended the state constitution to prohibit public institutions from discriminating based on race, sex, or ethnicity.

The percentage plan approach used in Texas and Florida that the administration helped to create, produced some racial diversity in higher education (Colburn et al., 2008), but was based on a K-12 school system that was significantly segregated (Alger, 2013). Percent plans have been shown to be largely ineffective at increasing racial and ethnic diversity (Bastedo & Jaquette, 2011; Howell, 2010). Recent studies showed that if percent plans are implemented on a national scale, minority representation on the most selective college campuses would decline by 10.2% following a ban on the use of race-based affirmative action (Howell, 2010). Colleges and universities administrators had to look to the research and alternate options being discussed to deal with such declines in racial minority representation. One potential option was the topic of class-based preferences.

Class-based preferences are perceived as a better or more acceptable alternative to race-based affirmative action, offering preferences to the underprivileged rather than to racial groups who are not all underprivileged (Kahlenberg, 2012). Some researchers suggest that class-based affirmative action can at least partly maintain rates of minority enrollment, while increasing college access for economically disadvantaged students (see Kahlenberg, 2012). Knowing how administrators addressed the increase number of racial minorities on campus without the use of race due to state-mandated bans becomes increasingly important.

A study conducted by Garces and Cogburn (2015) at the University of Michigan examined the idea of the individuals (i.e., key actors) and their personal opinions on

affirmative action, as well as *if* and *how* it should be employed. The authors specifically used the public-policy framework—a bottom-up theory, which highlighted how key actors (e.g., high-level administrators and faculty) were involved in implementing laws. Researcher who utilized quantitative studies found that bans on affirmative action in Washington, Texas, and Florida reduced the enrollment of students of color in these states' various educational sectors (Backes, 2012; Garces & Mickey-Pabello, 2015; Hinrichs, 2012). Building off of these studies, Garces and Cogburn conducted a qualitative phenomenological study using semi-structured interviews lasting approximately 90 minutes. The sample consisted of 14 higher education administrators closely split across gender and race who played a critical role in implementing and influencing diversity policy specific to race/ethnicity. The study examined how campus-level administrators described the law and the limits it placed on how they promoted racial and ethnic diversity.

Garces and Cogburn's (2015) study provided a more comprehensive understanding of the influence of affirmative action bans such as Proposal 2 (Similar to California's Prop. 209) and what this may mean to the rest of the nation as bans on the use of race-specific policies continued to increase. Their primary research question was "how institutional actors describe the influence Proposal 2 has had on efforts to further racial/ethnic diversity in the student body at the university?" (Garces & Cogburn, 2015, p. 838). The researchers asked participants to discuss (a) the university's ideological stance on institutional diversity, and (b) their perceptions of how the law influenced their individual efforts to support racial and ethnic diversity.

The findings of the Garces and Cogburn's (2015) study showed that administrators believe that the law had influenced their efforts to support racial diversity. That is, the law had limited the conversations campus-level administrators felt they could have around race and racism. Participants believed it was even more difficult to talk about race because the topic was more 'politically charged' because of the law. Participants also discussed the existence of racism and its impact; however, they felt they were not allowed to talk about it. Some administrators noted that the law placed limits on the university's ability to act as an agent of social change, because of the institution's need to protect itself against legal challenges regarding its policies and practices. On the other hand, other participants felt that Proposal 2 gave some individuals a reason for lack of action on diversification issues.

The participants in the study by Garces and Cogburn's (2015) reported that the university needed to change the current climate to reenergize individuals' commitment to racial diversity. The findings also suggested that a solution would require an internal system of accountability around diversity, similar to 10 or 15 years ago, nevertheless with silenced conversations around race and racism. The effect of silencing discussions about race and structural racism left individuals feeling disempowered to advocate on behalf of racial diversity; and made it more difficult for the institution to capitalize on an institutional history that successfully defended the constitutionality of affirmative action in *Grutter v. Bollinger* (2003).

An important connection between the ability to talk about race and an individual's sense of empowerment to work on diversity issues was a defining feature in Garces and Cogburn's (2015) study. The participants indicated that they felt personally

disempowered to act as advocates for racial diversity since the passage of Proposal 2. Participants also believed that the law had contributed to the negative perceptions about the university's commitment to racial diversity. Based on the findings of this study it is suggested that broader structural support is needed to empower individuals to act on their commitment to and support of students of color.

At the heart of a 2008 study conducted by Adrianna Kezar is an examination of the attack of structural support by the politics that surround campuses and the effects of the diversity initiatives that university presidents' employ. Kezar's (2008) study did not focus on the use of race-neutral or race-specific policies. However, it provided some insights into how university presidents viewed some of the issues related to diversity and inclusion. The researchers sought to find answers to two research questions namely (1) "How and in what ways do presidents find that moving a diversity agenda forward is a political process, and what is the nature of the politics?" and (2) "What strategies do presidents use to negotiate a political environment and create change?" (p. 408). The investigators interviewed 27 university presidents for this study. The goal was to examine the role of the university president in advancing diversity agendas, and the strategies used to move those agendas forward. This empirical study used the political theories of change and leadership theoretical framework.

Kezar's (2008) findings presented six strategies as being most important in advancing diversity on college campuses. These included:

> (1) to develop coalitions and advocates, (2) to take the political pulse regularly, (3) to anticipate resistance, (4) to use data to neutralize politics and rationalize the process, (5) to create public relations campaigns and showcase success, and (6) to

> capitalize on controversy for learning and unearth interest groups. (Kezar, 2008, p. 420)

The findings also highlighted the importance of assessing the political climate of the campus in a systematic and ongoing manner to monitor politics. Some of the participants interviewed had established a human relations commission or presidential diversity task force to help them with such ongoing assessments. Additionally, the findings revealed that all presidents agreed that students could make the greatest allies when making changes to diversity policies. An additional finding of Kezar's (2008) study was the need to continuously educate and dialogue with alumni and faculty when making or changing campus diversity initiatives to decrease potential political resistance. Kezar's study used a broad definition of diversity that included race and ethnicity, gender, disability, sexual orientation, and national origin.

Although court legislation in the University of Michigan's *Grutter v. Bollinger* (2003) case dismantled the use of affirmative action as a quota system, due to reverse discrimination, they recognized the benefits derived by society from racially diverse institutions of higher education. Because of the University of Michigan cases many universities revisited their affirmative action policies (Gichuru, 2010). Many higher education leaders remained focused on diversifying higher education (O'Neil, 2008) and as a result, more than 70 institutions of higher learning emulated the corporate world and engaged chief diversity officers (Gichuru, 2010).

A dissertation by Gichuru (2010) examined the creation of a new position within higher education known as a Chief Diversity Officer (CDO) and the lived experiences of CDOs. The research question that guided this phenomenological study was "how do

CDOs perceive and describe their experience in enhancing admission of minority students in the post-affirmative action era?" (Gichuru, 2010, p. 7). Six CDOs from public universities within each region of the U.S. who played a pivotal leadership role in the diversity of their respective campuses described their experiences during an interview ranging from fifty minutes to two hours. The analysis generated the following common themes: (a) the varied roles of CDO, (b) partnership, (c) post-affirmative action era examined, (d) changes in admission, (e) challenges in admission, and (f) future of diversity (Gichuru, 2010).

The findings of Gichuru's (2010) dissertation highlighted that many of the schools did not change their commitment to the diversification (including racial diversification) of their respective campuses. Instead, the schools revised the wording of policies and scholarships and implemented more race-neutral admission policies. Much like the findings of Lipson's (2007) study, the participants expressed a personal commitment to increasing diversity. Gichuru expressed that finding out about the CDO's role in admission initiatives evidenced:

> (a) their impact as leaders in enhancing admission of minority students in the post-affirmative action era, (b) their role as change agents as they created policies and initiatives to enhance diversity in the post-affirmative action era, (c) how they addressed challenges and resistance they were facing particularly in the post-affirmative action era, (d) how they envisioned the future of admission of minority students in higher education, and (e) their passion and optimism in working towards increasing diverse student body, now and in the future. (Gichuru, 2010, p. 186)

Gichuru (2010) also suggested that the CDOs were aware that their role was very challenging, and the need to undertake drastic measures to avoid lawsuits. Some of the measures included revising the wording of policies and scholarships, implementing more race-neutral admission policies, and supporting students at the middle and high school level to reach the same vantage point as the majority students. The findings of this study also revealed that access to information by parents and students was crucial. Participants (CDOs) noted that ensuring that parents and students were aware of available resources helped them to become better prepared and to take advantage of the available support. Many CDOs expressed their concern about having students of color still underrepresented in their campuses despite the use of race-neutral admissions programs that have a purposeful outreach inclination to enhance admission.

All participants mentioned that they collaborated with the admissions office, but each university was unique regarding the other offices with which it worked (Gichuru, 2010). Some participants emphasized the need to have an accountability system that uses quantifiable measures to determine progress and for future planning. CDOs expressed that after the Michigan rulings in the *Grutter v. Bollinger* (2003) and the *Gratz v Bollinger* (2003) cases, their role became more challenging and they had to undertake drastic measures to avoid lawsuits. Participants felt that the future of diversity at the university was more critical than ever because the differently worded admission policies included changes to some of the guarantees, ensuring that race was not used in the policies, and the change in the language of scholarships (e.g., discontinuing usage of the term *preferred*) and making sure there were no race-entitlement programs.

Among the studies that examined what administration at universities as a whole were doing to combat the challenges that both the bans and race-neutral policies presented, a study by Gandara (2012) explored the different outreach strategies employed by the University of California (UC). I assessed admission rates before and after the implementation of SP-1, a special resolution passed in 1995 by Regents of the University of California, and Proposition 209 between the years of 1995 and 2010. I examined (a) the different strategies implemented over the years to help increase diversity within the school system and (b) the outcomes of both the percentage of race/ethnicity of the applicant pool and the percentage of those admitted to the UC school system, while considering the racial composition of the state the school system serves.

Gandara (2012) utilized a case study approach to explore how in 1997, initially as a response to SP-1 and Proposition 209, the administration at the University of California first implemented an outreach strategy to increase the diversity of the university through race-neutral means. The objective of this strategy was to work directly with the high schools that served high percentages of underrepresented minority students (URM) to double the number of URMs. The costs associated with a program of this magnitude were too substantial for UC, reaching as much as $120 million annually. In addition to funding issues, it became apparent to the administration that the decline in URMs after the affirmative action bans could not be remedied in just a few short years with the use of this program (Gandara, 2012). According to Gandara, the administration and the new plan UC employed replaced the outreach study, including: (a) a holistic review strategy, (b) targeted recruitment, (c) percentage plan, and (d) class-based affirmative action as a substitute for race-conscious affirmative action.

Gandara's (2012) study stated that the holistic review strategy, initiated in 2002 at UC Berkeley, took into consideration a variety of circumstances that made an applicant unique such as persistence and overcoming disadvantage, which was predictive of successfully completing a degree. Unfortunately, the administration was not as successful as they hoped. The author alluded to the weak effects of this strategy in not being able to consider race, as contributing to the decline in URM at Berkeley, which has continued. The 'targeted recruitment' strategy employed its upper level administrators in addition to faculty of color to staff phone banks and call potential students, encouraging them to attend UC-Berkeley. The administration next implemented a 'percent plan' similar to Texas, admitting the top four percent of each high school class. This strategy did not work as administration had hoped because this strategy did not increase the pool of URM students due to the fact that most of these students were already qualified to enter the university (Gandara, 2012).

Unlike Texas, which has a highly segregated K-12 school-system, few schools in the state have a sufficient concentration of African Americans to ensure eligibility. In California, African Americans overwhelmingly attended largely Latino high schools (Gandara, 2012). The last strategy employed by the UC system was a Socio-Economic-Status as a substitute for race in admissions, also known as *class-based affirmative action*. UC chose strategy to diversify its campuses and increase representation of URMs. However, substituting class for race in admissions criteria resulted in proportionately more low-income White and Asian students gaining admission rather than increasing the representation of historically underrepresented minorities, specifically African American and Latinx students. Gandara (2012) noted that the UC system admitted a high

percentage of low-income students with 36% of UC undergraduates in 2010 being from homes with under $50,000 income, but relatively fewer underrepresented students of color were among them, with less than half of the low-income students admitted as 2011 freshmen being from underrepresented minority groups.

The findings of Gandara's (2012) study showed that even as Latinos and African Americans increased their representation in the applicant pool at UC Berkeley from approximately 13% in 1995 to 19% in 2010, they experienced a nearly 75% decline in the rate of admissions. Additionally, Gandara stated that Latinos at UCLA increased from 16% of the applicant pool in 1995 to 23% in 2010, yet, their share of the admissions pool steadily declined by nearly 75%. Similarly, the decline of African Americans in rates of admission at UCLA was approximately 70% (Gandara, 2012).

A study conducted by Harper and Griffin (2010) provided insight into the types of programs administrators have worked with or created to increase Black male enrollment. The authors sought answers to the following research question: "what programs enabled Black minority populations to successfully navigate their way to and through prestigious predominantly White colleges and universities?" (p. 48). The findings of this study added to the understanding of the policies, programs, and institutional practices that act as enablers to accessing elite and expensive institutions as well as retainment of its Black minority student population. Harper and Griffin's study provided important insight into how the administration at colleges and universities utilize multiple strategies to successfully keep their campuses racially diverse without the institutions themselves using race as a factor.

Additionally, Harper and Griffin (2010) described the policies and programs that enabled Black undergraduate men raised in low-income and working-class families to later enroll in one of 18 predominantly White private postsecondary institutions. A phenomenology approach to qualitative inquiry guided this study. Data for the Harper and Griffin (2010) study was based on findings from the National Black Male College Achievement Study (NBMCAS). The study included 219 students at 42 colleges and universities in 20 states across the country. Six different institution types were represented in the national study to include: (1) public research universities, (2) highly selective private research universities, (3) historically Black private colleges and universities, (4) historically Black public universities, (5) liberal arts colleges, and (6) comprehensive state universities (Harper & Griffin, 2010). Harper and Griffin's study uncovered that programs either funded by or partnered with the administrators and institutions they serve, as well as scholarships and financial aid waivers provided directly by the university/college played the largest part in the admissions decisions of the minority students interviewed.

The first strategy used to maintain a racially diverse campus without using race as a factor was a program initiative named Prep for Prep (Harper & Griffin, 2010). The partnership between one visionary teacher and Columbia University Teachers College founded program initiatives such as Prep for Prep in 1978. These initiatives focused on assisting low-income urban youth of color get into private, specialty high schools, and independent schools helping to prepare racially diverse, underprivileged students to access highly selective colleges and universities (Prep for Prep, 2017). The core belief of Prep for Prep is that the United States needs more leaders who are reflective of the

increasingly diverse United States society. Their mission is to develop future leaders by providing gifted young people of color access to a first-rate education and an array of leadership development and professional advancement opportunities (Prep for Prep, 2017). The program receives private funding and partners with 80 boarding and independent day schools. This program asserts its support from administration at colleges and graduate schools in the generous financial aid packages that their students are awarded. The students interviewed were very passionate about not only their commitment to college graduation but expressed how life changing a program of this magnitude was for them (Harper & Griffin, 2010).

The second strategy used to maintain a racially diverse campus, as noted by Harper and Griffin (2010) were collaborative college access and talent identification programs for urban youth, such as the Posse Foundation. This foundation has 57 partner institutions, which includes the nation's best undergraduate and graduate colleges and universities that have committed millions in scholarship dollars to Posse Scholars. All participants interviewed from DePauw University were Posse Scholars from New York City. Each of the participants had received institutional aid to cover the cost of attendance (Harper & Griffin, 2010).

The administration at Vanderbilt University was the first to form a partnership with the Posse Foundation. This foundation recognized the considerable challenges that the administration faced at selective colleges and universities that are committed to broadening educational access for underrepresented groups (Posse, 2017). An appealing component to the partnering administration at these highly selective institutions may be related to the program expressing that the Posse Scholarship is available to all students

regardless of race or need (Posse, 2017). One interviewee discussed with Harper and Griffin (2010) that at least 35 of the 52 Black undergraduate men enrolled at DePauw during the time of his interview were Posse Scholars. Posse Scholars espouse a commitment to positively affecting their campus communities through dialogue and leadership with the presence of a multicultural team of students from diverse backgrounds, fostering a campus environment that is more welcoming to all. These scholarship recipients worked directly with the administration because it is critical to the growth and success of the program since all Posse college and university partnerships are established through their offices (Posse, 2017). This scholarship program utilizes a unique evaluation method— Dynamic Assessment Process (DAP)— designed to identify young leaders who might be missed by traditional admissions criteria, but who can excel at selective colleges and universities. DAP is a three-part process, including large-group and individual interviews with Posse staff and university partner administrators who ultimately select a diverse group of 10 students for each college or university, thereby forming a Posse. Despite Posse's role in creating access for diverse populations, one interviewee felt compelled to point out that "Posse by no way is affirmative action for minorities; there is a rigorous and competitive selection process" (Harper & Griffin, 2010, p. 53). That being said, this study's findings determined that this foundation was the primary point of access for most low-income and working-class Black male students (Harper & Griffin, 2010).

The third significant factor in Harper and Griffin's (2010) study was how the administration at these institutions appealed to the study participants based on institution-based no-loans and zero-contribution initiatives. The study revealed that Harvard Law

School awarded some of the study participants the financial aid, which was ultimately the deciding point that made their matriculation possible. One of Harvard University's policies was that students whose parents earn below a certain income threshold may attend at no cost. Another student chose Amherst over the flagship public research university in his home state of Florida due to the financial aid package. Stanford has an income threshold aid initiative where students whose parents earn below $60,000 are not expected to contribute anything toward their educational expenses (Harper & Griffin, 2010). Penn State University also offered the no-loans initiative and these students praised their colleges' president for a perceivably authentic expression of commitment to college opportunity for lower-income students. Participants mentioned initiatives such as these as the most significant enablers of college access across institutions (Harper & Griffin, 2010).

Harper and Griffin (2010) felt that Federal grants could help create similar initiatives for low-income and working-class students in rural communities, especially in Southern states where postsecondary participation gaps between Black men and others are most pronounced. However, the authors alluded to two related shortcomings of programs including cost and capacity. That is, these programs only accommodate relatively small cohorts of students given the extensive financial investment and partnership parameters with a limited number of participating institutions.

Summary

There have been significant challenges for the administration in charge of policy formulation and implementation in maintaining racially diverse campuses while remaining race-neutral. The study conducted by Lipson (2007) shed light on the fact that

(a) the administration had an overwhelming increase in their workload in the admissions process, and (b) although they are fully committed to racial diversity, they have low African American and Latino presence on their campuses. The findings from Garces and Cogburn's (2008) study suggested that the impact of bans such as Prop 2 and Prop 209 ultimately lead to the silencing of conversations around race and racism on college campuses. With the participants perception that the existence of race, racism, and its impact are real and not being able to address these issues through conversation is very concerning.

Kezar (2008) highlighted the various approaches that university presidents have used in advancing diversity agendas, and the strategies used to move those agendas forward when dealing with the politics surrounding diversity plans. Kezar's (2008) study did not focus on the use of race-neutral or race-specific policies, rather, the study simply examined the role of university presidents in advancing diversity agendas, and the strategies used to advance these agendas.

Gichuru (2010) examined the role of Chief Diversity Officers (CDOs). The CDOs that participated in the study reported that the future of diversity at the university is more critical than ever, because the differently worded admission policies after *Grutter v Bollinger* (2003) included changes to some of the guarantees, ensuring that race was not used in the policies, and the change in the language of scholarships such as discontinuing usage of the term *preferred* and making sure there were no race-entitlement programs. In addition, Gichuru provided insight into the extensive efforts and many programs that the CDOs have utilized and implemented.

There are only four empirical studies, including a dissertation that directly examined the views of university administrators on affirmative action policies. As a result, it is for this purpose that I examined how higher education administrators responded by directly assessing the policies the administrators implemented to continue racially diverse college campuses, and how those policies evolved. The overarching themes found in a search of the literature were percentage plans, class-based plans, partnership programs, and financial assistance.

The data in the study conducted by Gandara (2012) on the University of California school system highlighted how the many race-neutral strategies employed in the admissions process since 1995 have proven insufficient, because the proportionate representation of underrepresented minority students continue to decline. In addition, other researchers suggested that class is not sufficiently a good proxy for race-based affirmative action policies to be effective at producing substantial racial diversity (Gaertner & Hart, 2013; Lipson, 2007; Reardon, Baker, Kasman, Townsend, & Klasik, 2014; Schwarzschild, 2013). Percentage plans are not a viable option either, based on current research showing that the k-12 school systems across the United States would need to be highly segregated and the current low levels of African American enrollment at colleges and universities in states that utilize these plans the colleges and universities in states that utilize this strategy show low levels of African American enrollment (Colburn et al., 2008). The Lipson (2007) and Harper and Griffin (2010) studies discussed the strategies used by administration to admit a diverse student body while maintaining race-neutrality according to the law. A review of the literature and the race-neutral strategies that have been employed by administration included: (a) percentage

plans, (b) class-based affirmative action, (c) partnering with outside programs that utilize their own diversity initiatives, and (d) institutions offering significant financial packages.

Inferences can be drawn from Harper and Griffin's (2010) study regarding the interesting tactics and foresight noted by them in terms of how the administrators worked together to ensure diversity. The authors highlighted that the administrators did not use race as a factor, but instead promoted racial diversity by partnering with programs that promoted racial diversity and working with historically underrepresented students of color. These non-federally funded programs operated similarly to the initial 1997 UC outreach strategy used by the administration that Gandara (2012) described. Gandara explained that the initial outreach strategy was too costly for the State of California to employ, which is why the administration of the UC currently used multiple strategies such as the percentage plan approach, the 'holistic review' strategy, and class-based affirmative action.

A review of the literature further revealed that there have limited research on the direct response of the lived experiences of the administration in charge of policy formation and implementation or those in charge of diversity initiatives, and their views on the challenges faced with the programs/policies they have used to address the acceptance and enrollment of racial minorities. The studies explored within this literature review have focused on two overarching themes: (1) how administrators embraced diversity (Garces & Cogburn, 2015; Gichuru, 2010; Lipson, 2007), and (2) the strategies used by administrators to promote racial diversity (Gandara, 2012; Garces & Cogburn, 2015; Harper & Griffin, 2010; Kezar, 2008).

One of the gaps in the literature addressed is the administrators' direct perspective on affirmative action. That is, to what extent do administrators continue to see a need for affirmative action policies or if they feel these policies are no longer needed to increase racial diversity in higher education institutions. Although one study (i.e., Garces & Cogburn, 2015) provided insight into administrators' perspectives on the issue, it was limited to one university. Also, while the Gichuru (2010) study provided insight into CDO's experiences it only focused on public colleges and universities. Given these limitations, I explored this issue at multiple private and public universities within the U.S..

The second gap in the literature addressed is the effects of the restrictions of race on the admissions criteria, relating to the number of racial and ethnic minority students that are accepted and enrolled in college and universities. Although four studies focused on the strategies that some colleges and universities have used to increase diversity, none focused on the impact of the loss of race-specific affirmative action policies on the number of racial and ethnic minorities accepted and enrolled in institutions of higher education. Furthermore, none of the studies have examined the impact of the loss of race-specific affirmative action policies on existing students, faculty, and staff in terms of race and ethnic relations on campuses. It was my intention to fill these gaps in the literature and provide a forum for administrators to provide insight in this regard.

Chapter 3: Research Methods

The purpose of this study was to examine the experiences of college and university administrators' implementation of race-neutral policies in their admissions criteria to ensure equal access of racial and ethnic minority groups to institutions of higher learning, while still meeting federal mandates of affirmative action. In this chapter, I discuss the qualitative methodology for this study. I describe the profile of the participants and the recruiting procedure. Also, data collection methods, data analysis, and the verification processes are discussed. Finally, confidentiality and ethical concerns are explored. In addition, I discuss the research design and rationale, the role of the researcher, participant selection logic, methodology, issues of trustworthiness, and ethical procedures.

Research Design and Rationale

Two primary research questions were developed to better understand college and university administrators' experiences with implementing race-neutral programs to ensure equal access to historically underrepresented racial and ethnic minority students. Secondary research questions were developed for each of the primary questions to further help to answer the research questions.

1. What are college and university administrators' experiences with implementing programs to ensure equal access to historically underrepresented racial and ethnic minority students?

- How do college and university administrators manage evolving changes to affirmative action while ensuring equal access to historically underrepresented racial and ethnic minority students?

- How are college and university admission policies modified when changes are made to affirmative action either due to state-mandated bans or court mandates?
- Who are the persons at the colleges and universities who are involved in formulating admissions policies to ensure equal access to historically underrepresented racial and ethnic minority students?
- What are the strategies that have been utilized to address any decrease in racial and ethnic minority students as a result of changes in race-based affirmative action?
- What are the perspectives on affirmative action of the administrators who are in charge of implementing programs to ensure equal access to historically underrepresented racial and ethnic minority students, on affirmative action?

2. What are the effects of the restriction of race in the admissions criteria relating to the number of racial and ethnic minority students who are accepted and enrolled in colleges and universities?
    - What impact has restrictions of race in the admissions criteria had on the racial and ethnic diversity of college and university campuses?
    - What impact has restriction of race in the admissions criteria had on race and ethnic relations among students on college and university campus?
    - What impact has restriction of race had on the attitudes and beliefs of administrators in charge of college and university diversity?

The key concepts of this study were restriction of race in the admissions criteria, enrollment of racial and ethnic minority students, ethnic diversity of college and

university campuses, race and ethnic relations among students, and attitudes and beliefs of administrators. Restriction of race in admission criteria referred to the exclusion of race as a factor in the university admissions process. Enrollment of racial and ethnic minority students was defined as acceptance of historically underrepresented racial and ethnic minority students into institution of higher education. For the purpose of this study, the focus was on U.S.-born African Americans, Latinos, Native/Indigenous Americans, and Pacific Islanders. The ethnic diversity of college and university campuses was defined as the proportional student population makeup, equaling that of the national population makeup. Race and ethnic relations among students were defined as the relationship between minority and nonminority students and the level of hostility and stigma experienced by minorities from nonminorities. Attitudes and beliefs of administrators referred to the support or opposition to using race as a factor as an admissions criterion.

I used a phenomenological design because it was best suited for in-depth explorations of administrators' experiences with implementing programs to ensure equal access to historically underrepresented racial and ethnic minority students at a specific college or university. Furthermore, a phenomenological design provides tools for researchers to study complex phenomena within their contexts (Creswell, 2007). CRT scholars have used counter-storytelling methodologies, such as narratives and phenomenology, to provide educators with opportunities to share their views of racial and societal implications (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). A phenomenological research approach was used to answer the research questions in this study designed to explore the lived experiences of administrators in charge of implementing programs to ensure equal access

to historically underrepresented racial and ethnic minority students at a specific college or universities. A phenomenological approach was most appropriate to capture the lived experiences of the college and university administrators. This approach allowed for exploration of shared experiences among a group of participants (Moustakas, 1994).

Other qualitative designs were not appropriate because they would not have facilitated an exploration of the issues under investigation within specific contexts. A quantitative design was not chosen for this study because it would not have facilitated deep exploration of administrators' experiences with implementing programs to ensure equal access to historically underrepresented racial and ethnic minority students at a specific college or university. Quantitative design generally does not allow for open discussions related to a person's perspectives and experiences. I used a qualitative approach to facilitate probing for underlying values, beliefs, assumptions, and experiences.

A phenomenological design is a useful approach for descriptive research studies with a focus on a specific situation or context, where generalizability is less important, for example, in describing the implementation of a program or policy (Rose, Spinks, & Canhoto, 2015). A phenomenological design facilitated utilization of the interview technique (see Creswell, 2007, 2014) to explore how college and university administrators view and understand their lived experiences related to affirmative action policies. A phenomenological design was used to examine the stories participants told about their experiences. These narratives allowed for a better understanding of their experiences with implementing programs to ensure equal access to historically underrepresented racial and ethnic minority students, and their perspectives related to the

effects of the restriction of race in the admissions criteria on the number of racial and ethnic minority students who are accepted and enrolled in colleges and universities. Additionally, the phenomenological design allowed for comparison of participants with different sociodemographic characteristics (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender, position) to allow for a deeper understanding of personal narrative and counter-stories (see Delgado & Stefancic, 2017) of administrators in charge of diversity initiatives in colleges and universities.

Sample

The participants for this study were university administrators. The selection of a variation of colleges and universities in the current study aimed to examine both regional and private/public educational institutions' differences. Participants represented a specific type of school in a specific region (i.e., Northeast, Midwest, West, South) and type of institution (i.e., private, public). The rationale for these choices was to understand the lived experiences of various types of administrators at institutions of higher education, and the differences between colleges and universities that can and cannot use race as a factor in their admissions decisions.

The sample size for a qualitative study is generally small (Creswell, 2007). The goal of this qualitative study was to use a sample size of at least eight participants to ensure representation and data saturation of the various institution type, location, and participant demographics being studied. Optimally, four participants were to be administrators from universities that do not use race as an admissions factor, two from private colleges and universities, and the remaining two from public institutions. Additionally, four participants were administrators from universities that use race as a

factor in their admissions criteria, with two administrators being from private institutions and two from public institutions. The goal was to recruit two Black females and two Black males, as well as two White females, and two White males to participate in the study.

Given the hundreds of colleges and universities in each region, I anticipated that there would have been no challenges in recruiting the required sample size based on the inclusion criteria. In the end, participant solicitation yielded a sample of nine individuals. All four regions of the United States were represented. Three participants represented institutions from the East, four were located in the Midwest, one was from the West, and one was located in the South. Six of the participants were at private institutions, and three were at public institutions. Four of the participants self-identified as African American males, three as African American females, and two as non-Hispanic White females. Overall, the sample consisted of seven self-identified African Americans and two non-Hispanic White individuals.

Data Analysis

I transcribed the audio-recorded interviews verbatim. I stored audio recordings, transcripts, and field notes on a password-protected laptop for which only I had access. I coded transcripts in such a manner that the identification number on the transcript responded to the code on the consent form. I created a master list with pseudonyms and identification numbers. The list was stored in a separate location from the transcripts. For reporting purposes, I used pseudonyms for the administrators and their institutions with the goal of maintaining confidentiality as agreed upon during the consenting process. Following Creswell's (2003) recommendations, I organized, coded, and grouped data

into initial descriptions or categories before selecting and further developing the final thematic findings. To maximize the quality and trustworthiness of the findings, I employed rich thick descriptions to strengthen credibility, confirmability, and dependability (see Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Role of the Researcher

My role as the researcher was to conduct interviews with the participants. There were no personal or professional relationships between myself and the participants. There was no conflict of interest regarding my work environment and that of the participants because I was not employed at any of the participants' institutions. I am of African American descent, which may present unintended researcher bias (see Patton, 2015). However, I was trained at Walden University to maintain objectivity throughout the interviewing process. My role was to maintain an open mind during the interviews and ask open-ended questions with probes, allowing the participants to tell their story in their own words without feeling like I guided what they were saying (see Patton, 2015). Patton (2015) noted "open-ended questions and probes yield in-depth responses about people's experiences, perceptions, opinions, feelings, and knowledge" (p. 14). This objectivity can also help the participants to be forthcoming in their answers because the interview guide was peer-reviewed and approved by the Walden University's institutional review board (IRB # 08-20-18-0025991).

Methodology

Participant Selection Logic

The study participants included current senior-level college administrators employed at both public and private PWI colleges and universities. Participants consisted

of college and university upper-level administrators including vice presidents, chief diversity officers, and administrators in charge of admission policies or diversity initiatives. Professors were not included as part of this study. Participants were administrators from four-year colleges and universities throughout the United States and did not include community colleges. I included administrators from four-year institutions because two-year institutions are open to all students and do not turn students away (Lipson, 2007). The participants were the focus of this study, and came from four-year colleges and universities from the West, Midwest, East, and the Southern regions of the United States. The study participants represented a mixture of both private and public colleges and universities.

I utilized a purposive nonrandom sample of college and university administrators. I employed purposive sampling because it facilitates the features of this study: seeking out the groups and individuals where the processes being studied are most likely to occur (see Silverman & Marvasti, 2008). I employed purposeful sampling as it facilitated the specific inclusion of university administrators involved in admissions and diversity policies. I also utilized this sampling strategy because there was no available list of university administrators from which to randomly select participants.

I selected the participants to better understand the experiences of college and university administrators with implementing programs to ensure equal access to historically underrepresented racial and ethnic minority students, and the effect it has had on the representation of historically underrepresented minorities. Each participant represented a variation of selective four-year institutions. I explored differences in both regional and private/public educational institutions. Therefore, my intention was to

recruit participants from at least one public and one private institution in the West, Midwest, East, and the Southern region of the United States. I made these choices to understand the differences between administrators at institutions of higher education that cannot use race as a factor in its admissions decisions on affirmative action.

Universities in the Midwest and East coast generally use race as an admission criterion (Douglas, 2007). In the South, there is a mixture of states that are and are not able to use race as a factor in the admissions decision-making process (e.g., Florida, Texas). Additionally, private schools not in receipt of federal funding may use alternative methods to reach a racially diverse campus; therefore, including both public and private institutions provided some context for the findings of this study. The use of both male and female participants in addition to those who self-identified as belonging to either Black or White racial group answered one of the secondary questions. According to CRT, race matters (see Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Orbe & Allen, 2008) and I sought to ascertain if the racial or gender background of the administrators affected their viewpoints and attitudes of the restriction of race in the admissions criteria.

Instrumentation

I conducted the interviews using an interview guide (see Appendix B) comprised of open-ended questions that allowed each participant to share their experience and perspectives, while allowing and respecting how the responses were framed and structured by the participants. I used the interview guide to facilitate the collection of detailed information. Additionally, the interview guide also allowed for a clearer understanding of the participants' perspectives and experiences of affirmative action in higher education.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

I recruited participants using a variety of different methods within a higher education administrators' LinkedIn group. This LinkedIn group had 54,265 members (LinkedIn, n.d.). Persons who have worked in higher education and overseen admission policies or diversity initiatives were eligible to participate in the study. If too few participants were recruitment from the LinkedIn group, participants would have been identified and recruited through gatekeepers (i.e., vice-president, dean, chief diversity officer) at various universities. I then sent recruitment letters (see Appendix C) to individuals identified via email to administrators, or those in charge of diversity initiatives, to solicit their participation in the study.

I identified participants based on their position/title, department, type of degree held, contract type (e.g., full-time, part-time), as well as gender and racial or ethnic affiliations. I used a screening form to select participants for the study as shown in Appendix A. Screening questions were about the potential participant's background and demographics including but not limited to race, sex, age, years of experience with diversity initiatives or affirmative action initiatives, and type of degree held. After completion of the initial screening, I emailed the selected participants and arranged an interview time via phone based on their availability. I then emailed a consent form to the participants which provided information related to the research study and the voluntary nature of their participation.

The data collection method for this study was personal interviews. I interviewed each participant once for approximately 60 minutes via phone based on his or her availability. With the study participants' permission, I audio-recorded the interviews.

Audio recordings aided my ability to accurately capture the participants' responses to provide a better and clearer understanding of the need for affirmative action in the current movement. I kept both the participants and the universities in which they work anonymous with the use of pseudonyms. I also took field notes because they allowed me to maintain and comment on impressions, environmental contexts, and behaviors that may not have been adequately captured through the audio recording. I utilized field notes to provide important context to the interpretation of audio-recorded data and to help remind me of situational factors that may be important during data analysis (see Sutton & Austin, 2015).

I stored the master list with the pseudonyms and identification numbers, along with surveys and audio/video-recorded data in separate locations. I used pseudonyms for the administrators and their institutions to maintain confidentiality as agreed upon with the participants during the consenting process. I debriefed all participants at the end of the interview. I answered any questions and addressed any concerns study participants had about the study and data usage.

Data Analysis Plan

I coded transcripts such that the identification number on the transcripts responded to the code on the consent form. I created a master list with the pseudonyms and identification numbers. I stored the list in a separate location from the surveys themselves. For reporting purposes, I utilized pseudonyms for the administrators and their institutions to maintain anonymity as agreed upon with participants during the consenting process. I coded the transcribed data manually without the use of qualitative

software. A combination of inductive (i.e., grounded) analysis approach and content analysis/theming code analysis was used.

Although various qualitative coding methods could have been applied to a study such as this one, a theming code was appropriate for this phenomenological study (see Saldaña, 2012). Through its theoretical freedom, thematic analysis provided a highly flexible approach that can be modified for the needs of many studies, providing a rich and detailed, yet complex account of data (Braun & Clarke, 2006; King, 2004; Nowell, Norris, White, & Moules, 2017). Throughout the coding process, I grouped the various quotes and statements into similar themes and categories and utilized concept mapping (see Cañas, Daley, & Stark-Schweitzer, 2007) as an additional way to understand the interview data, the analytical frameworks, and the relationships between the different codes in the coding scheme.

Concept maps are characterized by the hierarchical organization of concepts that are connected to each other through the use of linking words or phrases. The connections among concepts aim to produce propositions (see Cañas et al., 2007), and in this investigation to produce or support findings. During this process, I analyzed individual interview transcripts and then synthesized the individual transcript data with the total data from all transcripts to achieve findings. I made conclusions from these findings.

Issues of Trustworthiness

I explored threats to validity. Lincoln and Guba (1985) identified constructs that parallel those in quantitative research for use in qualitative works. Internal validity or truthfulness is identified as credibility. External validity, similar to generalizability, is known as *transferability*. Reliability or reproducibility of a study is dependability in

qualitative research. Finally, conformability of a study, or the way in which data is supported in qualitative research is similar to the idea of objectivity in quantitative research.

Due to the sensitive nature of the topic and potential political implications of the study, I was concerned about the impact of the participants' willingness to provide genuine feedback (see Kornbluh, 2015). Therefore, I kept both the participants and the institutions in which they serve completely confidential. To achieve dependability, researchers should ensure the research process is logical, traceable, and clearly documented (Tobin & Begley, 2004). I completed transferability of all fieldwork interviews directly after recruitment activities in a systematic manner and fully described data solicitation and collection. Data related to the sociodemographic makeup of the participants, their role in the organization, and region of the institution helped to provide a rich, thick description, and variation of the participants selected. The questions used were open-ended and were focused in attempt to ascertain consistency in the analysis of data during the interviews.

I conducted all interviews by phone and transcribed and coded each interview immediately following the interview. In some research, there is the issue of power differences (see Kornbluh, 2015). However, as the administrators being interviewed were most likely Ph.D. recipients, I assumed that they were familiar with the dissertation process and that I would have little to challenge being viewed as the expert or where the participants' deferred to my authority on the findings.

Seidman (1998) suggested, "reconstructing the experiences of their families, school, friends, and work" as a method of transitioning the participant into the present

interviewing situation (p. 11). Information gathered during the data collection process helped in decreasing the amount of time needed to build rapport. The use of the demographic information and the responses to the lived experiences questions assisted in the interviewing process (Seidman, 1998). This information helped in building rapport with the participants and in ensuring their comfort in sharing their genuine opinions, thereby enhancing the accuracy of the research findings. Using the qualitative study design, I addressed the dependability of the study with the use of clear, distinct descriptions of procedures.

The greatest concerns for the study participants centered on the issues of confidentiality and assurance that their participation would not impact their jobs. I obtained institutional review board approval from Walden University prior to the consenting of study participants. I notified the participants that their identities and the names of the institution to which they were employed would remain confidential. I used pseudonyms to aid in confidentiality of participant data/information. Therefore, the use of pseudonyms reduced the risk that participants' identity and information would be easily identified or compromised. Additionally, I made participants aware that they could withdraw from the study at any time. I recorded all interviews and deleted the recordings after transcribing and verifying the recorded responses. I assigned a unique identification to all transcripts to further ensure confidentiality. I stored all information collected from participants, including informed consent forms, interview responses, and researcher-created spreadsheets, electronically. I stored the collected data on a password-protected computer for which only I had access.

Summary

Using a qualitative phenomenological method, I intended to examine the experiences of college and university administrators' implementation of race-neutral policies in their admissions criteria to ensure equal access of racial and ethnic minority groups to institutions of higher learning. With this study, I sought to understand how different institutions addressed the ways administrators' viewed the language of affirmative action, if they had frustrations, what their concerns were, different strategies they have attempted, or the strategies they found to be successful. I utilized the methodology as described in Chapter 3 to analyze the data in this study. I present the data gathered from the study participants in Chapter 4.

Chapter 4: Results

In this chapter I address the data analysis from this qualitative phenomenological study, which I conducted to gain a greater understanding and insight into the experiences of university administrators implementing programs to ensure equal access to historically underrepresented racial and ethnic minority students, and to find out the effects of the restriction of race in the admissions criteria relating to the number of racial and ethnic minority students who are accepted and enrolled in U.S. colleges and universities. In this chapter I address the data analysis from this qualitative phenomenological study. I conducted this study to gain a greater understanding and insight into the experiences of university administrators implementing programs to ensure equal access to historically underrepresented racial and ethnic minority students. I also wanted to gain a greater understanding of the effects of the restriction of race in the admissions criteria relating to the number of racial and ethnic minority students who are accepted and enrolled in U.S. colleges and universities. The purpose of this study was to understand the perspectives, experiences, challenges, and successes of college and university administrators in their program development and implementation of race-neutral policies in their admissions criteria to ensure equal access of racial and ethnic minority groups to institutions of higher learning while still meeting federal mandates of affirmative action.

In this chapter I provide the results of the data collection and analysis techniques used in this study. I conducted this phenomenological study using in-depth, semistructured interviews to explore the lived experiences of university and college administrators in charge of campus racial diversity at private and public universities in all

four regions of the United States. The following sections address the findings and themes that emerged throughout the interviews.

Data Solicitation and Data Collection

I collected all data used in this study from nine participants. The participants were solicited through LinkedIn, including persons who self-identified as chief diversity officer or admissions administrator at a 4-year institution. I sent potential participants a Walden IRB-approved recruitment letter (see Appendix C) via email. This solicitation process yielded a convenience sample of 10 participants. I sent each participant who agreed to participate in the study an email that included a demographic survey link and the informed consent form. Each individual who agreed to participate in the study signed the informed consent form. Participants were not compensated or incentivized for participating in the study, a point which was clearly delineated in the consent form to which each participant agreed. The survey link directed the potential participants to a Walden-approved demographic survey (see Appendix A). I reminded participants that they could withdraw from the study at any time. I collected the interview data through a preset date and time according to each participant's schedule.

I audio-recorded the interviews with the permission of the participants, and they lasted between 45 minutes to one hour. During the interviews, there were several times when the participants had interruptions and I placed the interview on a brief hold. There were two unusual circumstances: one participant was concerned that someone else was on the line and the call was dropped. I called the participant back to resume the interview and assured the participant that the information was confidential. A second unexpected circumstance occurred when I inadvertently did not record the interview and could not

recover the information. I did not include this participant's information in the data set because there would have been issues of trustworthiness. Although the original solicitation process yielded a nonprobability sample of 10 participants, the final sample consisted of nine individuals.

Participant Demographics

A total of nine individuals participated in the study (see Table 1). I gave each participant a pseudonym. I did not record the names of the participants on their transcripts, and I used pseudonyms to maintain confidentiality. All participants had the responsibility of overseeing campus diversity at their respective institutions. All four regions of the United States were represented. Three participants represented institutions from the East, four from the Midwest, one was from the West, and one was from the South. Six of the participants were employed at private institutions, and three were employed at public institutions. The participants had varying job titles, including chief diversity officer (n = 6), director of admissions (n = 1), vice president of admissions (n = 1), and associate director of admissions (n = 1). Additionally, the participants had been in their respective positions for various time periods ranging from 1 to 14 years. Study participants were males and females of African-American and White/European racial descent. Four participants self-identified as African American males, three as African American females, and two as White females. In total, the sample consisted of seven African Americans and two White participants.

Table 1

Sociodemographic Characteristics of Study Participants

Name	Region of institution	Private/ public	Race/ethnicity	Gender	Time in position	Position
Peggy	Midwest	Private	African American	Female	4 years 4 months	Chief Diversity Officer
Dean	Midwest	Private	African American	Male	6 years 5 months	Chief Diversity Officer
Mary	Midwest	Private	African American	Female	1 year 6 months	Chief Diversity Officer
Jenny	East	Public	White	Female	1year 3 months	Chief Diversity Officer
Kemper	Midwest	Public	African American	Male	2 years 6 months	Chief Diversity Officer
Edward	South	Public	African American	Male	8 months	Chief Diversity Officer
Cheryl	West	Private	White	Female	12 years 1 month	Director of Admissions
Mike	East	Private	African American	Male	2 years 4 months	Assistant Vice President of Admissions
Jane	East	Private	African American	Female	13 years 10 months	Assistant Director of Admissions

Data Analysis

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to gain a better understanding of the participants' views, perceptions, and experiences of affirmative action in higher education. I coded transcribed data manually without the use of qualitative software. I utilized a combination of inductive (i.e., grounded) analysis and content analysis/theming code analysis. Although various qualitative coding methods could have been used, a thematic code was most appropriate for the phenomenological study (see Saldaña, 2013). Through its theoretical freedom, thematic analysis provides a highly flexible approach that can be modified for the needs of many studies and provide a rich and detailed yet complex account of data (Braun & Clarke, 2006; King, 2004; Nowell et al., 2017). Because thematic analysis does not require the detailed theoretical and technological knowledge of other qualitative approaches, it offers a more accessible form of analysis, particularly for those early in their research career (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The data in this study were collected using open-ended questions in the interview guide (see Appendix B). The open-ended questions allowed the participants to narrate a detailed description of their experiences with implementing programs to ensure equal access to historically underrepresented racial and ethnic minority students. I identified the themes for this study via the use of my notes and the interview transcripts.

Throughout the coding process, I applied codes to sections of text by grouping various terms, statements, similar discussions, and contrasting observations to categorize the data related to the research subquestions. I used concept mapping as an additional way to understand the interview data, the analytical frameworks, and the relationships between the different codes in the coding scheme (see Cañas et al., 2007). During and

after coding, I identified connections between codes and the related previously coded content. I then reviewed the transcripts again according to the inductive analysis method. Specific statements about the participants lived experiences emerged from this process (see Moustakas, 1994), and descriptive themes and concepts began to emerge. This process was helpful in making relevant connections to the central research questions and in synthesizing results that occurred in relation to the phenomenon being studied. Clusters of themes began to emerge by grouping units of meaning together (see Moustakas, 1994). I then placed these patterns were under thematic findings.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

To address credibility prior to the interview, I asked participants to fill out a demographic questionnaire, which was helpful to conduct the formal interview with each participant. The objective of this approach was to utilize a combination of methods that exhibited different weaknesses and strengths while enhancing the level of internal validity. Transferability of all fieldwork interviews occurred directly after recruitment activities were completed in a systematic manner. Sociodemographic data including participants' role in their organization and the region of the institution helped to generate a thick description of the study participants. I conducted the interviews using an interview guide that consisted of open-ended questions that were designed to ensure consistency in data collection. The interviews took place over the phone and I transcribed and coded them immediately after each interview concluded.

To achieve dependability, researchers should ensure the research process is logical, traceable, and clearly documented (see Tobin & Begley, 2004). I stored files for this study electronically on spreadsheets, which included transcripts, emailed consent,

self-reported demographic information, and data analysis on a password-protected computer for which only I had access.

Study Results

The findings are structured around the two primary research questions and related subquestions. Thick, rich participant responses are included to support emergent themes. Both the themes and subthemes that emerged from the data analysis are presented, and quotes from the transcripts are provided to support each finding.

Research Question 1

What are college and university administrators' experiences with implementing programs to ensure equal access to historically underrepresented racial and ethnic minority students? For the first primary research question, there were four secondary subquestions used to explore the lived experiences of university administrators with implementing programs to ensure equal access to historically underrepresented racial and ethnic minority students. Each secondary question had its own set of thematic findings that emerged from the data.

How do college and university administrators manage evolving changes to affirmative action while ensuring equal access to historically underrepresented racial and ethnic minority students? Study participants reported that their institution managed the evolving changes to affirmative action by using various strategies to ensure equal access to higher education for underrepresented minority populations (URMs). The dominant themes that emerged from the interviews related to this subquestion were: (a) holistic evaluation process, (b) financial aid/scholarships, (c) strategic alliances, and (d)

targeted recruitment. It is important to note that these themes have some intersectional elements, which I will explore below.

Holistic enrollment evaluation. The first major theme that emerged was the holistic enrollment evaluation. Over half of the participants indicated that they used a holistic evaluation method in their enrollment application review process as a strategy to increase racial diversity on college and university campuses. The holistic enrollment evaluation theme referred to an institution reviewing a student's application based on their capabilities giving balanced consideration to experiences, attributes, and academic metrics, and when considered in combination, how the individual might contribute value (AAMC, 2019). Mike explained that:

> race is certainly one of the factors that we consider. We use a holistic approach. We look at all the factors that make up the student and evaluate all those pieces of the application. We will consider the impact of the student's race as a part of what they present in their application.

There were three approaches included in this holistic review theme: (a) holistic review where race has more of an impact in the application process, (b) holistic review where race does not strongly impact the application review process, and (c) the lower/open admissions approach. I found variations in the different holistic review process that emerged in the research.

The first strategy was where *race along with other factors had a stronger impact in the review process*. Mary stated:

> I think that as a private institution, because we use holistic admission review, we're able to look at every facet of the student within the context of the whole

> person. When I think about it from where I sit and where the work that we do here every day, I want to be able to look at a person as a whole person and part of who a person is, is his or her racial identity. We're very lucky at [my institution]. We have 3,000 applications, so we get to know those students and their background and who they are and what they want and if we can help them to meet those goals. In the work that I've done and in the things that I've seen in terms of admission, it would be a loss not to have that information just like it will be a loss not to know what classes they've taken in high school or how many siblings they have or the experiences that have drawn them to the campus. I always think that the more information we have, the better because it helps us to make a more informed and holistic decision.

Another participant, Jane, detailed how race and national testing scores may be weighted and how national testing scores along with race played a part in the decision-making process of admittance of URMs.

> We look at statistical data of national averages for certain ethnic groups. And we assess students based on the data . . . For instance, if the institution requires students to have a 3.0 GPA . . . But the national data from wherever shows that students of color GPA is only a 2.95. Then students of color that have a 2.95 will also be considered with the rest of the students that meet the 3.0 requirements. [Then] you know, we have an interview process . . . our interview process is very subjective. Although we try not to make it such, it can be. And people bring in their own unconscious biases. So, although a student may have an opportunity to interview with that 2.95, that doesn't mean that they actually get in with that 2.95.

> It gives them an opportunity to have a seat at the table. Sometimes they have to, you know . . . go back to the drawing board. And they get rejected, and they wanna see someone do better, and get that 3.0. And some students show up and they explain, well, I would've had a 3.0, but I worked 40 hours a week, I took care of an elderly parent, blah, blah, blah. So, had I not had all these other factors, I probably could have done it. And I won't have those issues should I be accepted. So, then those students might get in. So, each student, it's a case-by-case decision.

The second holistic strategy that emerged was where an *applicant's race was given less consideration in the application review process*. In this holistic review strategy, students' test scores may not be adjusted based on socioeconomic status or race; however, race was still used as a factor in the determination process. As an example, Mary explained:

> What we [admissions officers] do, is look at various different things, like a person's experiences and their essay, and maybe how they draw that in as a criterion, but they don't use a folder. [This institution uses] a multi-layered approach to evaluating applications. And because of that you're going to get geographic region, you're going to get things like race, you're going to get things like gender, you're going to get things like international status, you're going to get things like a country that a person goes to, you're going to get things like the fact that sometimes people have a trust fund and they can afford to pay the full tuition, versus other people can't afford to pay five or ten dollars.

Another participant, Edward, also shared some insight on how this nonrace weighted holistic strategy works at his institution. He described a difference between the undergraduate use of holistic review and that at the graduate level.

> What the university has done at the undergraduate level is adopt holistic applicant review in which race is a dimension . . . a lower dimension, but a dimension . . . of kind of competitiveness in the space for admission. So, it is not affirmative action directly, but it is affirmative in the sense that race is considered, and as is socioeconomic status, and disability, and all of those other things, as a factor of a factor of a factor . . . Apropos of race-conscious admissions. So, it's recognized, but it is not part of anything that kind of moves admissions to the school. With regard to graduate [level], engineering has just started using a holistic application review, and that has had an impact.

Another subtheme that emerged related to holistic enrollment evaluation as an admissions practice was the use of a *lower/open admissions approach*. Participants did not express using a holistic admissions criterion, but that they allowed lower sat/act scores in the recruitment of their student body. As a result of such practices, they organically achieved a more diverse student body. Peggy shared her perspective on this strategy:

> We have another program for students who are, in some universities they might be provisionally admitted, because they have maybe a low-test score and a higher grade point average, or vice versa, and we see some potential in them. But they may need some support to succeed. That's called our Transitions Program, and it's our early intervention program for those students.

Other participants described how their respective institutions either used an open admissions approach or a lower admissions approach. Dean gave an account of what this may look like:

> I would call us moderately selective, so we're not highly selective like some other privates might be . . . one thing that I would point out that I don't think a lot of people recognize is [that] you can track the admissions standards almost exclusively for private institutions by the size of their endowment in comparison to the size of their enrollment. Meaning the larger endowment they have, the more exclusive they are, and the more stringent the admissions policies are. But tuition driven private institutions in particular in [this state], also work like access institutions . . . It is more likely for a student who has above average grades. So let's say 3.2 and let's say a 23 or 24 ACT. It is easier for them to get into tuition drive privates like [this institution], than it is for them to attend the main campus of our [state school]. I'll give you an example and people like me will argue that this is a problem with the flagship publics and there are more and more of the publics who move in this direction. Getting onto the main campus of the publics in [this state] with the exception of a handful of them has become more of where this admissions question comes up and affirmative action thing comes up because [our state school's] mean ACT is around 27 and the state [itself] is probably 22. The mean ACT for African Americans in [this state] is probably 18 or 19. So, what happens is those students who score very well will get in almost exclusively . . . if you're a student of color . . . If you're a student of color in [this state], and you have an ACT north of 26-27, and a GPA north of 3.75 you can

> attend many of our publics with great scholarship opportunities, because there is competition for that market. If you are an African American student with solid grades let's say 3.2-3.5 and a 21 ACT your options are different, and you may not get into some of those main campuses. You may get into branch campuses of these institutions, but the matriculation rate from branch campus to main campus is terrible for people who finish with four-year degrees. It has left tuition driven privates in a different market than they were in 20-30 years ago. (Dean)

Financial aid/scholarships. Financial aid was another dominant theme that emerged regarding what colleges and university administrators were using to ensure equal access to historically underrepresented racial and ethnic minority students. Almost all of the study participants indicated that they used financial aid or scholarships to ensure equal access to minority students. The financial aid theme referred to the funding that students received from the college to pay for educational-related expenses. These expenses included tuition and fees, room and board, books and supplies, and transportation. The financial aid that the institutions offered included Pell grants, Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants (SEOGs), work-study, student loans, and scholarships. The participants indicated the cost of attendance as one of the main barriers identified for college access for nearly all populations. Several participants also stated that although racial diversity was not always present within economic diversity, the institutions at which they serve have increased their efforts in using these various financial aid and scholarship practices as an incentive in the recruitment and retention of Black and Latinx students.

Another type of scholarship that participants mentioned are those derived from private sources, such as corporations, professional associations, unions, religious groups, and other "private" organizations awarding scholarships to students on a wide range of qualifications in need, heritage, and talent (see Rauf & Mosser, 2003). Participant Jenny explained, "For us, some of the things that we've done to recruit students, strong students academically is to have scholarships." Mary also narrated that there tends to be "more diversity economically and we do have a significant number of our Black students [and] our Latino students who social economically they would be in a lower social economic income bracket." Additionally, Dean also described the way his institution made "clear decisions to take a different direction to become a more diverse campus. Quite frankly, some of that was achieved through some strategic investments in financial aid."

A specific sub-theme that emerged regarding these private scholarships were those designed for students of color. All but one participant discussed either the use or the importance of this type of strategy for increasing underrepresented minority enrollment. These scholarships included heritage scholarships provided either directly by the institution or by alumni, or the partnering with groups that specifically work with underrepresented minority populations that pair scholarships with mentoring and training programs. Examples given by the study participants included Posse, Prep for Prep, Naviance, Bottom Line, and One Goal.

Peggy explained how financial aid is an extremely important factor: "scholarship programs affect all of [institutions] students, since appropriately 99.9% of our students receive some form of financial aid." Additionally, Peggy emphasized the importance of alumni and the private organizations such as Bottom Line and One Goal as they support

the student through the college process. Dean explained that not only does his institution partner with groups that provide scholarships to minorities, but that his institution itself offered "scholarships that are geared towards students of color. The Heritage Scholarship [provided directly from the institution] is geared towards students of color. Those are some of the parts of the strategies that help us get the numbers."

At a private Eastern graduate medical school program, Jane shared that her institution offered a number of minority scholarship for:

> any student that identifies as Black, Hispanic, or any of the racial ethnic underrepresented groups. We have scholarships that are specific for students that are interested in primary care, working with rural populations, from Hispanic descent, underrepresented minority students.

Dean also described how institutions like his may have some loose affiliations, and how those affiliations may use scholarship dollars to target racial minorities.

> We partner with a foundation of independent colleges with about 33 or 34 private institutions in the state. The primary function of that group is to raise scholarship dollars that then go to students at the member institutions. In that way, let's say there's a bank that gives a big scholarship donation, they might put some restrictions around . . . who they want to target with those dollars and then students from the member institutions could compete for those dollars.

Strategic alliances. The third most dominant theme that emerged from the data regarding what colleges and university administrators used as a tool to ensure equal access to historically underrepresented racial and ethnic minority students was strategic alliances. The theme of strategic alliances referred to the institution's partnering with

private groups or organizations that specifically works with underrepresented minority populations. Almost all of the study participants indicated the value of some form of strategic alliance in increasing equal access to minority students.

The first theme of financial aid overlaps with the strategic alliance theme because some of these strategic alliances are the providers of financial aid/scholarship awards. These strategic alliances either help in the recruitment and retention of URMs through: (a) financial donations/scholarship dollars or (b) the pairing of mentorship and training programs with scholarship dollars. Specific sub-themes that emerged from the data in relation to the strategic alliances themes were: (a) alumni and other private and/or corporate donors, (b) mentorship training programs that pair scholarship dollars with mentorship and training, and (c) community-based organizations/church/religious organizations.

Included in this first sub-theme are *school alumni associations, private companies, and corporations that use their financial awards specifically for students of color*. For example, Dean pointed out that his institution had "a number of corporate donors and things of that nature that work to donate funds to help . . . recruit and retain and ultimately graduate students from underrepresented minority populations." The alumni from these institutions have also shown to have an impact on URMs. Edward recognized the benefit of scholarships for students of color and narrated that after a long struggle with his public selective conservative institution they finally allowed scholarships directed specifically for students of color. Edward also noted that in order for these scholarships to be made possible, "it had to be done by the National Black Alumni Association." Disagreement and annoyance with the procedure for issuing such

scholarship was evident when Dean shared "and they're able to give out maybe three scholarships per year. That's it . . . for an undergraduate population of 15,000 . . . That's all we got!"

Additionally, several participants expressed the value of the alumni associations, private companies, and corporations as a strategic alliance. Dean expressed this view when he stated:

> We have a strategic alliance with a local Hispanic education foundation. The executive director of that organization happens to be one of our alums, so it's an easy relationship in terms of being able to participate and them being able to have some of their mentorship work that they do take place with our students.

Dean's comment leads to the next subtheme of *college opportunity programs,* which combines scholarship dollars with mentorship programs. This subtheme was continuously brought up in the interviews. These college opportunity programs work with many first generation and low-income students from areas where there is a large population of URMs. One participant described "institutions that utilize programs like Prep for Prep and other targeted programs . . . programs like QuestBridge, programs like Posse, that can really move the needle in terms of diversity." Cheryl described that for minority students, "Programs like these can be a game changer." Peggy also shared her agreement with the inclusion and use of college opportunity programs.

> I think every college and university should work extremely closely with college opportunity programs around the country. I mention One Goal and Bottom Line because they're local to us, but there are college opportunity partnerships around the country. [Our state] has a college opportunity partnership where it partners

> with programs from Spark, to Chicago Scholars, to Posse, to those kinds of programs that engage students in high school, get them prepared to present the best application credentials to their key list of colleges, and then supports them once they get there. (Peggy)

Another subtheme that falls under the theme of strategic alliances was the *partnership of the institution with community-based organizations and religious organizations*. Community-based organizations are defined here as organizations that have obtained 501(c)(3) status and that are physically located in and primarily serve members of their local community. The objective of these organizations is to provide social services at the neighborhood level. Organizations included in this study are small agencies representing community and youth development, family service/multiservice organizations, and religiously based and basic-needs organizations. These community-based organizations appear to act as access points for students, in helping to introduce students to the recruiters of the institutions.

Some participants expressed the value in incorporating visits to community-based organizations, especially non-profit organizations. Cheryl noted, "these nonprofit organizations specifically target, usually first-generation students, but also historically underrepresented students." She also mentioned that they visited and met with students and counselors at the community-based organizations. Another way that these institutions seem to work with other community organizations was by having associations whose objective "is to bring in underrepresented students of ... different backgrounds, at undergraduate institutions, to expose them to the program and focus on developing and nurturing relationships with these populations." Additionally, some of the universities

partnered with groups or organizations that work with community-based organizations that work with vulnerable populations. As university personnel travel around the country recruiting, they look at the lists of community-based organizations within that city. The subtheme of partnering with community organizations was related to how some institutions utilize targeted recruitment practices.

Targeted recruitment. Another dominant theme that emerged from the data related to how college and university administrators manage evolving changes to affirmative action while ensuring equal access to historically underrepresented racial and ethnic minority students is targeted recruitment. The targeted recruitment theme referred to the ways that colleges and universities strategically focused their recruitment efforts in racial and ethnic minority neighborhoods and communities with the intended purpose of increasing minority applicants and to increase student diversity. All but one participant expressed using some form of targeted recruitment of URMs. The subthemes that emerged from the targeted recruitment theme are: (a) recruitment or outreach in target areas/neighborhoods/schools, (b) the use of people of color in the recruitment process, (c) hosting of paid events, parties or programs that specifically target URMs, and (d) recruitment tools.

Over half of the participants spoke to the subtheme of *recruitment or outreach in target areas/neighborhoods/schools*. Participants shared how they targeted areas including inner-city communities and other areas with high minority populations. Mary explained how her institution does this:

> So, one of the things that I would say that [our] admissions and enrollment office has done that would be positive, is they changed the scope of areas where they

> recruit. For example, now they will go to a territory that is an all Hispanic scope, or they'll go to an area that is virtually untouched, so they put more money into traveling to other areas so that they can recruit a more diverse representation of our students . . . [Our institution] also uses targeted recruitment as evidence by different fairs that they go to. Because they broaden their scope of students that they try to recruit, and because they've opened their geographic region up within the admissions office lately. I would say that they are doing more recruitment for Latino students and for Black students. (Mary)

The participants who spoke to this subtheme all described the importance of the strategizing efforts used by their respective institutions and the use of recruiters to reach these target communities. I saw another example of this subtheme in several of the strategies that are in place at Mike's institution.

> We work with trusted advisors in communities that are of importance to us, underrepresented communities. Doing workshops, for example, with community-based leaders, reaching out to religious communities, we host college fairs in communities of color to encourage people to come out and learn more about us. Primarily, it's our outreach visiting high schools and hosting sessions in different cities that gets us what we're looking for.

In addition, the participants described several outreach programs that institutions host for high schools. Although these programs do not discriminate against the protected classes, the programs offered by the institutions worked with high schools that have high enrollment of URMs.

The second subtheme that more than half of the participants discussed was the *use of people of color in the recruitment process*. Overwhelmingly participants felt that there was a strong benefit to increase campus diversity when the prospective student gets to interact and engage with staff and students that look like them. Jenny expressed that for her institution, one of the most impactful recruitment tools has been having a recruiter of color located within the city. Jenny shared: "For [my institution] I think being in the city, having a woman of color doing the recruiting is necessary. I think that students want to see someone like them and so do families." This particular sub-theme includes the use of URM recruiters or staff members as part of the recruitment plan. Edward shared how his institution has experimented and benefited from this practice:

> We have a NSBE, the National Society of Black Engineers, very much engaged in doing peer recruitment. We do a phone-a-thon after students have been admitted, to try to get them to come. And so that's impactful on the yield. We did an experiment with that two years ago, where we had just an all-out phone-a-thon, and we were able to . . . these are students recruiting future students . . . to more than double the number of African American first-year entries into our Engineering program.

The third subtheme that emerged was *the hosting of paid events, parties, or programs that specifically target URMs*. Over half of the participants discussed their institution paying for student events or programs that were specifically for prospective minority students. Such programs included the institution paying for flights or bus rides for URM students to attend campus events or programs. Edward provided an example of this how this occurred at his institution:

> Our undergraduate recruitment efforts are pretty centralized through the Office of Undergraduate Admissions, and we get very much involved in the special days that we have for . . . to recruit underrepresented and underserved candidates. So, every Fall, there is what we call a Fall Blast, and that's when admissible African American students come. And then we have what we call I think a Spring Fling, and that's Hispanic students. So, we give the talks to the students and parents.

Cheryl also shared a similar recruitment strategy that included flight and other transportation to and from the institution.

> We have taken active interests in trying to increase our, what we call historically underrepresented student populations on campus, those are first gen students. Then also for our Latinx and African American students that those are the students who we're really targeting the fly in programs and having them come to campus.

Kemper, from a Midwestern institution, used a similar practice with busing URM students to their institution. In addition to free transportation, the offering of free food and free programming on campus appearred to be beneficial as a recruitment tactic for URM recruitment.

Jane described the use of programs that were set up for students from inner-city high schools with a high population of URMs as outlined in the below narrative.

> But one of the things that I do, is I do a pipeline program for high school students and middle school students. And I bring them to Campus and I get them in an emersion program where they are actually getting real life experiences, getting experiential type of learning on campus, with the hopes that it will ignite

> something in them and they would want to pursue a career in medicine or in the sciences. [These students] come from all over the city to participate in our medical school emergence program. We do a curriculum. We teach them anatomy. We teach them osteopathic manipulation because of course we're a DO school. We expose them to a lot of different things. And we feed them because the program is from 5:30 to 7:30. So that's the dinnertime. So, we want to make sure that they also get food in their belly. (Jane)

The last subtheme that emerged related to strategic alliances was the *use of specific tools in the recruitment process*. The subtheme of tools referred to the participants' institutions partnering with programs such as the Common App, Questbridge, or Naviance. These programs were set up to target first generation, low socioeconomic status (SES) and URM student populations. Participant Mary explained that:

> With a common application [students] could pay one fee and then [they] can check off the different schools that [they] want to apply to. I think that's really positive. When I was growing up, and I am a first-generation college student, I wanted a way to determine where I wanted to apply for school . . . actually a lot of it depended how much money my parents were able to give me for the application. I could think of many schools where the application fee was expensive, and I probably could have gotten into the school[s], but my parents didn't have the money for me to apply to ten school[s]. I remember my father having to have a discussion with me saying to apply to the schools you want to apply to and we'll see what the fees are. Some people could apply to 20 places. I

> think moving towards this common application certainly is positive, because there's more diversity economically and we do have a significant number of our Black students, our Latino students who [socio] economically they would be in a lower social economic income bracket. (Mary)

About half of the participants mentioned these types of programs that either the high school's partnered with or programs that students submitted applications to independently, and their usefulness in the recruitment of URMs to diversify the student body. These types of programs have some variability in terms of how they were employed, but they each had a similar element of having either a recruitment software tool or a list of schools that look through the applicant list in an attempt to recruit these students to their institutions. These programs often partnered with high schools and other K–12 institutions to provide students with college planning and career assessment tools, career readiness software, national college and scholarship match programs, and some offer continued support to students at their chosen institution. This tool subtheme and the strategic alliances theme intersect because some of the strategic alliances fall under this subtheme as well. Those strategic alliances that fall under this subtheme seem to be very helpful in the introduction of students to recruiters that partner with these programs. The programs/alliances that offered these tools worked with inner-city schools and targeted low SES students as well as first-generation students, but these programs recognized that systemic issues exist within school systems. These programs vary, but generally they not only help students through programs in high school with the intention of college readiness, but they also connect the students with recruiters from participating college or university institutions or college match.

How are college and university admission policies modified when changes are made to affirmative action either due to state-mandated bans or court mandates? Four themes emerged from the interviews with participants regarding how policies were modified when changes were made to affirmative action due to state bans or court mandates. These themes included: (a) diversity plan, guidebooks, or initiatives, (b) creation of the role of chief diversity officer, (c) sense of equity, and (d) have not modified policies.

Diversity plan, guidebooks, or initiatives. The first theme that emerged was diversity plan, guidebooks, or initiatives. More than half of the participants had institutions that established diversity plans, initiatives, or the use of guidebooks with the intention of increasing campus diversity, by placing language to integrate diversity throughout the institution. Throughout the course of the interviews, participants continuously mentioned the terms diversity plans, initiatives, and policies. Jenny indicated that her institution used a written document that included a diversity agenda; while other administrators made repeated reference to policies, agendas, or initiatives that their institution used to increase minority enrollment and diversity. It was unclear if at each of the institutions the agendas were conversational, or included a written document; however, most of the participants made reference to the review of such policies either annually or every two years. Jenny explained how the governor of the state had been formulating policy at state schools:

> [Our state governor] is putting in policies that directly are in conflict with what's happening on a national level. He wants us to be diversifying our students... I just had to put together a report for the governor, all the CDOs in [our state system]

had to lay out all the things that we've accomplished, what we're doing as a campus to support diversity. (Jenny)

The data suggest that these initiatives drive and provide the opportunity for employment of targeted recruitment strategies. Participants shared:

. . . we have a number of strategies and initiatives that we employ to introduce students from underrepresented populations to the campus in hopes that they will choose us for their college, university. So, that is a very intentional initiative, if you will, that helps us be as diverse as we possibly can. (Peggy)

We go to different conferences that are geared just for underrepresented students, it is part of our commitment. And those are deliberate programmatic initiatives. We look at statistical data of national averages for certain ethnic groups. And we assess students based on the data. (Jane)

Part of [our] holistic review is that we are looking at all of the different institutional priorities that the college has and those are set by the board and by the senior staff. Those are all of the things that we keep in mind. All of the goals that we have, the things that we're working towards . . . (Cheryl)

The statement made by Cheryl provided an example of how the use of planned guidebooks or initiatives and the deliberateness of diversity by the president's 'cabinets', or university councils' directives might have impacted some of the institutions. Jane from a private Northeastern school mentioned such an impact regarding the influence of the president of the institution impacts the way the plans, initiatives, or guidebooks are actually handled.

> . . . the diversity part, that is intentional. We are deliberately saying where are these stronger Black, Hispanic, minority students? Where are they? And can we bring them in for an interview? Because we are deliberately making the effort to make our student body diverse. And part of the reason [is] because [our city] is a diverse city. We need to have a school that looks like the people that we're serving . . . The President himself had a directive for us to increase the Hispanic population in the program. So much so, he developed a Hispanic scholarship. (Jane)

Many of the participants discussed the way diversity and bringing URMs to the campus was woven into the fabric of their admissions, mission, and policies. Similar to Jane, Edward expressed how the influence of the senior leadership and the campus community affected the implementation of affirmative action/increasing diversity policies "So, we have a relatively conservative legislature in [this state], and an even more conservative University Council, and Board of Visitors, such that there has been a real resistance. The place is highly risk-averse." It appearred that these guides, plans, and initiatives were the first step to creating a new foundation, but embracing these changes required the support of the campus community. Mike pointed out how the president of his institution enacted a change in policy.

> Well, with respect to policy, if you wanna talk about policy, now that's set at the presidential level. Just to give you an example, the president, in response to some conversations with students and faculty, the president, a year or so ago, hired a chief diversity officer to oversee how [this university] is directing its efforts

> across the different schools and programs around diversity and inclusion. And to set policy around having that as a priority. (Mike)

Creation of the role of chief diversity officer. An additional theme that emerged from the data was the creation of the role of Chief Diversity Officer (CDO). One of the strategies that some institutions used as part of incorporating diversity plans and agendas as a mission to its value, was creating positions of CDO. Chief Diversity Officer is an executive level leadership position that centers around cultivating the campus community on matters of diversity and to help the campus community abide by and comply with the policies and initiatives generated out of the diversity office (Wilson, 2013). The CDO's role varied at the different institutions with which the participants in this study were employed. However, the participants generally reported that the role of CDO at their respective institution involved dealing with policy, practice, student success, recruitment and retention, climate and culture, and working with HR in the recruitment and retention of minority faculty and staff. Peggy described how as an inaugural CDO, an institution may have a policy in place and a new plan, but how the CDO may affect policy change:

> Well, as an inaugural CDO, it's really important to determine what it is you're planning to do. When a university hires a CDO for the first time, they have maybe a strategic plan, they have some information about a job description in terms of the role they want the CDO to play. But then you get the job, and you see things that need to occur, and you know where you need to place an emphasis. And some things will be emphasized more than other things, and so forth… the original job description that I had, entailed working with faculty, and working with students, and working with staff to increase our, or to move the needle I

> guess, on our strategic plan that was in place at that time. So, there was a strategic plan that had a diversity plan that was created separately, and the CDO was brought on to help to implement that strategic plan. Then after arriving, I decided to put some structures around the goals of the plan, if that makes sense. (Peggy)

Kemper, in the inaugural role of CDO at a Midwestern public institution, described how this position translated beyond policy formation, but also to the recruitment and retention of minority populations:

> Currently at [this institution] the chief diversity and inclusion officer is a new role. A big part of what I do is lead the campus in thinking strategically about not only recruitment and retention, but more importantly success of individuals and marginalized population and enhancing the climate as it relates to diversity and inclusion overall. Working with my colleagues on the cabinet and deans and other administrators and departments to just strengthen everything that we do to make this the best campus we can possibly have. To where anyone without regard to their race, gender, sexual orientation, religious beliefs or disbelief, or whatever background they come from can be successful. Just knowing that because I'm in this job, there's a greater probability that people from marginalized and underrepresented populations will be likely to come to school here and ultimately graduate. Some of whom will go on for master's and doctorate's, because I'm on the job. Then, too, others will come here, and they'll work as faculty or staff and administrators and be more likely to have success and thrive in this environment, because somebody like me with my passion and my experience around diversity and inclusion is on the job and in this particular position.

***Sense of equity*.** The role of the CDO was used in helping to create an equitable and inclusive environment, which is related to the next dominant theme of sense of equity that emerged from the data. In the context of the participants' responses, *equity* was defined as the understanding of conditions within the United States' educational system comprised of systemic barriers that deny some students access to education and other opportunities enjoyed by their peers. Therefore, putting systems and supports in place to overcome these systemic barriers to ensure that these populations of students are provided an equal chance for success (Bowen & Bok, 1998; Bowen, Kurzweil, & Tobin, 2005; Chen, 2017; Harper et al., 2009).

Over half of the participants discussed equity and the value of equity as an essential element in policy modification. Participants described the necessity of looking at data, looking at the disparities in terms of enrollment, retention and graduation and determining what changes need to be made from an equity lens, and the attendance of equity and inclusion conferences. There appeared to be a connection between the institution adopting policies that not only allowed for equal access to URM populations but also providing equal opportunity to URM populations by senior leaderships embracement of a sense of equity.

The study participants felt that the first thing involved in increasing access for URM students was for all senior leadership to have a greater understanding of equity, and what that might mean in each particular context as they look at various statistical, national, or institutional data sets. Peggy elaborated this perspective when she noted "the first thing is to have the mindset as to what equity would mean in general, and then more specifically on our campus." Participants who spoke to the theme of equity recognized

that the neighborhoods, including schools, are often segregated, under-sourced in terms of government allocated funds, infrastructure, and as Jenny explained, "where the same opportunities are not provided that middle-class White kids receive." With regards to the theme of equity, the participants generally agreed with Jenny when she described the need "to provide support to these highly capable students which did not receive the same opportunities within the K-12 school systems." Jenny further opined that when using an equity mindset an institution must ask:

> what are we going to put in place to make sure that students are getting the support? And that we're looking at what we're providing from an equity standpoint. That we have to be equity-minded in when we think about the support that we're providing. Not that students aren't capable because they are highly capable, it's that they haven't been given the same opportunities in the K-12 system. So, how do we create that model and give support, have mentorship so that students are successful and that they know, that it's clear to students that we know that they will be successful, and these are the ways and the path to do that.

When asked how policies were modified to ensure equal access Cheryl, from a private West Coast institution answered the question and stated:

> I would say that it goes beyond equal access to it needs to be equitable. For us, that means that you're going to do different things in different areas and for different students and that is acting with an equity mindset. For us, when we think about that, I think that there are a couple of things that we have to do. I think we have to have a pulse on the questions and concerns that students have or the

> objections to what we can offer them. The best way we can do that is connecting with high school counselors, and with community-based organizations. (Cheryl)

The participants who spoke to the sense of equity theme appeared to work towards looking beyond getting the students equal access to the institution and are have a greater interest in attempting to provide students with the resources they need to succeed and an environment that is equitable.

Have not modified policies. When participants were asked directly if and how their admissions policies were modified when changes were made to affirmative action either due to state-mandated bans or court mandates happening across the nation, over half stated that their institutions did not make changes to their policies. Five of these institutions were private institutions and two were public institutions that either used open enrollment strategy or lower enrollment strategy. One of these private institutions was located in a state where a ban on the use of race in the admissions process was implemented. Although all of the participants from the private institutions described race-based recruitment strategies, all but one reported a decrease in the enrollment of their institution's minority student enrollment. Two of the participants explained that their respective private institutions were not subject to the same requirements and mandates of public institutions, and can follow national directive to look at the race of an individual in a holistic sense. Peggy explained that:

> *Grutter v. Michigan* clarified a way forward that many universities, including [this university], is pursuing at this point. And that is, we have a diversity rationale, which means that we think diversity is essential to the mission of the university, and also the goals of the university to create or graduate graduates

> from diverse backgrounds that can meet the challenges of an increasingly interdependent world. So, we think diversity is a very, very important critical part of that vision . . . Although we are race-conscious we do not have a system that privileges any race. (Peggy)

Based on the perspectives of the participant, all of these private institutions were watchful and interested in the challenges that are occurring, but felt that they have been largely unaffected in the need to make policy changes.

What are the strategies that have been utilized to address any decrease in racial and ethnic minority students as a result of changes in race-based affirmative action? Although most of the participants directly stated that their respective institutions did not need to make policy changes based on the multiple state and ongoing legal challenges related to affirmative action (i.e., *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke, Gratz v. Bollinger, Grutter v. Bollinger, Fisher I & II, Hopwood v. Texas,* Prop. 209, similar state bans), it is important to note that all participants discussed at length the multiple strategies that their institution employed to increase racial and ethnic diversity. The themes listed above in the management of affirmative action are: the holistic evaluation process, financial aid/scholarships, strategic alliances and targeted recruitment, and creation of the position of CDO. What was unclear was *when* these strategies were employed, whether the institutions employed these strategies based on a decrease in minority student enrollment, or if the respective institutions were proactive in their strategic planning. A pattern that became clear in the data is what is being referred to as a 'diversity rationale' theme.

Diversity rationale. The term diversity rationale referred to and included both the institutions' as well as the participants' commitment to diversity. The essence of diversity, and all but one participant mentioned that the aim of institutions to make diversity a major part of their institutional priority in their mission. Although diversity has many facets, it is inclusive of race and ethnicity. Peggy described, "What [this institution] attempts to do is to recruit a class that is sufficiently diverse, so that the class has an opportunity to interact with people from various backgrounds." Dean another participant, described that prior to his arrival, his institution decided to take "a different direction, to become a more diverse campus." In addition to the institution taking on the commitment to diversity, is the administrators' personal views reflecting their commitment to diversity. Participants offered several reasons for their respective institutions' willingness to make diversity an institutional commitment. One reason embraced by most participants can be seen in the below statement:

> A part of what we want to be able to do is reach students, as well as faculty and staff, and all the different populations, to kind of make sure that we're as diverse as we can. The reason that's important is because if you're talking about solving problems and dealing with issues globally, the more diverse you are in those students, faculty, staff, and administration, the greater the probability you are gonna be prepared to answer those questions, right? Because if we all come together to think about accomplishing one thing, and one way, and one way only, then we miss opportunities. We miss our ability to solve some problems and what have you. So those different life experiences and those different backgrounds and

> lenses and things of that nature help you be diverse, and more rich, and more able to learn from and with different people and solve problems. (Kemper)

Another reason provided by Jenny that was also inferred by other participants for the willingness of their respective institutions to embrace the diversity rationale was the need for diversity being essential to the institution's survival.

> We're in an interesting time . . . In [this state], for colleges to survive they need to diversity their student population. Because the numbers of, particularly in [this state], the numbers of White, middle class students is dwindling to where you're not going to make your class if that's the only student you're looking at. Colleges have to be intentional in thinking about what are we doing to recruit and retain students of color . . . I think that there are some colleges that won't stay afloat if they haven't really thought about the value and why it's important to diversify your class.

What are the perspectives on affirmative action of the administrators who are in charge of implementing programs to ensure equal access to historically underrepresented racial and ethnic minority students, on affirmative action? When inquiring about the administrators' perspectives on affirmative action, the most dominant themes that emerged were: (a) need to look at race, (b) affirmative action is misunderstood, (c) sense of equity, and (d) without affirmative action less diversity will be achieved.

Need to look at race. The most dominant theme that emerged from the data related to the perspectives on affirmative action of the administrators was the need to continue to look at race. Seven of the nine participants describe that they "want to look at

race," "to be intentional," and "provide opportunity to ensure equal access to URMs." Study participants also felt that in order to have a diverse campus they "want to look at race." Jenny further delineated the need to look at race when she shared, "I want to look at race and I want to make sure we're giving people opportunity. Particularly when a campus, most campuses are historically White." Additional languages used by participants when referring to this theme were the terms *needed* and *necessary*. An example of this can be seen with statements such as "I think [affirmative action] is needed more now than ever," made by Jane, or when Kemper stated, " most institutions still need it [affirmative action]. Quite a significant majority of institutions across the country still need it. That's my take." With data from the participants showing such a strong desire to use race-based affirmative action to ensure access was provided to ethnic minorities, Participant Kemper posed the question:

> Now, when you ask me what would happen if you take away affirmative action, you think we don't have a[n] equal representation or we don't mirror the availability of people with the requisite skills and abilities and credentials and things of that nature [currently]. Just imagine if we didn't have what little support we have with affirmative action. Where would we be then?

Affirmative action is misunderstood. The second theme that emerged from the data related to the administrators' perspectives on affirmative action was that affirmative action was misunderstood. Over half of the participants conveyed that affirmative action was misunderstood. They believed that the simple association of the term 'affirmative action' might imply to some that racial quotas were used in the recruitment of minorities to ensure a diverse class from various backgrounds. Participants discussed the various

ways affirmative action may be misunderstood. Mary noted that "unfortunately, I think that the way that we've seen it play out is that now people feel like it detracts from other peoples' applications, but really affirmative action was used as a way to look at other components of the applications." Another participant, Edward, described his experience with affirmative action to include both as the perceptions of others as well as his personal experiences with it.

> People think of affirmative action in all kinds of different ways. That it's about Black. Or you know, just aspects of kind of identity. Or that they believe that it's about taking away something from White folks, and Asian folks, which is a big thing now. Lots of Black folks don't want to be associated with it, and I think I had an aught with it, prior to coming to the University of Virginia, and seeing what the deal is. I believe in *affirmative* approaches to equity, and I believe that we have to take *action* in order to get there. Whether I would subscribe to affirmative action as a paradigm, or just the language, I don't know, because *it is fraught*, right? Particularly in a space like [my institution] . . . but I do very much believe in which the tenets rest . . . We need an affirmative approach that honors our history and kind of contextualization of reality, and that helps to nurture us forward. I will say that as long as we have extremely conservative folks in the Office of Legal Counsel, and the Office of Communications, we're not gonna go very far with it.

Mike described the idea that the term affirmative action created a feeling of anxiousness and the description of affirmative action being misunderstood:

> Personally, I believe affirmative action is a necessary tool. I also think it's very much misunderstood and has been bastardized by conservatives who would like to see it go away and positioned as something that is some sort of [a] gift horse that unfairly puts people who don't deserve it in positions that they haven't merited. That's not the case. To me, affirmative action is about making sure that all communities have access to an opportunity. I think that's evidenced by the fact that once affirmative action rules are in place, the major beneficiary has been White women, as opposed to any people of color. Because those were people who have traditionally been excluded from the process. I think, unfortunately, affirmative action has been equated to targets and quotas and that's just not the case. That's not what it is. (Mike)

***Sense of equity*.** The study participants described their respective institutions as recognizing that diversity had value. Additionally, these institutions had at some point begun various strategies to help push the diversity agenda forward. Sense of equity was one of the dominant themes that emerged from the data regarding the administrators' perspectives of affirmative action. Over half of the participants ascribed to the sense of equity theme for implementation of their institution's diversity agendas. The sense of equity theme was defined as both the institution and the administrator recognizing that equality and equity are different and that the use of equity was a good way to go about increasing ethnic minority diversity. Edward illustrated this view:

> Now, I'm taking the university through what we call an institutional equity initiative, on race and equity. And it's with [a western flagship campus]. The difference between equality and equity, as we are defining it, is that equality gets

> everybody the same thing, right? And that's what universities do. Equity gives everybody what they need to succeed. And there's a differential in what people need to succeed. I would say that opening the doors is not sufficient. In fact . . . Basically talking about an inclusion paradigm . . . [I feel] inclusion is bad for business. Because when we include . . . basically, inclusion says that we get to include whom we want, in what we want, and what aspects of them we want. That can be inherently exclusionary, particularly in a university setting that claims that it wants the best and the brightest. How do we define "best and brightest," particularly when the structures to define "best and brightest" are inherently biased against people of color . . . So, standardized testing and the like. I will say to you that once students get in, there has to be equity there, too . . . And so, I guess the point I'm making is that policies around entry, that are race neutral, probably don't get at equity. They may get at equality. And even if they get at equity, the environment into which students come may also be inequitable . . . Or lacking a sense of real equity. (Edward)

Participants further described attending conferences on equity and inclusion. Attendance at these conferences further contributed to the sense of equity being a part of the mindset of individuals that appeared to help these institutions to achieve the diversity that the institutions are embracing. Cheryl described how her institution attempts to work on diversification through an equity lens:

> I would say that it goes beyond equal access to it needs to be equitable. For us, that means that you're going to do different things in different areas and for different students and that is acting with an equity mindset. I think we have to

> have a pulse on the questions and concerns that students have or the objections to what we can offer them. The best way we can do that is connecting with high school counselors, and with community-based organizations. Really having thoughtful conversations with them 'cause they're on the ground of 'what are of the objections that they are hearing' to considering [this institution]. Can we overcome some of those objections? Are some of them immovable? Then being flexible enough in our programming and in the things that we're doing with students not just related to admission but also with recruitment that seek to over overcome those. (Cheryl)

Without affirmative action less diversity will be achieved. Another theme that emerged from the data in relation to the administrators' views of affirmative action was without affirmative action less diversity will be achieved. Just under half of the participants spoke to this theme. The perspectives included Deans' explanation of the results of flagship campuses utilizing percentage plans and what that could mean to other institutions nationally. Dean shared: "They saw the numbers of students of color and lower socioeconomic students decrease dramatically, tremendously." Other participants described what affirmative action has meant for people of color at institutions of higher education. Peggy explained:

> I think that had it not been for affirmative action, there would be a lot fewer individuals [of color] on predominately White campuses. Moreover, I think that Sonia Sotomayor said it best. She, in her career, had some support as she made her way through law school, and she got clerkships and so forth. And she says

> that affirmative action, along with her stellar academic credentials, opened doors for her. (Peggy)

Another participant, Cheryl, described both a fear and a hopeful view of affirmative action when she explained:

> I sort of have two minds about it. I think that there is the chance that it could be devastating to the diversity of college campuses. Part of our institutional mission and the work that we do is creating diverse communities in a lot of different ways. In that way, I think that the thought of losing that is scary. I do think that admission folks are very resourceful and that people and the work that we do, I do think the colleges would still try to find a way to have diverse communities. I'm not quite sure how they do it, but I do think that they would try to find a way.

Summary of Research Question 1

When addressing the primary question of *What are college and university administrators' experiences with implementing programs to ensure equal access to historically underrepresented racial and ethnic minority students?* several themes emerged regarding how participants managed evolving changes by using various strategies. The most dominant strategies used by institutions in the management of evolving changes to ensure equal access to racial minorities included the use of: (a) holistic evaluation process, (b) financial aid/scholarships, and (c) strategic alliances and (d) targeted recruitment.

In looking at college and university administrators' experiences with implementing programs to increase access to racial minorities, I wanted to have a better understanding of the participants' perspectives regarding how their institutional policies

were modified when changes were made to affirmative action due to state bans or court mandates. The four strongest themes that emerged from the data were the use of: (a) diversity plans, (b) guidebooks or initiatives, (c) creation of the role of CDO, (d) sense of equity, and statement from most of the participants that the institutions did not need to modify their policies.

Most of the participants explicitly stated that their respective institutions did not need to modify their policies due to issues surrounding affirmative action. However, the data do show that all of the participants' institutions have not only made changes to their policies but have also employed multiple strategies at their institution over time to increase racial and ethnic diversity. Still unclear is whether the institution employed these strategies based on a decrease in minority student enrollment or if the respective institutions were proactive in their strategic planning.

One theme that all but one participant described in the interviews was the institution making diversity a major part of their institutional priority in their mission. I referred to this theme as the 'diversity rational" theme. There were also strategies employed by these institutions to increase their racial diversity. These strategies included the use of the holistic evaluation process, financial aid/scholarships, strategic alliances and targeted recruitment, and creation of the position of CDO.

I did not find distinctions between public and private institutions because each institution was unique in their admissions process in the admittance of racial and ethnic minorities. When I inquired about the administrators' perspectives on affirmative action as a policy, the most dominant themes that emerged from the data were that administrators felt that: (a) looking at race is still needed, (b) affirmative action is

misunderstood, (c) a sense of equity mindset is important to be present within the institution and the administration, and (d) without affirmative action less racial diversity will be achieved in colleges and universities.

Research Question 2

What are the effects of the restriction of race in the admissions criteria relating to the number of racial and ethnic minority students who are accepted and enrolled in colleges and universities? For the second primary research question, I used three secondary questions to explore the lived experiences of university administrators regarding the effects of the restriction of race in the admissions criteria in relation to the number of racial and ethnic minority students that are accepted and enrolled at colleges and universities within the United States. Each secondary question had its own set of thematic findings that emerged from the data. The first sub-question is presented below:

What impact has restrictions of race in the admissions criteria had on the racial and ethnic diversity of college and university campuses? The three themes that emerged from the data related to the impact that the restrictions of race in the admissions criteria had on racial diversity on college and university campuses were: (a) the low enrollment of African Americans, (b) the decline in African American enrollment, and (c) the increase of Latinx enrollment.

Not all participants had the racial demographic breakdown of current student enrollment of their respective institutions available during the interview. However, five participants provided the racial breakdown of their students at their respective institution. All five participants indicated that they experienced low enrollment of African American student population. Overwhelmingly, African Americans had the lowest enrollment rates

among the student population and ranged from 4 to 6%. The second lowest student enrollment rates, as indicated by study participants, were that of the Latinx population that ranged from 6 to 49% of the overall student population. Contrariwise, students who identified as White had the largest rates of enrollment as expressed by all but one participant.

Only one participant mentioned having a very small Indigenous American population. However, during the course of the interview several participants mentioned a strong desire to increase this population's demographic. Also expressed by participants was the difficulty experienced in increasing their indigenous student populations. Two participants provided enrollment statistics for their Asian population (3.2% and 17%). Four participants did not provide the breakdown of their current student enrollment. One participant expressed having an enrollment rate of 7%, while three of the participants appeared to have high rates of enrollment of students of color at their institutions, ranging from 18 to 40%. What is unknown is the breakdown between those students that identified as African American, Indigenous American, Latinx, and Asian, or if they may be from the international student population.

Over half of the participants discussed their respective institutions as experiencing low enrollments of African Americans. Four participants, Peggy, Edward, Cheryl, and Jane, expressed a decline in African American enrollment. Edward described:

> In 1995, we were 8.4% Black, and around the same percentage Hispanic. What happened in 1996 is that California banned affirmative action. And that had a knock-on effect, to how institutions brought in folks. And all over the country during that period, particularly the flagships, we saw Black enrollment cut in half.

> Lots of institutions will say that that's not really the case, that in the early 2000s we had the shift to multi-race, and that took away some of Black enrollment. I would say that our data here in [Engineering] indicates that most of our racial mixtures are White and Asian, and that the mixed-race paradigm had no material impact on Black enrollment, Black-identifying enrollment. Hence, there was a 50% reduction in Black enrollment. (Edward)

The second theme was the increase of Latinx enrollment from Peggy's, Mary's, Cheryl's, and Jane's institutions. Half of the participants who spoke to the theme of an increase in Latinx populations also expressed seeing a decline in their African American enrollment. Three of the four institutions that experienced a decrease or flattening in African American enrollment were institutions that had a stricter enrollment criterion (i.e., higher GPA standards). Three of the four institutions that experienced an uptick in the Latinx enrollment were institutions that reported the local communities that they serve also experienced a Latinx population increase. All four of the institutions that reported an increase in their Latinx student enrollment were private, with participants three of four institutions reported using a race/conscious admissions standard. Mike reported experiencing an increase each year in the enrollment of students of color, but what he did not report was if that included the international student body.

What impact has restriction of race in the admissions criteria had on race and ethnic relations among students on college and university campuses? When I asked participants what impact the restriction of race has had on racial and ethnic relations among students on their campuses, only six of the nine participants spoke to this theme. The three strongest themes expressed by half of the participants were that: (a)

there is no impact (b) black students feel disenfranchised, and (c) students experience stress.

There is no impact. Three participants, Dean, Peggy, and Jenny, expressed that there was no impact of race in the admissions criteria on racial and ethnic relations among students. These participants indicated that their institutions utilize what is described in this study as a lower admissions enrollment strategy. Dean, in an effort to describe why students at his campus did not take issue when changes occured regarding affirmative action mandates, shared "Every time there's a development in what I call the ongoing saga of the University of Texas cases as well as Michigan, I would say that quite frankly it's not on the . . . to my knowledge, the conscious radar of our students."

Although Dean stated that he was unaware of any student-related issues due to the restriction of race in admissions among the student body, there was an occasional issue from non-minority students with one of the race-conscious strategies that the institution utilized:

> Every once in a while, we'll have students who believe that our heritage scholarships are problematic . . . We point out really quickly that when you look at our overall aid awarding to who we have here at [this institution], there's a lot more institutional aid going to White students than there is going to students of color. It is not out of proportion at all, so no I don't know that people are conscious of it that way at [this institution]. We don't have a cap on our class, so there's nobody who's like 'they let in a less qualified student of color and didn't let me in'. (Dean)

Students experience stress. Two participants who described 'student-related issues' on campus due to restrictions of race' also agreed with the next theme, the level of student stress. Student stress referred to discomfort being expressed and felt by minority student populations when restrictions have been placed on the institution as to how it can admit students of color. Student stress also referred to the discomfort of minority students as a result of ongoing conversations in the media due to pressure from the White House as stated by three of the study participants. Both participants were at institutions that did not use race as a weighted factor in their undergraduate admissions criteria, were selective, and had low numbers of racial minorities enrollment. Mary illustrated this with the below narrative of some of the issues her Midwestern private institution had dealt with:

> I can give you two examples. Two years ago, in 2017 in January, as soon as Donald Trump—I'm going to use him because he's the current President of the United States—as soon as he's elected, he comes up with this rule recently thereafter about the countries that will be banned. Obviously, if you have some students here who are attending school and they're from those countries and Spring Break is coming up, which this did happen, there were some international students that were wondering if they should go home for Spring Break because they were thinking they wouldn't be let back in the country. That's stressful. These students are stressed, I mean they have their visas in order, they may have been in the process of buying a plane ticket, they got family at home, but they don't know if they should go home and you don't want to tell them the wrong thing so you're stressed about what you say to them because you don't want to lie

> and you don't know who's going to be at the board. Another stressor is for undocumented students, because we do allow undocumented students to have access to educational opportunity. At some schools you can't even apply to their university and be undocumented. Another stressor is when you have people who are saying, "If you're undocumented I'm going to call ICE on you," and these students here think like that and you don't know who's undocumented and who's not undocumented. It puts you [in] a very hostile environment and that can be very stressful. (Mary)

Black students feel disenfranchised. The theme and discussion surrounding student stress from the participants who responded to this topic intersects with black students feeling disenfranchised. Edward supported this theme when he explained that at his institution Black students felt disenfranchised especially because the institution was a PWI "founded for men and in slavery." Edward further noted that the institution at which he is employed is located in a community that had been subject to "alt-right events," which have shown "material impacts." This participant explained that the university was present, but questions whether the university was "prepared to get its arms fully around them." Jane also provided another example of the disenfranchisement of a minority student even prior to the enrollment process:

> the unfortunate thing is a lot of our Black men I think becomes disenfranchised as a result of being . . . I can't say. I can give you an example; My nephew was applying to medical school, and he went to Syracuse. And he had a 3.3 GPA. The advisor said, "Oh, no. You're not going to get in. You're not going to get in. You can't." I think what happens some of our students are told they can't do it, and

they look for other professions, and they go in other directions. I think that's one thing. (Jane)

What impact has restriction of race had on the attitudes and beliefs of administrators in charge of college and university diversity? All the participants had diverse perspectives regarding the restrictions placed around race in colleges and universities. The two most dominant themes that emerged were: (a) institutional racism and discrimination, and (b) the concern over retention of URM student populations.

***Institutional racism and discrimination*.** The strongest theme that emerged in relation to the restriction of race on the attitudes and beliefs of administrators in charge of college and university diversity was the recognition of institutional racism and discrimination. Institutional racism, also known as systemic racism, is a form of racism expressed in the practice of social, political, and educational institutions which are governed and govern behavioral norms that reinforce discriminatory beliefs, values and distributions of resources reflected in history, culture, and interconnected institutions. Institutional racism allow for policies to have negative effects on the opportunities of substantial numbers of people from minority backgrounds from taking part of social institutions (see Groos, Wallace, Hardeman, & Theall, 2018; O'Day & Smith, 2016).

The K-12 system is flawed where minorities experience inequities in education and the recognition that standardized test scores (e.g., ACT, SAT) are racially biased was acknowledged by over half of the participants. When asked how the restriction of race in admissions impacted administrators in charge of diversity, acknowledgement of structural racism within educational institutions was prevalent among participants. This theme comprised of statements that included: (a) describing the systemic racial issues of

elementary education, (b) the racial bias of standardized testing (e.g., ACT, SAT) as a barrier for racial minorities seeking entrance into higher education, (c) systemic racism embedded within policies at the participants institutions, (d) discussions with employees presenting a biased viewpoint centered around policy change or hiring, and (e) issues surrounding employment of racial minorities at participants institutions.

The first example of statements that supported the institutional racism and discrimination theme was racial bias of standardized testing as a barrier for racial minorities seeking entrance into higher education. Jenny opined:

> Higher Ed and K-12 is . . . racism is embedded in it. Systems of racism are just embedded throughout the whole structure . . . Not that [minority] students aren't capable, because they are highly capable, it's that they haven't been given the same opportunities in the K-12 system . . . if you look at our university centers, the really big schools in the SUNY system, the number of Asian students is very, very high. I think it probably speaks to systemic issues in education to be honest and the schools people are going to.

Mary's perspective about the impact of no longer having to use race as an admissions criterion is narrated below:

> I would say people are happy. The less restrictions you put on somebody, and they don't have to hire this person, they don't have to admit this person, they could admit whoever and they don't have to explain their process, when you lift that burden from people and people feel like 'I don't have to do this because nobody is watching me' . . . In our current society, you're seeing a huge gap in

> people who do the right thing because it's the right thing to do and people who tend to do the right thing because other people are looking. (Mary)

Another participant, Jenny, described a situation where her institution enacted policy change to deal with a biased situation that was part of a marketing strategy that would have perpetuated the systemic perspective:

> We have a diversity plan, [a] policy put into effect because . . . I wasn't involved in creating that document. There's lots of things I've done to address what's in that document and that would be the one . . . basically it's in there because there were graduation photos put up and there were no photos of any students of color in the graduation photos. A faculty member was like 'how can that be when we're graduating 30% of our students are students of color at graduation?

Kemper felt that affirmative action was not strong enough and explained his exasperation with restrictions around race when diversity was what was being asked of him, and yet there were systemic challenges in the way.

> It's one thing for [them] to say, 'Well, hey, we want you to increase [minority representation]. We want you to recruit more [minority] students. We want you to get more [minority] faculty.' . . . Then [they] say, 'Well, hey, that ain't fair to me... All things being concerned, so help me understand this. [You're] saying it's not fair for me to give a scholarship to . . . somebody because he's a Black male, but historically, for the last 175 years that this institution's been in existence, we've been giving scholarships to people are not [Black males] . . . Society has been quick to say, 'Well, you can't do that, because it's race. You can't do that because it's this, that.' [But] We don't have the same perspective about gender.

> We don't. There's a concerted effort to increase the percentage and representation of women who are qualified to do this particular job and do this particular thing [such as STEM]. I support that. What I'm saying is, that is equally discriminatory [to Blacks], because [Black men have] also had some of those historical issues. (Kemper)

Participant Edward described a systemic issue that occurred within the institution which was unnoticed until he pointed it out. This issue, which he described, also highlighted resistance to policy change and the systemic racialized (i.e., biased) reasoning from the peer groups.

> One of the things I ran into when I came here is, I looked around and said, 'Why does it appear that most Black students are in a single major in Engineering?' . . . So, they got in. It's a tough school. But why do they seem to be sequestered? Tell me about the major. Well, the major is *our only unaccredited major*. It is not a full engineering discipline. It is made of engineering minors. It has the *lowest earnings outcome*, the *lowest graduate school participation rates*, the *lowest* overall everything . . . Why are 60% of Black students in that major? Well, we had double caps on majors. One cap was in terms of the faculty teaching. The other cap was in terms of the GPA floor to get into the major . . . So, you look at that sort of paradigm, and say there's an entire population of students that does not have access to the majors within engineering that others [have]... And so, some faculty said, 'Well, Black students come from inner city high schools and should expect them to be ... You know, those schools aren't as well funded, and it's gonna have differential achievement rates.' Oh, really? Some said, 'if you

> have Black students in a given major, and you need to get them to perform better, keep them corralled in that major, 'cause we don't want them messing up our scores in the other majors'. Those are some serious issues. Now, with equity, I had to fight one hell of a battle up in here. And I mean, it was war. What we did was, we eventually removed all caps on majors, such that all students are able to be in the major of their choice. (Edward)

Within this structural/systemic racism and discrimination theme were issues surrounding employment of racial minorities at the participants' respective institutions as described by over half of the participants. Participants described the commitment of the institutions to the value it placed on diversity. Over half of the participants described either the lack of diversity with faculty and staff or the bias in the hiring of URM candidates. Mary shared:

> Well, you could get more multicultural students if you had more multicultural staff . . . Potential students would also be excited about the fact that some of their faculty members also looked like them. I think that would be one selling point. That's been a topic of discussion because often the demographic of our students, our employees, are a reflection of that. I think we could probably do a better job with that.

Another participant, Kemper, described a multi-institutional conference being held at his institution where only four Black minorities were in the room of 300. Kemper was upset by the low representation of Black minorities as he noted that one of the minorities was a server. Edward explained that his conservative institution had the

highest Black and Hispanic graduation rates in the country, but that the institution "will not promote it." Additionally, Edwards shared his observation of what occurred:

> That does not necessarily equate to other faculty members believing that Black and Brown scholarship, or scholarship coming from Black and Brown people, is equal to that of scholarship coming from others. Faculty are self-perpetuating groups, in that they hire their own. And so, we can have institutional influences, but ultimately if the faculty committees aren't prepared to bring in and to value diversity in the way that the institution might want, then it becomes a bit for naught . . . Over the past ten years [this institution] has hired across the entire university about four tenure/tenure-track faculty members a year. And have lost an equal number. So, in some instances, it's been kind of no net gain. This past year, we brought in 20, and while that may seem a lot, when we think about the growth rates of the faculty here, we're not making up much ground . . . So, in terms of percentages, it's pretty flat. That is more of a systemic issue, I think, with the faculty.

Another participant, Jenny, explained how she has worked towards combating this systemic issue at her institution:

> I'm going to relate this to some of the work that we've done in HR where . . . we create a training that springs people's awareness to bias because we see what plays out in search committees. And how . . . whatever the reason that candidate of color is not rising to the top. For me, it's about having conversations and making sure that people understand that diversity is a priority. So, that is an extremely valuable piece of a candidate.

Jane explained a situation she faced that highlighted how difficult and complex the challenges surrounding the application of the holistic process could be. She described discussions with the committee surrounding systemic issues that minorities face regarding standardized testing. During such discussions Jane presented to the committee data showing statistical ranges of marginal Black and Hispanic children. After hearing the committee say "'Well, it's a Black kid. That's a good score for a Black kid. Oh, it's a Hispanic kid. That's a good score for a Hispanic kid,'" she realized that she had unintentionally "planted [a] seed," she then had to "deprogram them to stop saying that" because "not all Black kids and Hispanic kids are marginal."

Jane also pointed out that she was the only Black person in her office and that she was sure it was because of affirmative action that she got there. Another issue that she dealt with as a person of color, which was included in this systemic theme, was the bias she received from her co-workers:

> At one time, because I am sometimes the only person in the room that looks like me, the assumption is I know every minority student that comes across the table. Especially when I'm defending the student. The first question is 'do you know the student?' No, I don't know the student. But just because I don't know the [student] ... even if I did know the student, it shouldn't matter. Defending a student is defending a student. I don't have to know a student personally to defend a student. And the other thing is all things diverse is supposed to be me. I'm not all things diverse. Just because I'm Black does not mean I'm all things diverse. There are a lot of things that we [people of color] go through.

Concern over retention of URM student populations. The second theme that emerged in relation to the restriction of race on the attitudes and beliefs of administrators in charge of college and university diversity was the theme of concern over retention of URM student populations. This theme referred to participants mentioning their concern over the retention of racial minorities, especially Black minorities in their institutions. Almost half of the participants mention this theme. All of the participants who spoke to this theme were at institutions that utilize the process of what is described in the lower/open enrollment theme. This theme intersects with the equity theme because these participants described the retention of racial minorities as an issue, and their perceptions of how the issue can be fixed. Peggy, Jenny, and Kemper all described how their institution worked on retention issues. Kemper explained the challenges his institution faces due to the way it operated.

> We are a front-loaded institution. For the most part, we see more success at getting them here, than we do graduating. But in the coming weeks and months and years, we're gonna be looking to move or spread some of that focus out from not only getting them here but making sure that they graduate. Right now, our graduation rate is about 32 percent for Blacks. I think Hispanic, maybe 40 percent, or 42 percent, or something like that. We're not happy with that, although, we recognize that's an improvement from where we were a couple years ago. We're very front loaded, but most institutions are. Most higher education institutions will do 99 percent of their work as it relates to retention on the front end. That's the first year. So, you'll see 75, 80, maybe even 90 percent

> of students from year one come back for year two, but then it starts to taper off drastically. (Kemper)

Jenny's institution addressed the retention issue by creating a more equitable environment. She described how this process would require a lot of conversations:

> [My institution] has larger numbers than other [state schools] of students of color, [and] are really trying to figure out how do we create this environment where students are going to be successful? How do we increase our retention rate, how do we get faculty to rethink what they are doing in the classroom? We're at the cabinet level talking about . . . with the increase in the number of students who are coming from . . . particularly [from a large nearby city], a lot of the [elementary] schools that . . . hadn't prepared students . . . what kind of things are we going to do to ensure that students are successful? If we are admitting them and bringing them here, what are we going to do to make sure that they are successful. We're having lots of conversations about that and not really around the admissions specifically. In some ways, we are an access institution. When you're providing access for students . . . we do have admissions criteria so it's not open enrollment. We still are providing access to a lot of students. So, what are we doing though to make sure that once they are here, they are successful? Those are a lot of the conversations that we are having in terms of the model of what we are providing is critical.

Peggy discussed how her institution addressed this issue:

> And in looking at our data, we have some disparities, both in terms of graduation rates and in terms of retention, and in terms of enrollment. So, the first thing we

> have to do is realize that, look at the data, analyze it more carefully, and determine what other changes we might make to close those gaps. I will say that the reduction in student numbers of African American students on campus, not so much due to enrollment, although we have had a decline in enrollment, but more so retention and graduation, that's something that student group[s] are concerned about on campus. (Peggy)

Summary of Research Question 2

The second primary question asked *What are the effects of the restriction of race in the admissions criteria relating to the number of racial and ethnic minority students who are accepted and enrolled at US colleges and universities?* Based on the data it appeared that there may have been an impact on racial and ethnic diversity on college and university campuses due to the restrictions of race in the admissions criteria. The administrators discussed the low enrollment of African Americans and an increase of Latinx enrollment on college and university campuses. When I asked participants what impact the restriction of race has had on racial and ethnic relations among students on their campuses, there were no strong findings. Only six of the nine participants spoke to this theme. Of the participants who spoke to this theme, the data highlighted that there was no impact among student relations with regards to the use of, or non-use of affirmative action. Furthermore, just under half of the six participants expressed that Black students felt disenfranchised and that students experienced stress.

The participants provided diverse perspectives regarding the restrictions placed around race in colleges and universities and its impacts on administrators in charge of diversity. All participants acknowledged the existence of structural racism within

educational institutions. This theme comprised of statements that included: (a) describing the systemic racial issues of elementary education, (b) the racial bias of standardized testing (ACT/SAT) as a barrier for racial minorities seeking entrance into higher education, (c) systemic racism embedded within policies at the participants institutions, (d) discussions with employees presenting a biased viewpoint centered around policy change or hiring, and (e) issues surrounding employment of racial minorities at participants institutions. Last, the administrators appeared to have concern over the retention of URM student populations.

Summary and Conclusions

In this chapter I presented the data gathered from nine college and university administrators in charge of implementing programs to ensure equal access to historically underrepresented racial and ethnic minority students. The significant findings of this qualitative phenomenological research study provided insight into the views and perspectives of participants with implementing race-based and race-neutral programs to ensure equal access to historically underrepresented racial and ethnic minority students. In this chapter, the summary of the findings from each primary research question was provided at the end of each section. Furthermore, I also presented the data solicitation and data collection, participant demographics, data analysis, evidence of trustworthiness, and study results. In the next chapter I will present the interpretation of the findings, recommendations for future research, and implications of the study.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to understand the perspectives, experiences, challenges, and successes of college and university administrators in the program development and implementation of various policies in their admissions criteria to ensure equal access of racial and ethnic minority groups to institutions of higher learning, while still meeting federal mandates of affirmative action. I conducted this phenomenological qualitative study using in-depth, semistructured interviews to explore the lived experiences of university and college administrators in charge of campus racial diversity at private and public universities in all four regions of the United States. There is a paucity of published research on the perspectives and experiences of those in charge of implementing race-neutral and race-based policies in their admissions criteria to ensure equal access of racial and ethnic minorities. I sought to contribute to the literature by exploring the experiences of university and college administrators in this regard. I used critical race theory (CRT) as the conceptual framework to guide this study. Ladson-Billings (2009a) discussed CRT approaches to education including exposure of racism in the educational system. I chose this framework because it aids in the legitimization of the experiences of minorities (see Delgado & Stefancic, 2001).

I used CRT to explore the experiences of college administrators in dealing with the challenges faced in meeting the goals of race-neutral policy changes. The use of the CRT also allowed for an understanding of what is being done to overcome the continued obstacles of campus diversity, primarily in relation to ensuring that historically disadvantaged groups are being admitted without violating the law. According to Carter (as cited in Delgado & Stefancic, 2001), CRT "recognizes that revolutionizing a culture

begins with the radical assessment of it" (p. 81). Delgado and Stefancic (1995, 2017) emphasized counter-storytelling and narrative as elements of a distinctive voice employed by people of color. I used a qualitative interview approach that included discussions from both White and African American administrators regarding their experiences in increasing their racial minority student populations at their respective colleges and universities. I analyzed the findings of the study using a CRT lens.

Interpretation of Findings

Two primary research questions were used to guide this study. Each primary question had secondary questions to aid in the gathering of information to obtain a better understanding of how administrators view and manage changes to affirmative action. The findings of this study are based on the themes derived from analysis of the interview data. The findings presented in the sections below are in reference to the secondary questions. The implications of the findings and the discussions surrounding the theoretical framework (if applicable) are also presented in this chapter.

Research Question 1

How do college and university administrators manage evolving changes to affirmative action while ensuring equal access to historically underrepresented racial and ethnic minority students? The findings from the current study suggested that institutions use more than one strategy to recruit and retain their URM student population. The themes that emerged from the data regarding the strategies used by both private and public institutions in all four regions of the United States in this study were as follows: (a) holistic evaluation process, (b) financial aid/scholarships, (c) strategic alliances, and (d) targeted recruitment.

Holistic evaluation process. Results regarding the use of a holistic evaluation process were similar to the findings of Gandara's (2012) study. Gandara discussed the use of the holistic evaluation method as a strategy to increase racial diversity at the University of California. In the current study, over half of the administrators indicated that they used a holistic evaluation method in their enrollment application review process as a strategy to increase racial diversity on college and university campuses. The holistic enrollment evaluation method referred to an institution reviewing a student's application based on his or her capabilities, experiences, attributes (such as race and gender), and academic metrics, which are considered in combination to assess how the individual might contribute value. Three approaches are included in this holistic review: (a) Race does not strongly impact the application review process, (b) race has more of an impact in the application process, and (c) the lower/open admissions approach is used. I found variations in the different holistic review processes that emerged in this study.

The data analysis revealed two different types of holistic review process being used at these institutions. The first type is one in which race does not strongly impact the application review process; although still considered, the applicant's race does not increase the likelihood of his or her acceptance into the college or university. According to the perspective of CRT, this race-neutral or objective policy is what Ladson-Billings (2011, 2009a) described as contributing to the endemic nature of racism in the U.S. educational system. Additionally, Lipson (2007) and Gandara (2012) showed that this strategy had not been as effective as administrators had hoped at UC California because it did not fully allow for the consideration of race and had contributed to a decline in African American and Latinx enrollment at UC institutions. The data from the current

study supported previous research findings from Gandara (2012) and Lipson (2007), who found that institutions have employed a variety of strategies to increase racial diversity at their respective institutions beyond that of the holistic review.

Expanding on the findings of Gandara (2012) and Lipson (2007), I also found that private and public institutions across all four regions used another type of holistic review process. This review process is one in which race has more of an impact in the application process and is weighed along with national academic achievement testing scores and an interview. Another admissions approach included in this holistic evaluation is the use of the lower/open admissions approach. The lower/open admissions approach facilitated the acceptance of lower SAT/ACT scores in the recruitment of the student body and contributed to the institutions organically achieving a more diverse student body. Included in this type of approach are institutions that may provisionally admit students with a low test score and a higher grade point average, or vice versa, when administrators see some potential in them.

Participants in the current study reported that the issues surrounding affirmative action were more apparent in flagship universities, as flagship institutions had a more selective process and were less likely to admit URMs. This is the case because these institutions typically use the first type of holistic review in which race is not given strong consideration in the application process. The perspectives of the administrators in this study aligned with findings of Gandara (2012), which suggested that this type of holistic review in which race is not given much consideration in the application process at more selective institutions ultimately resulted in lower URM representation at these campuses. These findings might be concerning for several reasons. Several studies (e.g., Alon &

Tienda, 2005; Bowen & Bok, 1998; Bowen, Chingos, & McPherson, 2009; Hoekstra, 2009; Long, 2008; Melguizo, 2008) demonstrated that the more selective the institution, the higher the rate of college completion for underrepresented students. Also, more selective institutions appear to have a higher payoff in terms of graduate or professional school (Gandara, 2012).

Financial aid/scholarships. Findings from the current study showed that the study participants' institutions used strategic investments in financial aid and scholarship practices. These institutions have increased their efforts in using financial aid and scholarship practices as an incentive in the recruitment and retention of Black and Latinx students. The findings from the current study supported and confirmed research by Harper and Griffin (2010), who found that financial aid was one of the main factors of college choice for prospective African American students. Financial aid referred to the funding that students receive from the college to pay for education-related expenses. The financial aid that the institutions offered included Pell Grants, Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants (SEOGs), work study, student loans, and scholarships.

The findings from the current study also revealed the use of scholarships designed for students of color. All but one participant discussed either the use or importance of this type of strategy for increasing underrepresented minority enrollment. These scholarships included heritage scholarships provided by the institution, alumni, or the institution partnering with groups that work with underrepresented minority populations and pair scholarships with mentoring and training programs. Examples of the mentoring and training programs most frequently mentioned in this study were Posse, Prep for Prep, Naviance, Bottom Line, and One Goal. The use of this type of race-based or race-specific

scholarship is unlike what research by Gichuru (2010) had shown, where institutions began rewording the language used in programs, policies, and scholarships to not be race specific.

Strategic alliances. According to the administrators in the current study, strategic alliances played a prominent role in the recruitment and retention of historically underrepresented minority students. Almost all of the administrators indicated the value of some form of strategic alliance in increasing equal access to minority students. The strategic alliance theme referred to the institution partnering with private groups or organizations, alumni, or corporations that work with underrepresented minority populations or provide financial awards for students of color. These strategic alliances helped in the recruitment and retention of URMs through (a) financial donations and/or scholarship dollars or (b) the pairing of mentorship and training programs with scholarship dollars. This second type of strategic alliance is consistent with the findings of Harper and Griffin (2010), who pointed to the success of training and scholarship programs (e.g., Prep for Prep, First Gen, Posse Scholars) in the recruitment and retention of minority students in U.S. colleges and universities.

Another type of strategic alliance that the administrators in the current study discussed was community-based organizations (CBOs), churches, and other religious organizations that act as access points for recruiters in their recruitment efforts to target first-generation and historically underrepresented students. These findings are important because CBOs have been found to benefit underserved students, including low-income or first-generation students, immigrants, and/or students of color, and their programs offer additional resources and time to explore postsecondary options (Shere, 2014).

Furthermore, CBOs have been found to provide services students cannot afford or are not offered in their high schools (e.g., SAT prep, academic advising, free college trips, emotional support, FAFSA completion, leadership opportunities), often in urban, rural, or poor areas where college-related services are not financially built into the curriculum or school counseling (Shere, 2014). None of the previous studies addressed the use of race- or heritage-based scholarships as a way to increase URM student populations. This information can be important to other institutions in helping them increase their URM student enrollment.

Targeted recruitment. All but one participant expressed use of and value to some form of targeted recruitment of URMs. Targeted recruitment, according to the administrators' responses, referred to the ways that colleges and universities focus their recruitment efforts in racial and ethnic minority neighborhoods, communities, and schools, with the intended purpose of increasing minority applicants and to increase student diversity. Included in the targeted recruitment theme are (a) recruitment or outreach in target areas/neighborhoods/schools, (b) the use of people of color in the recruitment process, (c) hosting of paid events, parties, or programs that target URMs, and (d) recruitment tools.

Over half of administrators described their respective institution focusing its recruitment and outreach efforts to target areas that include inner-city communities and other areas where high minority populations exist. The administrators described hosting workshops with community-based leaders, reaching out to religious communities, and hosting college fairs in communities of color. It is unknown if or when this became a common recruitment strategy used at institutions because there have been no empirical

peer-reviewed discussions surrounding this approach by upper-level administrators in the research found in the review of the literature. This may prove to be a valuable reference point for other institutions in increasing its minority enrollment.

More than half of the administrators found the use of recruiters, faculty, staff, and students of color in the recruitment process to be beneficial. The administrators described a strong benefit to increasing campus diversity when the prospective student gets to interact and engage with staff and students that look like them. This finding is consistent with and supports findings from Gandara (2012), who described the use of URMs in the recruitment practices as being a beneficial strategy in the recruitment of URM's at the University of California.

Another finding from this current study that is part of targeted recruitment was the use of hosting of paid events, parties, or programs which targeted URMs as a strong strategy in working towards increasing URM student populations. Over half of the administrators discussed their institution paying for student events or programs for prospective minority students. This strategy included the institution paying for flights or bus rides for URM students to attend campus events, programs, or special days for underrepresented and underserved candidates. The institution hosted these types of events for first-generation, Latinx, or African American prospective students (each event was held for those specific populations on separate days). These events also included emersion programs or campus learning events for students from inner-city high schools with a high population of URMs. The implication of this finding highlights the importance of having a racially diverse admissions and recruitment team in an effort to

increase the URM student enrollment, while utilizing minority student body in their recruitment practices.

Another interesting finding from the current study was the theme of tools which institutions used in the recruitment of URMs. The data showed that institutions partnered with programs such as the Common Application, Questbridge, or Naviance. These programs targeted first-generation, low-SES, and URM student populations. There was some variability in the types of programs in terms of how they are employed; however, they each have the similar element of either a recruitment software tool or list of schools that reviewed the applicant list in an attempt to recruit these URM students to their institutions. There are no published studies describing the use of these types of tools. The lack of existing literature may be due in part to the changes in technology over time; however, this strategy appears to be important in student college matching. The use of these types of tools suggest that institutions are attempting to use technology in a manner that allows matching of prospective student groups to their criteria and could be a very useful tool for other colleges and universities.

Gandara (2012) and Lipson (2007) both described selective institutions as using multiple strategies. Such strategies included the use of percentage-plans and class-based affirmative action, as an attempt to remedy the decrease in URM representation. In the current study, the administrators utilized none of these strategies because their respective institutions used percentage-plans or class-based affirmative action. Furthermore, the findings from the current research study highlihgted that administrators were alternatively working with strategic alliances and were providing financial aid or scholarship dollars geared towards low SES student populations.

How are college and university admission policies modified when changes are made to affirmative action either due to state-mandated bans or court mandates? The findings from the data showed that there are some commonalities between institutions on how they have addressed policy modification when changes have been made to affirmative action due to state bans or court mandates. The strategies employed by institutions included the use of (a) diversity plans, (b) guidebooks or initiatives, (c) the creation of the role of chief diversity officer, (d) sense of equity, and (e) have not modified policies.

Diversity plan, guidebooks, or initiatives. More than half of the participants were employed at institutions which have established diversity plans, initiatives, or the use of guidebooks with the intention of increasing campus diversity by placing language to integrate diversity throughout the institution. Some administrators indicated that their respective institutions had written documents that included a diversity agenda. Other administrators made repeated reference to policies, agendas, or initiatives that the institution used to increase minority student enrollment and diversity. As referenced by the administrators, these initiatives referenced drives and provided the opportunity for employment of targeted recruitment strategies. Participants also made repeated reference to consistent review of these policies, initiatives, and agendas. This finding is consistent with Kezar (2008), who showed that taking the political pulse of the campus in a systematic way and on a regular basis is an important strategy in advancing diversity on college campuses. Additionally, the implications of this finding from the current research study suggest that administrators were attempting to increase racial diversity at their respective institutions using a CRT lens as part of their policy evaluation in an attempt to

address the lack of diversity. Bell (2005) posited that once race and racism have been accepted as persistent and dynamic, it is then that more realistic focus can be placed on strategies and approaches which will more comprehensibly address racial inequities in higher education.

The review of the literature revealed the role of upper-level administrators and faculty in implementing and influencing diversity policy specific to race/ethnicity (see Garces & Cogburn, 2015; Kezar, 2008). The findings from the current research supported findings by Garces and Cogburn (2015) and Kezar (2008), who found a strong connection between the influence of senior leadership and campus community, and that how they embraced racial diversity had a strong influence on how these policies were implemented. In this current research study, I found that institutions that had a strong commitment from senior leadership regarding the implementation of these racial diversity policies and agendas had higher rates of racial minority student populations.

Creation of the role of chief diversity officer. Garces and Cogburn (2015) discussed administrators' feeling that changes in laws created a silencing of conversations around race. According to Kezar (2008), moving diversity agendas forward is a political process that requires senior leadership to develop coalitions and advocates. Also, Gichuru (2010) has shown that the administrators in the role of chief diversity officer (CDO) act as change agents because they created policies and initiatives to enhance diversity. The findings of the current study are in alignment wit h the existing literature because part of the changes that institutions have made is the creation of the executive level leadership position, CDO.

The administrators reported that the role of CDO at their respective institution was tasked with handling matters of policy, practice, student success, recruitment and retention, climate, and culture, and working with HR in the recruitment and retention of minority faculty and staff. Garces and Cogburn (2015) and Gichuru (2010) has shown that administrators, including CDOs, felt that changes in laws played a role in limiting conversations around race and how they could enact changes to policies related to affirmative action regarding racial diversity. Unlike the research conducted by Garces and Cogburn and Gichuru, the administrators whose institutions employed either a CDO or a recruiter tasked with increasing racial diversity reported consistent discussions, conversations, and re-evaluation of practices relating to racial minorities.

These administrators also discussed having conversations regarding race-based strategies and scholarships that fall within legal boundaries in their institutional efforts to increase racial diversity at their respective campuses. The current findings suggested that the CDO and the office of diversity provides a CRT framework for minority students to confront any hostile environment they find themselves in; this involved them expressing their counter-story and aides in alleviating some of the stress associated with bearing the burden of marginalization (see Carter, 2011; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Stanley, Porter, Simpson, & Ouellett, 2003). According to Carter (2011):

> speaking about one's experiences as an underrepresented group may not provide immediate alleviation of the stress, but sharing one's stories and experiences with an interested audience has been found to have long-term effects on how diversity initiatives are created, implemented, and assessed, which could lead to creating welcoming environments for future African Americans. (p. 82)

The implication of these findings is in alignment with CRT's notion of counterstories. In this instance, the re-evaluation of practices and policies encouraging conversations around race with the use of an upper-level administrator (i.e., CDO), as well as providing a safe space to encourage the use of counterstories, appear to have a significant benefit in higher education. The findings from this current research study suggested that the use of counterstories can be a useful tool because it allows the institution to listen to and address the challenges that the URM students are facing and transform it for the better.

***Sense of equity*.** The sense of equity was another theme that emerged from the data. Based on participant's narratives, I found that the role of the CDO was used to create an equitable and inclusive environment. In the context of the participants responses, equity was defined as the understanding of conditions within the United States educational system which are comprised of systemic barriers that deny some students access to education and other opportunities enjoyed by their peers, and therefore putting systems and supports in place to overcome these systemic barriers to ensure that these populations of students are provided an equal chance for success (see Bowen & Bok, 1998; Bowen, et al., 2005; Chen, 2017; Harper et al., 2009).

Over half of the participants discussed equity and the value of equity as an essential element in policy modification. These findings showed that policy formation is tied to senior leadership embracing and understanding equity. According to the administrators in this study, this includes having conversations around systemic barriers experienced by students from different races and socioeconomic status (SES) in relation to unequal educational resources, and opportunity within the K-12 school systems. The findings highlighted the fact that the administrators found value in reviewing data sets of

national ACT/SAT scores based on race and SES, looking at the disparities in terms of enrollment, retention, and graduation, and determining what changes needed to be made from an equity lens. Additionally, administrators who discussed this sense of equity needing to be a part of the essence of the institution discussed the importance of attending equity and inclusion conferences.

Administrators who spoke to the equity theme also recognized the need to look beyond getting students equal access to the institution and were interested in attempting to provide students with what they needed to succeed, provide the needed support, and an equitable environment. CRTs' goal is to create an equitable environment for racial minorities. In fact, some of the institutions, especially those that reported higher numbers of racial minorities, embraced this sense of equity. Delgado and Stefancic (2001) described how society "applauds affording everyone equality of opportunity but resists programs that assure equality of results" (p. 23). However, the implication of the findings from the current research study may be that since CRTs' initial inception it has found some grounding within institutions and those in charge. Such new grounding may imply that institutions may be putting more programs in place with a focus on the equality of results.

The implication of this finding might suggest that these institutions may be unintentionally employing aspects of CRT as a method of achieving racial diversity. Furthermore, institutions that employ the use of CRT are finding greater success with increasing their racially diverse student body. Following the first election of President Barack Obama, individuals with various political ideologies touted that America had become a "post-racial" society and more institutions began employing colorblind

admissions standards (see Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Nguyen & Ward, 2017). However, unlike what critical race theorists have posited, none of the administrators in the current study discussed what Bonilla-Silva (2009) referred to as the 'minimization frame.' This frame encourages the belief that racial discrimination is lessening or has disappeared in this country and thus forms no significant impediment to the social status and mobility of people of color in the United States (Bonilla-Silva, 2009). This finding is important because it highlights the administrator's awareness that this 'minimization frame' is what encourages color-blind policy formation, which has been shown to result in a lack of racial diversity on college campuses (see Gandara, 2012; Lipson, 2007), which may be why they are embracing this equity mindset.

Have not modified policies. In this current research study, most of the administrators indicated that their institution did not need to make changes to their admissions policies. This finding differed from Gichuru (2010), who found that each institution was unique but that changes needed to be made to reflect changes in the language of admissions policies, language of scholarships, and other race entitlement programs.

Five of the administrators in the current study were from private institutions and two were from public institutions which either used an open-enrollment strategy or lower enrollment strategy. One of the private institutions that the administrators described as not making changes to policies was located in a state that banned the use of race in the admissions process. Although all participants from private institutions described race-based recruitment strategies, all but one reported a decrease in the enrollment of their institution's racial minorities.

Using a CRT lens, this may suggest that although racial equity appears to be a priority at these institutions, it never held a consistent place at the core of their policies (see Gillborn, Demack, Rollock, & Warmington, 2017). As posited by one of the core principles of CRT, racism is a relentless, deep-rooted, and systemic characteristic of society which lies embedded in the routine "normal-ity" of everyday schooling and school policies (Gillborn, 2018, p. 77). A lack of change in such policies will continue to have a negative impact on racial and ethnic minority enrollment rates. This negative impact on enrollment of racial and ethnic minority might be problematic because without changes in policies these institutions will be unable to embrace the equity and inclusion that they appear to be working towards. Furthermore, it could impact the racial diversity that the institutions seek to attain.

Despite the findings of this study, it is unclear if the decrease in racial and ethnic minority enrollment at these institutions is related to policy changes and bans on affirmative action. Two of the participants explained that their respective institutions were private and were not subject to the same requirements and mandates of public institutions and were allowed to follow national directives (e.g., *University of Michigan v. Grutter, Fisher II*) to look at the race of an individual in a holistic sense using strict scrutiny.

What are the strategies that have been utilized to address any decrease in racial and ethnic minority students as a result of changes in race-based affirmative action? Although most of the administrators indicated that their respective institutions did not need to make policy changes based on the multiple state and ongoing legal challenges related to affirmative action (i.e., *Regents of the University of California v.*

Bakke, Gratz v. Bollinger, Grutter v. Bollinger, Fisher I & II, Hopwood v. Texas, Prop. 209 and similar state bans), they did not provide an answer as to why there was no need to modify their policies. However, it is important to note that *all* administrators discussed at length the multiple strategies that their institution had employed to increase racial and ethnic diversity (i.e., the holistic evaluation process, financial aid/scholarships, strategic alliances, targeted recruitment, and creation of the position of CDO). It is unclear when the institution employed these strategies, whether the institution employed these strategies based on a decrease in minority student enrollment, or if the respective institutions were proactive in their strategic planning.

Diversity rationale. A pattern that became clear in the data used by all but one participant is the *diversity rationale theme*. This theme includes both the institution making the essence of diversity a major institutional priority and commitment, as well as the participants' commitment to diversity. All but one participant mentioned the essence of diversity being a major part of their institutional priority in their mission. It is worth noting that the institutions which used this diversity rational had a broad definition of diversity, which included race, ethnicity, gender, disability, sexual orientation, and national origin. Additionally, all of the administrators indicated that they were committed to institutional racial diversity, which is consistent with research by Lipson (2007) and Gichuru (2010). Lipson and Gichuru found that administrators were committed to increasing racial diversity and were also supportive of race-based affirmative action at their respective institutions. This finding suggests that institutions and the administrators, despite legal challenges regarding the use of race, continued their commitment and felt

that using race in the admissions process was essential to them being able to increase racial diversity on their respective campuses.

Lipson (2007), whose findings were similar to the current findings of this study, discussed understanding why institutions have come to embrace this diversity rationale. Lipson had two overarching themes which overlap with the findings from the current research study: (a) some administrators discussed institutions needing to reflect a diverse classroom environment to better prepare for a diverse world environment, as well as discussions highlighting the benefit of having people from diverse backgrounds being able to offer diverse perspectives regarding problem-solving, and (b) discussions from administrators that centered around the financial sustainability of the institution being dependent on its racial diversity given the population demographic shift to a minority demographic.

Lipson (2007) used a neo-institutional organizational theory to describe and situate the thought processes leading these key actors (i.e., upper level administrators) to forge this policy transformation. This current study, however, utilized CRT to explain how embracing racial diversity had become central to the institutions' priority and commitment. This movement towards embracing racial diversity can be explained with a notion of CRT known as interest convergence (Bell, 1980). Bell (1980) posited that no advancement within communities of color, particularly Black communities, can be taken at face value. Policies are written only when there is an interest convergence—when the interests of the majority are served by creating policy to address inequalities (see Donnor, 2005). Rather, racial minorities will be afforded opportunities, including within policy formation, only when they converge with the self-interests of Whites.

An example of this element of CRT can be seen within the findings of the current study. Several participants mentioned, that the racial demographics of the nation are changing and to ensure its survival, colleges, and universities must change the way they are going about their recruitment practices, and how they go about working to increase URM student populations. These comments support the view of CRT that it is self-preservation which motivates both the people in employment at these institutions as well as the institution itself, and that it is this self-interest survival mechanism that motivates the desire to increase its Black and Brown enrollment.

What are the perspectives on affirmative action of the administrators who are in charge of implementing programs to ensure equal access to historically underrepresented racial and ethnic minority students, on affirmative action? The findings from the data showed that administrators in charge of campus diversity supported the use of race in implementing programs to ensure equal access to racial and ethnic minority students. These administrators have shown strong commitment to the numerous strategies that they have employed at their respective institutions in an attempt to increase the URM student body. Four themes emerged from the data regarding the perspectives of administrators on affirmative action and included: (a) the need to look at race, (b) affirmative action is misunderstood, (c) equity mindset, and (d) without affirmative action less diversity will be achieved.

Need to look at race. All of the administrators who participated in the current study expressed that they are committed to diversity and felt that race-based affirmative action was still needed at a significant majority of institutions across the nation. Seven of the nine participants described a strong desire "to be intentional" in looking at race and

provide opportunity to ensure equal access to URMs. The findings from this current research are consistent with those of Lipson (2007) and Gichuru (2010), whose findings suggested that administrators at colleges and universities support racial diversity and race-based affirmative action.

Affirmative action is misunderstood. Another theme that emerged during the analysis was that affirmative action is misunderstood. The administrators described that many people seem to think that affirmative action implies that racial quotas are used in the recruitment of minorities to ensure a diverse class from various backgrounds.

Another common misconception shared by the administrators was that most people believed that affirmative action detracts from other peoples' applications, falsely believing that it is about taking away something from White Americans, and Asian Americans, and that some African Americans do not want to be associated with it due to these misconceptions. The administrators in this study felt that people in the community in which the institutions were located, the campus community, and faculty and upper-level administrators needed to be better educated to understand that affirmative action is about making sure that all communities have access to opportunities. This is a very important finding given the consistent legal challenges regarding the use of race in the admissions process, and also because these administrators supported the use of race in the admissions process to increase their URM campus representation. The potential implication of this finding is that the campus community may benefit from the use of workshops and other professional development opportunities related to understanding what affirmative action is, and how institutions can address and implement their diversity agendas.

***Sense of equity*.** The sense of equity theme is similar to the findings that addressed how colleges and universities modified their admission policies when changes were made to affirmative action either due to state-mandated bans or court mandates. Over half of the participants ascribed to the sense of equity theme for implementation of their institution's diversity agendas. The sense of equity theme is defined as both the institution and the administrator recognizing that equality and equity are different and that the use of equity is a good strategy to increase diversity among ethnic minority.

The administrators had strong feelings when explaining that institutions must embrace equity and go beyond equal access. Over half of the administrators felt very strongly that opening the doors was not sufficient. Furthermore, the administrators felt that policies around race-neutral entry may address equality but are unlikely to address equity. These administrators had a strong desire to create an environment where students are treated in an equitable manner. There are no previous studies describing the use of an equity mindset for institutions to diversify their campus setting. Additionally, unlike any of the previous studies, the findings of this current study highlight the fact that attending conferences on equity and inclusion is linked to this sense of equity becoming part of the campus mindset. Such mindset, in turn, appears to help these institutions in attempting to achieve the diversity that institutions are embracing as a part of their institutional missions. The literature regarding affirmative action did not describe this element, and this is an important finding given that CRT centers on the creation of equitable environments for racial minorities. As stated in a previous finding where this sense of equity theme also emerged, some of the administrators from institutions who reported higher numbers of racial minorities embraced the sense of equity mindset. The

implication of this finding is consistent with the previous implications that these institutions may be unintentionally employing aspects of CRT as a method of achieving racial diversity. The institutions that are employing aspects of CRT are finding greater success with increasing their racially diverse student body.

Based on the findings from this study there needs to be continued research using a CRT lens regarding equity and inclusion and its association with the admittance and retention of racial minority student populations. Doing so could prove beneficial for colleges and universities, especially those with higher admission standards.

Without affirmative action less diversity will be achieved. The last theme that emerged in relation to research question one centered on the perspective that without the use of race-based affirmative action, less diversity will be achieved at colleges and universities. Many of the administrators pointed to declines at flagships colleges and universities that do not use race as a factor or use the holistic enrollment practice where race is not given a strong consideration. The views expressed by the administrators are consistent with those of Lipson (2007) and Gandara (2012) who described the use of the holistic enrollment strategy where race was given little impact on admissions criteria employed by the University of California and the result being a drop in Hispanic and African American enrollment rates. Although just under half of the administrators spoke to this theme, none of them expressed that more diversity can be achieved through other race-neutral policies.

Based on findings from the first research question, I found varied and unique strategies used by administrators to increase its campus' racial diversity. Many of these institutions still utilize race in their admissions processes, especially the policies

surrounding the recruitment efforts and these administrators continued to support the use of race in their admissions decisions. These findings are important because they show that institutions have committed to increase their racial diversity, which has led them to search for alternative ways to increase their minority representation. These findings are important in helping to understand that the recruitment practices areas requires the creativity of administrators to address the lack of URM enrollment at their institutions. Other institutions may see these processes as something that has the potential to work at their institution.

Additionally, in the current research study I found that the line between race-based and race-blind policy-making can be blurred. The use of financial aid and scholarships directed at students of color, as well as the partnering with strategic alliances that target and support students of color, all appeared to be beneficial to administrators in charge of campus diversity. Furthermore, the new tools of technology acting as college match choices are new approaches and appeared to have a positive impact on these institutions in their recruitment of URM students.

From the findings of the current study institutions that utilize strong practices of race-based recruitment strategies and are linked to higher rates of student racial diversity have (a) a more open dialogue regarding race, (b) embrace an equity mindset as a means to achieve its diversity goals, (c) a strong presidential commitment to racial diversity, and (d) discuss the attendance of conferences related to equity and inclusion—appear to utilize strong practices of race-based recruitment strategies—and are linked to higher rates of student racial diversity.

The institutions that follow the above criteria appeared to be implementing practices associated with CRT; such as the value of equity, the use of counter-storytelling, policy evaluation and modification, seeing the benefits of the use of race in its recruitment practices, and not embracing the minimization frame. Implementing practices associated with CRT is an important insight because it has the potential to influence the way other institutions approach their diversity goals. Additionally, these findings may suggest that private institutions are more willing to use race in their efforts at colleges and universities.

Research Question 2

What are the effects of the restriction of race in the admissions criteria related to the number of racial and ethnic minority students who are accepted and enrolled in colleges and universities? There were three secondary questions associated with the second primary research question. Each of the secondary questions came with their own set of thematic findings that emerged from the data and is presented below.

What impact has restrictions of race in the admissions criteria had on the racial and ethnic diversity of college and university campuses? The three themes which emerged from the data related to the impact that the restrictions of race in the admissions criteria had on racial diversity on college and university campuses included: (a) the low enrollment of African Americans, (b) the decline in African American enrollment, and (c) the increase of Latinx enrollment.

Low enrollment/decline in enrollment of African Americans. Only five participants gave a racial breakdown of their respective institution. These administrators reported that African American enrollment was low, ranging from 4 to 6% of their

student population. These numbers are consistent with Gandara (2012) and Lipson (2012) who discussed drops in representation at selective institutions since the first legal challenges to race-based affirmative action practices. Most participants did not discuss the presence of any Native/Indigenous American student population; however, during the interview several participants mentioned an overwhelming desire to increase this population's demographic. Additionally, participants also expressed difficulties in increasing their Native/Indigenous American student populations. Given these challenges it appears that although institutions are utilizing numerous strategies to increase their racial minorities population, there is little impact in increasing the African American and the Native/Indigenous American population demographics.

Three out of four institutions that experienced a decrease or flattening in African American enrollment were institutions that had stricter enrollment criterion (e.g., higher GPA standards), and who offered medical and other important graduate level programs. The implications of these findings suggest that there will continue to be fewer African American and Native/Indigenous American graduate degree recipients, which is consistent with the findings from a study conducted by Gilroy (2011) who found that graduate school programs become less diverse with the decline in African American and Native American enrollment. Although four participants in the current study did not give a racial breakdown, one participant expressed having low enrollment rate, while the other three participants appeared to have high enrollment of students of color at their institutions (ranging from 18 - 40%). What is unknown of these institutions is the breakdown between those students who identified as African American, Indigenous American, Latinx, Asian, or if they may be a part of the international student population.

Increase of Latinx enrollment. The second theme that emerged in relation to research question number two was the increase of Latinx enrollment. This finding in the current study differs from Gandara (2012), which described a decrease in Latinx enrollment, but is more in line with the findings of Rios-Ellis et al. (2015). More specifically, Rios-Ellis et al. (2015) discussed the increase of overall college admission rates for Latinx students over the last few decades. Rios-Ellis et al. found that the strategies used by institutions have a positive impact in increasing its Latinx population. It is important to note that administrators indicated that three of four institutions experiencing an increase in enrollment of Latinx reported the local communities in which they serve were also experiencing a Latinx population increase.

Gandara (2012) also described a Latinx population increase and a significant increase of Latinx graduating high school classes by about one-third. However, Gandara found that even with this population increase, the Latinx freshman classes at University of California school system had either declined overall or returned to a level that failed to keep pace with the dramatic increase in the population. All four of the administrators from institutions that had a Latinx population increase were private, while three of these administrators indicated using a race-conscious admissions standard. None of the previous literature reviewed discussed both private and public institutions and the various strategies employed by these institutions. Therefore, this current research study expands knowledge in this area.

Although it is unknown whether the increase in Latinx enrollment was due to the various recruitment tactics used by institutions, the use of race-conscious admissions standards, or a local Latinx population increase, according to the administrator's

responses it appears that these institutions are keeping pace with the population increase, unlike those in Gandara's (2012) study. In the current study, half of the participants who discussed experiencing an increase in Latinx student populations expressed seeing a decline in their African American enrollment. The CRT opined that institutions are only willing to increase its racial diversity in as much that it does not affect the enrollment of the majority group members (i.e., White) because this is a result of interest convergence. However, it is still unknown whether the increase of Latinx populations has led to a decrease in African American population in these areas. Further research regarding the association of the increase of Latinx student enrollment and the decline in African American student enrollment at these institutions would be beneficial.

What impact has restriction of race in the admissions criteria had on race and ethnic relations among students on college and university campuses? Only six of the nine participants responded to this question. The three strongest themes that emerged from the data presented by the study participants included (a) there is no impact, (b) students experience stress; and (c) Black students feel disenfranchised.

There is no impact. Half of the participants who provided answers to this question reported that there had been no impact on race and ethnic relations due to the restrictions placed around race. One administrator felt that this was due to students not being aware of the changes being made regarding affirmative action. All three of the participants' institutions utilized what is described in this study as a lower admissions enrollment strategy. The lower admissions/enrollment strategy is one where the institution may allow lower SAT/ACT scores in the recruitment of their student body and/or may provisionally admit students with a low-test score and a higher-grade point

average, or vice versa. Students not being aware of changes may present a challenge as university and college leaders find students make the best allies when making changes to diversity policies and agendas, according to Kezar (2008).

The findings from this current research study showed that half of the administrators who spoke to this theme did not believe students felt an impact because there were no changes in how the institutions enact their policies and strategies; this is important because the findings seem to suggest that students in general think that the practices that were being used were fair and appropriate. However, the rates of minority enrollment remained low at these institutions and may also signify that students found the lower rates of minority students' enrollment acceptable. According to Warikoo and de Novias (as cited in Bhopal, 2017), by seeing the admissions process as being fair, students do not see the inequalities it perpetuates and it reinforces the lack of acknowledgement of the disadvantages that some students experience. Only one participant mentioned that issues with the race-conscious strategy of heritage scholarships occasionally arised from non-minority students. Ultimately, students are presented data showing the overall institutional aid being awarded to White students resulting in the issue being resolved.

Students experience stress. Two administrators described student-related issues on campus due to 'the restrictions of race' causing elevated levels of student stress. Student stress referred to discomfort being expressed and felt by minority student populations when changes are made to affirmative action policies and conversations surrounding the topic in the media. Both participants were at institutions that did not use

race as a heavily weighted factor in their undergraduate criteria, were selective institutions, and both had low numbers of racial minority enrollment.

The students who were most affected by student stress were the international student body population or those students who may appear to others as non-White, Latinx, or Arabic descended. These students had concerns that ranged from not being able to go on spring break with their peers, as they feared not being allowed re-entry into the country, racial slurs, comments that the students were undocumented, and that they would be reported to the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). These findings are insightful especially because the two administrators that reported stress were from schools that did not use race as heavily, and this may mean that institutions lacking sufficient diversity may experience higher levels of student stress in this form. Moreover, participants at the institutions that gave race a stronger weighting in the admissions criteria did not report student stress. In short, stress among students was not evident at institutions with higher rates of racial minorities.

Black students feel disenfranchised. The student stress theme intersects with the theme of Black students feeling disenfranchised. The conversations by the administrators included instances where Black students may sometimes feel marginalized, excluded, or disenfranchised by peers, faculty, or even academic advisors. Research has found that racial/ethnic minority students and their White peers who attend the same institution often view the campus racial climate in different ways (Harper & Hurtado, 2007). For example, racial/ethnic minorities often perceive campus climates as more racist and less accepting than Whites (see Harper & Hurtado, 2007). Additionally, one administrator in charge of the admissions to a medical school noted that one reason for a lack of Black

applicants was related to students being dissuaded from applying to medical or other graduate schools due to the academic advisor feeling that the student did not meet the standards. This administrator also felt that instances like these can be an additional reason that students become disenfranchised and do not make it to the door of admissions to medical and upper graduate schools.

Administrators expressed concern over how fully the institution was willing to protect its minority student populations when racial issues arose on and around campus. These findings are important given that institutions have been using the strategy of the equity mindset, which suggests that this strategy needs further modification because it may be ineffective in its implementation. It is also worth noting that the use of the 'sense of equity' mindset appears to be rather new in its implementation, compared to the 'diversity rationale' that has been embraced early on at these institutions. Further study on the use of an equity mindset at colleges and universities and how they deal with student related issues regarding African American students feeling disenfranchised could offer some insight and add to the gaps in the literature on this issue. Given that most institutions want to enroll African American students and show high numbers of graduation rates, these findings are important for institutions to address.

What impact has restriction of race had on the attitudes and beliefs of administrators in charge of college and university diversity? All the participants had diverse perspectives to offer regarding the restrictions placed around race in colleges and universities. The two most dominant themes were related to: (a) institutional racism and discrimination, and (b) the concern over retention of URM student populations. Majority and minority group members described these views. The below section describes the

attitudes, insights, and discussions by both White and African American administrators. In this section I also discuss what both White and African-American administrators have observed, overheard, felt, and dealt with at the respective institutions that they serve. These findings highlight what minorities in charge of campus diversity must deal with at the colleges and universities they serve.

Institutional racism and discrimination. Consistent among participants was the acknowledgement of the existence of institutional racism within educational institutions. This theme comprised of statements that included (a) describing the systemic racial issues of elementary education, (b) the racial bias of standardized testing (e.g., ACT, SAT) as a barrier for racial minorities seeking entrance into higher education, (c) systemic racism embedded within policies at the participants institutions, (d) discussions with employees presenting a biased viewpoint centered around policy change or hiring, and (e) issues surrounding employment of racial minorities at participants institutions.

Knoester and Au (2017) argued that the intrinsic features of high-stakes testing combined with current systems of school choice, function as mechanisms used for racial coding that facilitate segregation, and compound inequalities found in schools. The finding of Knoester and Au's study is in alignment with the findings from this current research because the administrators who participated in this study discussed and recognized these key features and further validated studies like Knoester and Au. More specifically, participants in the current study repeatedly discussed and referenced their recognition of systemic racial issues inherent in elementary education, the racial bias of standardized testing, and high-stakes testing (e.g., ACT, SAT). In addition, policy modification has been made to these institutions in changing how much they weigh

ACT/SAT testing in the enrollment process. This current study expands on research studies like Knoester and Au to include the acknowledgement of upper-level administrators' recognition of the existence of these features, such as standardized testing and segregation practices, in elementary educational systems.

In this current research study, administrators discussed systemic racism embedded within policies in their respective institutions that included marketing strategies that erased the existence of minorities at the institution, corralling of URM students into majors and restricting them through policy access to other majors. CRT implies that race should be the center of focus and charges researchers to critique school practices and policies that are both overtly and covertly racist (see DeCuir & Dixson, 2004). Based on the findings of the current study, it is implied that a growing number of institutions are using a CRT perspective in not only (a) employing administrators who are more aware of these systemic issues affecting racial minorities, but are also (b) using a CRT lens in revealing systemically flawed policies and practices within their own institution as a way of increasing racial diversity. The findings from the current study highlight the needs for continued research using a CRT lens in the field of policy evaluation at institutions of higher education.

Although it appears that the institutions used many strategies to increase the racial student diversity, this study revealed challenges experienced by administrators as agents of change at their respective institutions, and for some, as minority employees. An overabundance of evidence demonstrated that racism and all its manifestations are an integral part of workplace settings, especially at higher education institutions (see Essien, 2003; Moore, 2008; Wingfield & Alston, 2014). The findings from the current research

study supported this evidence where peers, faculty members, and university community presented biased viewpoints that included both subtle and blatant racism and standing against policy change. Zambrana et al. (2017) found that faculty members experienced blatant, outright, and insidious racism at colleges and universities, and the findings from this current research study supported and expanded that of Zambrana and colleges to understand that upper-level administrators are also victims of such behavior. Additionally, this current research study extends on the research from Zambrana et al. to include both overt and subtle forms of racism existing at both departmental and institutional levels not only among faculty, but also upper-level administrators.

Issues surrounding the employment of racial minorities included views from faculty, peers, and hiring committees as having biased viewpoints as well as discussions surrounding the credentials of URMs as not being meritous enough. This finding is noteworthy because it confirmed what critical race theorists described as the permanence of racism (e.g., Bell, 1992, 1995; Crenshaw, 1991; DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; Delgado & Stefancic, 2017, Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Soloranzo & Villalpando, 1998; Yosso, 2013). Furthermore, this finding is also noteworthy because it points to the continued cyclical pattern of systemic racism that CRT continuously highlights. Delgado and Stefancic (2017) explained:

> If racism is embedded in our thought processes and social structures as deeply as many critical race theorists believe, then the ordinary business of society in the routines, practices, and institutions that we rely on to do the world's work-will keep minorities in subordinate positions. (p. 27)

The findings from the current study also highlighted similar findings as Bona-Silva (2010) and Zambrana et al. (2017). These studies described that not only faculty but also administrators experience barriers to full inclusion within academic institutions and experience a variety of microaggressions, including implicit and explicit racism and discrimination, a sense of isolation, and a devaluing of their research. Robertson and Frier (as cited in Carter, 2011) argued that a commitment to diversity goes beyond just hiring minority faculty; they recognized that without a process that makes minority faculty feel valued for the contributions they can make to the campus community, "minority faculty members [will] become victims of revolving doors" (p. 69). This statement is important given that the findings from the current research study indicates that higher URM faculty and staff are more desirable to URM prospective students (i.e., people who look like them). Continued research to better understand the discriminatory practices experienced by URM administrators at their respective institutions could prove beneficial for increasing and retaining URM administrators and faculty. Additionally, administrators discussed that not having high rates of minority faculty and administrators is in and of itself challenging, because this often results in one individual within the department being the representative of racial diversity. This finding is important because not all minorities experience the same dimensions of discrimination.

The findings suggested that colleges and universities initially freely embraced a commitment to diversity. CRT would expose within the findings that institutions embraced this commitment to diversity; yet there is (a) continued devaluing of competency and merit of scholarship from African American and Latinx American populations, and (b) the lack of URMs representation in administrative, admissions, and

faculty positions at the institution and continued microaggressions that make URM administrators feel isolated. CRT theorist Crenshaw (1988) argued that everyday institutional practices embody White norms camouflaged by a stance of cultural neutrality presented by perspectivelessness. The implications of the findings demonstrate that the commitment to diversity alone will ensure that change at these institutions will not be sweeping or immediate. The commitment to equity may still be in the early stages at these institutions because it is unclear at what point this began within the institution. However, the implication of these findings highlights the lack of a commitment to equity, which at this point extends to hiring practices, and the subtle and overt forms of racism experienced by these minority administrators.

The institutions are increasingly creating the role of chief diversity officer (CDO) who works towards recognizing and changing the racialized policies that exist within the structure of the institutions. According to the study findings CDOs appeared to be one necessary tool in an attempt to change the permanence of racism (see Bell, 1992, 1995; Lawrence, 1995) within the institution. Given that the incorporation of the CDO was new to these institutions, these findings suggest the need for continued research regarding CDOs who have a direct input on human resource (HR) with regards to the hiring of faculty and staff. Furthermore, additional research is needed to explore the nature of the relationship between the CDOs and university presidents, and the association to faculty, staff, and administrative URM hires, as well as the specific discriminatory practices experienced by URM administrators at their respective institutions. Such research could prove beneficial for increasing and retaining URM administrators and faculty. Again, this is important, given that the findings from the current research study delineated that higher

number of URM faculty and staff are more desirable to URM prospective students (i.e., people who look like them).

Concern over retention of URM student populations. Lastly, in this research study I found that administrators had concerns over the retention of URM student populations. This finding is consistent with Minefee, Rabelo, Stewart, and Young (2018) who also found that administrators have concerns over retention of their URM student populations. Almost half of the administrators in the current study shared their concern over the retention of racial minorities, especially Black minorities in their institutions. All the participants who spoke to this theme were at institutions that utilized the process of lower/open enrollment. The use of lower/open enrollment is important because it was one of the holistic enrollment methods employed by the institutions espousing the highest rates of minority enrollment. The implication of this finding suggests that although these institutions have found a strategy that brings minorities to the table, they have the alternate problem of retaining their minority student population, especially African Americans. Administrators from all these institutions have discussed the beginning stages of working from an equity mindset as potential ways to remedy the problem of low African American enrollment.

Limitations

This qualitative case study had several limitations. First, in the current study I utilized purposive sampling of administrators in charge of campus diversification and focused on those institutions that have personnel in charge of either implementation or policy formation related to admissions. Given the fact that I utilized a nonprobability sampling approach and a small sample size, the findings are not generalizable to all

university administrators and university organizations (see Creswell, 2007, 2014). The attitude and opinions of the participants and the institutions they represent may not be representative of all colleges or universities, as each institution may have their own individual guidelines and goals, as well as laws that vary from state to state.

Second, some participants did not provide answers to some of the interview questions and may also be a limitation of the findings. Discussing issues related to race and diversity is a highly sensitive topic and given the positions of the participants, they might have been uncomfortable sharing their views, which may not have been in alignment with their respective institutions. As such, it is important to recognize that these participants may have provided socially desirable responses.

Finally, this study is also limited by the fact that the racial breakdown of the student population was not available by all participants during the interviews. I did not ask the study participants to have this information available as part of the interview and many of them did not know or readily have access to the racial breakdown of the student population.

Recommendations

There are several recommendations that can be made for further research. These recommendations centers around study design considerations. The first recommendation for future research is a quantitative study with a larger sample size. Due to some questions yielding more responses from admissions administrators and other questions generating more responses from CDOs, future studies should consist of university or college presidents as they may have greater awareness of admissions policy and development, as well as policies surrounding diversity. Additionally, the use of a

quantitative study design would also facilitate a better understanding of the various recruitment and admission strategies directed at increasing campus racial diversity. This design would generate a larger volume of responses and have the potential to recognize patterns of private and public institutions strategies that would be generalizable to other colleges and universities. An additional recommendation is for a future quantitative study which examines and assesses at institutional data. The use of a longitudinal research design to examine institutional policies, practices, and plans and the patterns of acceptance and retention of ethnic minority students is also recommended for future research.

Very little research exists regarding Indigenous/Native American populations and policies or recruitment tactics that are used to enhance their enrollment in institutions of higher learning. It is recommended that further research be conducted focusing on this minority group, especially because the current study found low numbers or a nonexistence of this minority group in institutions of higher education. Future research should also consider reviewing the specific diversity plans and policies that are in place at institutions of higher education. Strategies to employ could include a content analysis which would allow for information of both the (a) diversity policies and plans, and (b) equity policies and plans to be extracted in a more aggregated manner.

It is also recommended that a qualitative study on URM administrators of colleges and universities be conducted. Based on the findings of the current study there is a need for continued research to better understand the specific discriminatory practices experienced by URM administrators at their respective institutions, as this could prove beneficial for increasing and retaining URM administrators and faculty. The need to

explore the experiences of this group of minorities is important, given that the findings of the current study highlights the fact that a higher number of URM faculty and staff are more desirable to URM prospective students (i.e., people who look like them).

Implication for Social Change

The primary implications of social change for this study centers around changes in institutional policies that seem to be "color blind" or policies that are exclusionary (see Hiraldo, 2010, p. 56), and not realized in terms of the potential for future adverse impact on minorities. Hiraldo (2010) postulated, "colorblindness is a mechanism that allows people to ignore racist policies that perpetuate social inequity" (p. 56). Therefore, the findings from the current study have the potential to encourage colleges and universities to perform policy evaluations, which could allow their institutions to not only increase their racial and ethnic minority student enrollment, retention, and graduation rates, but also increase the inclusion of URM administrators and faculty.

The findings of this study could be transformative. More specifically, findings of this study could encourage institutions of higher education to consider training institutional agents connected to admissions on the importance of race and ethnicity in a manner that encourages, rather than discourages, policy and program applications. Such training would not only include clarifying the collective e□ort necessary to nurture a supportive learning environment in light of historical exclusion of racial minorities, but also enhancing these institutional agents' awareness about particular technologies of exclusion. For example, training problematizing the use of standardized test scores as a weighted admissions criterion could limit reductive conversations about students' abilities and help invite applications from increasingly racially and ethnically diverse

groups of students. Furthermore, given the findings of this study there is a need for racial sensitivity training, as well as a greater understanding of policy evaluation and the development of a stronger supporting role from college and university presidents as impactful in working to increase campus racial and ethnic diversity. Additionally, this study finding can be used to heighten awareness on the challenges institutions continue to face, even with the use of race-based and race-neutral policies. The results of this study also highlight the need for policy modification and the continuation of institutions to pursue ways to increase their racial and ethnic minority student population.

An additional social change implication of this study is that the findings have the potential to influence programming and policies that could lead to higher levels of acceptance and enrollment of racial and ethnic minority students at colleges and universities throughout the United States. The modification to and/or implementation of programming and policies has the potential to result in more racial and ethnic minority students having an opportunity to earn baccalaureate and graduate or professional degrees at a much higher rate than what exists.

Summary and Conclusion

There is a dearth of studies that have explored the experiences of college and university administrators in implementing the race-neutral and race-based policies and programs, as well as their perspectives on the outcome of these policies. Most of the studies conducted have examined the effects that affirmative action bans or the loss of race-conscious affirmative action policies have had on racial diversity on college campuses, or potentially could mean for the rest of the United States if race-neutral policies were employed. The purpose of this study was to explore the lived experiences

of college and university administrators with implementing race-neutral and race-conscious programs to ensure equal access to historically underrepresented racial and ethnic minority students. I developed two research questions as part of this study.

The first question asked: *What are college and university administrators' experiences with implementing programs to ensure equal access to historically underrepresented racial and ethnic minority students?* Administrators at colleges and universities showed a strong commitment to increasing their respective campuses' racial and ethnic diversity. These participants discussed using many race-based practices in the recruitment and admissions processes. Administrators discussed wanting to use race in the admissions process to increase racial diversity. Administrators in the current study also discussed the term affirmative action as being misunderstood.

These institutions used race-based admissions policies and practices, mostly in recruitment strategies and more loosely in the holistic enrollment/evaluation process. These institutions employed recruitment strategies that included: (a) a holistic evaluation process, consideration to race in GPA scores, (b) financial aid as well as scholarships that include race-based or heritage scholarships, (c) strategic alliances which includes mentorship programs and community based organizations, (d) targeted recruitment which includes using URMs in the recruitment process, and (e) institutions partnering with programs that aid in the recruitment of low SES and URM students which employ the use of a recruitment software tool or an applicant list.

In the current study, the administrators shared that their institutions were not impacted by changes to affirmative action policies because they still used race in their admissions, but not as a quota system. However, their respective institutions at some

point have created (a) diversity plans, guidebooks or initiatives, (b) positions for CDO, (c) embraced a sense of equity, and (d) begun using the essence of diversity at their institutions. In short, these institutions employed a variety of strategies that can be associated with CRT perspective at its essence, in improving their campus' racial/ethnic diversity composition. However, administrators felt that using race in the admittance of racial and ethnic minorities was still necessary.

The second question asked: *What are the effects of the restriction of race in the admissions criteria relating to the number of racial and ethnic minority students who are accepted and enrolled in colleges and universities?* In this study, I found that the administrators viewed racial diversity initiatives as a high priority, and a central dimension of their role and responsibilities; however, although the Latinx student enrollment is increasing at these institutions, the African American and Native/Indigenous American populations continue to lag. I also found that administrators did not see students as being impacted on campus when changes are made to affirmative action mandates. Participants reported student-related issues at their respective institutions, among them were students stress and Black students feeling disenfranchised.

Based on the data analysis, I also uncovered discussions surrounding institutional racism and discrimination at the participants' institutions. These issues were both embedded within the policies at the institutions and the experiences of URM administrators themselves with regards to barriers to full inclusion within their respective academic institutions and a variety of microaggressions, including implicit and explicit racism and discrimination, a sense of isolation, and a devaluing of URM research. Additionally, the retention of URM student populations concerned these administrators.

CRT was useful in exploring ways in which (a) the institutions have challenged and changed racist practices and policies, as well as (b) exposing the continued racial/racist issues at institutions of higher education. While CRT lens is a valuable tool to explore the lived experiences of administrators in charge of racial/ethnic minority enrollment, there is a need for additional information from other theoretical perspectives that facilitate an exploration of the experiences of administrators in other ways. Although the transdisciplinary goals of CRT explicitly support this kind of work, there is rarely any scholarship that incorporates other theoretical perspectives in concert with CRT (see Williams, Burnett, Carroll, & Harris, 2018). For example, additional insights could be uncovered if a motivational theoretical perspective/organizational change/organizational development framework is incorporated *with* CRT in the exploration of URM admissions standards, affirmative action policies, recruitment strategies, or policy modification. Applying new and appropriate theoretical perspectives to the study of (a) policy making and analysis, (b) recruitment strategies, and (c) equity analysis in the admittance and/or retention of racial minorities may lead to stronger scholarship with applicable implications.

In this study I aimed to provide college and university administrators in charge of campus diversity a voice in the discussion of the use of and constant changes to affirmative action policies. The administrators shared their lived experiences with developing policies and practices to help create racially diverse campus environments; their experiences revealed that affirmative action in higher education is a very difficult issue to navigate. Nonetheless, they all used a variety of strategies to ensure equal access to historically underrepresented racial and ethnic minority students without violating

federal affirmative action mandates. In the end, this study facilitated a greater understanding and appreciation of the challenges that college and university administrators experience with the development and implementation of policies ensuring racial diversity in institutions of higher learning.

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Appendix A: Screening Questions

1. Are you currently, or have you ever been an administrator at a US college/University?
    - Yes
    - No

2. Have you been in charge of/dealt with campus diversity/affirmative action initiatives?
    - Yes
    - No

3. How long have you been/were you in this position?
    _____ Years
    _____ Months

4. Are you aware of your institutions' history and current diversity initiatives and/or affirmative action policies?
    - Yes
    - No

5. What region of the country is your institution located?
    - Northeast
    - South
    - Mid-West
    - West

6. Does your institution have a history of using race as a factor in helping to increase campus racial diversity?
    - Yes
    - No

7. Has your institution had to undergo changes due to the evolving and continuous changes to affirmative action policies?
    - Yes
    - No

8. Is your institution Private or Public?
    - Private
    - Public

9. Are you female or male?
    - Male
    - Female

10. What is your Race/Ethnicity?
    - Asian/ Pacific Islander
    - Black/African-African
    - Native American
    - White/ European Descendant
    - Hispanic/Latino
    - Bi-Racial/Multiracial

Appendix B: Interview Guide

1. Can you describe the racial and ethnic makeup of your campus?
   Probe: What is the proportion of white? Black? Latino? Indigenous peoples?

2. Does your school use race as an admissions criterion? (If yes see probes below in addition to the rest of the questions)
   Probe: Has your institution undergone changes due to the evolving and continuous changes to affirmative action policies?
   Probe: Has using race as a factor been beneficial to increasing URM representation on campus? (later down use the same QUs-)
   Probe: Does your institution employ any other types of race-neutral policies?

3. Has your school had to change its admissions policies and criteria because of affirmative action laws/mandates that restrict the use of race in admission criteria?

4. What impact do you think that restriction of race in the admissions criteria has had on the racial and ethnic diversity of college and university campuses? **(If none, Skip Question 9)**
   Probe: Has the loss of using race as a criterion impacted the minority student enrollment?
   Probe: Over your time at the institution how have the racial composition of campus changed?
   Probe: Is there a specific racial demographic at your campus that has been a struggle to increase? How have you dealt with this?

5. What was involved in changing admissions policies and criteria to ensure equal access to racial and ethnic minority students?

6. How did your university policies change when states have banned using race as a factor?

7. How did your university policies change when new court mandates have changed previous rulings on using race as an admission criterion?

8. How has your institution dealt with these challenges?

9. What (if any race-neutral) strategies has your university used to address any decrease in racial and ethnic minority students as a result of changes in race-based affirmative action?

Probe: Does your institution utilize class-based affirmative action programs? How well has that strategy worked to increase racial/ethnic minority campus presence?

Probe: Does your institution partner with, or fund any programs that try to target racial minorities? Which ones do you use? How well has that strategy worked (or how successful has this strategy been) to increase racial/ethnic minority campus presence?

Probe: Does your institution provide scholarships or financial aid waivers (provided directly by the university/college)? How well has that strategy worked to increase racial/ethnic minority campus presence?

Probe: Does your institution utilize percentage plans? How well has that strategy worked to increase racial/ethnic minority campus presence?

Probe: Does your institution utilize targeted recruitment?

Probe: Are there any other strategies that your institution uses or has used to ensure equal access to historically underrepresented racial and ethnic minority students? How well has that strategy worked to increase racial/ethnic minority campus presence?

10. What are your perspectives on the need for the continued use of race-based affirmative action?
    Probe: Do you still think that it is needed?
    Probe: What do you think would happen if affirmative action was still not in place?

11. Do you feel that there are any particular program or policy that are better suited for increasing minority representations on campus?

12. When judicial changes occur or changes through state referendum, are you aware of any significant stressors on the department?
    Probe: Are you aware of any significant stressors on the institution?

    Probe: Are you aware of any significant stressors on the employees?

    Probe: Are you aware of any significant stressors on the student body?

13. What impact do you think that restriction of race in the admissions criteria had on race and ethnic relations among students on college and university campus?
    Probe: Is/has there been any repercussions or reactions from student populations for not using race as a factor?
    Probe: Is/has there been repercussions or reactions from student populations at your institutions for using race as a factor?

14. Has there been student-related issue due to the usage of various race-neutral strategies that your institution has tried to employ either in the past or present?

15. What impact do you think restriction of race had on the attitudes and beliefs of administrators in charge of college diversity?
    Probe: Are you aware of any workload increase to the admissions department or any other departments?

16. Is there anything else you would like to add to the discussion?

Appendix C: Recruitment Letter

Dear [Insert Name of Participant],

My name is Terry Hogan and I am a doctoral student at Walden University. I am writing to let you know about an opportunity to participate in an exciting research study about the experiences of college and university administrators' implementation of policies in their admissions criteria to ensure equal access of racial and ethnic minority groups to institutions of higher learning.

You were identified in a LinkedIn group as either an administrator in charge of campus diversity or as a Chief Diversity Officer at an institution of higher education. As such, I am inviting you to participate in this study and would be honored if you chose to do so.

Participation in this study will involve an interview that is conducted either face-to face, skype, or phone for approximately 60-minutes based on your availability and preferences.

There are no direct benefits to you as a participant in this study and you will not be compensated for your participation in this study. However, there are some potential benefits to students, other administrators and institutions of higher education. The findings may have the potential to influence programming and policies that will lead to higher levels of acceptance and enrollment of racial and ethnic minority students at colleges and universities throughout the United States.

If you would like to participate or have any questions about the study, please email or contact me at thoga001@waldenu.edu or 630-715-7190.

Thank you very much for considering this research opportunity.

Sincerely,

Terry Hogan