

GADDY, MAREK D. Ed.D. Achieving authentic diversity: Addressing African American faculty misrepresentation in kinesiology programs. (2024)  
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The field of Kinesiology has grown over the centuries from a discipline primarily focused on sport to one that includes a more scientific focus, leading to an increase in scholarship and research. This study provides an overview of Kinesiology's history, highlighting the connection between African and the Greek Philosophers that paved the way for the discipline. It highlights past African American Kinesiology professionals that made substantive contributions, which has been absent in past discussions on Kinesiology's history. Due to this historical erasure of minority voices and their contributions in Kinesiology, this paper amplifies past and current African Americans within the discipline, rectifying a wrong that has been perpetually done in research.

Using a narrative inquiry approach influenced by Intersectionality Theory and Occupational Socialization Theory, this study reveals the lived experiences of six African American faculty within Kinesiology programs at Predominantly White Institutions (PWI's) and insight into how Kinesiology programs at PWI's can support African American professionals. Interviews were conducted to learn how they were socialized into Kinesiology and their experiences as an African American professional in White spaces. The participants shared their experiences through personal stories and sharing artifacts in the form of pictures, books, and songs. The interviews were transcribed with the creation of subsequent notes from the data, which provided three themes and tangible strategies to help support current African American faculty within Kinesiology programs at PWIs.

The three themes surfaced from the interviews surrounding their personal and professional experiences: Kinesiological ambiguity, inequitable and retaliatory environments, and a lack of support for African American faculty members. Through the application of

Intersectionality Theory, instances of marginalization in the form of retaliations, heavier workload, inequitable student evaluations, perceived incompetence, and a general lack of support for the scholarship of Black female faculty members were revealed. The strategies shared by the participants centered around the need for an intentional mentoring framework for African American professionals, evaluating hiring, promotion, and tenure policies as well as implementing cultural/racial bias training for faculty and staff.

ACHIEVING AUTHENTIC DIVERSITY: ADDRESSING AFRICAN  
AMERICAN FACULTY MISREPRESENTATION  
IN KINESIOLOGY PROGRAMS

by

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## DEDICATION

I stand on the shoulders of so many family members whose sacrifices paved the way for me to get to this stage of my life. From my great-great grandparents who survived slavery to become a blacksmith and a sewist, to my great grandparents who were sharecroppers in Anson County, North Carolina, I come from a line of industrious and resilient people. I dedicate this work to past and current family members as a token of my gratitude and an ongoing sign that their sacrifices were not in vain, as I am the first member of my family to earn a Doctoral degree.

I dedicate this work to my wife Crystal, who has been supportive of my educational and professional aspirations throughout this journey. I also thank my kids Maison, Maliyah & Christian for their own sacrifices, as there were days and nights where I had to focus on completing assignments and working late hours to ensure our financial stability.

APPROVAL PAGE

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## CHAPTER I: PROJECT OVERVIEW

Since the 1960's, institutions have progressed through four stages of diversity and multiculturalism: representation, support, integration, and multiculturalism (Levine, 1991; Brooks et al., 2013). The first two stages, representation and support, focused on bringing more underrepresented groups onto campus and adding academic programming and support targeted towards minorities. By the 1990's, many institutions began to embrace the minoritized groups on campus by making genuine attempts at creating a multicultural community where their input and contributions were valued. From 1976 to 1999, enrollment numbers for minority students increased by 137%, while white students' enrollment increased by 13% (Anderson, E.L. (2003); Lowrie & Robinson, 2013); much of the enrollment increase can be attributed to the creation of pipeline programs at many institutions.

The creation of pipeline and mentoring programs has played a pivotal role in ethnically and socioeconomically diversifying programs, especially within the Allied Health and STEM disciplines. Pipeline programs such as the Rural Minority Scholars Program (RMSP) and the Maternal and Child Health (MCH) program have increased the minority student representation within Allied Health programs (Holley, 2013; Belcher, et al., 2022). In STEM, several programs have been effective at increasing minority student representation in past years: Minorities Opportunities in Research (MORE), STEM Undergraduate Summer Research Experience (SURE), Meyerhoff and the Fisk-Vanderbilt Masters to PhD. Program (Hrabowski & Maton, 1995; Slovacek et al., 2012; Stassun et al., 2010; Maton et al., 2016; Brown, et al., 2020).

Within Kinesiology, several pipeline programs were created to address the lack of minority student representation, as overviewed in Gregory-Bass and associates (2013). Many of these programs have experienced individual success, but as a discipline, Kinesiology still lacks

substantive minority representation. In 2007, there were 218 doctoral degrees conferred, with minorities making up 14.7% of the recipients; in the same year, minorities comprised of 20% and 15.8% of the master's and bachelor's degrees awarded, respectively (Snyder et al., 2009; Lowrie & Robinson, 2013). In 2019, ethnic minority students comprised of 35% of the U.S. student population and it is predicted to exceed 50% by the year 2050 (Simon & Azzarito, 2019a). Student enrollments experienced a rebound after the COVID-19 pandemic, with a 1.2% increase during the fall 2023 semester; most minority groups experienced increases, while white student enrollment decreased by 2% (*Current term enrollment estimates 2024*).

From 2010 and 2021, overall student enrollment trends have shown a consistent flow of minority students and a decrease in White students from 43% to 38% (National Center for Education Statistics, 2023a). The report showed that African American student enrollment saw a marginal decrease from 2010 to 2021 from 38% to 37%. When the report discussed gender trends, African American male enrollment decreased from 35% to 31% and female enrollment increased from 41% to 42%. Between 2010 and 2021, undergraduate student enrollment decreased, with a 27% and 28% decline in African American and white student, respectively (National Center for Education Statistics, 2023b). African American graduate student enrollment has increased by 6% since 2010, while white graduate student enrollment has decreased by 9% during the same period (National Center for Education Statistics, 2023c). Although it is encouraging to see that minority students are enrolling into higher education institutions, the faculties at many of those same institutions do not mirror the same degree of ethnic or gender diversity.

Black faculty rates have experienced marginal improvements since 2007, where African Americans comprised of 5.4% of the full-time faculty population in higher education (Hodge &

Corbett, 2013). However, African American faculty rates increased by 2% during the 2009 academic year, where many of the Black faculty members were employed at 2-year institutions or Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU's) (Hodge & Wiggins, 2010; Hodge & Corbett, 2013). In 2020, a study was conducted by Graber and associates (2020), reporting that out of 230 colleges that represented forty-nine of the fifty states, only 4% of the faculty across academia were African American, indicating a notable decrease in diversity when compared to rates reported in earlier research (Hodge & Wiggins, 2010; Hodge & Corbett, 2013). The lack of diversity in academia is reflected within the demographic makeup of Kinesiology faculties, as 88% of Physical Education faculty in the U.S. are white (Simon & Boyd, 2021). Addressing the lack of faculty diversity within Kinesiology programs is a vital task to ensure that it remains in congruence with the level of diversity found within the student population at institutions. Far too often, minority students walk into Kinesiology programs where they rarely interact with a faculty member who shares their ethnic or gender identity, thereby stifling their experience within the discipline. To address this problem, my research will capture the lived testimonies of current African American faculty members in Kinesiology programs to learn about their graduate experiences and use their recommendations as a springboard to develop effective and sustainable solutions to improve diversity representation in Kinesiology.

## **Relevant Literature**

### ***Historical Overview of Kinesiology***

Traditionally, most conversations on the origin of Kinesiology center around classical Greek philosophers such as Hippocrates, Aristotle, and Plato, but its inception can be traced centuries prior in the sub-Saharan areas of Africa. Although these philosophers made major contributions to the evolution of Kinesiology, we would be remiss to omit the impact that

African society had on Kinesiology's foundation. Much of ancient Egyptian history has been passed down through oral tradition and past researchers have had to rely upon subsequent writings that were influenced by some of the earliest Egyptian philosophers, such as Imhotep (Graness, 2016). Past research has provided evidence that some of the classical Greek Philosophers studied in Africa and their interactions with African philosophers and scientists helped them develop the theories and philosophies that are often discussed when reflecting on their impact on Kinesiology (Lefkowitz, 1998).

The Egyptian philosophical concept of Ma'at, which is underpinned by the tenets of truth, justice, order, and cosmic balance is a foundational part of the early philosophy practiced in Egypt (Baines, *Sources and limitations of ancient and modern knowledge*). In ancient Egypt, Ma'at was a goddess who is depicted as a winged woman who holds a feather, which symbolizes the balance that must be obtained to determine a person's moral worth (Mark, 2023). Many Greek philosophical concepts mirrored the concept of Ma'at as seen in the tenets of Eudaimonia, Kosmos and Sophrosyne. The concept of Eudaimonia was posited by Plato and Aristotle, defined as human flourishing through the practices of virtuous actions, which leads to a virtuous life (Duignan, 2023). Greek philosopher Pythagoras and other philosophers who ascribed to Neoplatonic thoughts ascribed to the concept of Kosmos, which dealt with the role that cosmic order plays natural order of the universe (Gregersen, 2023). According to Aristotle, the tenet of Sophrosyne describes a person who practices self-control and can abstain or indulge in various appetites without exerting extreme effort (Encyclopædia Britannica, *Sōphrosynē*). The parallels between Egyptian and Greek philosophical tenets can be explained by the interactions that occurred between both cultures by the great thinkers in their respective histories.

Greek philosophers such as Plato and Pythagoras spent a significant amount of time learning various mathematical, scientific, and philosophical concepts from Egyptian priests, whose knowledge predates classical Greek philosophy (Guthrie, 1960). Historical reports have shown that basic and advanced mathematical processes such as counting, weighing, and measuring originated in Africa over 20,000 years before the earliest Greek Philosophers (Rambane, 2007). In 1950, archeologists found the Ishango Bone in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which was used for counting prime numbers, as well as a lunar calendar for women to track their fertility (Rambane, 2007). The mutual relationship between ancient African and Greek pioneers played a vital role in the birth of Kinesiology as a discipline. By highlighting this relationship, we can mitigate the perpetual erasure of other cultures from any discourse. If we continue to ignore the influence of Africans in the development of our discipline, we will be doing a disservice to current and future Kinesiologists by blocking a key part of history from entering this space.

### ***Kinesiology in the 19<sup>th</sup> and Early 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries***

Before the 19th century, past cultures emphasized physical education, focusing on physical activity for religious, military, or vocational purposes. Kinesiology as a discipline was birthed from the earlier African and Greek philosophies in the 19th century, experiencing exponential growth in its impact on academic scholarship through the creation of academic journals and professional organizations during this period. In addition to the growth of scientific research in the 1800s, the first reported instance of African American faculty representation occurred in 1855 through the hiring of Aaron Molyneux Hewlett as the director of physical education and culture at Harvard in the free state of Massachusetts (Wiggins & Wiggins, 2011). During this time in American history, the country was on the heels of the passing of the Kansas-

Nebraska Act in 1854, allowing newly acquired territories to choose their stance on slavery. He was the first African American to hold a faculty position at a PWI in the discipline and it would be 79 years after Hewlett's death in 1871 for another African American, Roscoe Brown, to hold a full-time Kinesiology faculty position at New York University in 1950. Although Kinesiology went through significant growth in this period, it was not without its own set of issues surrounding race. In the early 1900s, African Americans were unable to join many of the professional organizations that were created; one clear example is the case of the American Academy of Physical Education (AAPE).

The AAPE was established in 1926 and aimed to advance knowledge, uplift standards, and bestow honor in physical education, health education, and recreation (Nash, 1946). However, the AAPE did not induct its first African American fellow until the selection of John Mitchem in 1973, and then it took another 26 years until Dana Brooks was inducted in 1999 (Gill, 2022). The noticeable lack of African American fellows in the first 47 years of AAPE's existence conveniently coincides with the rampant segregation, racism, and Jim Crow laws that were pervasive in the United States at that time. In addition, the induction of Mitchem in 1973 came only a few years after the apex of the Civil Rights Movement, where integration in many aspects of American life was spreading, including the academy. Since 1999, six African American faculty members have been inducted as fellows: Louis Harrison Jr., Michael Brown, Samuel Hodge, Ketra Armstrong, NiCole Keith and Leah Robinson. Throughout the 20th century, African American professionals in the discipline did not sit idly by amid the marginalization within Kinesiology. Due to the Jim Crow segregation at most PWIs in the 20th century, most African Americans who worked in the discipline worked at HBCU's.

### *African American Pioneers in Kinesiology*

Anita J. Turner was a pivotal figure in the advancement of the discipline among African Americans. She was appointed as an elementary school teacher in the segregated Washington, D.C. public school system in 1891 and promoted as the teacher of physical culture in the Black elementary schools in 1893 (Coursey, 1974). During her tenure as a teacher of physical culture, she was instrumental in exposing Black girls to the newly created sport of basketball and by 1902, was named the Assistant Director of Physical Education for the school system. As a graduate of the Dudley Sargeant's Summer School, the preeminent training program for Physical Educators at the time, she used the training to revolutionize how Physical Education is delivered, especially within Black schools. She made contributions to the Physical Education curriculum by using various games, dances, and activities that met the interests of the students, which was radical when compared to the rigid curriculum used in Physical Education in her era (Clark et al., 2020). This curricular change was important due to its ability to allow students to learn skills, knowledge and attitudes that could be applicable to all areas of a person's life, which was a novel idea in this era of education (Coursey, 1974). She spent her career as a staunch supporter of equity within the discipline and served as a mentor for aspiring African Americans, such as Edwin Bancroft Henderson.

Edwin Bancroft Henderson is often coined as the "Father of Black basketball" due to his role in exposing young black men in the Washington, D.C. public schools to the sport, which was likely influenced by the example previously set by his mentor, Anita J. Turner. Henderson was a well accomplished scholar, social activist and sports historian who made significant contributions to Kinesiology. Due to the intentional exclusion of African American professionals within the organizations of his day, Henderson was forced to create professional spaces for

people of color within Kinesiology (Smith & Jamieson, 2017) and he created two organizations that served this purpose: the Interscholastic Athletic Association of the Middle Atlantic States and the Public-School Athletic League. Henderson's social activism was focused on addressing racial discrimination, as he was instrumental in the creation of an American Alliance of Health, Physical Education and Recreation (AAPHER) chapter for African Americans in Washington, D.C., aiming to create a professional space where scholarship would be shared and respected. Henderson was also actively involved with his local NAACP Chapter and local organizations such as the Citizen's Committee Against Segregation in Recreation (CASR) that fought to end racial discrimination in recreation facilities in the nation's capital (Wiggins, 1999). Henderson's literary contributions to Kinesiology sought to debunk the prevailing thought that is credited as being a predecessor for the Sports Education curricular model (Clark et al., 2020). African Americans were biologically superior in athletics and purported that sport can be used to address the racial division that exists in America. He also made scholarly contributions by publishing a comprehensive history of Black athletes in 1939 and was the first certified Black physical educator in the country (Clark et al., 2020).

Lavonia Allison's impact on Kinesiology was at the institutional level, but significant, nonetheless. Allison served as a faculty member at North Carolina Central University from 1960-1974 and created major clubs that could help provide students with access to professional resources and the development of networks within Kinesiology (Clark et al., 2020). The development of major clubs set the stage to encourage student involvement in NC-AAPHERD (currently known as NC SHAPE) in 1962; this was particularly important during her tenure, as the state-level organization was segregated. Allison's scholarship was focused on highlighting the racial inequities within Kinesiology and providing strategies that can address these issues



within the physical education setting. Her research, as well as her involvement in AAPHER, enabled her to contribute to significant curricular change within Kinesiology, providing the conceptual foundation for a variety of current pedagogical approaches in Physical Education (Clark et al., 2020).

AAPHER made progress in the integration of its organization in 1965, but southern chapters such as North Carolina's were resistant to this change. Dr. Leroy Walker was critical in the integration of national and state-level professional organizations, as he served as the first Black president of AAPHER and the first Black head coach of the United States Olympic track and field team (Clark et al., 2020). During this period, Dr. Walker also served as a faculty member and eventual chancellor at North Carolina Central University, serving as the Vice-President of Physical Education within North Carolina's AAPHER chapter in 1966 (Smith & Jamieson, 2017). The arduous work that was done to integrate professional organizations within the field was vital in providing networking, professional development, and scholarship opportunities to African American Kinesiology professionals, which had been denied for decades.

Although these trailblazers made significant and long-lasting contributions to Kinesiology, their voices continue to be muted within the discipline through their erasure from prestigious accolades that many other white professionals receive with far less substantive impact on the field. The National Academy of Kinesiology (NAK), that was founded in 1926, has yet to induct Henderson, Turner, Allison, or Walker as fellows, even though many of them held positions and offices within NAK in their careers (Gill, 2022). This intentional marginalization of African Americans within Kinesiology has cast a shadow on past efforts to

achieve authentic diversity, weakening its impact and sending a clear message to current and future African Americans about their place within the discipline.

### ***Current African American Faculty Trends in Kinesiology***

In line with the evolution of Kinesiology over the centuries, Kinesiology programs are defined as those that house any of the following sub-disciplines: Public Health, Athletic Training, Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Physical Education, Exercise Psychology, Biomechanics, Exercise Physiology, or Sport Management. Although African Americans comprise 13.2% of the population in the US, they only make up 6% of the full-time instructional faculty population at degree-granting institutions nationwide (Russell et al., 2019). Most African American Kinesiology faculty members were employed at HBCU's in decades past and this trend has remained constant. DiGiacinto (2016) reported that 61% of the instructional faculty members at HBCUs were African American, while at PWI's African Americans made up 3.8% of their faculties. For this study, a PWI is defined as an institution where Whites account for at least 50% of the student population (Lomotey, 2010).

To address the lack of African American faculty at PWIs, some authors (Hodge & Corbett, 2013; Russell, 2019) have provided recommendations that institutions can implement, and time will tell if those strategies lead to increases in representation. The recommendations provided in both articles centered around making a tangible commitment to diversity through focused financial investment, intentional strategic goals regarding diversity, evaluating hiring procedures and committing to substantive changes in institutional climate and culture (Hodge & Corbett, 2013; Russell, 2019).

Auburn University is one example of an institution that has adopted these recommendations and has seen remarkable success through all levels of the institution (Russell,

2019). Although Auburn has made great strides in becoming more ethnically diverse throughout the institution, I would be remiss to acknowledge that they still experience backlash from their community and past racial incidents that have occurred on their campus by student organizations. In addition to those incidents, Russell (2019) acknowledged that the impetus that sparked the interest in making these changes was from student protests in 2015 at the University of Missouri, which could put into question Auburn's initial sincerity behind becoming more inclusive and diverse. Auburn and many other institutions have made great strides in making cultural change in masse, but the experiences of the Black men and women remain a mystery.

### ***Intersectionality Theory***

Kimberle Crenshaw (1991) is credited as the creator of Intersectionality Theory (IT) after the release of her seminal article, but its roots can be traced back to a wide variety of past researchers, artists, and activists in decades past. From Sojourner Truth's "Ain't I a woman" speech in 1851 to Frances Beal's 1969 essay, "Double jeopardy: To be Black and female," Black feminists have played a vital role in the evolution of intersectionality (Hester, 2020). Crenshaw's motivation to posit IT was fueled by the shortcomings of the second wave of feminism that spread across American culture from the 1960's through the 1980's. The second wave of feminism focused on issues such as gender inequality, reproductive rights, and workplace discrimination, yet one its major criticisms was that it viewed inequality from a myopic perspective. Crenshaw summed up the shortcomings of the second wave, stating that "feminist efforts to politicize experiences of people of color have frequently proceeded as though the issues and experiences they each detail occur on mutually exclusive terrains" (Crenshaw, 1991).

Many contemporary Black feminists, including Crenshaw, felt that this mutual exclusivity was due to the movement's inherent focus on the experiences of middle-aged white

women, which resulted in the marginalization of Black women (Runyan, 2018). IT is built upon the idea that systemic inequity never has a singular causative factor but is due to a set of factors that play a role in reinforcing those inequities (Dagkas, 2016). Humans have a variety of social identities (race, gender, class, sexuality, etc.) and IT provides a vehicle for those identities to overlap and fully capture the human experience. By allowing those identities to traverse in a person's story, we can analyze the multilayered nature of inequity within our society.

Researchers have explored the experiences of Kinesiology faculty through the lens of IT, particularly with female athletic directors at the college level. McDowell and Francique (2017) interviewed six African American female athletic directors, asking them to reflect on their experiences through the lens of gender, race, and class at both PWI's and HBCU's. The participants shared their experiences around occupational, racial and gender stereotyping, various career barriers and overall criticism and unfair scrutiny. The women in the study discussed how they experienced occupational stereotyping in the form of overt conversations and different treatment because they were in professional roles that were incongruent with the prototypical image of an Athletic Director at their institutions (McDowell & Carter-Francique, 2017). They experienced racial and gender stereotyping in their struggle to dispel and cope with the "angry, Black female" stereotype that often is associated with Black women who are considered aggressive or arrogant by others; this was in addition to the gender stereotyping they experienced when people assumed that they were only in their Athletic Director role due to affirmative action. Through the existence of "good old boy" networks, sexism, and the unwarranted criticisms of their abilities and decisions, the women in the study shared their plight as leaders within their institutions and these issues were rampant between both PWI's and HBCU's.

A later study conducted by Welch and associates (2021) focused on female Athletic Directors from various ethnic groups (African American, Asian, and Latino) and the study echoed some of the findings from McDowell and Carter-Francique's article (2017), particularly regarding the constant questioning of their competence. The Welch study (2021) provided insight into the importance of professional support for minority women in the form of mentorship to help combat gender and racial inequity.

This study will help to explore the experiences of African American faculty members, therefore creating a new voice and an opportunity to deepen our understanding of how factors such as race and gender can all shape a person's experiences within the discipline. Application of IT will provide insight on how gender and race have informed the participants' personal and professional experiences, which may potentially uncover systemic practices that negatively impact their experiences. Past application of IT has highlighted the experiences of Black women in leadership roles in collegiate athletics and this study aims to examine the experiences of African Americans through the intersection of race and gender in Kinesiology academic programs.

### ***Occupational Socialization***

Occupational socialization theory (OST) is a framework that examines how a professional is recruited, prepared, and socialized into the discipline (Pennington, 2021). According to OST, individuals progress through three phases of socialization: acculturation, professional socialization, and organizational socialization. The acculturation phase represents a period where an individual learns about the discipline from teachers, coaches, or other influential persons, focusing on a person's childhood or grade school experiences. The professional socialization phase is where a professional begins their Kinesiology program of choice, typically

involving a person's collegiate experience. The third phase, organizational socialization, captures the experiences of recent graduates and the beginning of their professional careers. In relation to this study, the purpose of applying OST is to provide insight into the pathways that African Americans navigate when entering and moving through the discipline.

According to Hodge and Corbett (2013), OST is built upon basic assumptions when a person is progressing through the phases of socialization. It presupposes that the organization plays an influential role in the socialization process for a new member and the individual adjusting to the new position will respond to the knowledge, strategies, and mission of the role in three ways: custodianship, content innovation, and role innovation. Custodianship is a common behavior where a new member maintains the status quo, making no attempts to change the culture or structure of the organization. Content innovation is where a new member looks to make changes while maintaining the organizational mission. Role innovation is the last step where a new member seeks to change the knowledge, mission, and roles of an organization with the hopes of changing the organizational culture. Although this article outlines the socialization process that minority faculty members experience in academia, it lacks the lived experiences of minority faculty, which could serve as a litmus test for their respective institution's progress in developing an inclusive culture.

When looking at OST within the context of ethnic/gender minorities enrolling or working at PWIs, the well-entrenched traditions and practices of the majority group (in this case, White professionals) can serve as a deterrent for minorities to pursue organizational changes, thereby stifling socialization. Some of the most common forms of these Euro-American hegemonic traditions may include curriculum bias, inequitable admissions practices, Eurocentric cultural norms on campus, or the underemphasis of non-traditional or minoritized epistemologies

(Ladson-Billings, 2000; Villalpando & Delgado Bernal, 2002). These practices are the product of systemic privilege, power and prestige that are imbedded within the culture of many higher educational institutions. Many PWI's have implemented a variety of diversity initiatives to address their lack of ethnic representation yet struggle with successfully recruiting and retaining minority faculty. Lowrie & Robinson (2013) shared how PWI's will fail to experience success in recruiting and retaining minority faculty until they recognize their culpability in reinforcing policies and practices that are centered on the dominant group (i.e., white faculty) at their institution. Some of the practices that are often found within PWI's include blatant exclusivity from leadership roles within the institution, a willingness to only address diversity-related issues on their own terms, implicitly mandating assimilation from currently employed minority faculty or the practice of tokenism in personnel decisions (Lowrie & Robinson, 2013).

Along with these ingrained practices within many PWI's, the banning of Affirmative Action concerning higher education admissions will have an impact on ensuring that minority students are provided an equitable opportunity to enrollment at various institutions. In addition to the Supreme Court declaring that race-based admission programs at Harvard and the University of North Carolina as unconstitutional, nine other states have already banned Affirmative Action in their public institutions: many of those institutions reporting a decline in minority admissions at some universities (Liu, 2023). Although the same has not been directly implied regarding its implications on recruiting and retaining minority faculty, it will set the stage for changes to Title VII, which specifically covers workplace discrimination (Burnett et al., 2023). In the big picture, the potential decrease in minority enrollment due to these changes may have a precipitous impact on the pool of future minority faculty members in higher education.

Early research conducted by Hodge and Stroot (1997) sought to discover the perceived barriers and support structures for African American and White physical educators. Results showed that both ethnic groups shared similar barriers before beginning a graduate degree program such as funding for tuition/fees, personal financial obligations, and the ability to succeed in the academic program. However, African American respondents differed with their testimonies revealing the following: the inability to receive instruction from an African American professor, limited social opportunities with other African Americans, leaving their church, adjusting to a different weather climate, and limited opportunities for mentoring from other African American colleagues, peers, or professors. Although many institutions have used Affirmative Action policies to guide their college admissions and faculty hiring processes for decades, the study suggests that simply bringing in more ethnic minorities into a predominantly white space without making systemic cultural changes may reinforce previously ingrained barriers. These perceived barriers shared by the minority respondents underscore the need for PWIs to recruit and retain minority faculty. The recent striking down of Affirmative Action in college admissions in 2023 may have future impact on hiring policies, which necessitates that institutions that prioritize diversity reimagine their approach.

These issues regarding barriers for African American faculty in Kinesiology were reinforced through research conducted by Burden and associates (2005). Nine tenure-track African American professors participated in the qualitative study that found four noteworthy themes after conducting interviews. The first theme shared by the respondents was the perceptions regarding the availability of resources, opportunities for professional growth, and their White colleagues' power. Due to the impact of their white colleagues' influence in faculty hires, faculty assignments, course loads, and the promotion/tenure process, the respondents felt



that they were not able to control their professional trajectory. The second theme dealt with the perception that there was programmatic neglect in recruiting/retaining African American faculty and students to the program. Participants shared that they felt that the diversity efforts of their institution were disingenuous because any efforts to diversify their programs coincided with institutional evaluations or programmatic accreditations, in addition to a reluctance to diversify curricular offerings and pedagogies.

In addition to programmatic challenges in the first two themes, Burden and his colleagues (2005) discussed two themes centered on the participants' social experiences. The third theme surrounded respondents' feelings of social isolation, disengagement, and intellectual inferiority. The participants described their work environments as "chilly" in nature due to the perceived disingenuity of their white counterparts and experiences with being excluded from departmental information and decision making. The fourth theme dealt with the perceived double standards, marginalization, and scholarship biases reported by the African American faculty. Participants shared that due to an absence of senior level African American faculty members serving on promotion and tenure committees led to a fear that their research would be perceived as "pulling the race card" if it didn't fall in line with the traditional, Eurocentric paradigms in research. Overall, this study provided a glimpse into the socialization experiences of African American faculty members, but it only focused on their organizational socialization into Kinesiology and the experiences of professional track African American faculty were not captured in this study.

In conclusion, past research that employed OST as a theoretical lens has provided a snapshot of the socialization experiences of African American faculty members in Kinesiology. Challenges surrounding marginalization, lack of financial investment and social isolation were discussed, as well as a set of strategies that can potentially improve the organizational and

departmental culture at the institution. OST will be used in this study to provide insight into the socialization process for African American faculty members from their initial exposure to the field (Acculturation), undergraduate and graduate school experiences within Kinesiology (Professional Socialization), and their current experiences as professionals within Kinesiology programs (Organizational Socialization). Socialization experiences can be impacted by a variety of factors such as race and gender, which necessitates that IT is paired with OST to illuminate the unique experiences of African American men and women within the discipline. Highlighting the importance of this relationship through the lens of IT has proved to be effective within Kinesiology research by discovering the subtle nuances that can impact a person's experiences and potentially unearth specific challenges or strategies that can impact faculty experiences (McDowell & Carter-Francique, 2017).

### ***Purpose and Aims***

The purpose of this study is to describe the experiences of African American faculty in Kinesiology programs at PWI's, inspired by Occupational Socialization and Intersectionality Theory, and it has two aims:

AIM #1: Uncover the personal, academic, and professional experiences of African American Kinesiology faculty members.

AIM #2: Provide Predominantly White Institutions a set of actionable strategies that can help further support current African American faculty members in their respective Kinesiology programs.

## **Methods**

### ***Methodological Approach/Rationale***

This study used a narrative approach, which Creswell (2007) defines as a design where the “narrative is understood as a spoken or written text giving an account of an event/action or series of events/actions, chronologically connected” (p.54). The narrative approach allowed me to capture the detailed stories of the participants and discover emerging themes from their experiences. Within Kinesiology, researchers have used this approach when uncovering the stories of African American female faculty members (Blackshear, 2022a; Blackshear & Hollis, 2021; Simon & Boyd, 2021; Simon & Azzarito, 2019a). The study aims to garner the narratives of African American males and females, specifically from those who either currently or previously worked at a PWI. Focusing on the participants’ experiences in Kinesiology departments at PWI’s will allow me to take the findings of the study and make them more applicable to other PWI’s. Although the experiences of African American faculty at HBCU’s are valued and important, the cultural and social experiences found there are often unique and not often found at PWI’s.

### ***Researcher Positionality***

I am an African American faculty member within the Health and Physical Education program at a community college in North Carolina and have worked in settings where the institution was extremely diverse and others where I was the only African American faculty member. Although I have experienced varying degrees of marginalization in my professional career, my past educational experiences have informed my worldview, due to the varying levels of ethnic diversity in those schools. I attended schools that were predominantly Black and predominantly white from elementary school through college. In my professional career, I have

had experiences surrounding race that have taught me how to navigate predominantly white spaces.

In addition to the benefits of having a diverse educational experience, I have also had negative experiences that are in line with some of the experiences shared in past research on this topic. During my professional career in higher education, I have experienced the social isolation that others have stated in past research. I have also witnessed the impact that gender bias has on African American female colleagues that falls in line with past research's findings on the unique marginalization of women in academia. My experiences could put me at risk of confirmation bias, due to having shared experiences with participants.

### ***Participants***

Purposeful sampling was used to create a pool of 50 faculty members for this study, allowing me to select candidates who would fit the ethnic and gender criteria of this study. The candidates in this study were faculty members who identified as African American and worked in the Kinesiology department of their respective PWI, representing an array of position ranks (i.e., Associate Professor, Assistant Professor, or Professor) and statuses (professional track or tenure track). The email addresses of the candidates were ascertained through networking at professional conferences, using public internet searches or through institutional faculty directories. Of the initial 50 candidates, 16 responded to the email inquiry and 6 verbally committed to participating in the study. It should be noted that the 10 who declined to participate in the study were supportive of the research being conducted and had prior commitments that would prevent them from being an asset to the study.

A formal recruitment email was sent to the six participants detailing the purpose of the study, my motivation for their selection, consent instructions, and it provided an opportunity for

anonymity if desired (Appendices A & B). Once the participants agreed to participate in the study, a link to the pre-interview survey and a scheduling link was provided in a subsequent email. Participants received a link to establish their availability for the semi-structured interview using Calendly scheduling software; this link did not collect their personal data to ensure anonymity. Anonymity was preserved through pseudonyms, and email addresses were not collected during the study's pre-interview survey collection phase. During the virtual Zoom meetings that lasted between 45-60 minutes in duration, participants used their pseudonyms to eliminate any identifying information during the recorded interviews.

***Data Collection/Analysis***

Prior to the interview, participants completed an 8-item pre-interview survey that collected demographic data such as gender identity, race/ethnicity, age, and years of service (Appendix B). Qualtrics XM survey software was used to collect survey data and email addresses were not linked to the participants’ responses.

**Table 1. Participant Demographics**

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Years in Higher Ed</b>	<b>Years at PWI</b>	<b>KIN Subdiscipline or Research Interest</b>
Naomi	F	39	1.5	1.5	Occupational Therapy
Brooke	F	44	13	13	Sport Management
Bill	M	40	10	10	Sport History
Zuri	F	39	11	5	Exercise Science
Kenneth	M	46	20	20	Public Health
Jacob	M	26	5	5	Motor Development

Artifacts in the form of personal narratives or visual items were collected from participants as part of the interview questioning. The artifacts provided a deeper understanding of their personal and professional experiences within Kinesiology. The interview also allowed participants to share visual representations of their personal, academic, and professional

experiences (i.e., photos) The visual approach has been used in previous studies (Simon & Azzarito, 2019a; Simon & Azzarito, 2019b; Simon & Boyd, 2021; Jowers & Curtner-Smith, 2022b) and is a valuable tool to allow participants to personify their Kinesiology experiences. Pairing the narrative and visual artifacts helped create a connection between the participants' experiences and the people, books, and music that played a pivotal role in their socialization into Kinesiology. The interview questions were posed chronologically, thus enabling me to ascertain their lived experiences using the narrative qualitative approach (Cazers & Curtner-Smith, 2017; Jowers & Curtner-Smith, 2021; Jowers & Curtner-Smith, 2022b).

Towards the end of the interview member checks were conducted to ensure the dependability of the collected data and allow for any additions or omissions to their earlier responses. The interviews were recorded and transcribed using Zoom; notes were produced from all the data sources using Atlas.ti transcription software ([www.atlasti.com](http://www.atlasti.com)). Once the interviews were transcribed, participants were sent a copy of their transcript to ensure that their statements were accurately represented, mitigating any potential biases during data analysis. Upon review of their interview transcripts, all the participants were in full agreement that it accurately represented their responses to the interview questions.

The transcripts were read several times in concert with the artifacts to form codes, which allowed me to link the data with the narratives shared by the participants. The codes obtained were used to develop categories of findings and determine themes in the study. Since the interview questions were designed to reflect OST's three socialization phases, the codes were placed into each phase of socialization. Other pertinent categories (i.e. barriers, artifacts, positive experiences, etc.) were also added to the corresponding phases of socialization. Lastly, interview question responses that highlighted the gender-related differences in socialization experiences

were placed in its own category, as well as all the strategies to improve African American faculty representation.

Once the codes were organized into categories, themes were developed between the phases of socialization, as well as the role that the intersection of gender and ethnicity played in the socialization of the participants. The first step in developing themes was to calculate the number of codes that were associated with a particular category in the data. Once the categories with the highest number of codes were located, I correlated the relationship between the categories and the phase of socialization or gender-specific experiences to each other as much as possible. To ensure data trustworthiness, triangulation was used between the verbal data, visual data, and member checks. The participants' privacy was maintained using pseudonyms and the recorded interviews, artifacts, and transcriptions were stored using UNCG's secure storage drive ("Box").

## **Results**

After completing the interviews, member checks and data analysis, the results were presented in two phases: faculty experiences throughout the three phases of socialization and the themes that were discovered throughout their experiences in higher education: Kinesiological ambiguity, inequitable and retaliatory environments, and a lack of support for Kinesiology faculty.

### ***Acculturation Phase***

Out of the six participants, three (Naomi, Jacob, and Brooke) were first socialized into Kinesiology through their participation in organized team sports or recreational activities like family events. Naomi shared her early passion for basketball as the impetus for her interest in Kinesiology during our conversation:

Growing up, I was always passionate about sports, and I thought I was going to be a physiotherapist (in Canada, we call physical therapist, physiotherapists). I thought I was going to do that for the Toronto Raptors, because basketball is my passion, and I knew that I needed an undergraduate degree to do that.

Naomi, who is a native Canadian with Barbadian heritage and currently works at a private PWI in a rural town in the South, shared her initial interest in the discipline as a byproduct of her athletic background, which was also echoed in a later interview with Jacob, who is a native Midwesterner who works at a public PWI in an urban city in the South:

I'm originally from Illinois, and I was an athlete in high school. In my senior year, I sustained an injury during the season and interacted with the Athletic Trainers and Physical Therapist to help me return to the track. After that experience, I thought that physical therapy seems cool, and I aspired to go to college in that area.

Unlike Naomi and Jacob, Brooke, who is a native North Carolinian who works at private PWI in an urban city in the South, said that her initial exposure to Kinesiology came in the form of both athletic experiences, as well as a familial culture of recreational activity:

Everyone on my mom's side of the family were involved in some type of sport, whether it was cheerleading, softball, or basketball, and then it was nothing for every family gathering to be related to us playing kickball...even just running around the house. It was always some type of activity there, and we would always watch any sporting events on TV.

Later in our conversation, Brooke discussed the role that her aunt played in nurturing her socialization into athletics, despite not having a deep background into organized sports participation:



My aunt went to Duke University, and she was very passionate about Duke basketball; so, through my interactions with her, I began to like, "this sports thing," so I think it (interest in KIN) definitely stemmed from growing up.

As I listened to all three participants share how they were introduced to Kinesiology through either athletic participation or familial connections to sports in their childhoods, it reminded me of how I was socialized into the discipline in a similar way. Just like Jacob and Naomi, I was exposed to sports through playing football, baseball and track as a youth and then later specifically exposed to Athletic Training through taking a Sports Medicine class in high school. Like Brooke, I also had profound experiences with recreational activities, but mine were in the form of participating in Summer League Bowling leagues and participating in a kickball game that my church held at their annual spring picnic.

### ***Professional Socialization***

The remaining three participants (Zuri, Kenneth and Bill) were all introduced to Kinesiology during their collegiate years. Both Zuri and Kenneth were introduced to Kinesiology early in their undergraduate years through social experiences or later sports exposure, changing their original college majors. Zuri, who is a North Carolina native who has previously worked at a public PWI in the South, shared about her unique introduction to Kinesiology through a college dating relationship:

The first time I got recruited, I was actually dating a bodybuilder. He started bodybuilding at 14, and we were 18 and 19 at the time and I was a nursing major, and I really hated it. I didn't want to do nursing, and so he told me, "just come over to Exercise Science," and I went over there, and I loved it, because of the amount of freedom, flexibility and creativity that you have.

Kenneth, who is a Georgia native who currently works at a public, urban PWI in the South, shared his unconventional socialization to Kinesiology that stemmed from a budding interest in sports during our conversation:

I did not start out wanting to do this (teach in KIN program) as a profession...I went to college as a landscape architecture major and switched into physical education after about a year and a half for a couple of different reasons. The first reason was because I started realizing the fact that I like doing sports; I was a late bloomer in terms of athletic achievement. Secondly, I had a very instrumental professor who is still at my undergraduate institution; she was the person that helped push me into that direction (changing majors).

Bill is a Georgia native who currently works at a private, rural PWI in the Midwest and his experience as a college athlete at a private HBCU in the South played a role into his acculturation into Kinesiology, but his relationship with his dissertation committee and advisor in Graduate school was the impetus for providing direction in his career:

My advisor and dissertation committee members were essential to my development by challenging me to think outside of the box of the Academy. For my original dissertation topic, I was trying to look at, "enslaved women in eighteenth century Louisiana." Yet, I ended up looking at, "activism amongst Black athletes in the 1960's." I had a mentor in the Physical Education Department that helped me understand the importance of sport; so those mentors really kind of set me up to where I am now.

The participants had differing undergraduate experiences, as half of the them attended an HBCU and the other half a PWI. Jacob was the lone participant who had the unique experience of starting his undergraduate experience at a public, urban PWI in the Midwest and subsequently

transferring to a private, urban HBCU in the South for more opportunities to compete as a college track athlete. He spoke in detail about this transition in our conversation:

Oh, my goodness, it was challenging! I'm from Illinois, so I never knew what it felt like to be an African American man in the South. My first college was predominantly white so that transition was very interesting... being Black and being surrounded by other African Americans was a super culture shock, but in a positive way. I learned so much more about the diversity even within my ethnicity; we are not all the same. I was able to be exposed to Black people from different socioeconomic statuses, ethnicities, and everything. So, it was super cool being immersed in this all Black, yet unique and different people at the same time.

The participants who attended an HBCU discussed how their positive experiences motivated them to pursue advanced degrees and a career in Kinesiology. However, they also shared about the challenges that were presented once they began navigating the transition from the HBCU environment in undergrad to the PWI experience in their respective graduate programs. Bill spoke of the culture shock and adjustment that he experienced when transitioning from his undergraduate years at a small, private HBCU to attending a large Midwest PWI for graduate school:

Coming from a community and schools that are predominantly Black and going to a Midwestern city that felt like a "white man's heaven" was a challenge. There was some cultural exchange I had not been privy to and there was a lot of internal striving I had to face because of the unfamiliarity with the people and environment. This was something that I had to address, while also recognizing that I belong here.

The participants shared a common experience of having an influential mentor who motivated them and inspired them to delve deeper into Kinesiology. Kenneth shared a poignant experience about his mentor during graduate school that helped propel him into his current professional space:

I had a very instrumental professor by the name of Dr. Cooper, who's still at the PWI I attended for graduate school; she was the person that helped push me towards my Doctorate. I remember emailing her after earning my master's degree saying, "thank you for helping me during this whole process of working on my masters; I'm ready to go out into the real world." She emailed me back and said, "that's nice, but I think you should come back and work on a Doctorate."

In my interview with Jacob, he discussed the impact that his relationship with his mentor in Graduate school, who also was an alumnus of Jacob's undergraduate HBCU:

I wouldn't call Dr. Smith a "father away from home," but having a role model that I can discuss academic and nonacademic things with; being a Black man in the rural South itself is something that I knew that he would be able to help me with. I doubt that I would have been as interested if he wasn't there.

The participants shared how their experiences as marginalized students motivated them to pursue careers in Kinesiology with the purpose of improving racial or gender representation within the field. Some of them discussed how their interactions with other African American professionals or faculty in their programs served as an impetus to serve in the same capacity for future generations of African American students. Zuri shared about her motivation to pursue a career in higher education:

I chose to become a Kinesiology professor in higher education because I realized there's not a lot of "us" (Black professionals) in that space. There's not only a lack of Black or brown faces, but also a lack of female Black or brown faces and I just really wanted to capitalize on that. I want to encourage other young ladies that they could definitely do this, whether they do fitness, physical therapy or athletic training.

Zuri's interest in progressing further into Kinesiology did not come without experiencing marginalization from others within the discipline. She shared a conversation between herself and some white colleagues that highlighted the reality that many Black women face presumptions of incompetence in their careers stating that, "When I was ready to graduate in 2007, I had told some of my white counterparts that I'm looking to advance in this field, and they're like, "probably not because you likely don't know anything."” Zuri's experience with these presumptions have been reported in past research by other African American female faculty members across academia (Burden et al., 2005; Harrison et al., 2010; McDowell & Carter-Francique, 2017; Overstreet et al., 2021 & Welch et al., 2021).

Kenneth also spoke about his motivation to continue his career in Kinesiology:

I think for me, I started looking at representation because as I was going through Grad school and I didn't see a lot of people who look like me. I think there were some conversations that just needed to be had. I felt that Kinesiology was very attractive to me, because I look at issues from a troubleshooter's perspective.

The participants shared a variety of artifacts that allowed their undergraduate and graduate school experiences to become richer and deeper in meaning. The artifacts were in the form of stories about influential family members, books that expanded their worldview and the impact of their personal faith and music that encouraged them as they navigated difficult days in

school. Zuri discussed her challenging experiences when she was working towards her Doctoral degree and shared how a YouTube gospel playlist played a pivotal role in motivating her as she worked towards the degree:

When I think about my PhD program, I used to live off a gospel playlist on YouTube. The gospel playlist was 5 hours long and I said to myself, "okay at hour two and a half, I'm going to pause this gospel playlist, take a break, and then I will restart it once I come back from that break." It would help me with my faith because when you are the first person in the entire family to have this advanced degree, you don't really have any support system. It really helped me even more with the unexpected passing of my mother and my grandmother.

Jacob shared stories about the influence that his grandmother had during his college years, sharing how she would author stories about him in the local newspaper when he had noteworthy accomplishments in college:

My grandmother was probably the one that was most supportive. She would put me in the newspaper when I do things; so those are like physical artifacts that keep me going. It was usually something inspirational; I was a hurdler in track and one time I got my Master's degree she wrote an article in the local newspaper that was titled, "Jacob is still clearing all hurdles."

Naomi also spoke of the influence that her grandmother has had on her professional life in our conversation:

I would say my strongest supporter to this day is my grandmother. She is the one person that I can call anytime of the day, and she will talk me through, say a prayer, anything

like that to really help me manage my emotions and the frustrations that I encountered throughout my journey. So, I would say she was a big support system for me.

Through listening to the participants share their challenges progressing through both undergraduate and graduate programs, they place a great deal of value on their relationships with mentors and family, as well as depend on their personal faith to endure difficult times in life. As a student myself, I can attest to their experiences and know that I've had my own challenges in school and depended on my personal faith and relationships with family and fellow African Americans in Kinesiology to remain motivated and focused. Due to the lack of ethnic and gender representation in many Kinesiology programs, it is paramount that programs foster a culture that acknowledges the social needs of current African American faculty and provides a approach that appreciates the spirituality that many African Americans possess.

### ***Organizational Socialization***

As the participants discussed their professional experiences as faculty members, it illustrated a spectrum of experiences from positive to extremely negative. All the participants shared that their relationships with white faculty members in their respective programs have been mostly positive. In some situations, the participants disclosed that when comparing their relationship with white faculty to other minority faculty, they were guarded in what they shared with white faculty regularly. Brooke described her experiences with the white faculty at her institution during her interview:

One of my Black colleagues told me yesterday that my new colleague is white and to "be careful as y'all start bouncing off ideas because typically, white males will take credit for all the ideas and get the recognition for it." So now I must go into this like, "give me a

hand and let's bounce ideas off of each other." It must be known that it was both of our ideas and not just his, so he will not take all the credit.

Brooke also shared in the interview that, "Out of the other two white female faculty members, there's one I don't trust, because she's one of the ones that stabbed my old mentor in the back, and the other one is just coasting, doing the bare minimum." In our conversation, Brooke discussed how her mentor, who was the Department chair at her institution when she was hired, and how the same white colleagues who praised his efforts when he was at the institution, would later turn their back on him when he considered returning in a leadership role:

Other departments got along with him, but you have to be careful because he did want to come back and be the Dean and some people who didn't want him to come back and be the Dean were the same people that probably was smiling in his face while he was here. When I saw what people did to him, I'm thinking, "yeah, it's probably happening behind my back too, which is why I don't bother anybody."

In addition to the mentor experiences that the participants had in graduate school, participants were successful in developing positive mentoring relationships with other senior faculty at their respective institutions. However, those mentoring relationships had to be initiated and cultivated by the participant; the institution either provided limited or no mentoring support for faculty. Naomi succinctly stated in her interview that at her institution, "there's no training nor resources; nothing is intentionally done to support faculty of color... every support I get is because I have found it outside on my own."

Some participants discussed their experiences with being the only African American faculty member in their program, while a couple of participants discussed the experience of working with other African American or minority faculty members in their program. Bill spoke



about his experience in being the only Black male faculty member in his program, but how he didn't allow it to define his worth as an academician in our conversation:

I think my previous experience in higher ed have prepared me for this because there was another area in which I worked, where I was the only Black male for a long time. I'll say, for the first 35 years of my life I was never the only one; I come from predominantly Black spaces but getting into this current role, although I know I am the only Black faculty member, it is not a handicap.

Brooke also spoke of her experience as the only Black female serving on various committees at her institution and the unwanted attention that it can bring when taking a stand on various issues within committee work:

I'm the only minority on the Academic Policy Committee representing my college and I'm the only one that voted "no" against the sport communication program. I brought up some valid questions to them and everybody else voted "yes," so now we have a competing program in another area, and no one would see it from my point of view.

Naomi spoke of the value of having Black faculty representation during her interview, saying, "when you find another Black faculty member that you can depend on and trust, which makes a world of difference...you don't need to say a lot, and they get it." Kenneth discussed the impact that minority faculty members played in his socialization into the profession, saying that he, "worked with a considerable number of female Asian faculty, and came into the profession siloed and misogynistic views." Kenneth shared how prior to his interactions with minority women during his professional career, he was unaware of some of the misogynistic views that he possessed because of his own challenges with actively listening to colleagues in the past.

The participants shared that their experiences in academia were filled with situations where they had to speak out on racial or gender injustices, as well as their individual experiences surrounding the tenure and promotion process at their institution. Participants shared personal stories about the need to speak out when they felt a student had been treated unjustly, acknowledging the need to use discernment when choosing which battles to fight among their program or institution. Naomi spoke at length about a situation that occurred with a planned event within her program and serving as an advocate for inclusion:

There was an incident where we were planning an event for a cohort of students and the location that was chosen was a chapel and I had to speak on that because I said that is something that is strongly correlated with Christian beliefs, and I know for a fact that not everyone in here ascribes to the Christian faith. I asked why we couldn't have it at a more neutral space so that it is respectful to all races, creeds, religions and I thought people looked at me like I had said the craziest thing.

There were a couple of participants who have begun or finished the tenure and promotion process and shared mixed feelings about their experiences or perceptions of the process. Brooke discussed her fear of the experience and the potential repercussions that she could face due to the value student evaluations play in her tenure and promotion process:

Tenure is scary because when you're just an assistant professor, you must worry about job security. I've learned that you can have the best publications, but it is political, and a heavy emphasis is placed on student evaluations at my institution.

In summary, the participants discussed their socialization experiences through all phases of OST. Four participants were acculturated into the profession through sports, which fueled their desire to pursue college degrees in a Kinesiology-related major. The

influence of mentors during their undergraduate and graduate studies was vital to their sustained socialization into the profession, whether they attended a PWI or an HBCU. As the participants began their professional careers in academia, they shared challenges surrounding marginalization and the positive impact of new or previous mentorship relationships had in their ability to cope with the challenges of academia. Through all their interviews, there were common themes found surrounding their socialization into Kinesiology.

### ***Kinesiological Ambiguity***

As they progressed through their undergraduate experiences, participants shared that one of the biggest barriers that they experienced was a lack of knowledge regarding Kinesiology as a discipline and what career options await a person with the degree. Naomi discussed this paradox in her interview saying, “There wasn't a lot of easily accessible information about Kinesiology, what it is, and what type of work you can do; I was nervous to enter a degree that didn't have a clear career path.” During her undergraduate studies, she discussed how this lack of information was pervasive with other students, stating, “many people in my program wanted to be PE teachers, but I do feel there's so many other areas people can go into. They're just not highlighted, and people don't know about them.” She also delved into the cultural and familial challenges behind the lack of knowledge surrounding Kinesiology, saying that “I didn't have much support with my family, because they were like, "Go to school and get a degree. We don't know this nonsense that you're doing because you're not a doctor, or a nurse, or a lawyer.” This level of ambiguity regarding Kinesiology is an indication that more must be done to expose future students and families to the diversity of options that exist within the discipline.

In the professional setting, Brooke shared her firsthand experiences during college, which were impacted by her institution's myopic definition of Kinesiology, and discussed how she mitigates the lack of knowledge regarding the breadth of Kinesiology to her current students:

When I was in college, the professors weren't teaching you about the different career options like I tell my students today. When I was working towards my exercise science degree, I interned at the fitness center down the street from campus because I thought that's all you could do. The only career options that were highlighted were cardiac rehabilitation or fitness training and in graduate school they didn't fully let you know about more career options. I had a speaker from a sport agency come to my class and many of my students did not know that agency work was a job that you could do.

The impact that a narrow, and ambiguous definition of Kinesiology can have on a new professional in the field came up during Kenneth's interview, where he shared his experience during his first professional stop in academia:

I don't think that many of the people at my first institution thought I was as serious about my work as I was, and it was because they didn't see how important it was going to be. When you start doing work with empowerment or social justice, people were like, "I don't see it" and to be quite honest with you I didn't know how to pull all that together myself.

Kenneth's experience with feeling like his research was being downplayed by colleagues due to its focus on social justice sheds more light on the ongoing issues that many minority faculty experiences in academia. As a discipline, Kinesiology has ascribed

to a Eurocentric epistemology, which can create an “othering” effect on any research interest that doesn’t conform to its paradigm; past researchers (Burden et al., 2005; Hodge & Corbett, 2013) have also reported this experience among Black faculty members in Kinesiology.

Participants also shared how ambiguity regarding Kinesiology also extended beyond their program and impacted others’ perceptions about their role in academia. Brooke spoke about her experience with this challenge at her institution:

I've seen people who are not in my department come after my program in a negative light that are of another race who feels that our area (Kinesiology) isn't as valid and that they can take over. We are constantly fighting every day and now that we have changed our name from Kinesiology to Health and Human Performance, we've added the health promotion program and now it feels like they're fighting the same fight along with us.

This challenge is not specific to PWI’s, as Zuri shared in her interview on this topic:

*“You still have people, even at an HBCU, who think that you are a lower citizen. I had somebody say, “all she does is teach push-ups” ... you still have people that still hold those stigmas there.”*

### ***Inequitable and Retaliatory Environments***

The lack of support for African American female faculty was well documented throughout many of the interviews. Both male and female participants shared instances where they either directly experienced or observed situations where African American female faculty members were given heavier workloads, discouraged from producing scholarship within their research interests and experienced targeted forms of retaliation. Kenneth, who is the only Black

faculty member who has earned Full Professor status at his PWI, was privy to two situations within his department and discussed it in detail:

Black women who are here at this university are treated like absolute garbage. We had a Black female professor who we hired two years ago; since she got here, there were people coming by her office saying, "I don't know what types of classes you're going to be teaching here" or changing her class loads from time to time. Every project that she does was getting scrutinized; this woman is well-published on issues related to diversity, equity, inclusion, and sport management. Yet, folks were not trying to look at her annual reviews and give her credit for those publications nor were they talking to her about how to improve upon those things.

He also discussed a situation with another African American female faculty member and the types of inequity that she experienced as a new employee at the institution:

We had another situation where we created a new program and hired an African American female professor, and she was put on a 3x3 load. This woman published research from one of the best universities in the United States on Public Health. Then the next year, I left as chair and the new chair hires new folks with a 2x2 research load. I was like, "what's happening with the previous person? Shouldn't we be reverting that as well?" She's just been in this yo-yo and she's a high performer, but she just keeps getting mixed messages. She also didn't get an opportunity to get her research funding in terms of the money that she was supposed to have.

Kenneth's account of his colleague's challenges with having an inequitable workload, despite being an accomplished researcher in her discipline have been reported in past research (Diggs et al., 2009). Oftentimes, Black female faculty are tasked with coping with a higher workload due to what Blackshear (2022a) referred to as the "superwoman" stereotype. This stereotype positions Black woman as successful multitaskers who sacrifice their personal needs (i.e. financial, emotional, physical, etc.) for the greater good of the program or institution. Previous research has discussed how this stereotype is more often placed on Black women who have accomplished great professional accolades and is further exacerbated when their research interests are marginalized and devalued (Blackshear & Hollis, 2021; Harrison et al., 2010 & Hester, 2020).

Naomi and Brooke shared their experiences surrounding the ongoing threat of retaliation that they either directly experienced, or fear would be eminent if they were to vocalize their concerns to administration. Due to the threat of retaliation, the participants shared that it often created what they coined "Black fatigue" and made it more difficult to find the motivation to speak out when they saw inequities. The threat of retaliation became more apparent to Brooke during her time serving on various committees for her PWI, often the only Black faculty member in those spaces:

I was on the a steering committee to see if my institution should go Division 1 and the faculty was upset about that. The chair of Faculty Council decided she was going to share the vote from the committee and made it known that she was the only one that voted "no." I had to talk to the provost and share that one of these people might end up being on my tenure committee and she tried to reassure me

that nothing can happen and there won't be any retaliations. Yet, I still wasn't sure because if you got 60% upset faculty members, they're always going to remember that I was on the steering committee and I voted "yes."

Naomi discussed in detail about a situation that she experienced with the President of her discipline's largest professional organization during a Virtual Town Hall meeting that was centered around social justice and how the organization can make positive steps towards equality. Her negative experience exemplified the retaliation that Black female faculty can experience systematically within Kinesiology:

The President started to go around the room and she called me out, asking, "so what brings you here today?" and I said, "well, I'm here to see what our organization is going to do to ensure that everyone that we service has equal rights and justice to function as everyday citizens in the community and I'm really interested on what this profession is going to do to ensure this happens." She asked, "well, how long have you been a clinician?" and at that time maybe it was 10 years. She said, "well, I know there are lots of volunteer positions open on the AOTA (American Occupational Therapy Association) board; how many positions have you volunteered for? Oh, my gosh! I wanted to slam that computer! I was like, "you are not going to come up here and make me come up with the solutions for a problem that I didn't create!" How dare the President come up here and test me!" I can't say anything...I can't get heated like how I'm talking now, because I wanted to go off on her, but I didn't, because then I was going to look crazy in front of all those people, and I was never going to be assigned to a position because they would have had me blacklisted.



Between Brooke and Naomi's experiences at the institutional and systematic levels, both participants shared a perceived fear of retaliation if they were to speak out on injustice. This silencing of their voices is a constant theme found in past research (Blackshear & Hollis, 2021) and further reinforces the idea that Black women must have an active role in fixing problems that they didn't create, which also reinforces the "superwoman" stereotype given to many Black women in academia (Blackshear, 2022a).

Inequity was exemplified through inadequate funding for professional development, negative student evaluations, misogynistic attitudes of white coworkers and pay inequity. Participants discussed how they have observed how they often receive more critical student evaluations than their white counterparts; this was problematic due to the impact of those evaluations on achieving tenure status at their institution. The female participants shared that they often experience marginalization in the form of questioning their expertise within their professional spaces. Zuri shared how she experienced this mindset within the HBCU and PWI spaces in her interview:

I have picked up a long time ago that some people are going to look at me as a Black woman and assume that I don't know what I'm talking about. That is one undertone that has not changed as I have been in different spaces. I've been given a side eye, or people talk to me like I don't know about certain topics or how to diagnose any type of inability or disability; it's assumed that I just don't know, and that's unfortunate.

When discussing hiring practices and pay inequity,

Zuri shared her perspectives that have been gained through her direct experiences:

From my experience, men will always come before a female, even though the female might have more experience. Being a Black woman, I have been hired and told that I was

hired to "balance out the department." A gender-specific experience I've had is the idea that if I'm hired, and there's a male colleague at the job, he's going to earn more.

### ***Lack of Support for Kinesiology Faculty***

Another theme shared by the participants was the varying levels of nonsupport provided by their Kinesiology programs for African American faculty members, regardless of gender. The levels of nonsupport ranged from an institution having no form of support mechanisms in place to distinct types of ambivalent support that were minimally effective. The participants' experiences with non-support were consistent across the type of PWI (public vs. private), as both types of institutions were equally represented in the study. Naomi discussed in detail about the nonexistent support that she has experienced at her PWI saying, "There is no training or resources; there is nothing intentionally done to support faculty of color. It stems from the executive leadership team, and it trickles down into all areas. I just don't feel supported...I'm just a body here."

Kenneth discussed his own experience of having to "prove himself" to other white professionals, despite having an impeccable scholarship record and earning international acclaim for his work. He also discussed having an experience like Brooke's regarding the lack of financial support to take a group of students on a study abroad trip to Africa. The impact of the lack of support to faculty at his institution has led to a toxic work environment, which Kenneth discussed in our conversation:

We have a really toxic working environment when it comes to our school; we have situations where folks just either leave, or they don't feel like they're getting support. Then we have people going up to Deans who should be handling some of

this stuff, and they're not doing the best job they possibly could. Yet at the same time, the Deans are saying, "I want to be more supportive."

These instances of non-support by their programs aims to devalue their scholarship and can negatively impact recruitment and retention of African American faculty members (Gasman et al., 2011 & Hodge & Corbett, 2013). To cope with all these forms of non-support, either at the institutional or organizational level, the participants shared that they have often taken matters into their own hands, oftentimes doing the tasks that they feel their institution should be doing. Brooke shared how due to the lack of support by her dean, she must use her own social media accounts to market her program:

We must highlight ourselves... I promote our program on my personal LinkedIn account, and I think that's the only reason why the President has any idea of what I'm doing is because he follows me on LinkedIn. My dean doesn't share or brag about us and the amount of work that I do outside and its impact on the program.

In addition to a lack of support from Brooke's dean, she also shared a how her institution does not provide adequate financial support for marketing materials for her program and how these issues did not surface until the previous program chair, who was a Black male, left the institution:

My institution gives us \$700 per year for conferences, which technically only covers one conference; everything else, I do or find it on my own. Right now, the program chair and I are fighting to get marketing materials as simple as a tablecloth. I went to a NASCAR event last year and everyone had tents and tablecloths, while I'm sitting there with just a table with a tablecloth looking a mess. We can't even get support for that or printing off marketing materials from the copier. Not having my former program chair around is

tough because I could vent to him and I feel strongly that if he was still here, all this stuff that's happening wouldn't be happening.

Participants shared examples of ways that they support their program or their own professional development by finding their own mentors, using their personal social media accounts to promote their program's achievements, or finding external funding for research projects. Kenneth succinctly said that regarding his research, he "finds ways to go outside the box" to fill the financial gap that his institution creates with their lack of investment. Jacob shared his experience with the mentoring program at his institution in our conversation:

I did get appointed a mentor, but I had to be intentional about seeking it out. I had questions that needed answering such as, "What do you do when you have a student that may be undermining you as a Black professor... how do you deal of that?" I also sought out other Black professors at other institutions that I get feedback from regularly.

Throughout many of the participants' interviews, it was clear that many of their experiences at PWI's were filled with varying levels of non-support, whether it was financial or social, which have been echoed by past researchers as a major impediment to faculty recruitment and retention (Russell, 2019; Harrison et al., 2010 & Richards et al., 2014).

### ***Strategies to Improve African American Faculty Representation***

The participants shared several strategies that they believe can help PWI's improve African American faculty representation in their respective programs, and they were placed into three categories: Addressing Cultural Competence/Bias Training, Improving Professional Relationships and Evaluating Programmatic/Institutional Policies.

### *Addressing Cultural Competence/Biases*

One area that some of the participants felt needs to be addressed within PWI's is the level of cultural competence and implicit biases that their white colleagues exhibit regularly. For some institutions, the first step in training faculty in cultural competence or implicit biases is to establish a Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) office or committee; however not all PWI's have made this commitment. Naomi's institution is one example of a PWI that has not established a DEI framework and she discussed her experiences in our conversation:

We don't have a DEI coordinator, and I feel that is something that's invaluable. I don't even know how we're functioning in 2023 without one, because I feel like that is the go-to model that people are trying to incorporate through mission statements and visions and really show how they're putting those tools in place so faculty and staff feel like they have resources that they can contact to be supported. I think it's a start, and it shows that they're being intentional, but not even having one and acting like DEI is not an issue and that you all are too good to need one (a DEI coordinator) is a problem. I'm not even saying that person needs to be doing groundbreaking work, but at least have an outlet or a chain that could be utilized to bring those concerns to whether anything happens with it. I feel those are the next steps, but at least get those things in place.

There have been studies such as Brooks and associates (2013) and Price et al. (2017) that have discussed the value that addressing diversity within institutions, with some of the benefits including an improvement in cultural competency, an increase in race/gender-related research and more women and minority faculty involved in community service. Zuri shared that the other aspect that should be addressed to make the institutional environment supportive for African American faculty members is to address the biases that many white faculty members possess implicitly. In our interview, Zuri spoke at length about the need for bias training for all faculty:

There needs to be some kind of support with individuals that know about biases and why biases exist, because we can only compare something from our own experiences to something else. For example, you come across Black women that say, "Oh, you know all men are dogs." Generally, we come to that conclusion because we've either experienced it ourselves or seen our mothers, grandmothers, aunts, friends, or sisters go through that. Because we've seen it and seen it repeatedly, that alone will generate a bias. You have to say to yourself, "okay, something's not healthy here...let me address this bias" and that's where self-care comes in. Going to therapy, healing and take a different perspective of things, and then say to yourself, "I've had this bias for so long, but I've learned that it's not always true," and so I think that's one of the things that needs to be addressed when we're talking about support. That's super important, and I think that'll be super helpful for offering support as a Black faculty member.

From this study, it appears that the female participants were more sensitive to the need for cultural competence and bias training, which is consistent with past research (McDowell & Francique-Carter, 2017 & Russell et al., 2019). This may reflect their personal experiences with a version of what Harrison and associates (2021) calls a “double burden” of being a woman and an African American.

### ***Improving Professional Relationships***

Participants discussed that another area of need for African American faculty members is an environment where they can find safety in having honest conversations with white faculty members. Bill was the only participant that discussed how this environment is a reality in his program, which could serve as a blueprint for other institutions:

I have a good relationship with my white colleagues; we're still learning each other because our program is new, but I wouldn't say it's bad. I think we are building community; we are getting our "ducks in a row" as far as our academic plan. When getting people in a room and getting those parameters laid out, you're going to have some good conversations and difficult conversations, but that's a part of development and growth. I love the people I work with, and I don't have any real issues. They recognize the contributions that I bring to the Department and vice versa.

Jacob also provided similar support for this recommendation, but shared where he believes the responsibility falls in making these changes in our conversation:

Being the first person in a space or the only person in a space is challenging, so I think the onus should not be on me to seek out relationships or to seek out information. Let's be open to talking about my experiences as a Black person and don't make me feel like I can't share with you, or I must hide it from you...be open. That's the only way that you learn, and then you get better going forward. To act like it's not a thing or to act as if my experience will be the exact same as everybody else's experience is a disservice to me and a disservice for you or others who can learn and come up with better training or better strategies to support.

Naomi shared her sentiments on the importance of creating a safe space for faculty to discuss their honest feelings about their needs and the importance of having minority faculty “at the table” when making decisions that have a direct impact on their experiences at the institution:

The institution needs a reality check... listen to student and faculty concerns and not dismiss them. A lot of the time, faculty fears retaliation, so create safe spaces where people feel they can have those conversations with someone, and there isn't going to be

any type of retaliation or push back. If the executive leadership truly desires more, have us as a part of the decision-making process, even if we can't make the decision. I think that's all people want... we just want a little bit of our voice to be heard.

The participants' desire to develop a safe space for honest conversations is not a novel idea, as Lowrie & Robinson (2013) discusses the implementation of a Multicultural Organization Framework that details this as one of the indicators of an organization that is making positive strides towards creating an inclusive culture for faculty and students. In addition to creating safe spaces for honest conversations with white faculty, some of the female participants alluded to the need for Black spaces for female faculty, which has been supported by past research (Gardner, 2019 & Overstreet, et al.,2021). Brooke shared that she feels that she can, "share more with the Black colleagues, because they understand a little bit better, and I know that if they say they're not going to say anything they won't." Naomi also echoed Brooke's sentiments in our conversation regarding the value of having another Black female faculty member to confide:

When you find another Black faculty member that you can depend on and trust that makes a world of difference. I'm not discrediting people of other races or nationalities, but there are a lot of things that are unspoken that someone who is Black can understand... you don't need to say a lot, and they get it. Having someone who understands me is powerful, and I feel like when I am stressed that you don't want to bombard people and burden them with everything, but at least knowing that they could read the room and understand why you're frustrated, and why something that was said, done or written was inappropriate is powerful, but not a lot of people have that.

As mentioned earlier in the study, many of the participants shared stories regarding influential mentors that helped them progress through the earlier phases of socialization and in



the same light, many of them felt that there is a need for a tangible mentoring framework for any institution that wants to support African American faculty members. Jacob shared in detail the importance of mentoring for Black faculty, especially those who are entering the later phases of socialization:

One of the things that can help junior faculty get tenure is to have good mentorship, as well as help those who are finishing a PhD program. Good advisors and mentorship are going to be a difference maker; I think programs where things are put into place to better support me is critical.

Naomi also shared her perspective regarding importance for a mentoring framework for newly hired African American faculty, despite her own cynicism regarding her institution's willingness to follow through:

Institutions need to be intentional and understand the needs of African American faculty, especially people new to Academia. I don't think this would ever happen, but I think I would even have appreciated just any type of mentorship that could have been provided regarding teaching strategies or best practices to improve student success as a new faculty member.

### ***Evaluating Programmatic/Institutional Policies***

Participants shared that institutions should evaluate their current hiring, promotion, and tenure policies to make substantive change in the level of support for African American faculty members. Bill succinctly stated that institutions need to, "create more tenure track positions," which could increase the number of African American faculty members who are able to secure better stability in the academy. Regarding hiring policies, Kenneth shared how he felt that one of

the meaningful ways that institutions can improve racial, or gender diversity is to be intentional about hiring them for administrative positions:

I think the biggest thing is that we must hire more administrative faculty who are able to do their job. About 28% of our student population consists of Black students and they're not always getting what they need currently, but it has gotten a lot better in the past ten or fifteen years. I think that our university cannot be afraid to hire Black faculty in significant leadership roles. If Black faculty is not in the room, it's very difficult to give a perspective that we can help other people with.

In addition to having more African Americans in leadership roles within programs, Jacob shared that institutions should be cognizant of how their interview process is structured stating that his program, “added one additional phone interview question about diversity that we are going to ask to people.” However, Jacob also discussed how even this small addition to their interviewing process may be threatened due to state level legislation regarding diversity:

My state has legislation going on where it's specific about what we can ask applicants and what we can't in terms of diversity. We don't know what we can and cannot ask from a legal standpoint at this time. The bigger issue is beyond just us as a program; legally they can make it hard to draw the line between discrimination versus diversity. You can support diversity without discriminating others, but they have them tied together right now in a way that's like, "oh, no! by doing that you're going to be discriminating or excluding other people!" I'm just like, "we've been doing that to people of color all this time and nobody cared."

Along with institutions making a concerted effort to incorporate diversity within their interviewing procedures, Jacob also felt that they should be intentional about infusing diversity within the promotion and tenure process:

If we really say we value things like diversity the way that we do scholarship or other things, it should be in our promotion & tenure document. It should be a part of the requirements to get tenure that people must do, just like publications. It needs to be built in and woven into the expectations of faculty members; it can't just be this separate thing that you do on the side; it needs to be a part of the program.

Kenneth, who served a term as the department chair at his institution, discussed how his position helped to make diversity a higher priority with promotion and tenure:

We're having discussions right now about promotion and tenure documents and there are some things that I can have conversations with newer faculty in terms of how to navigate certain things that if I weren't in those rooms previously or weren't currently in those rooms, I wouldn't be able to have that discussion. Even things such as making decisions on hiring; if you're not in the room, it's very difficult to give a perspective that we can help other people with.

Kenneth's experience as a department chair provides a real-life example of what can happen when institutions have African American faculty members in higher level meetings, which was a need communicated by other African American faculty in past research (Burden et al., 2005).

## **Discussion**

The purpose of this study was to describe the experiences of African American faculty in Kinesiology programs at PWI's, inspired by Occupational Socialization and Intersectionality

Theory. The first aim was to reveal the personal, academic, and professional experiences of African American Kinesiology faculty members. In the acculturation phase of OST, it appeared that four of the participants' exposure to Kinesiology was through sports participation; this trend was also discussed in an earlier study conducted by Park and Curtner-Smith (2018). Based on the interviews and personal experience, any further exposure to other career options within Kinesiology was through personal (self, family, or friends) interactions with Physical Therapists, Athletic Trainers, or Occupational Therapists.

During the professional socialization phase of OST, most participants began their undergraduate education in the traditional subdiscipline of Physical Education; only through the influence of early mentors were they able to learn how expansive the discipline can be. Half of the participants discussed how impactful their undergraduate experiences were at an HBCU and detailed the culture shock that they experienced once they transitioned to attending a PWI for Graduate School. During this phase, many of the participants also shared artifacts and examples of ways that they coped with the common struggle of being the "only one" within their program of study.

Participants shared stories about how their relationships with African American faculty or students within their graduate programs helped to provide a model of success for them, as well as poignant advice when considering future decisions about school or work. The participants felt that the best way to see change is to take a grassroots and integrated approach to educating our future college population at an early age. As the participants transitioned to the organizational socialization phase, many of them started to experience a myriad of challenges.

A theme shared by the participants was the varying levels of non-support provided by their Kinesiology programs for African American faculty members. The levels of nonsupport

ranged from an institution having no form of support mechanisms in place to distinct types of ambivalent support that were minimally effective. African American females experience more obstacles during their socialization into their institution. The Black female faculty members in this study discussed their experiences with retaliation and inequity, which as reported in earlier studies (Overstreet et al., 2021; Blackshear & Hollis, 2021).

When looking at the intersection of race and gender on the participants' professional experiences, there were many examples of marginalization and bias that were shared in the interviews. These instances of marginalization were in the form of retaliation, heavier workload, inequitable student evaluations, perceived incompetence, and a general lack of support for their scholarship. The experiences shared in this study were consistent with many of the same experiences discussed in past studies (Blackshear & Hollis, 2021; Harrison et al., 2010; Hester, 2020; Welch et al., 2021) and PWI's must address these issues if they want to successfully recruit and retain Black female faculty.

The second aim of the study was to provide PWI's a set of actionable strategies that can help further support current African American faculty members in their respective Kinesiology programs. Although some participants shared that their institution provided no support, some believed it was ineffective. In most cases, the participants felt that their institution's efforts were only done to "check a box" and they were not aware of any substantive actions that have resulted in any meaningful change. There was a general opinion that their institution did not want to do the necessary work of addressing the serious issues out of fear of "stepping on toes." Upon reviewing the websites of all six institutions, the focus on DEI ranged from one institution's closing of their DEI office due to state legislation to another institution that had specific goals to address faculty recruitment and retention from a diversity lens. Most institutions that included

DEI into their strategic plans did so primarily focusing on the student experience, with the faculty experience in the background.

Participants discussed ways that PWI's can make substantive change by evaluating or implementing new policies. Cultural competency or bias training has been recommended in past research (Burden et al., 2005), but the participants felt that this should be an ongoing form of training that is part of the tenure/promotion process for faculty. Participants felt that PWI's must do what they can to hire more African Americans in significant leadership roles; this was especially important for institutions that have a larger African American student population. Despite the common excuse that, "there aren't enough Black candidates" to fill these positions, Hodge & Corbett (2013) discussed how institutions must be more creative in their recruitment strategies and be intentional to make connections with HBCU's or Community Colleges, who typically report having more African American faculty members in their ranks. Reviewing job descriptions for adequate diversity language, incorporating the candidate's responses surrounding diversity into an interview rubric have been suggested to improve hiring practices. Burden and associates (2005) echoed these suggestions to address the programmatic neglect that has been pervasive for years in Kinesiology programs.

Institutions must make a good faith effort to review and update their tenure/promotion policies as part of the institutional shift to an inclusive culture. The first step suggested by participants was to increase the number of tenure-track positions within the program, which is an issue that has been echoed in past research (Flaherty, 2016). Infusing diversity into tenure/promotion policies may require institutions to make their pay and workload structures equitable, which can be challenging because many institutions have depended on underpaid and overworked faculty, especially Black women for years (Blackshear & Hollis, 2021). Institutions

should incorporate diversity efforts into the tenure process, requiring faculty to participate in cultural competency training on a regular basis. Making any diversity, equity, and inclusion activity optional is counterproductive to building an environment that is conducive for African American faculty. Institutions should value diversity at the same level as they value scholarship, service, and external funding.

Based on the experiences of the female Black faculty in this study, it appears that institutions that include student evaluations as part of the tenure application should do so taking potential biases into consideration. Past research (Hester, 2020; Russell et al., 2019; Blackshear & Hollis, 2021) has discussed how many students come into college with preconceptions and biases against Black women, which subsequently impact their instructor evaluations. Another viewpoint that is noteworthy is the adoption of a multiple measure evaluation tool that one article suggests that “ensures that teaching effectiveness is being measured rather than student and colleague resistance to innovative teaching methods or course content that challenges the status quo” (Pittman, 2023). The adoption of this measure could mitigate the impact that racial and gender bias plays in student or colleague evaluations of Black female faculty members, improving their chances of earning tenure.

Lastly, participants shared their firsthand experiences with mentors in their professional spaces, but most of those connections had to be initiated by the individual. Institutions must develop an effective mentoring framework that allows African American faculty members to connect with others, even if they are not in their discipline. The literature is clear that a robust mentoring framework is needed for African American faculty members (Burden et al., 2005; Harrison et al., 2010; Hodge & Wiggins, 2010). To improve current mentoring frameworks, PWI’s must be open to creating professional connections with other institutions, specifically

HBCU's. By creating these professional networks between PWI's and HBCU's, it will allow faculty to connect with other African American faculty, authenticating their diversity efforts. As stated by DiGiacinto (2014), there is an "untapped potential in HBCU's" and PWI's that are genuine in their desire to achieve authentic diversity must be proactive in establishing a relationship with HBCU's. However, HBCU's are not without their issues with vestiges of patriarchy (Blackshear & Hollis, 2021; McDowell & Carter-Francique, 2017), so making a productive connection with HBCU's could serve as a doubly beneficial partnership with PWI's.



## CHAPTER II: DISSEMINATION

The format that used to disseminate the findings of this study is in the form of a conference presentation at the American Educational Research Association (AERA) Annual Conference in 2024, which is discussed in detail in Appendix E. The target audience for this conference will be program directors, deans, and provosts at 4-year institutions. The purpose of this study was to describe the experiences of African American faculty in Kinesiology programs at Predominantly White Institutions, inspired by Occupational Socialization and Intersectionality Theory, and it had two aims. The first aim was to bring to light the personal, academic, and professional experiences of African American Kinesiology faculty members. The second aim was to provide Predominantly White Institutions a set of actionable strategies that can help further support current African American faculty members in their respective Kinesiology programs.

### **Presentation Script**

Any discussion surrounding Kinesiology must include the contributions of these pivotal African Americans and their contributions to the discipline. I stand on the shoulders of people like Aaron Molyneux, who was the first African American Physical Education professor at a PWI (Harvard) in 1855. In the early 1900's, Anita J. Turner, who has a school in her namesake in Washington, D.C., worked alongside Edwin Henderson as a mentor, creating professional spaces for African American professionals in Physical Education and curricular change for public education. As a native North Carolinian, Dr. Lavonia Allison and Dr. Leroy Walker both made contributions that improved the availability of professional development for African American professionals in Kinesiology. Their work to improve access to professional organizations for college students and the eventual integration of North Carolina's state chapter

of AAPHER (currently SHAPE), which was the last state chapter to integrate in the national organization.

Since the integration of many colleges and universities, there has not been meaningful change in the representation of African American faculty members in higher education. In 2005, African American faculty only comprised 3.8% of the total faculties at 27 of the United States' highest ranked universities. This lack of representation has created an environment where minority faculty often feel that their voice is marginalized, thereby stifling their ability to make more profound impacts in academia. While minority student enrollment has increased and is projected to become the ethnic majority by the year 2050 (Harrison et al., 2010), the lack of African American faculty representation must be addressed so that our faculty can become a clearer reflection of the student demographics that we will serve. To begin this process, we must learn more about the experiences of current African American faculty that work at Predominantly White Institutions; this study will do so through the lens of two theories: Intersectionality and Organization Socialization Theory.

Kimberle Crenshaw is often credited as the creator of Intersectionality Theory and one of the foundational principles that IT is built upon is the idea that inequities that are within a system never have a singular causative factor, but they are due to a set of factors that play a role in reinforcing the systemic inequities at its core. In recent years, IT has been used to learn more about students' experiences within Kinesiology programs, but more attention has been given to the ethnic minority and female faculty experience. In this study, I have focused on learning about the intersection of race and gender on the experiences of African American faculty members in Kinesiology programs.

Occupational Socialization Theory (OST) is a framework that examines how a Kinesiology professional is recruited, prepared, and socialized into the discipline. According to OST, individuals progress through three phases of socialization: acculturation, professional socialization, and organizational socialization. The acculturation phase represents a period where an individual learns about the discipline from teachers, coaches, or other influential persons; this phase often focuses on a person's childhood or grade school experiences. The professional socialization phase is where a professional begins their Kinesiology program of choice; this phase typically involves a person's collegiate experience. The third phase, organizational socialization, captures the experiences of an individual's professional experiences.

This study was conducted using a narrative approach, allowing me to capture the detailed stories of the participants, their experiences, and discover emerging themes from their experiences. Purposeful sampling was used to create a pool of six faculty members for this study. The participants in this study were faculty members who identified as African American and worked in the Kinesiology program of their respective institutions. Participants were currently employed at a PWI or had previous professional experience at a PWI. For this study, a PWI is defined as an institution where Whites account for at least 50% of the student population.

A recruitment email was sent to potential participants detailed the purpose of the study; once the participant agreed to participate in the study, they completed an 8-item pre-interview survey that collected demographic data such as gender identity, race/ethnicity, age, and years of service. The interview allowed participants to share visual representations of their personal, academic, and professional experiences (i.e., photos, videos, documents, etc.), allowing participants to personify their experiences within Kinesiology. Coupling the narrative and visual responses helped create a bridge between the data, further reinforcing the theoretical frameworks

that have inspired this study. Towards the end of the interview, member checks were conducted to ensure the accuracy of the collected data and allow for any additions or omissions to their earlier responses. The interviews lasted between 25-65 minutes for an average of 50 minutes and were conducted through Zoom.

In this study, there were six African American participants (3 male and 3 female). The participants' average age was 33, which places their average birth year at the year 1990. These participants had an average of 8 years of experience working at a PWI and had professional experiences in 8 states, ranging from the Mid-Atlantic, Southeastern and Midwest regions of the country. Out of the six participants, four were initially socialized into Kinesiology through their participation in sports in high school or college. The remaining two participants were introduced to Kinesiology early in their undergraduate years through social experiences or later sports exposure.

The participants had diverse undergraduate experiences, as half of the participants attended a HBCU and the other a PWI. The participants who attended a HBCU discussed how their positive experiences motivated them to continue to pursue advanced degrees and a career in Kinesiology. However, they also shared about the challenges once they began the transition from the HBCU environment in undergrad to the PWI experience in their respective graduate programs. All the participants shared a common experience of having an influential mentor who motivated them and inspired them to delve deeper into Kinesiology. The participants shared artifacts that allowed their undergraduate and graduate school experiences to become richer and deeper in meaning. Many of the artifacts were in the form of stories about influential family members, books that expanded their worldview and the impact of their personal faith and music that encouraged them as they navigated difficult days in school.

The participants shared that their relationships with white faculty members have been mostly positive. In some situations, the participants did disclose that when comparing their relationship with white faculty to other minority faculty, they were more guarded in what they shared with white faculty regularly. In addition to the mentor experiences that many of the participants had in graduate school, some participants were successful in developing positive mentoring relationships with other senior faculty at their institutions. The participants shared their experiences in academia with situations where they had to speak out on racial or gender injustices, as well as their individual experiences surrounding the tenure and promotion process at their institution. Participants shared personal stories surrounding the need to speak out when they felt an injustice had been done to students, acknowledging the need to use discernment when choosing the battles to fight among their program or institution. There were a couple of participants who have experienced the tenure and promotion process and shared mixed feelings or perceptions of the process.

As they progressed through their undergraduate experiences, participants shared that one of the biggest barriers that they experienced was a lack of knowledge regarding Kinesiology as a discipline and what career options await a person with the degree. A prevalent theme was the varying levels of nonsupport provided by their Kinesiology programs for African American faculty members, especially female faculty. The levels of nonsupport ranged from an institution having no form of support mechanisms in place to ambivalent support that were minimally effective. The lack of support for African American female faculty was shared throughout many of the interviews. Participants shared instances where they either directly experienced or observed situations where African American female faculty members were given heavier workloads, discouraged from producing scholarship within their research interests, targets for

retaliation and experienced targeted forms of inequity. Two female participants shared their experiences surrounding the ongoing threat of retaliation that they either directly experienced, or fear would be eminent if they were to vocalize their concerns to administration. Due to the threat of retaliation, the participants shared that it often created what they coined “Black fatigue” and made it more difficult to find the motivation to speak out when they saw inequities.

Participants shared that their institution does not provide enough support for African American faculty, specifically when it comes to their professional development and scholarship. Two participants shared stories of situations where their institution did not want to provide adequate financial support for study abroad trips to Africa and France for them and their students. To cope with all these forms of non-support, either at the institutional or organizational level, the participants shared that they have often taken matters into their own hands, oftentimes doing the tasks that they feel their institution should be doing. Participants shared examples of ways that they support their program or their own professional development by finding their own mentors, using their personal social media accounts to promote their program’s achievements, or finding external funding for research projects.

To see the evolution from ambivalent to effective support for African American faculty members, participants shared that there must be institutional investment at all levels. One participant discussed how the President and executive leadership is visible and engaged at his institution, which sets the stage for the cultural change that his Kinesiology program can accomplish. In addition to institutional investment, there must be robust financial support for scholarship, as well as safe spaces for underrepresented groups of faculty. There was widespread support for the implementation of perpetual cultural competency training for all faculty that may

mitigate the misogyny, inequity, and retaliations that African American female faculty have experienced by addressing the implicit biases that influences it.

Participants felt that PWI's must do what they can to hire more African Americans in significant leadership roles; this was especially important for institutions that have a larger African American student population. Reviewing job descriptions for adequate diversity language, incorporating the candidate's responses surrounding diversity into an interview rubric were suggested to improve hiring practices. Institutions should make a good faith effort to review and update their tenure/promotion policies as part of the institutional shift to a more inclusive culture. The first practical step suggested by participants was to increase the number of tenure-track positions within the program. To set the stage for long-lasting cultural change, institutions should incorporate diversity efforts into the tenure process, requiring faculty to participate in cultural competency trainings on a regular basis.

Institutions must develop an effective mentoring framework that allows African American faculty members to connect with others, even if they are not in their discipline. To improve current mentoring frameworks, PWI's must be open to creating professional connections with other institutions, specifically HBCU's. By creating these professional networks between PWI's and HBCU's, it will allow faculty to connect with other African American faculty, authenticating their diversity efforts.

### CHAPTER III: ACTION STEPS

This study helps to improve professional practice by accomplishing two important tasks. First, this study will serve as a contribution to our current knowledge level surrounding the experiences of African American faculty members in Kinesiology programs. Past research that was related to this topic has placed a heavy emphasis on the African American students' experiences (Barfield et al. 2012; Gregory-Bass et al. 2013; Russell, 2020), yet the faculty experience has been overlooked, sans a handful of studies (Burden et al., 2005; Harrison et al., 2010; . Another caveat with this study is that the female African American faculty member's voice is embraced, which is a group that has experienced its own type of marginalization and silencing (McDowell & Carter-Francique, 2017; Blackshear & Hollis, 2021; Simon & Azzarito, 2019a; Simon & Azzarito, 2019b).

Secondly, one of this study's aims was to provide institutions with practical strategies that can help make their Kinesiology programs supportive of African American faculty members, which has a direct impact on professional practice. Considering the recent Supreme Court ruling that has made Affirmative Action unconstitutional in higher education admissions, institutions that are genuine in their desire to achieve an inclusive culture will find this study helpful. The strategies shared in this study can serve as a starting point for institutions and a springboard for future research on this topic.

During the literature review process for this dissertation, it quickly became obvious that there is a need for Kinesiology programs to review their curriculum to ensure that students are taught about the contributions that women and minorities have made to the discipline. In addition to highlighting the advancements made in the discipline, the history should include the instances where past people and organizations have reinforced the systemic racist and sexist practices that



are pervasive in America. I know that if I had not chosen this topic for the study, I would not have learned about some of the African Americans who have paved the way for me to work in this field of Kinesiology.

### **Short Term Plans**

The findings of this study will be presented to Kinesiology Program Directors, Academic Deans and Provosts at PWI's. These stakeholders can implement the recommendations provided in this study and encourage others at their institution to provide support for the needed changes. Beyond sharing these findings with administrators at PWI's, I also plan to present these findings at professional conferences in the coming months. Organizations such as American Educational Research Association (AERA) and American Kinesiology Association (AKA) have conference themes that are relevant to this topic in 2024 and an abstract will be submitted for both conferences.

### **Long Term Plans**

Within a year, I plan to convert this dissertation into a publication that can be submitted to professional journals such as Quest, Kinesiology Review or Journal for Blacks in Higher Education (JBHE). Both Quest and Kinesiology Review have a record of accepting journal articles on this topic, but JBHE would serve as a new opportunity to expand the work beyond the discipline. Beyond publication, I believe that I will continue to conduct scholarly research on this topic, potentially looking to expand the conversation to other ethnic groups. Follow-up research with institutions that chose to implement these strategies is also a possibility and delving into learning more about the student experiences within Kinesiology programs at PWI's as well.

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## APPENDIX A: FACULTY RECRUITMENT EMAIL

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

My name is Marek Gaddy, and I am a 4th year Doctoral student in the Ed.D in Kinesiology program at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. I am conducting research for my dissertation which is titled, “Achieving authentic diversity: addressing African American faculty misrepresentation in Kinesiology programs.” The purpose of this communication is to provide you with pertinent information surrounding the study, including the dissertation purpose statement, pre-interview demographics survey, artifact instructions, and the ensuing interview question guide. You will find the link to the pre-interview survey below and the interview guide is attached to this email.

### Dissertation Purpose Statement and Aims:

The purpose of this study is to describe the experiences of African American faculty in Kinesiology programs at Predominantly White Institutions (PWI's), inspired by Occupational Socialization and Intersectionality Theory, and it has two aims:

1. Bring to light the personal, academic, and professional experiences of African American Kinesiology faculty members.
2. Provide Predominantly White Institutions a set of actionable strategies that can help further support current African American faculty members in their respective Kinesiology programs.

### Artifact Collection

As a part of the study, participants are provided with an opportunity to share any relevant artifacts that would provide more depth into their personal, academic, or professional experiences within Kinesiology; examples of artifacts include documents, videos, photos, or media. Any artifacts that participants would like to share can be sent to me via email.

Your participation in this study is voluntary and you can withdraw at any time. The pre-interview survey below should take 3-5 minutes to complete, and the upcoming scheduled interview will be held via Zoom and should last 60-90 minutes.

The pre-interview demographics survey is located [here](#).

Thank you for your time and consideration regarding this important issue within our discipline. Feel free to contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Marek Gaddy, MS, MAT  
Doctoral Candidate, Doctor of Education in Kinesiology  
UNC Greensboro

## APPENDIX B: PRE-INTERVIEW SCRIPT

INSTRUCTIONS: Please answer the following questions based on your demographic profile:

1. What is your identified gender?

- Male (1)
- Female (2)
- Prefer not to say (3)
- Other (4)

2. If you chose “other,” what is your identified gender? \_\_\_\_\_

3. What is your age? \_\_\_\_\_

4. What is your ethnic/racial identity?

- Black or African American (1)
- Hispanic or Latino/a or Spanish Origin (2)
- Asian (3)
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (4)
- Native American (5)
- Other (6)

5. If you chose “other,” what is your ethnic/racial identity? \_\_\_\_\_

6. How many years have you worked in a faculty role in higher education? \_\_\_\_\_

7. During your career as a faculty member, how many years of service were held at a

Predominantly White Institution (PWI)? \_\_\_\_\_

8. Would you like to complete the interview anonymously?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

## APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW SCRIPT

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Institutional Pseudonym: \_\_\_\_\_

Pseudonym: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Introduction**

- Provide informed consent for participants' review and signature.
  - Provide the structure of the interview (i.e., audio/video recording, transcription, use of pseudonym)
  - Q&A
1. Can you discuss your personal journey to your current position?
  2. What factors influenced your decision to attend your undergraduate/graduate institutions?
  3. What experiences from your undergraduate or graduate education have influenced your beliefs and actions as a Kinesiology professional? Were there notable gender or ethnic influences in your experiences?
  4. As you reflect on your undergraduate and graduate experiences, what do you believe were the biggest challenges/supports to success on campus? Were there notable gender or ethnic influences in your experiences?
  5. Were there any forms of media (i.e., songs, movies, books, etc.) that helped you through hard times during your academic experiences?
  6. Why did you choose to become a Kinesiology professional in higher education?
  7. How would you describe your gender and/or ethnic experiences as a faculty member at your institution?
  8. Describe how you successfully navigate your professional space at your institution; are there notable gender or ethnic differences in your navigation?
  9. How does your institution offer support to minority faculty members? How does gender impact the level of support for minority faculty members?
  10. Describe your professional relationship with other faculty members in your program.
  11. Knowing what you know now, what advice would you have given yourself 10 years ago?
  12. What would you change to make the environment at your institution more supportive and welcoming for current and future African American faculty?

## APPENDIX D: PRESENTATION SLIDES

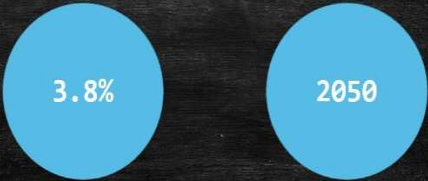
Achieving Authentic Diversity:  
Addressing African American Faculty  
Misrepresentation in Kinesiology  
Programs

AERA Conference  
April 2024

Unsung Heroes in Kinesiology



Why is Faculty Representation Important?



3.8%

2050

Theoretical Inspirations

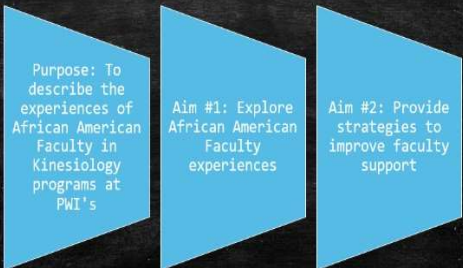
Intersectionality

- Race
- Gender

Organizational Socialization

- Acculturation
- Professional Socialization
- Organizational Socialization

Purpose & Aims




Purpose: To describe the experiences of African American Faculty in Kinesiology programs at PWI's

Aim #1: Explore African American Faculty experiences

Aim #2: Provide strategies to improve faculty support

Methodology



```
graph LR; A[Emails] --> B[Survey]; B --> C[Interviews]; C --> D[Member Checks]
```

## Participant Profile

Sample Size  
(n=6)

Average Age:  
33

Average  
Years at  
PWI: 8

Professional  
Locations

## Results: Socialization Phase Recap

	Acculturation	Pro. Socialization	Org. Socialization
<b>Personal Experience</b>	Via sports/social exposure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Role of faculty mentors</li> <li>HBCU/PWI Transition</li> <li>Impact of family</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>White faculty interactions</li> <li>Activism</li> <li>Tenure/Promotion</li> </ul>
<b>Quote</b>	"The very first time I got recruited, I was dating a bodybuilder"	"My grandmother is the one that I can call anytime and help me manage my emotions and frustrations"	"Tenure is scary because when you're just an assistant professor, you don't have to worry about job security."

## Qualitative Themes

Major Themes	KIN Ambiguity	Inequity/Retaliation	Lack of Support
<b>Sub Themes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Personal/Familial Ignorance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fear of retaliation</li> <li>Pay Inequity</li> <li>Workload inequity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Insufficient financial support</li> <li>Self-Supporting initiatives</li> </ul>
<b>Quote</b>	"There wasn't a lot of information easily accessible about Kinesiology, what it is, and what type of work you can do; I was nervous to enter a degree that didn't have a clear career path."	"Black women who are here at this university get treated like absolute garbage."	"We have a toxic working environment. We have a lot of situations where folks just either leave, or they don't feel like they're getting support."

## Proposed Strategies



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## APPENDIX E: AERA CONFERENCE

When examining African American faculty representation, 3.8% of the total faculties at 27 of the United States' highest-ranked universities<sup>3</sup>. This lack of representation has created an environment where minority faculty often feel that their voice is marginalized, thereby stifling their ability to make more profound impacts in academia<sup>3</sup>. The purpose of this study was to describe the experiences of African American faculty in Kinesiology programs at Predominantly White Institutions (PWI's), inspired by Occupational Socialization and Intersectionality Theory, and it had two aims. The first aim was to bring to light the personal, academic, and professional experiences of African American Kinesiology faculty members. The second aim was to provide PWI's a set of actionable strategies that can help further support current African American faculty members in their respective Kinesiology programs.

Kimberle Crenshaw is credited as the creator of Intersectionality Theory (IT) after the release of her seminal article<sup>4</sup>, but its roots can be traced back to a wide variety of past researchers, artists, and activists in decades past. One of the foundational principles that IT is built upon is the idea that inequities that are within a system never have a singular causative factor, but they are due to a set of factors that play a role in reinforcing the systemic inequities at its core. Past researchers have begun exploring the experiences of Kinesiology faculty through the lens of IT, specifically focusing on female athletic directors at the college level. One article published their findings on the topic by asking six African American female athletic directors to reflect on their experiences through the lens of gender, race, and class. The participants shared their experiences around occupational, racial and gender stereotyping, various career barriers and overall criticism and unfair scrutiny<sup>8</sup>.

Occupational socialization theory (OST) is a framework that examines how a Kinesiology professional is recruited, prepared, and socialized into the discipline<sup>9</sup>. According to the OST, individuals progress through three phases of socialization: acculturation, professional socialization, and organizational socialization. The acculturation phase represents a period where an individual learns about the discipline from teachers, coaches, or other influential persons; this phase often focuses on a person's childhood or grade school experiences. The professional socialization phase is where a professional begins their Kinesiology program of choice; this phase typically involves a person's collegiate experience. The third phase, organizational socialization, captures the experiences of recent graduates and the beginning of their professional careers.

This study was conducted using a narrative approach, which is defined as a design where the "narrative is understood as a spoken or written text giving an account of an event/action or series of events/actions, chronologically connected"<sup>5</sup>. The narrative approach allowed the principal investigator to capture the detailed stories of the participants, and their experiences, and discover emerging themes from their experiences. Within Kinesiology, this approach has been used by several researchers when discovering the stories of African American female faculty members<sup>1,2,10,12</sup>.

The participants in this study were faculty members who identified as African American and worked in the Kinesiology program of their respective institutions. Kinesiology programs are defined as those that house any of the following sub-disciplines: Public Health, Athletic Training, Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Physical Education, Exercise Psychology,

Biomechanics, Exercise Physiology, or Sport Management. The faculty members represented an array of position ranks (i.e., Associate Professor, Assistant Professor, or Professor) and tenure statuses (non-tenure vs. tenure). Participants were currently employed at a PWI or had previous professional experience at a PWI. For this study, a PWI is defined as an institution where Whites account for at least 50% of the student population<sup>7</sup>.

A recruitment email was sent to potential participants detailed the purpose of the study, the motivation of the researcher for their selection, consent instructions, and provided an opportunity for anonymity if desired. Once the participant agreed to participate in the study, a link to the pre-interview survey and a scheduling link was provided in a subsequent email. The 8-item pre-interview survey collected demographic data such as gender identity, race/ethnicity, age, and years of service. The participants stayed anonymous using pseudonyms in the interviews and email addresses were not collected during the pre-interview survey collection phase of the study. During the virtual Zoom meetings, participants were instructed to enter their pseudonyms to eliminate any identifying information during the recorded interviews.

The interview allowed participants to create or share visual representations of their personal, academic, and professional experiences (i.e., photos, videos, documents, etc.). The visual approach has been used in previous studies and is a valuable tool to allow participants to personify their experiences within Kinesiology<sup>6,10,11,12</sup>. The interviews were recorded and transcribed using Zoom and notes were produced from all the data sources using transcription software. The transcriptions were read several times in concert with the visual artifacts to form codes, which allowed the principal investigator to link the visual data with the verbal narratives shared by the participants. The codes obtained were used to develop categories of findings and ultimately determine themes in the study.

In this study, there were six African American participants (3 male and 3 female); details regarding demographics can be seen in Appendix A. These participants had an average of 8 years of experience working at a PWI and had professional experiences in 8 states, ranging from the Mid-Atlantic, Southeastern and Midwest regions of the country. Out of the six participants, four were initially socialized into Kinesiology through their participation in sports in high school or college. The types of sports participation ranged from organized team sports to recreational sports in the form of family activities or intramural teams in college. The remaining two participants were introduced to Kinesiology early in their undergraduate years through social experiences or later sports exposure, changing their original college majors.

The participants had differing undergraduate experiences, as half of the participants attended a Historically Black College or University (HBCU) and the other half a PWI. The participants who attended a HBCU discussed how their positive experiences helped motivate them to continue to pursue advanced degrees and a career in Kinesiology. However, they also shared about the challenges that were presented once they began navigating the transition from the HBCU environment in undergrad to the PWI experience in their respective graduate programs. All the participants shared a common experience of having an influential mentor who motivated them and inspired them to delve deeper into Kinesiology. The participants shared a variety of artifacts that allowed their undergraduate and graduate school experiences to become richer and deeper in meaning. Many of the artifacts were in the form of stories about influential family members, books that expanded their worldview and the impact of their personal faith and music that encouraged them as they navigated difficult days in school.

All the participants shared that their relationships with white faculty members in their respective programs have been mostly positive. In some situations, the participants did disclose that when comparing their relationship with white faculty to other minority faculty, they tended to be more guarded in what they shared with their white faculty on a regular basis. In addition to the mentor experiences that many of the participants had in graduate school, some participants were successful in developing positive mentoring relationships with other senior faculty at their respective institutions. The participants shared their social experiences during their time in academia with situations where they had to speak out regarding racial or gender injustices, as well as their individual experiences surrounding the tenure and promotion process at their institution. Participants shared personal stories surrounding the need to speak out when they felt an injustice had been done to students, acknowledging the need to use discernment when choosing the battles to fight among their program or institution. There were a couple of participants who have experienced the tenure and promotion process and shared mixed feelings or perceptions of the process, as detailed in Appendix A.

As they progressed through their undergraduate experiences, participants shared that one of the biggest barriers that they experienced was a lack of knowledge regarding Kinesiology as a discipline and what career options await a person with the degree. A prevalent theme was the varying levels of nonsupport provided by their Kinesiology programs for African American faculty members, especially female faculty. The levels of nonsupport ranged from an institution having no form of support mechanisms in place to ambivalent support that were minimally effective. The lack of support for African American female faculty was shared throughout many of the interviews. Participants shared instances where they either directly experienced or observed situations where African American female faculty members were given heavier workloads, discouraged from producing scholarship within their research interests, targets for retaliation and experienced targeted forms of inequity. Two female participants shared their experiences surrounding the ongoing threat of retaliation that they either directly experienced, or fear would be eminent if they were to vocalize their concerns to administration. Due to the threat of retaliation, the participants shared that it often created what they coined “Black fatigue” and made it more difficult to find the motivation to speak out when they saw inequities.

Participants shared that their institution does not provide enough support for African American faculty, specifically when it comes to their professional development and scholarship. Two participants shared stories of situations where their institution did not want to provide adequate financial support for study abroad trips to Africa and France for them and their students. To cope with all these forms of non-support, either at the institutional or organizational level, the participants shared that they have often taken matters into their own hands, oftentimes doing the tasks that they feel their institution should be doing. Participants shared examples of ways that they support their program or their own professional development by finding their own mentors, using their personal social media accounts to promote their program’s achievements, or finding external funding for research projects.

To see the evolution from ambivalent to effective support for African American faculty members, participants shared that there must be institutional investment at all levels. In addition to institutional investment, there must be robust financial support for scholarship, as well as safe spaces for underrepresented groups of faculty. There was widespread support for the implementation of perpetual cultural competency training for all faculty that may mitigate the

misogyny, inequity, and retaliations that African American female faculty have experienced by addressing the implicit biases that influences it.

Regarding hiring practices, participants felt that PWI's must do what they can to hire more African Americans in significant leadership roles; this was especially important for institutions that have a larger African American student population. Reviewing job descriptions for adequate diversity language, incorporating the candidate's responses surrounding diversity into an interview rubric were suggested to improve hiring practices. Institutions should make a good faith effort to review and update their tenure/promotion policies as part of the institutional shift to a more inclusive culture. The first practical step suggested by participants was to increase the number of tenure-track positions within the program. To set the stage for long-lasting cultural change, institutions should incorporate diversity efforts into the tenure process, requiring faculty to participate in cultural competency trainings on a regular basis.

Institutions must develop an effective mentoring framework that allows African American faculty members to connect with others, even if they are not in their discipline of study. To improve current mentoring frameworks, PWI's must be open to creating professional connections with other institutions, namely HBCU's. By creating these professional networks between PWI's and HBCU's, it will allow faculty to connect with other African American faculty and in the big picture, set the stage for potential collaboration with students at each institution.

APPENDIX F: ADDITIONAL TABLES

**Table F1. Participant Demographics**

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Years in Higher Ed</b>	<b>Years at PWI</b>	<b>KIN Subdiscipline/ Research Interest</b>
Naomi	F	39	1.5	1.5	Occupational Therapy
Brooke	F	44	13	13	Sport Management
Bill	M	40	10	10	Sport History
Zuri	F	39	11	5	Exercise Science
Kenneth	M	46	20	20	Public Health
Jacob	M	26	5	5	Motor Development

**Table F2. Socialization Phase Overview 1**

	<b>Acculturation</b>	<b>Pro. Socialization</b>	<b>Org. Socialization</b>
<b>Personal Experience</b>	Via sports/social exposure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Role of faculty mentors</li> <li>• HBCU/PWI Transition</li> <li>• Impact of family</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• White faculty interactions</li> <li>• Activism</li> <li>• Tenure/Promotion</li> </ul>
<b>Quote</b>	"The very first time I got recruited, I was dating a bodybuilder."	"My grandmother is the one that I can call anytime and help me manage my emotions and frustrations."	"Tenure is scary because when you're just an assistant professor, you don't have to worry about job security."

**Table F3. Qualitative Themes**

<b>Major Themes</b>	<b>Kinesiological Ambiguity</b>	<b>Inequitable/Retaliatory Environment</b>	<b>Lack of Support</b>
<b>Sub Themes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal/Familial Ignorance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fear of retaliation</li> <li>• Pay inequity</li> <li>• Workload inequity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insufficient financial support</li> <li>• Self-Supporting initiatives</li> </ul>
<b>Quote</b>	<p>“There wasn't a lot of information easily accessible about Kinesiology, what it is, and what type of work you can do; I was nervous to enter a degree that didn't have a clear career path.”</p>	<p>“Black women who are here at this university get treated like absolute garbage.”</p>	<p>“We have a toxic working environment. We have a lot of situations where folks just either leave, or they don't feel like they're getting support. “</p>