

Let My People In: A Comparative Study of Diversity Rhetoric to Reality in Institutions of Higher Education

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LET MY PEOPLE IN: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF DIVERSITY RHETORIC TO
REALITY IN INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

by

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ABSTRACT
LET MY PEOPLE IN: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF DIVERSITY RHETORIC TO
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Darvelle Hutchins, MBA, B.A.

Marquette University, 2017

Due to longstanding structures that have failed to provide an academic climate that is inclusive of the many dimensions of difference that exist among all people, institutions of higher education are under increased pressure to not only communicate but to live out a commitment to diversity as a means for business survival. By conducting this two-step research study at one private, Midwestern university, I examined the extent to which Black faculty members identified with their institutional rhetoric on diversity. In the first step, I completed a rhetorical analysis on four official texts to fully understand the extent to which Saint Alexander University communicates its diversity efforts as part of its identity. In the second step, I conducted qualitative interviews with Black faculty members to understand whether or not the stated commitment is lived out in the institutional culture. This study revealed that (1) official actions surrounding diversity speak louder to Black faculty members than organizational rhetoric, and (2) Black faculty members believe that how they experience diversity within their institution is largely different than those experiences of their White counterparts. Finally, (3) the “diversity talk” and “diversity walk” at Saint Alexander University did not fully align which revealed disparity between the organizational rhetoric and reality.

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Darvelle Hutchins, MBA, B.A.

This project is a demonstration that with God all things are possible.

–Matthew 19:26

In no particular order, I would like to express my gratitude:

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	i
TABLE OF CONTENTS	ii
Chapter	
I. CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	1
A. Background of Study	1
B. Statement of the Problem	2
C. Research Goals	3
D. Preview of the Thesis	4
II. CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	5
A. Definitions and Frameworks of Diversity	5
1. Diversity in the Workplace	8
2. Definitions of Workplace Diversity	9
3. Aims of Workplace Diversity	12
4. Strategies for Workplace Diversity	13
B. Diversity in Higher Education	14
1. History of Affirmative Action in Higher Education	15
2. Present State of Affirmative Action	17
3. Positioning the Research	18
C. Organizational Rhetoric and Diversity	21

D. Theoretical Framework	24
1. Organizational Identity	24
2. Organizational Identification	26
3. Summary and Research Questions	27
III. CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY	29
A. Research Context	29
B. Participants	29
C. Data Gathering Procedures	30
D. Rhetorical Analysis	32
E. Data Analysis	33
IV. CHAPTER FOUR: QUALITATIVE RESULTS	35
A. STEP ONE: Rhetorical Analysis	35
1. Mission Statement	35
2. Vision Statement	38
3. Values Statement	38
4. Statement on Human Dignity and Diversity	38
B. STEP TWO: Interview Findings	40
1. Institutional Identity from the Black Faculty Perspective	40
C. Theme One: Well Intentions Are Meaningless, When Communication is Infrequent	44
1. Successful Actions	45
a. Recruitment and Inclusion	45
b. Invited Speakers	46

c. Gender and Sexualities Center	47
d. Climate Study	48
e. Email Communication and Symbolic Expression	49
2. Unsuccessful Actions	50
a. Gender and Sexuality Issue	50
b. Racially Charged Decision	51
3. Ambiguous Actions	52
a. Program for First-Generation Students	53
b. Hispanic Serving Institution	54
c. Connection to Community	57
4. Diversity Identity and Identification Revisited	59
D. Theme Two: Diversity is About Demographics, Inclusion is About Process and Culture	62
1. Developed Their Own Definitions of Diversity	62
2. Developed an Understanding Through Personal Interaction	65
3. Dis-identified with Institutional Efforts Around Diversity	66
E. Theme Three: The Diversity Experience is Different for Minorities ...	67
1. Lack of Minority Recruitment	68
2. Lacked Sense of Community for Black Faculty	70
3. Token Faculty Members	72
4. The Negative Stereotype of Black Faculty	74
5. Black Faculty Challenged by Students	77
6. Evaluations Negatively Impact Advancement (...)	79

V.	CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION	83
	A. Summary of Results	83
	B. Theoretical Implications	88
	C. Pragmatic Implications	89
	D. Limitations and Future Research Directions	92
	E. Conclusion	93
VI.	REFERENCES	95
VII.	APPENDIX A	103
VIII.	APPENDIX B	106

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Background of Study

It was my first day serving as a teaching assistant. I had just completed two of three classes and, having taught several times before, I naturally assumed I would introduce myself, then clarify expectations and provide a high-level overview of the proposed curriculum. I additionally assumed that once we adjourned, the undergraduates would bustle out of class as they faced the anxieties of starting a new semester. I wasn't entirely correct.

Contrary to my prior classes, one student remained after class with questions. She was the only Black student enrolled in this particular section, and as she proceeded to approach the front lectern, I could not help but to think about of the qualifiers that led to her placement at a predominantly White, Catholic institution. However, I dared not probe for additional information and invoke a sense of prejudice, inequality, or favoritism. Absent from my internal dialog, I focused my attention to the student, and supportively asked, "How may I help you?"

The student replied, I would like to ask you... "How do you do it?" I assumed one of two things: she either held inquiry about my credentials as an educator, or she was in some way inspired by the accolades of my role as a graduate research and teaching assistant at one of the most notable colleges in the Midwest, and shared an idea of what many people in my urban community deem to be success. Either way, I was confused by the missing elements of her question. She then rephrased by asking, "How do you survive

in a predominately White college?” However, I assumed the unmentioned... “as a Black male.”

I realized her query had little to do with my accomplishments but rather, everything to do with the evident lack of racial diversity on campus. Much so, that I sought to make sense of her decision to choose a predominately White university for study. For the first time, in my graduate experience, I shared a desire to experience an inclusive culture, in which racial diversity would be more evident. I also realized that a five-minute conversation did more than identify a gap, it paved the direction for this study by shedding light on an issue that is both relevant and salient to institutions of higher education today—the need for diversity.

Statement of the Problem

Although colleges and universities have become increasingly diverse within the past decade (Turner, González & Wood, 2008), the lack of minority representation remains a longstanding issue. In the past, institutions of higher education were swaddled by decades of institutionalized racism and oppression which inhibited minority groups from accessing a quality education. This reality called for the United States Government to mandate affirmative action in the 1960s, a policy that allowed minorities the opportunity to study at predominately White institutions. While affirmative action has been credited as a primary vehicle in desegregating college and university campuses, the policy in and of itself, did very little to shift institutional cultures. More specifically, many colleges and universities continue to operate based on the longstanding values and experiences of White men. Minority faculty and students continue to lack a sense of

belonging and often feel “othered” due to their lack of inclusion in college and university structures (Uwah, McMahon, & Furlow, 2008).

With the U.S. demographic population becoming more culturally and ethnically diverse, and because minority groups are expected to become the statistical majority in the U.S. demographic profile (Aronson, 2002), recent studies have focused on the campus experience for minority faculty and students (e.g. ...). Institutions of higher education must prepare for the many dimensions of diversity approaching their doors as a means for business survival (Edelman, Fuller, & Mara-Drita, 2001). A large part of this preparation is creating a campus environment where all members feel equally valued. In doing so, colleges and universities are facing increased pressure to not only communicate, but to live out a value and commitment to diversity.

Research Goals

There are few studies devoted to how Black faculty members perceive and experience their institutional rhetoric on diversity. Therefore, this study aims to advance organizational communication literature by analyzing how one private, Midwest academic institution communicate its value and commitment to diversity through official texts (rhetoric). The use of organizational identity and identification as this study’s theoretical framework will allow for exploring how rhetoric on diversity is linked to institutional identity. Specifically, by interviewing Black faculty, my hope this that it will help colleges and universities who are tasked to become diverse and inclusive, understand the significant role that diversity language play in shaping the cultural

experience for minority faculty members. This is especially important as institutions of higher education struggle to find and retain diverse talent (Turner, 2002).

Preview of the Thesis

In the subsequent chapters, the literature review provides a broad overview of diversity in institutions of higher education. I then present a theoretical framework of organizational identity and organizational identification. Next, I describe the data gathering and analysis process, which includes a rhetorical analysis of university official texts, as well as a constant comparative analysis of the day-to-day lived institutional experiences for Black faculty members. Finally, I present the study results, followed by a discussion and research implications.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE & THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

To fully understand the extent to which institutions of higher education communicate their value and commitment to diversity in official texts, as it reflects the lived institutional experiences of Black faculty members, this literature review teases out four aspects of diversity. First, I present multiple definitions and perspectives on diversity. Second, I review diversity in the workplace. Third, I explore diversity in one particular type of workplace—the academy. Fourth, I examine organizational rhetoric, leading to the specific research questions in this study. This literature on diversity is foundational to understanding the urgency for colleges and universities to communicate and live out a commitment to diversity.

Definitions and Frameworks of Diversity

“Somehow, in an awfully short time, we have pounded and bleached the word diversity into nothingness.” Clifford Adelman (1997, p. 36).

Diversity is a popular buzzword in contemporary discourse (Adelman, 1997; Ehimare & Ogaga-Oghene, 2011; Henry & Evans, 2007). Diversity is commonly defined as “any significant difference that distinguishes one individual from another—a description that encompasses a broad range of overt and hidden qualities” (Kreitz, 2008, p. 102). Loden and Rosener (1991) described diversity as a two-dimensional framework: primary and secondary. Dimensions are the individual properties or characteristics that make up the whole person (1991). They explained that primary dimensions of diversity are foundational to one’s identity and are reflective of visual features such as gender,

race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, or disability (Cole & Salimath, 2013; Mazur, 2010). Furthermore, primary dimensions of diversity shape an individual's self-concept (how they view themselves), as well as how they make sense of the people around them (Rijamampianina & Carmichael, 2005).

Secondary dimensions of diversity encompass less visible characteristics that include but are not limited to educational level, geographical location, religion, marital status, and work experience (Mazur, 2010). Loden and Rosener (1991) explained that although secondary dimensions of diversity do not alter one's foundational characteristics; they do, however, add complexity and have an influence on how individuals view themselves and others. Put simply, secondary dimensions "add a subtle richness to the primary dimensions of diversity" (Rijamampianina & Carmichael, 2005, p. 109). Finally, Loden and Rosener defined diversity as "that which differentiates one group of people from another along primary and secondary dimensions" (1991, p. 18).

Gardenswartz and Rowe (1998) expanded upon Loden and Rosener (1991) two-dimensional framework and described the concept of diversity as having four layers: personality, internal dimensions, external dimensions, and organizational dimensions. They proposed that individuals differ based on their *internal dimensions* (e.g., race, gender, ethnicity, sex, and so on), which include *personality* (the core of a person). The personality dimension reflects an individual's positive and negative characteristics which, in turn, influences one's actions and behaviors, as well as shape one's likes/dislikes, beliefs, and personal values. Furthermore, *external dimensions* are equivalent to the secondary dimensions explained in Loden and Rosener's (1991) two-dimensional framework. Finally, Gardenswartz and Rowe (1998) offered *organizational dimensions*

as their fourth and final layer of diversity. Organizational dimensions encompass difference(s) such as functional level, work location, department, management status, seniority, and union/non-union affiliation (1998).

While the term diversity represents all the ways in which people are different, organizational leaders and scholars alike are grappling to answer the questions of “What is diversity?” or, rather, “Who is diversity?” As Harrison and Klein (2007) explain:

The definitions [of diversity] do not pinpoint and substantiate the nature of those differences, nor do they specify the collective distribution—the compositional pattern of differences—within a unit. On the one hand, readers may discern from such definitions the meaning of *minimal* diversity: it occurs when there are no differences on attribute X among the members of a unit. On the other hand, the distribution, shape, and meaning of *maximal* diversity are less clear. We know what is *least* diverse but not what is *most* diverse, and, therefore, the direction of “more” (or less) diversity can be ambiguous (p. 1201).

Diversity is difficult to understand and synthesize because the concept, in and of itself, lacks an explicit definition (Harrison & Klein, 2007). For instance, writers in favor of broad definitions of diversity argue that narrow definitions are too closely linked to the goals of affirmative action (Kreitz, 2008)—a policy that aimed to support women and minorities who suffer from discrimination (Garrison-Wade & Lewis, 2004). Moreover, they explain that when diversity is restricted to visible dimensions such as race and gender, it fails to acknowledge all the possible ways people differ (Nkomo & Cox, 1999). Differently, writers in favor of narrow definitions of diversity argue that broad definitions fail to promote real change (Cox, 2001; Welburn, 1999). This is, in part, based on the notion that when diversity considers “all people as different,” it fails to acknowledge the unequal treatment experienced by women and minorities as salient (Kreitz, 2008). Further, diversity when considered as “all-inclusive,” makes it difficult to identify

discrimination (Adelman, 1997). Thus, the concept of diversity may eventually become obsolete (Ehimare & Ogaga-Oghene, 2011). This confirms Adelman's (1997) assertion that the term diversity has been defined to various extents, leaving many to question what diversity actually means.

For the purpose of this study, I accept the definition of diversity proposed by the Association of American Colleges and Universities. They explain that diversity includes "individual differences (e.g., personality, learning styles and life experiences) and group/social differences (e.g., race/ethnicity, class, gender, sexual orientation, country of origin, and ability as well as cultural, political, religious, or other affiliations)" (Making Diversity Inclusive, 2017).

Beyond any broad societal definition of diversity, the workplace provides specific challenges requiring further studies on diversity. Specifically, as the United States population becomes racially diverse, workplaces are under increased pressure to respond to these changing demographics (Smith & Schonfeld, 2000). To understand diversity as a growing phenomenon (E. Friday & S. Friday, 2003), in the following section, I review the business case for diversity.

Diversity in the Workplace

This section of the literature is two-fold. First, because colleges and universities share a unique responsibility and mission to prepare students for the workplace, it is important to understand the nature of diversity in the organizational realm. Second, because the workplace has been known to forecast issues that will soon surface within institutions of higher education (i.e. affirmative action), post-secondary institutions might

benefit by understanding current challenges in relation to the many dimensions of diversity approaching their doors.

Current literature suggests that by 2050, African Americans, Hispanics, and other minorities will comprise the majority of the United States population (Allen, 2010; Aronson, 2002). That said, the values and experiences of White European men that have a longstanding history in the founding of the United States workforce are soon to end (Wentling & Palma-Rivas, 1997). Consequently, the workplace is expected to encounter tension as minority groups communicate expectations that are different from the past (Allen, 1995). Thus, organizational leaders must incorporate policies and practices that support a culture of diversity.

Definitions of Workplace Diversity. According to Henry and Evans (2007), workplace diversity is “a systematic and planned approach to recruit and promote a diverse mix of employees.” Similarly, Gotsis and Kortezi (2015) defined workplace diversity as “voluntary organizational actions designed to generate a process of inclusion of employees from different backgrounds to the formal and informal organizational structures through particular policies, events, and initiatives” (2015, p. 5). When taken together, workplace diversity is the acknowledgment that all employees harness unique differences in personal values, experiences, and perspectives that vary one from another. Further, when these differences are fully embraced, each employee may reach his or her maximum potential in the workplace (Cox & Blake, 1991; Ndudzo, 2015). It is important to consider how diversity is defined in the workplace context because the definition in which an organization accepts will determine how it is practiced. However, to fully

understand diversity, specifically in the context of the workplace, it is important to revisit early affirmative action literature.

Diversity by way of affirmative action dates back to the 1960s Civil Rights Movement, but it was not until the 1980s when the workplace began to consider the values of minority workers. Before the 1980s, the U.S. workforce had been confronted by affirmative action which mandated organizations to assimilate minority workers into predominately White structures. Moreover, it allowed access for women and minorities into the U.S. workforce. While affirmative action opened the door for those who were considered different to come in, they were often expected to conform to homogenous structures. These environments championed sameness, oneness, and likeness while failing to allow provision for the many dimensions of human difference. More recently, due to the unprecedented shift in the U.S. demographic profile and the lack of White men available to fill the job vacancies of today's workforce, workplaces are now required to incorporate the "others."

The lines of intersection between diversity and the former policy of affirmative action are blurred. Kelly and Dobbin (1998) contend that diversity is "simply 'old wine in new wineskins; in other words, diversity practices are essentially the same as affirmative action practices" (Edelman, Fuller & Mara-Drita, 2001, p. 1590). Differently, Barak (2013) asserted that diversity is separate from affirmative action. He explained that affirmative action served as a reactive approach to past discrimination and victimization and a protective barrier for racial minorities. Barak further emphasized this distinction in his quote: "While equal opportunity [affirmative action] has been effective at widening the door for others to come in, diversity requires companies to make major structural

accommodations so that all workers feel at home” (2013, p. 238). In other words, while affirmative action sought to increase diversity in terms of numbers, diversity as its own concept, takes on a deeper commitment to inclusion.

Given the changing demographics of the United States population, diversity is something that every workplace will encounter (Thomas, 1990). Yet, and still, many organizational leaders remain uncertain about whether they should “tolerate, value, celebrate, manage, harness, or leverage diversity” (Kreitz, 2008, p. 3). Thomas (1990) explained it best:

A lot of executives are not sure why they should want to learn to manage diversity. Legal compliance seems like a good reason. So does community relations. Many executives believe they have a social and moral responsibility to employ minorities and women. Others want to placate an internal group or pacify an outside organization. None of these are bad reasons, but none of them are business reasons, and given the nature and the scope of today’s competitive challenges, I believe only business reasons will supply the necessary long-term motivation” (1990, p. 15).

Diversity in the workplace lacks a widely acknowledged definition. In this study, I argue that the way in which organizations define diversity will determine how they practice it. Further, I accept Mease (2012) assertion that workplace diversity is concerned with connecting human differences to the organizational bottom line (Mease, 2012, p. 384). For instance, if we accept the notion that minorities are soon to become the statistical majority in the racial makeup of the United States demographic composition, then, it is appropriate to practice diversity as a strategy for business survival (Edelman, Fuller, & Mara-Drita, 2001). Moreover, organizational leaders who do not accept and embrace the differences of all people will experience difficulty in finding and retaining

talent. Thus, a body of management literature has focused on the aims of diversity and what it offers the workplace.

Aims of Workplace Diversity. Organizational leaders who desire to experience workplace diversity in its full manifestation must aim to create work environments where no one is advantaged or disadvantaged and an environment where ‘we’ includes everyone. Further, they must transform existing work structures from an “us“ versus “them“ mentality into a harmonious culture of “we.“ This type of inclusion is only made possible when the differences of all people are fully embraced. Currently, many workplaces have work to do. In his publication *Walk the Walk, and Drop the Talk*, Adelman (1997) argues that those who are considered “we” are “the [same] people who define ‘diversity,’ set the ‘diversity agenda,’ formulate the ‘diversity policies,’ and run the ‘diversity conferences,’ and ‘they are usually those in the majority who see others as different’” (p. 36). In other words, minorities are left uninvited to the table as White people discuss the definition and use of the term diversity. Consequently, workplace diversity as an evolving concept often lacks a diverse perspective.

Organizational leaders must realize that not only do minorities deserve a seat at the table when discussing diversity, but their ideas should be heard and respected (Aguirre & Martinez, 2002). This level of inclusion requires buy-in from leaders who occupy the very top of the hierarchy to hold all leaders accountable for integrating diversity into all aspects of the workplace such as performance and feedback processes (Mogannam, 2014). More to the point, diversity must become “a lens for looking at identifying, developing, and advancing talent” (Thomas, 2011, p. 1).

Strategies for Workplace Diversity. Because the extent to which workplaces define diversity vary one from another, achieving workplace diversity is not a one size fits all strategy. Workplaces that wish to defuse tension by effectively leveraging the diversity that exist among its employees must first obtain a clear assessment of the present culture (Thomas, 1990). To do so, organizational leaders must be willing to listen in break areas and establish open communication with all workers (1990). A task that is often placed on external consultants who use survey methods that focus on if and how minority groups feel they are restricted from performing effectively within their respective roles (Kreitz, 2008). Perhaps, a truly diverse workplace will ask all employees if and how they feel inhibited from fulfilling their job expectations.

Beyond the cultural assessment, organizational leaders must be willing to make the necessary accommodations to organizational policies or procedures, as a means of reinforcing the desired level of diversity an organization hopes to achieve (Gotsis & Kortezi, 2015; Kreitz, 2008). Boyer and Webb (1992) explained that when the language of diversity is tied to a workplace code of ethics, employees come to be it, trust it, and respect it. Put simply, organizational member attitudes and behaviors must be shaped. However, in doing so, workplaces must be sure that new policies and/or procedures do not offer special privilege to one particular group or race (Thomas, 1990). This way, all organizational members feel engaged and valued, resulting in reduced absenteeism and turnover (Kreitz, 2008; Maxwell, Blair, & McDougall, 2001). Additional benefits include diversity in perspectives and creativity (Strachan et al., 2010). Oppositely, when diversity is absent from the workplace, it leaves room for issues related to prejudice,

discrimination, and in-group bias. For this reason, scholars contend that a culturally diverse workplace should resemble the diverse makeup of society (Siegel, 2006).

The business case for diversity is extensive. As examined, the United States workforce has a long history of racial oppression that called for affirmative action in the 1960s. While affirmative action helped to desegregate homogenous work settings, many of the founding policies and practices remained in place. Recently, changes in the demographic profile of the United States workforce now requires American workplaces to become more diverse. Because minorities are soon to become the statistical majority of the U.S. population, it was important to examine workplace diversity literature more broadly. In this study, I am interested in diversity as it relates to one particular type of workplace—the institution of higher education. In what follows, I explore diversity in the academy.

Diversity in Higher Education

“The institutional challenge is we are a diverse community, isolated from each other. Isolation fuels ignorance, indifference, and fears.”
—Bryan Massingale

Given that the present study explores the extent to which colleges and universities communicate a value and commitment to diversity, it is important to consider how the concept of diversity was introduced to the academy. “The origination of diversity in higher education is often contextualized by court cases rooted in affirmative action issues” (Meier, 2012, p. 6). In this section, I situate the role of affirmative action in higher education, which led to diversity.

History of Affirmative Action in Higher Education. Different from the workplace, affirmative action in the context of higher education has a life of its own. Historically, in the 1960s, colleges and universities were segregated along racial lines, and Black students only made up 1% of enrollment (Arcidiacono, Lovenheim, & Zhu, 2015; Anderson & Byrne, 2004). This injustice prompted the contributions of President John F. Kennedy, who coined the term affirmative action and introduced the Executive Order of 1961 which prohibited discrimination based on race, creed, color, or national origin (Brunner, 2016). Thus, colleges and universities began to factor race and gender into their admissions process as a means of increasing the representation of women and minority students who were historically locked out in profound ways. However, it was not until 1964 when the Civil Rights Act aimed to outlaw discrimination altogether (Kelly & Dobbin, 1998).

In 1965, President Johnson spoke to the need for ethnic advancement as a corrective measure for past cultural deprivation, which deprived ethnic minorities of access to higher education and increased their experience of racism (Allen, 2010; Lindgren, 2005). His speech confronted the major tenets of affirmative action and his words still resonate today. He states the following:

Freedom is not enough. [...] You do not take a man who for years has been hobbled by chains, liberate him, bring him to the starting line of the race, saying, 'you are free to compete with all the others,' and still justly believe you have been completely fair" (Garrison-Wade & Lewis, 2004, p. 24).

Following his statement, President Johnson later reinforced antidiscrimination law in his release of the Executive Order of 1965, which mandated organizations to justify their recruitment process to ensure equal treatment for minorities in all aspects of the hire

(Brunner & Rowen 2016; Cole & Salimath, 2013). This prewritten statement became a legitimizing factor for public and government institutions, and both early and subsequent affirmative action policies had a critical role in the demand for racially diverse colleges and universities. In many ways, affirmative action compelled universities across the country to increase the admission of African Americans and Hispanics at predominantly White institutions (Crosby et al., 2003; Wilcher, 2010). Further amendments such as the Executive Order of 1967 extended this protection to women (Cole & Salimath, 2013).

In 1978, the case of *Regents of University of California v. Bakke* provoked controversy regarding the legal tenets of affirmative action in higher education as it suggested reverse discrimination. This debate involved a White male, Allan Bakke, who was unjustly denied admission to medical school due to the university's attempt to admit minority students (Garrison-Wade & Lewis, 2004; Gudeman, 2000; Synnott, 2004). As a result, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled the use of a racial quota system in academic admissions as unconstitutional, as it explicitly discriminated against the dominant White race (Arcidiacono et al., 2015; Garrison-Wade & Lewis, 2004). The term *quota* is defined as "a fixed number or percentage [of students and/or faculty] which must be attained, or which cannot be exceeded" (Grutter v. Bollinger, 2003).

In lieu of a quota-based system, the U.S. Supreme Court allowed for institutions of higher education to consider race as a plus factor but not a deciding factor in university admissions. Moreover, if two applicants were equally qualified to fill the requirements of an open seat, at that point, race was considered to be a plus factor based on the proposed benefits of racial diversity which are discussed later on in this section. Although the U.S. Supreme Court acknowledged race as a salient category in educational

admissions, its ban on the racial quota system meant that colleges and universities were no longer allowed to admit students based on their race alone. Thus, institutions of higher education were left to explore new ways to desegregate college campuses. Hence, the case of *Regents of University of California v. Bakke* is when the academy began to increase diversity efforts. The term race, as a plus factor, refers to central cues for perceptions about others. As Allen (2007) explained, an individual's temperament, sexuality, intelligence, athletic ability, aesthetic preferences, and so on are presumed to be fixed and discernible from the palpable mark of race (p. 260). Put simply, race is a socially constructed concept and a way in which people categorize one another (Jenkins, 2013).

Following the case of *Regents of University of California v. Bakke*, affirmative action was criticized for perceived illegality and inequality until the 1980s when Ronald Reagan deemed affirmative action to be reverse discrimination. He argued that discrimination against one race should not be used as a remedy to discriminate against another race (McDowell, 1989). Reagan's determination to abolish antidiscrimination laws were backed by the Bush and Clinton administrations from 1988 to 1996 which signaled the days of affirmative action were soon to end (Kelly & Dobbin, 1998).

Present State of Affirmation Action. Now, nearly six decades later, concerns loom with the Trump administration. Educators and parents alike are displeased with Donald Trump's decision to appoint Betsy DeVos as the U.S. Secretary of Education (Glover, 2017). They argue that Betsy DeVos lacks sufficient experience as an educator and therefore, is deemed unfit to make decisions that will greatly impact the lives of many students (Goldstein, 2017). Further, being that Betsy DeVos expresses a strong

advocacy toward private education, and has financially invested a portion of her wealth into companies that own for-profit colleges (Miller & Jimenez, 2017). Many people are concerned that her appointment as Secretary of Education could mean the demise of public education—a system that serves as the primary vehicle for academic advancement for minority students.

Similarly, civil rights groups have opposed the appointment of Jeff Sessions as the U.S. Attorney General. In 1986, Sessions was accused of being racist. This cost him his federal judgeship (Glover, 2017). Specifically, after a young Black man was kidnapped and hung from a tree by members of the Ku Klux Klan, Jeff Sessions, when asked to speak on the issue, commented that he admired the Klan until he learned that they smoked marijuana (Glover, 2017). Later, Sessions defended his statement as mere humor (2017). Despite Jeff Sessions actions and further allegations, he currently heads the U.S. Department of Justice system. Thus, the current Trump administration appears to be yet another threat to reverse decades of progress that the United States has made since the early Civil Rights Movement.

Positioning the Research. Different from the role of diversity in the workplace, affirmative action served as a corrective approach to alleviate the racial discrimination experienced by individuals belonging to disadvantaged groups (Thomas, 1990). Before affirmative action, the U.S. economy experienced what I like to call a battle among the races. White men dominated the American workforce and minority groups fought for access as a matter of public policy and common decency (1990). After 30 years of affirmative action, current writers are still questioning the mission that affirmation action claimed to serve. For instance, minority students who value education, continue to enroll

in American colleges and universities at rates lower than the 1970s (Lindgren, 2005; Palmer, Wood, Dancy, & Strayhorn, 2014; Strayhorn & Terrell, 2010; Williams, 2013; Wilson, Meyer, & McNeal, 2012). To be more specific, minority men only account for 4.3% of enrollment at four-year colleges and universities (Palmer, Wood, Dancy, & Strayhorn, 2014). This reality is often attributed to unsupportive campus and learning environments (2013; 2014).

As adolescents, minority men receive subtle stereotypical messages from their teachers, peers, and the media, predicting their inability to succeed in education (Allen, 2010; Palmer, Wood, Dancy, & Strayhorn, 2014). Moreover, they are socialized in early childhood to view themselves as “other,” resulting in a lack of self-confidence, as well as a lacked sense of belonging in educational settings (2014). To be clear, the learning experience for minorities are unequal and largely defined by White privilege (Glenn & Johnson, 2012). White privilege is defined as “the unearned, unacknowledged entitlement one receives in everyday life simply because of their white skin” (Allen, 2010, p. 86). White privilege is devastating to minorities because they are rarely qualified to compete against their White counterparts as a result of institutionalized racism. Thus, the idea of race as a plus factor for two mutually qualified applicants offers little promise as a means to increase racial diversity within the academy.

Similarly, in a study done by Turner, González and Wood (2008) faculty in college and university settings remain 80–90% White and largely male (Taylor, Apprey, Hill, McGrann, & Wang, 2010). The underrepresentation of minority faculty is often attributed to the fact that few minority students actually earn their doctoral degree (Adams, 1988). Moreover, minorities make up only twelve percent of PhD’s (Magner,

1999). With the exclusion of psychology and education fields, that number is reduced to two-percent (Roach, 1999). Beyond the narrow pool of minority faculty members available for recruitment, diversity studies indicate that minority faculty are leaving colleges and universities due to unwelcoming and unsupportive campus environments, that are often described as isolating and hostile (Blackwell, 1989). Bronstein (1993) explained that faculty members feel tokenized when they are the only colored minority in their department. This idea of token faculty contributes to social isolation (Padilla & Chávez, 1995). In addition, minority faculty feel obligated to serve on multiple committees which leaves them less time to focus on research (Garza, 1993). Thus, many minority faculty members leave their college or university before they are tenured (Turner, 2002).

When both the faculty and student cultural experience are taken into account, it is evident that colleges and universities are struggling to fulfill the aims of diversity in the workplace which is to create work environments where no one is advantaged or disadvantaged and an environment where ‘we’ includes everyone. While many studies focus primarily on increasing diversity at the student level, in the present study, I am particularly interested in how Black faculty members make sense of their institutional value and commitment to diversity. As a diverse demographic of students approach the doors of colleges and universities, a diverse faculty is also called for (Meier, 2012). Diversity among faculty is said to enhance the quality of the educational experience by allowing for new ideas and approaches to teaching (Turner, 2002). Further, multiracial and multiethnic classrooms promote critical thinking by allowing all students to learn and grow from experiences that are different from their own (Surgrue et al., 1999). These

benefits, also known as the plus factors, have many colleges and universities exploring new ways to attract and retain a diverse faculty.

Phillips (2002) provided three strategies that colleges and universities could use to increase faculty diversity. First, stated that institutions of higher education should look to *grow their own faculty*. This requires the colleges and universities to identify promising minority students and provide them with the means to obtain an advance degree to return back to teach as faculty members. Second, she contends that institutional leaders must *look beyond traditional recruitment approaches* and make an intentional effort to recruit from minority populations. Third, Phillips (2002) asserts that institutions of higher education must *provide minority faculty members an opportunity to be successful* once they arrive. This could be done by designing and implementing workplace roles that support diversity among faculty (Barcelo, 2007). Beyond Phillips (2002) three strategies to increase diversity among faculty members, as a fourth and final point, I offer Clayton-Pederson et al. (2007) recommendation to obtain buy-in from campus leadership. Moody (2004) explained that buy-in is important for minority faculty members to feel supported and valued. While there are many ways that colleges and universities are going about developing a diverse and inclusive campus climate, one specific way in which this study argues is for campuses to develop an identity as diverse. This can be done through official texts, otherwise known as organizational rhetoric.

Organizational Rhetoric and Diversity

Rhetoric, from the organizational perspective, is defined as the “strategic use of symbols by organizations to influence the thoughts, feelings, or behaviors of audiences

who are important to the operations of the organization“ (Hoffman & Ford, 2009, p. 7). As independent terms, the word *symbol* refers to words or visual references that are used to help an audience or message receiver decode (make sense of) the intended message. The word *strategy*; however, is the art of constructing communication messages to accomplish a goal set forth by the institution. Taken together, *organizational rhetoric*, in the simplest conception, is the use words by the organization to influence its audiences in a way that achieves an organizational goal. Moreover, it is how “identity is managed on the individual and collective levels” (Cheney, 1991, p. 23).

As a primary function, organizational rhetoric represents a collective voice. Because the term “organization” represents multiple people rather than a single person, in a similar way, organizational rhetoric is best understood as messages that represent the voice of all members within the organization. Put simply, it is the transition from the question of “Who am I” to “Who are we?” Following the notion that organizational rhetoric represents the collective voice, it then follows that organizations are easily defined by their rhetoric. Not to be mistaken, the concept of *organizational rhetoric* is separate from *organizational identity* in the sense that organizational identity is merely what an organization communicates about itself. Differently, organizational rhetoric reinforces organizational identity by communicating it through internal and external channels, otherwise known as rhetorical sites.

On the one hand, internal rhetorical sites (organization to its members) include but are not limited to mission statement, vision statement, or corporate policies. On the other hand, external rhetorical sites (organization to other organizations, groups, or individuals outside its formal structure) may consist of the organizations website, social

media presence, and so forth. Because organizational rhetoric is said to represent the collective voice of all members within the organization, it is often called upon by individuals who seek to understand and make sense of an organization's identity (Feldner, 2006; Hoffman & Ford, 2009). Moreover, it helps organizational members to understand themselves as part of that identity (Craley, 1986). Because of this, I argue that colleges and universities that truly value diversity and inclusion should spell out the extent of such a commitment through official (communicative) texts (Milem, 2003; Temperato & Ferrari, 2010).

For example, in their book *Organizational Rhetoric: Situations and Strategies*, Hoffman and Ford (2009) argue that rhetorical messages should reflect the type of diversity a particular organization practices on a daily basis. Earlier in the literature, Kreitz (2008) explained that the way in which an organization practices diversity will vary based on how/if an organizational leader chooses to tolerate, value, celebrate, manage, harness, or leverage diversity. In the context of this study, for instance, if a college or university communicates a value for racial diversity, one would expect programs and policies in place that support such a claim. The reason being that when organizational rhetoric is seen as a window dressing that fails to uphold its commitment in actual practice, I argue that organizational members will find it difficult to identify (Bingham, Quigley, & Murray, 2001; Milem, 2003; Temperato & Ferrari, 2010; Wilson, Meyer, & McNeal, 2012). The terms *identify*, or the process of *identification* is when organizational members attach themselves to a shared value of the organization (Torres, 2014). Now that organizational rhetoric has been defined as a means in which

organizations communicate their diversity identity, I turn the theoretical framework that ground this study.

A Theoretical Framework for Assessing the Reality of Diversity Rhetoric

A theoretical framework must be developed to understand the extent to which institutions of higher education communicate a value and commitment to diversity or do not, as it reflects or is not reflected in the lived institutional experiences of faculty members (Adelman, 1997). The push for institutions of higher education to walk the talk is due to the increasingly diverse U.S. demographic population. Research predicts that minorities are soon to become the statistical majority and outnumber White men whose values and experiences still permeate educational structures today. Despite previous attempts to address the demographic population shift, college and university structures remain largely segregated. Today, workplaces are seeing the manifestation of the unprecedented shift in the U.S. demographic composition and are under pressure to not only communicate but also live out a commitment to diversity. Failure to do so could mean the end to many college and university campuses. Thus, I offer a theoretical framework for the construction of organizational identity and identification, leading to the research questions of this study.

Organizational Identity. A valuable lens through which to view the extent to which colleges and universities communicate a value and commitment to diversity is through the organizational identity framework. As people, we are bombarded by organizations' attempts to communicate their identities through subtle rhetorical messages every day (e.g., brochures and websites). However, for the purpose of this

study, it is important to consider how communication scholars define *organizational identity*.

Albert and Whetten first introduced organizational identity in 1985 (Lin, 2004; Puusa, 2006). These two scholars defined organizational identity as “a set of statements that organizational members perceive to be central, distinctive, and enduring to their organization.” In other words, organizational identity is an institution’s attempt to define itself (Sillince & Brown, 2009). It speaks to a shared sense of purpose among the members who make up the entity.

Because early scholars like Albert and Whetten (1985) contend that organizational identity is dependent on what the organization’s members hold to be central, distinctive, and enduring, it is important to conceptualize centrality, distinctiveness, and endurance. To start, the term *central* means that a statement about an organization’s identity should include attributes that are foundational to the organization’s existence (Ashforth & Mael, 1996; Lin, 2004). Moreover, if such attributes are absent, then the organization’s members will feel out of place (Whetten, 2006). In the simpler way, the term *central* addresses the question “Who are we?” Ashforth and Mael (1996) contend that this question can be answered based on the consistent beliefs, values, and norms that are generally articulated in rhetorical sites, such as mission statements.

Organizational identity implies that when an organization makes the claim that it is distinct, the implied distinction should clearly distinguish the organization when compared to others alike (Albert & Whetten, 1985; Ashforth & Mael, 1996). Organizational members create this distinction by comparing what they understand their

organization's identity to be in comparison to that of their competitors. To clarify, the term distinction is concerned with what sets one organization apart from the next. While distinctiveness addresses the question of "How are we different?" it also represents an obligation or commitment in which the organization must live up to (Whetten, 2006). In this study, for instance, colleges and universities that claim to value diversity, as parts of their institutional identity must live out the extent of their commitment in actual practice.

The term *enduring* refers to the longstanding nature of an organization's identity (Ashforth & Mael, 1996; Lin, 2004). Organizational identity statements should include ideologies and perspectives that an organization has maintained over time. Altogether, organizational identity publicly communicates the characteristics of an organization and its members. However, as of recent, the concept of organizational identity is undergoing a much-needed transformation. Because many organizations today are intentionally alike, the early definition of Albert and Whetten is outdated because it is rather difficult to make the claim of being distinctive (Puusa, 2006). Finally, the idea of an organization's identity being enduring is nearly impossible because organizations are constantly changing, and so are their identities. In this study, I argue that institutions of higher education should rhetorically communicate a diversity identity that reflects actual practice.

Organizational Identification. In addition to the theory of organizational identity. This study also explores the concept of organizational identification. It is important to understand the difference between the two. Having already explored the theory of organizational identity, the notion of identification is a "discursive process implicating, shaping, expressing, and transforming identity structures that occur in

coordinated activity” (Kuhn and Nelson, 2002, p. 7). The concept of *identification* is often linked to words such as “belongingness, attachment, and membership” (Torres, 2014, p. 13). Organizational identification is, therefore, the overlapping process in which one’s values intersect with those of the organization. Put simply, it is the meeting point where organizational members attach themselves and develop a sense of belonging to an organization’s identity.

The concept of organizational identification builds upon social identity theory (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Jones & Volpe, 2011). Social identity theory is the process through which individuals sort themselves, as well as others, into categories (e.g., race, gender, age, and religion). It is how organizational members come to share mutual values with the organization (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Cheney & Tompkins, 1987).

For identification to be possible, organization’s must first communicate an identity as a target for identification (Cheney 1983). Moreover, identification can be as simple as an institution of higher education communicating “we value religious and spiritual diversity.” Thus, an organizational member who values differences in religious beliefs is more likely to identify with the communicated value of the organization to which he or she belongs (Ashforth, Schinoff, & Rogers, 2016; Scott, Corman, & Cheney, 1998). The present study builds on these assumptions by asking faculty members to communicate the extent in which they identify with their organization’s value and commitment to institutional diversity.

Summary and Research Questions

Recent literature on diversity within institutions of higher education has focused primarily on how both faculty and students, particularly those from marginalized categories, experience diversity on college campuses. More to the point, they seek to understand the cultural experience for minorities at predominantly White institutions. However, few studies have explored how Black faculty members make sense of their university's communicated value and commitment to diversity in official texts, as it reflects their lived institutional experiences. Moreover, understanding how Black faculty members identify with their university's rhetoric on diversity calls for further research. In working to understand that issue, this study will uncover a number of complex communicative challenges impacting how Black faculty members, at one private Midwest academic institution, experience diversity within their institutional culture. Faculty members are salient to this study as they provide long-term direction for academic programs, curriculums, and hiring practices. Thus, I seek to address the following research questions:

RQ1: How does Saint Alexander University use official texts (rhetoric) to communicate its value and commitment to diversity?

RQ2: How do Black faculty members at Saint Alexander University identify with the university's identity as it specifically relates to diversity?

RQ3: How do Black faculty members at Saint Alexander University perceive the rhetoric on diversity as reflective of their actual lived experiences?

CHAPTER THREE: **METHODOLOGY**

Identity and identification are two fundamental communicative concepts. Thus, to understand how institutions of higher education communicate their value and commitment to diversity through official texts, I conducted a case study of a single private, Midwestern academic institution. Further, in understanding how the university's rhetoric on diversity reflects the actual institutional experiences of Black faculty members, I used qualitative interviews. This allowed me to understand the extent to which Black faculty members identified with their university's language on diversity.

Research Context

I conducted research with faculty members at a private, mid-sized research university in the Midwestern United States, which I will refer to as "Saint Alexander University." Saint Alexander University serves approximately 12,000 students, located in an urban community.

Participants

I interviewed thirteen full-time, Black faculty members from eleven different colleges and departments within the university. This provided me with the ability to interview a diverse group of faculty members to gain a strong sense of how diversity is understood and experienced throughout Saint Alexander University. Faculty members who participated in this study included both tenure track and non-tenure employees. And the length of service among Black faculty members ranged from six months of service (at

the time of interviews) to over thirteen years of service. This time span is inclusive of those faculty members who were comfortable with providing their length of employment.

Data Gathering Procedures

To fully understand how Black faculty members experience diversity at Saint Alexander University, I conducted open-ended qualitative interviews. These interviews were beneficial as they allowed for face-to-face, interpersonal communication. Different from a quantitative approach, by doing qualitative interview, it allowed me to pay close attention to the nonverbal communication behaviors of each participant such as body language, tone, pitch, facial expressions, and so forth which helped to bring meaning to each individual response (Edwards & Holland, 2013, p. 91) without making prior assumptions (Mayan, 2009). Specifically, these interviews allowed me to articulate and interpret faculty members' feelings, as well as if they considered diversity to be a priority within their organization.

I personally contacted each Black faculty member individually via email and invited them to participate in this research study. The email consisted of information about myself as a researcher, the purpose of this study, and I asked each faculty members to pinpoint a one-hour time block to complete the interview. After a second email attempt, fifteen faculty members responded. Out of fifteen responses, thirteen faculty members agreed to participate, while the other two Black faculty members respectfully declined participation. All thirteen interviews were scheduled for the duration of one hour. Eleven interviews took place in the privacy of faculty member offices, and two interviews were held via teleconference as a result of time/space limitations. The actual

interviews ranged approximately 20 to 119 minutes in length, and on average took about 61 minutes to complete.

Prior to each interview, I gathered consent from each Black faculty member. This allowed me to digitally record each interview with a recording device. Then, all thirteen of the interviews were transcribed, with participant names masked with pseudonyms. At the interviews, each participant was provided and identified by an interview number due to the small sample size and confidentiality. Within the results section, however, I anonymously attributed each Black faculty member with an alias name. To clarify, the names listed in the results section of this study are not the actual names of my research participants. The interviews resulted in 229 single-spaced pages of transcriptions. By reading through the transcripts line by line, it allowed me to become very familiar with the data.

Questions within the interview guide were divided and broken up into four different categories. The first category was *individual background*. It was structured in a way that allowed me to build rapport and establish a personal connection with each participant. Therefore, this category included statements such as “Tell me about yourself,” followed by questions such as, “What identifying markers do you use to identify yourself,” “What is your current position?” and “How long have you been employed at the institution?” I wanted each participant to explicitly communicate and describe their personal identity, which may or may not impact and/or shape how they experience diversity in their lived institutional experience.

Beyond developing rapport, the second category was *institutional background*. This section consisted of questions that allowed for participants to communicate Saint

Alexander University's identity. For instance, "Describe Saint Alexander University to me?," "How do you think others might describe Saint Alexander University," and "Describe the mission of Saint Alexander University?" These questions served as my basis for comparing Saint Alexander University's diversity identity as spelled out in official texts against how Black faculty members described and understood their institution. I looked for specific references and links to the concepts of diversity and inclusion.

The final two categories were specifically related to my research goals and invaluable to the results of this study. The third and fourth category asked specific questions that allowed me to answer RQ2 (How do Black faculty members at Saint Alexander University identify with the university's identity as it specifically relates to diversity?) and RQ3 (How do Black faculty members at Saint Alexander University perceive the rhetoric on diversity as reflective of their actual lived experiences?). This research study was broken down into a two-step process. The first step of my research study consisted of a rhetorical analysis of the university's rhetoric on diversity. By completing a rhetorical analysis, I was able to respond to RQ1 without feedback from research participants, which is, how does Saint Alexander University use official texts (rhetoric) to communicate its value and commitment to diversity? I then went on to complete the second step of my research study, my interview findings with Black faculty members. In what follows, I explain both processes more in depth.

Rhetorical Analysis

For the first step of my research study, the use of a rhetorical analysis allowed me to understand the extent to which Saint Alexander University communicate its value and commitment to diversity in official texts. Cheney and McMillan (1990) argued that rhetorical analysis is necessary to understand an organization's "voices" and messages. Hoffman and Ford (2009) explained that rhetorical analysis requires the researcher to break down the text from its complete form into smaller parts. Rhetorical analysis can be conducted to examine the strategies that the organization uses to achieve its goals. It is concerned with understanding the structure in which a message is constructed, rather than the rhetorical statement itself. I analyzed Saint Alexander University mission, vision, and value statements, as well as a statement on diversity to understand the verbiage used to construct the message. My goal for conducting the rhetorical analysis was to interpret this university's position on valuing diversity. By conducting a rhetorical analysis, I identified an institutional commitment to diversity. Furthermore, I then used the analysis data to examine the extent to which Black faculty members related to the stated commitment in their day-to-day lived institutional experiences. All in all, I included four documents in my rhetorical data collection.

Data Analysis

To complete the second step of my research study, which is analyzing the data from my interviews with Black faculty members, I used the constant comparative method rooted in grounded theory (Fram, 2013; Walk, 1998). Grounded theory is the most common form of organized qualitative data analysis. Specifically, I read through each interview transcript in their entirety and looked for themes and recurring issues. After

each interview, I highlighted key points and takeaways that I found to be interesting or worth noting. I then began to place my findings into groups in an attempt to form themes with the data. Once all of the interviews were completed, I went back and re-read each of the transcripts over again to ensure that the themes were true and accurate. In my second analysis, I started a blank document where I copied key points and quotes from each transcript. I made it a point to only include themes that were mentioned in at least three different interviews with Black faculty members. I then used the constant comparative approach to complete my analysis and create categories to articulate my key findings. I accomplished this task by specifically looking for keywords, phrases, and language consistency.

Qualitative rhetorical methods allowed for a full understanding of the experiences of the Black faculty at Saint Alexander University. This one case study helps us to understand how colleges and universities communicate their value and commitment to diversity, as well as how Black faculty members perceive their university's value as reflected in their lived day-to-day experiences. Specifically, these methods worked simultaneously with my theoretical framework of organizational identity and organizational identification to achieve the aims of my study which are to compare Saint Alexander University's communicated rhetoric on diversity to the reality of the actual institutional experiences of Black faculty members. Thus, I provide these results in the following section.

CHAPTER FOUR: QUALITATIVE RESULTS

This research study consists of a two-step process. In the first step, I begin by providing a rhetorical analysis on four of Saint Alexander University's official texts, which responds to RQ1 (How does Saint Alexander University use official texts (rhetoric) to communicate its value and commitment to diversity?), in the second step, I present my interview findings with Black faculty members which responds to RQ2 (How do Black faculty members at Saint Alexander University identify with the university's identity as it specifically relates to diversity?), and RQ3 (How do Black faculty members at Saint Alexander University perceive the rhetoric on diversity as reflective of their actual lived experiences?). The results of my research study are as follows.

Step One: Rhetorical Analysis

While many official texts were open for assessment, I was particularly interested in official texts that are reflective of the university's identity. Thus, I completed a rhetorical analysis of four official texts which include the mission statement, vision statement, values statement, as well as a statement on human dignity and diversity. In the following paragraphs, I present how Saint Alexander University's rhetoric on diversity is communicated in each official text.

Mission Statement. Saint Alexander University mission statement is extensive and can be found on the university's website. While the university's mission statement is unique to its Catholic faith identity as commonly mentioned by Black faculty members, the mission statement expresses its commitment to four pillars which include excellence,

faith, leadership, and service. Within each value, Saint Alexander University communicates a commitment to diversity. For instance, the excellence value is expressed as follows: “Our students, whether traditional or non-traditional, undergraduate, graduate, or professional, come to share our commitment to the pursuit of excellence in all things as a lifelong endeavor.” The use of “our,” referring to the feeling of oneness or belonging to the institution, is used throughout the report, particularly when referring to the institution’s value for individual differences among students. Cheney (1983) explained that organizations use the words such as “our” to create a sense that all audience members share in the views of the organization. By stating “Our students, whether traditional or non-traditional,” Saint Alexander University demonstrates that it values students who come to the institution from diverse backgrounds.

The mission statement goes on to state “they come to join a community whose members—faculty, staff, students, trustees, alumni and friends alike—believe that education must encompass the whole person.” Again, the word “community” is reflecting a strong sense of belonging within the institutional culture. Also, the value for the “whole person” expresses an institutional commitment that extends beyond education. Moreover, the university is interested in all diversity dimensions that complete a person. Black faculty members often referred to the institution’s value for the whole person in their interviews. While maintaining its valuation of excellence, the university claims: “to keep education accessible to a diverse population of students, and to offer personal attention to each member of the community.” Black faculty members frequently made reference to a program within the university that provides services to first-generation students and its success in improving the racial diversity among the student population. However,

participants did not express how the university offers personal attention to each person. The idea that Saint Alexander University wants to make education accessible to a diverse population of students communicates its valuation of all human differences because it does not provide any implicit or explicit discriminatory language.

The *faith* value speaks explicitly to the university's Catholic faith identity. Saint Alexander University's expresses that because of its Catholic identity, the institution is expected to be diverse and inclusive. Here is the institution's claim: "Because Catholicism at its best seeks to be inclusive, we are open to all who share our mission." Black faculty referenced the university's faith identity frequently in their interviews. As listed in the above quotation, the university mentions the word "all" throughout its official texts. This verbiage is inclusive of all differences. The faith value, within the mission statement expresses: "We welcome and benefit enormously from the diversity of seekers within our ranks, even as we freely choose and celebrate our own Catholic identity." The university's faith value, in many ways, intersects with the value for *service*. As stated in the service value, "We expect all members, whatever their faith tradition, to give concrete expression to their beliefs by giving themselves to those in need." The university's value for service was identified as an institutional priority by Black faculty members in the interviews. By using the word "whatever," the university clarifies that it does not expect its members to identify with its Catholic faith identity. This again, represents Saint Alexander University's all-inclusive definition and value for diversity. Finally, the value for *leadership* is also listed in the mission statement. The university communicates its commitment to prepare students to "work in a world of increasing complexity and diversity." This language clearly acknowledges the shift in the

U.S. demographic profile (Aronson, 2002). Faculty members expressed that in order for the university to prepare students for the diverse world, the institution itself needs to reflect the societal demographics.

Vision Statement. The vision statement is a fairly short rhetorical site for assessment, yet, important to examine because vision statements communicate where an institution wants to go, or rather, who it wants to be in the future. Saint Alexander University makes the claim that it wants to “embrace new and collaborative methods of teaching, learning, research and service in an inclusive environment that supports all of our members in reaching their fullest potential.” As the literature suggests, this level of diversity and inclusion calls for diverse in faculty (Turner, 2002). In the interviews, Black faculty members seemed uncertain on if the university’s future direction.

Values Statement. While there were values listed within Saint Alexander University’s mission statement, the university offers six official values that are unique to the institution. Within the six values, two are reflective of a value and commitment to diversity. To start, Saint Alexander University claims to: “nurture an inclusive, diverse community that fosters new opportunities, partnerships, collaboration and vigorous yet respectful debate.” By using words such as “partnership” and “collaboration,” it sounds as if Saint Alexander University wants to leverage human differences to foster a rich learning experience for all people. While this level of diversity should be a priority, Black faculty members did not emphasize or confirm diversity as an institutional value in their interviews.

Statement on Human Dignity and Diversity. Above all official texts examined, the university’s “Statement of Human Dignity and Diversity” was the most explicit in the

institution's attempt to communicate its value and commitment to diversity. As previously stated, the university claims to "cherish the dignity of each individual regardless of age, culture, faith, ethnicity, race, gender, sexual orientation, language, disability, or social class." Here, the university communicates the fact that it values all dimensions of human difference. The diversity statement goes on to state: "through our admissions and employment practices, our curricular and co-curricular offerings, and our welcoming and caring environment, we seek to become a more diverse and inclusive academic community." This statement is profound because by using the word "seek," the university acknowledges that it has not yet arrived to this state of diversity and inclusion. Further, because the university did communicate its efforts to adjust the admissions process, policies, procedures, and so forth, it shows a true commitment to structural change (Gotsis & Kortezi, 2015; Kreitz, 2008).

In addition to structural change, Saint Alexander University's statement on diversity expresses an expectation of organizational members as it relates to diversity. It states that "each member is charged to treat everyone with care and respect, and to value and treasure differences." Paying particular attention to the word "treasure," Saint Alexander University clearly communicates a valuation and commitment to diversity that extends far beyond accepting human differences. Finally, the "Statement on Diversity and Human Dignity" states that "a concerted and intentional effort should be made to live out the Human Dignity statement and respond more adequately to the needs of underrepresented students on campus." Although the university acknowledges that intentional efforts must be made, Black faculty members are saying that there are no

institutional expectations from the university's leadership team around diversity and inclusion.

A rhetorical analysis was foundational to this study. It is clear that Saint Alexander University does indeed communicate a value and commitment to diversity. Diversity from this perspective is reflective of an all-inclusive definition. If we accept the notion that rhetorical messages are reflective of an institutions identity when constructed by organizations (Lin, 2004; Puusa, 2006), then the above definition, along with value and commitment to diversity, as examined in the rhetorical analysis, should mirror how Black faculty members define their institution's identity. In what follows, I present the results of how Black faculty member described Saint Alexander University's identity.

Step Two: Interview Findings

Institutional Identity from the Black Faculty Perspective. After I analyzed Saint Alexander University's value and commitment to diversity, I wanted to focus on how Black faculty members understood and perceived the university's identity. What I found, above all things, is that most Black faculty members referenced Saint Alexander University's Catholic faith as a central value that is deeply ingrained in who the university is. The following accounts present the common ways in which Black faculty members described Saint Alexander University's identity. Professor Smith expressed the way in which she communicates the university's identity to other people:

The way in which I would describe Saint Alexander University to other individuals is that it's a Jesuit institution with a Jesuit Catholic identity. Their identity is wrapped in being the difference, which is, I guess the university's sort of slogan, and so, with being the difference, is being an institution that theoretically is one that is tied to social justice and trying to create some sort of

social change. At the end of their education, students should use the tools that they gained from the institution for some sort of common good of humanity. I think that is the identity of Saint Alexander University.

The above comment represents what many Black faculty members at Saint Alexander University understand the university's identity to be. Black faculty members repeatedly made references to the concept of social justice, and the idea that the university's aims to educate the whole student. Similar to the above comment, Black faculty members used phrases such as "I guess," "sort of," and "I think" when communicating the university's identity. This sends the message that Black faculty members have an idea of who or what the institutional identity is but few were able to provide a concrete response. I went on to ask Black faculty members to describe to me the mission of Saint Alexander University. In doing so, the slogan "being the difference" resonated. Professor Thomas stated:

When I think about the mission, the biggest thing that comes to mind is, being an agent for social change. That our mission and goal is to prepare individuals who are equipped to do such, and you know, you start with the four pillars. So, you use the pillars of excellence, faith, service, and so forth to shape and develop those individuals who will go out for social justice.

I was not surprised that Black faculty members used similar language when speaking about Saint Alexander University's mission statement, as they did when they were asked to describe the university's identity. After all, a mission statement is a form of organizational rhetoric that reinforces organizational identity. Black faculty members see Saint Alexander University as an institution that is rooted in its commitment to service and social change. For the purpose of this study, however, I was specifically interested in hearing specific references to diversity and inclusion. However, of the 13 faculty members interviewed, the terms "diversity" and "inclusion" were not mentioned by one

single Black faculty member. The rhetorical analysis tells us that diversity is not absent from the university's rhetoric; yet, and still, Black faculty members do not see a value or commitment to diversity where they look for it—in actual practice. For instance, several Black faculty members admitted that they had no idea of what Saint Alexander University's mission statement was. Professor Green stated:

To be honest, I am not even sure what the mission is. I just have an idea of it but it's like... it's not something that I can recall.

Similarly, Professor Zander commented:

No, I can give you some of the catchphrases that I think are part of the mission. So... social justice, community, and excellence.

Among the Black faculty members who were unable to recall Saint Alexander University's mission statement, the vast majority indicated that the last time they looked at the mission rhetoric dates back to when they were hired. This piece of information was important because it shows us the university's rhetoric on diversity is not central to Saint Alexander University because it is rarely called upon. Although the university's mission statement is just one of many official texts, if faculty members do not see it, it becomes increasingly difficult for them to identify with it. As Feldner (2006) and Hoffman and Ford (2009) argue, organizational members look to organizational rhetoric to make sense and understand their organizational identity. Thus, answering RQ2: "How do Black faculty members identify with the university's identity as it specifically relates to diversity?" becomes a complex question to address.

I went on to ask Black faculty members to explain to me why they did not mention the concept of diversity or inclusion when describing the university's identity. The notion that "the university is not diverse" represents the collective responses of

Black faculty members. Professor Hicks mentioned that while Saint Alexander University does communicate about diversity in various places around campus, the university does not fuse diverse and inclusive language to its identity. He stated the following:

I guess it's one of those things that I don't think of in the top of my head about Saint Alexander University. I do not think about diversity and inclusion because it's just not here. I see things like emails and stuff like that but the major things I would see on a flyer around the university, but when talking about who they are, I don't really see diversity or inclusion.

If we recall Saint Alexander University official texts, the university's *Statement on Human Dignity and Diversity* reads, "we cherish the dignity of each individual regardless of age, culture, faith, ethnicity, race, gender, sexual orientation, language, disability, or social class." Thus, the notion that Saint Alexander University has not tied the language of diversity and inclusion when speaking to its [Saint Alexander University] identity is not true. On the one hand, Saint Alexander University expresses an all-inclusive value and commitment to diversity in official texts. On the other hand, if Black faculty members are not seeing a value for diversity and inclusion in actual practice, then this tells us that the way Saint Alexander University spells out its commitment to diversity within rhetorical sites and how Black faculty members make sense of diversity through their lived experiences do not align. In other words, there is a disparity between the organizational rhetoric and the lived reality of Black faculty members. This speaks to Hoffman and Ford (2009) assertion that organizational rhetoric often serves as a window dressing for an identity that is diluted in actual practice.

To fully understand the results of this study, I grouped my findings into three major themes. The first theme is *well intentions are meaningless, when communication is*

infrequent. The second theme is *diversity is about demographics, inclusion is about process and culture*. Third, and finally, the theme of *the diversity experience is different for minorities* emerged. Within each major theme, I present sub-themes and provide qualitative context to bring meaning to the communication and identity challenges that exist.

Theme One: Well Intentions Are Meaningless, When Communication Is Infrequent

In the qualitative interviews of this study, I asked Black faculty members to define both the identity and mission statement of Saint Alexander University. Interesting enough, I discovered that Black faculty members did not mention the concept of diversity or inclusion. Yet, as I continued throughout the course of the interviews, I continued to hear faculty Black members say that the university is “well intentioned.” In one particular instance, I asked Black faculty members “How does the Saint Alexander University communicate its value and commitment to diversity?” They were unable to recall specific instances or messages from the university’s leadership team around diversity. They did, however, make mention of different situations that had happened throughout their tenure that communicated to them that the university does or does not want to value diversity. In what follows, I highlight these different situations as official actions and group them into three sub-themes. They include (1) *successful actions*, (2) *unsuccessful actions*, and (3) *ambiguous actions*. I argue that these actions represent the extent to which faculty members identify with their institutional diversity identity. Thus, I respond to RQ2, which is, “How do Black faculty members at Saint Alexander University identify with the university’s identity as it specifically relates to diversity?”

As discussed in the methods section, I only included actions that surfaced at least three times from different faculty members in the one-on-one interviews.

Successful Actions. Within the interviews, Black faculty members described five successful actions that indicated to them that Saint Alexander University is well intentioned in its desire to become diverse and inclusive. These successful actions include *recruitment and inclusion, invited speakers, gender and sexualities center, climate study, email communication, and symbolic expression*. I argue that because Black faculty members described these actions as successful, these are the actions in which they strongly identify.

Recruitment and Inclusion. One way in which Black faculty members perceive that Saint Alexander University is committed to becoming diverse is through minority faculty recruitment. Specifically, they are pleased that the university has demonstrated a commitment to hire minorities into its predominately White structure. Black faculty members often expressed their gratitude as follows. Professor Jamison stated the following:

The fact that there was significant effort undertaken to bring me here does say that there is cognition of the problem and the necessity of remedying it. People actually see that. That kind of ties into why I see diversity as more of an aspiration than a current state. That's why I said Saint Alexander University means well.

Similarly, Professor Delaney, a Black female faculty member expressed the following:

I will say that one of the things that I feel grateful of in terms of a commitment to at least numbers and the representation of people on campus. The package that was offered to me was sort of sweetened by the diversity office. They threw in some money and increased what the school could have me in terms of benefits. That communicated to me that people on campus, beyond my specific department cared. So, that helped me out as a first-year faculty member knowing that there

was someone outside of my department sort of paying attention in getting me here.

The sentiments above show that Black faculty members find value in the fact that the university's leadership has made strides to show that it wants to become more diverse and inclusive. This is important because the diversity literature tells us that organizational leaders have a responsibility to make all workers feel welcomed (Wadors, 2016). Faculty members feel that the Saint Alexander University's leadership team went above and beyond to secure their employment, which helped to strengthen Black faculty members sense of belonging on campus.

Invited Speakers. Another official action that communicated to Black faculty members that Saint Alexander University wants to become is based on the fact that the university recently invited multiple minority speakers to campus to engage in race-related dialog. Professor Delaney continued to add the following:

There has been this freedom now and other kinds of dialog sessions that the campus hosts that both reflect the intentions behind the institution of those that desire to have people talking about race. You know —that's been going on all year. [Anonymous] was on campus last week so I am sure that was not cheap but I don't know how she actually got here or who paid for that. So, bringing a range of speakers who might bring up issues that might not otherwise be heard on campus.

Based on the interviews, Black faculty members spoke positively about the university's decision to bring a variety of speakers to campus. Beyond the value of engaging in racial dialog, Black faculty members find value in seeing that the university has demonstrated a willingness to invest in diversity related initiatives. Similarly, Professor Howard made a comment about how he feels that Saint Alexander University is

becoming much more open to topics of gender and sexuality, being that is it a Catholic based institution. She added the following:

Trying to diversify the campus racially but then there seems to have been a lot of focus on gender and sexuality, diversity in that respect as well, so this campus is much more open than it used to be about gay faculty, gay student and LGBT students and faculty as a whole by having speakers come to campus. Having these types of events at a Catholic institution is kind of mind-blowing.

All comments considered, Black faculty members are communicating that they see Saint Alexander University demonstrating official actions that directly tie to a value and commitment to diversity. What this tells us is that although Black faculty members are not familiar with the rhetoric on diversity listed within official texts, the official actions of the institution spoke loudly to the Black faculty.

Gender and Sexualities Center. While still addressing RQ2, which is “How do Black faculty members at Saint Alexander University identify with the university’s identity as it specifically relates to diversity,” Black faculty members felt that Saint Alexander University’s decision to open a gender and sexualities center on campus sent a positive message that the university is on the path toward becoming more diverse and inclusive. Although several faculty members felt that the university’s decision to open the gender and sexualities center was more of a corrective measure to past diversity related mistakes, Black faculty members view this decision as a value and benefit to the campus community. Professor Howard commented as follows:

Because of the challenge a couple of years ago, we now have a gender and sexuality center and it’s like pride week this week and so you are at a Catholic institution, how is this happening? But I don’t think those things necessarily go against the value of the institution. I guess it depends on how you perceive it.

What is interesting about the above comments, is that, there has been at least a couple of responses that question the official actions of Saint Alexander University being that it is a Catholic, faith-based institution. While there is a push for all workplaces to become diverse, Black faculty members hold query about what the line is. In other words, at what point will Saint Alexander University's value and commitment to diversity and inclusion negatively impact and conflict with the university's identity (i.e., religious beliefs)? Black faculty members are grateful that the university provides resources to faculty and students who take on a sexual identity that is different from the heteronormative.

Climate Study. The campus climate study is another official action that Black faculty members deemed to be a success. Saint Alexander University conducted a climate study as a way to measure the climate of diversity and inclusion on campus. Specifically, the study looked at current attitudes, behaviors, standards, and practices of both faculty and staff, as well as students of the university. Professor Jamison stated what follows:

I understand that there was a climate study done before I got here. The diversity and inclusion director mentions that a lot. I am not sure what they are doing on it but it's just in the right direction to getting the data.

Similarly, Professor Delaney commented as follows:

I know that we have a top administrator who is focused on diversity on campus, and with the recent campus climate survey and some other work.

Based on the above comments, what I hear Black faculty members saying is that even the slightest action that shows effort to diversify the university's culture is positive. This particular action reinforces the literature on diversity in that organizational leaders must be willing to listen to what organizational members have to say as a central step

toward improving the organizational culture (Thomas, 1990). Saint Alexander University does this by way of the climate study.

Email Communication and Symbolic Expression. The final official action that Black faculty members noted as successful were diversity efforts through email communication. Faculty members feel that Saint Alexander University effectively brings everyone together to address local and world-wide issues. Professor Delaney explained the following:

There are also prayer circles it seems. I don't know if that's the right term but after something happened in the city. I know there was a huge visual on campus. Students were showing up and I received statements from the chief of diversity officer and the president about issues that were happening off campus that relate to us. I think that is important.

In a similar way, Professor Hicks spoke about how the university responded to the city's outcry through email communication. She stated the following:

There was a time last summer when there was a letter about an outbreak in [city removed]. I think there was an email about that, and then um... there was a person in Baton Rouge that got killed and person in Minnesota, and the whole week I think I got an email from the university.

These actions are important because they demonstrate to Black faculty members that Saint Alexander University is concerned with issues that impact all people. Further, Black faculty felt that by bringing people together it created a sense of oneness which speaks to the university's value for community as communicated in the official texts. Thus, these findings indicate that to an extent, Black faculty members strongly identified with Saint Alexander University's diversity identity as expressed in official texts, based on how they perceived official actions.

Unsuccessful Actions. Just as there are successful actions, Black faculty members also identified two unsuccessful actions that respond to RQ2, which is “How do Black faculty members at Saint Alexander University identify with the university’s identity as it specifically relates to diversity?” These unsuccessful actions include a gender and sexuality issue, as well as a *racially charged decision*. I argue that because Black faculty members described these actions as unsuccessful, these are the actions in which they least identify.

Gender and Sexuality Issue. As briefly discussed, Black faculty members believe that Saint Alexander University’s decision to open a gender and sexualities center on campus was a corrective measure for past mishaps. Although Black faculty members did not provide specific details on the event that took place in the past, based on what I did gather, the university faced a challenge related to a gender and sexuality issue. In one way or another, faculty member felt that while the issue may have conflicted with values and traditions of the Catholic church, the university’s decision resulted in bad press and the university’s response was not reflective of an institution who makes the claim to value diversity and inclusion. Professor Johnson was disturbed when she learned of the university’s decision. She commented as follows:

The issue happened a year before I got here. I didn’t know initially when I applied. It wasn’t until I got here [...]. Had I known, I definitely would not have come here, but after knowing that, it made me want to be here even more because it was like, “Seriously?”

While I chose to withhold confidential details about the gender and sexuality issue that took place at Saint Alexander University, the above comment shows that Black faculty members prefer to be a part of a university that takes diversity and inclusion into account

in its decision-making process (Mogannam, 2014). Furthermore, when the university does not demonstrate a value and commitment for all dimension of differences, Black faculty members tend to take on an advocacy role—standing up for those in low power positions. Although Black faculty members viewed this official action as unsuccessful, one faculty member explained the university’s decision was closely related to the leadership at the time of the incident. He commented as follows:

I think you also have to understand the leadership at every particular moment. This is the first time Saint Alexander University is having a president that is not a Jesuit, so if that issue was to happen this time, how would Saint Alexander University respond. It may be different but also, I think an important thing that came up was that many faculty members were against that, and we now have a center for gender and sexuality. In a way, Saint Alexander University wanted to redeem itself as an inclusive environment. The first thing you look for at a university is not people’s sexuality. So, as an inclusive university, it becomes important that we understand and accept difference.

Since this incident took place, Saint Alexander University has hired a non-Jesuit president which is different from its past. The fact that the university has made changes to its hierarchal structure, it has become more clear that Saint Alexander is concerned and is working to become a diverse and inclusive campus. However, the university has yet to communicate its past mishaps. Black faculty members believe that had the university acknowledged its past mistake, the healing process could have begun much sooner than it did. This gender and sexuality issue confirms the assertion of Clayton- Pederson et al. (2007) that buy-in from leadership is essential to campus diversity efforts.

Racially Charged Decision. A second official action that Black faculty members viewed as unsuccessful in Saint Alexander University’s attempt to become a diverse and inclusive campus is in regard to a racially charged decision. Specifically, the university’s leadership removed a painting from wall of a campus organization. Students who are a

part of the organization felt that the painting delivered a strong message about the importance of educational equality for minorities. However, one particular critic of the university allegedly used what was intended to be a positive message to create bad press. When Saint Alexander University's leadership learned of the incident, they took to social media and remove the painting immediately.

From the Black faculty perspective, they perceived that Saint Alexander University had little regard for the context in which the painting was posted. Faculty members mentioned that the university justified its decision by stating that the appropriate channels to post the painting had not been explored. Black faculty members felt that the university's decision was unfair to minority students. Further, they added that decision making within the institution should not have been heavily influenced by external audiences. Professor Reid expressed her concern as follows:

It [the university] seems to be trying to take some steps to be better. I think about the controversy around the painting. Based on one complaint from an alumnus who had a problem with it. They [the university] immediately removed it. I am not in enough of the rooms where these decisions are made but it seems from the outside looking in, that whenever there is the possibility of criticism, they [Saint Alexander University] tend to overcompensate.

Black faculty members feel that a large part to becoming a diverse and inclusive campus requires openness to the minority perspective. They did not feel that the university did its due diligence to understand the context of the painting before removing it. This unsuccessful action speaks to Aguirre and Martinez (2002) assertion that minorities need a seat at the table when discussing diversity related issues.

Ambiguous Actions. The last sub-theme that emerged in the first major theme of *well intentions are meaningless, when communication is infrequent* is that Black faculty

members viewed several of the Saint Alexander University institutional actions around diversity as ambiguous. To clarify, while still responding to RQ2 (How do Black faculty members at Saint Alexander University identify with the university's identity as it specifically relates to diversity?), in what follows, I present three official actions that Black faculty members felt were unclear in creating a diverse campus climate. They include (1) a *program for first-generation students*, (2) becoming a *Hispanic serving institution*, and (3) *connection to community*.

Program for First-Generation Students. Within the interviews, Black faculty members often made reference to a university funded program that serves underrepresented, first-generation students. While Black faculty members acknowledged the program in its efforts to increase racially diversity among the student population, they remain uncertain about the role the program will play in the future and question the programs efforts to provide a sense of belonging especially for minority students entering into a predominately White structure. Specifically, Black faculty members are concerned with the negative stigma that all minority students on campus have been provided a means to a private, Jesuit education through this particular program. Faculty members are concerned that if minority students are seen as charity or unequal to their White peers, they may be treated unequally. Thus, impacting how minority students experience a sense of belonging on campus.

Black faculty members propose that in the future, the first-generation program should reinforce that it provides resources to all students who fall within the program requirements, regardless of race. Professor Thomas mentioned that although Saint Alexander University primarily serves students that come from affluent families, the

program has to help shift the notion that poverty is race related and restricted to people of color. She stated: “We have poor White students too. There are [White] students who are getting loans. Not everybody is pulling all this money out of pocket.” Black faculty members feel that the university has helped to shape the stereotype that all minorities are provided access by way of the first-generation program based on where it positions the program. Professor Hicks explained it best when I asked him what a truly diverse and inclusive campus should look like. He added what follows:

It [the first-generation program] would not be tucked in a building in the back of the university. There would actually be various offices around so that people are aware of it instead of it just being “ghetto” in one building.

While the first-generation program has provided a means to an education for many minority students, Black faculty members are asking “how might Saint Alexander University work to make this program more diverse and inclusive?” In such a way where minority students do not experience the university differently based on their socioeconomic status. Black faculty members contend that the idea of placing diversity related programs in one building is not the answer.

Hispanic Serving Institution. For most faculty members, they see their institution’s Hispanic serving direction as one that is financially beneficial versus a genuine effort to increase diversity. Black faculty members are primarily concerned about what this decision means for other minorities on campus. Professor Hicks felt that the university’s decision to become a Hispanic-serving institution had much to do with its Catholic identity, and the need to attract more students who identified with the faith. He stated the following:

Saint Alexander University is talking about becoming a Hispanic serving institution, and some of the basis is because Latin people are predominately Catholic. So, that idea is that you go to demographics that you know are Catholic, but then people forget that there is diversity within the Catholic religion. I mean, there are Black Catholics. There has always been. One person was actually the president of Georgetown. So, there has been a history of Black people in the Catholic church.

As mentioned in the comment above, the faculty member communicated that if the push is truly about increasing Catholic representation, then the university needs to see past the idea that Catholics are racially homogenous. Along the same lines, Professor Delaney expressed inquiry about the university's intentions for becoming Hispanic-serving.

I know there's different efforts that are happening on campus, some of which I think are a unique commitment of Saint Alexander University. Diversity is not something that strikes me as the highest priority in terms of the way that I think about it as a value, like there's the Hispanic serving initiative, but if that's actually motivated by a value of diversity or other reasons, I can't say for sure.

The stated recollection indicates that the university at-large has not explicitly communicated its reasoning in becoming a university with a focus on Hispanic access. Therefore, Black faculty members are left with their own interpretation of where the institution is headed. Consider Professor Johnson's comment:

One thing that I heard recently that gives me cautious optimism. I don't know the exact term, but Latino serving institution. So, on the one hand, it makes me roll my eyes because I'm like "This sounds like some money," but then we had a woman who is heading that or part of that come to talk to our department. Like I said, it gave me cautious optimism. I mean I still have my own feelings about how come this whole plan wasn't set out just for any student of color? Now, you have a whole plan about what you are going to do and how you are going to recruit and all these really awesome ideas. So, my own personal... like why couldn't you do this before? But regardless, so you're doing it now. She made a point to say that even though the initiative is driving it, that plan will be in place and include all students of color. So, there is some cautious optimism that as they reach this designation, there may be better infrastructure for students of color broadly.

Interesting enough, Professor Johnson communicated her concerns about the institution's decision to become Hispanic serving and explained how she was more at ease when communication took place. By having dialog with someone who was connected to the vision of the institution's decision, she was able to make sense of the bigger picture. One benefit, being the opportunity to increase access for all students of color. At the end of the day, Black faculty members want to know that Saint Alexander University is concerned with the access of all students of color. This value for student demographic diversity was highlighted in Professor Smith's comment:

This could also increase the numbers of Black students coming to school because they now see this racially diverse Saint Alexander University or more so than it has been in the past. So, they maybe more comfortable. Although it's not African American's increasing at the rate projected, but this may then change the overall culture or at least the vibe of the institution where this may attract more students of color not just Hispanic.

While the above comments have communicated a strong institutional need for minority access, Professor Hutchinson brought to light a current gap within the institution that must be considered. The need to have Hispanic faculty who will reflect this new population of students (Turner, 2002). She commented as follows:

I don't know how you can be and say that you are going to be Hispanic serving institution if there are no Hispanic faculty. That's always a puzzle to me. I think we have three Hispanic faculty members right now. It's worse for the Hispanic faculty.

Undoubtedly, the path toward becoming a Hispanic serving institution is unclear. Faculty members are arguing for a more inclusive approach that focuses on the educational advancement of all students. Professor Robinson agreed that the push toward becoming a Hispanic serving institution is a good business case. She mentioned the following:

I think it Saint Alexander University is behind in the Hispanic serving resources. One of the things as a college is you have to be self-sustaining and have other sources of money, and so, I think part of the motivation, and I don't fault them for this because they need a good business case for whatever they do. You know they see this as a path forward and one that is consistent with the Catholic demographics and appeals to that population, and so, they're like "yeah! let's focus on that." For good or for bad, there is not a lot of return on investment to focus on bringing more Blacks here. That's the state of our global dynamics right now.

Based on the above recollection, Black faculty members are saying that the university's attempt to become diverse is motivated by financial means. While the business case tells us that diversity is necessary, faculty members want to know that Saint Alexander University's efforts are authentic and genuine. Faculty members are also saying that it is important that in its attempt to become diverse, the university should not lose sight of the need to increase the representation of all students of color.

Connection to Community. The final official action that Black faculty members described as ambiguous when making sense of how they perceive their university's value and commitment to diversity is Saint Alexander University's connection to the community. In the interviews, faculty members were asked to describe how other people might see Saint Alexander University. There was a range of responses but faculty members generally spoke from the perspective of community members. In what follows, are some comments that came out of this dialog. Professor Smith commented as follows:

People have the perception of Saint Alexander University as something unattainable. It's something that's distinct and separate from the surrounding community. That is not a part of the community. It's in the center of community but it's not a part of our community. So, you just occupying space in our community. That's the words of people on the street. Why is that? Do faculty live in these communities or their areas around here? Are these people breaking bread with some of these people in here? Not really, or superficially.

Based on what Black faculty members communicated, there is a sense of isolation that exists from the university and how it connects with the inner city in which the institution resides. Considering that the city has many minority populations, faculty members believe that the disconnect in the university's relationship to the city is closely related to pre-existing stereotypes. Professor Reid explained this clearly:

It's [Saint Alexander University] not a closed campus, right? We're not pushed off. We are in the heart of it and so... do we see ourselves as part of the community? And I think that we have to work more on that. The community needs to feel a sense that there are no barriers around Saint Alexander University. Like this invisible lake, "Oh you don't go over there because you know they are all uppity" You know what I mean? We have to change that. We have to change the way that we are involved. Not just going in and getting what we need and then flying right back out, but have an invested interest in the community in which this university lives. Like, we're not just here renting. We got to get students to break down stereotypes and what they think a group of people are.

From a different perspective, when asking faculty members what a truly diverse and inclusive campus should look like, community was also mentioned. Professor Thomas added the following:

I would like a university that embraces the community in which it lives, that we do more for individuals that have social issues that affect their outcomes, that affect being productive members of society. That we embrace that we are different. I hate when people say, oh I don't see color. Oh?!... Then you don't see me. I want you to see this brown skin; I want you to know what my people do, what we contribute. Don't tell me you don't see color. That just boggles my mind. I'm like, "Really?" I know that's a nice phrase you want to say, but no, see me, see the differences because when you don't see color, then you don't see me, then you don't see my differences, then you don't accept... what I bring to the table. If you think we are all the same, we're not. So, that's what I want, I want a university that sees differences.

As commented above, many Black faculty members believe that the university could do a better job at getting to know its community and understanding the race-related tensions that exist. The university must understand that although the institution and the

city at-large foster different demographic makeups, a connectedness to the community must extend beyond the purposes of research. The university must be willing to make an investment in the city at various levels (i.e., time, money, commitment). The institution must also see the community as an avenue for minority recruitment. Professor Hutchinson could not have explained it better:

I think at the very least the institution needs to realize that we're surrounded by a very diverse community. We're surrounded by a city of African Americans and you can't figure out how to bring more diversity into the university. At some universities, there is a conscious effort to partner with the community. Right? In terms of giving a sense of belonging. So, you have these types of programs and collaborations between the community and the university that tend to revive fallen neighborhoods around very big universities like this. You know, so Saint Alexander University can do more in that sense, and I think also giving the community a sense that they are a part of this institution.

Overall, Black faculty members want to know that the university values and wants to be connected to the community. While the rhetorical analysis shows that the university recognizes the value of being located in a diverse urban city, faculty members are saying that the relationship with the city is not there. They further believe that because the university has a Catholic identity rooted in service, the university has a responsibility to bridge the division between the institution itself and the community. Thus, these findings indicate that Black faculty members partially identified with institutional actions that were perceived as ambiguous.

Diversity Identity and Identification Revisited. After completing a rhetorical analysis which included multiple official texts, an all-inclusive commitment to diversity by Saint Alexander University was identified. As discussed in the early literature, all-inclusive definitions of diversity express a value and commitment to the many dimensions of difference (Loden & Rosener, 1991). Scholars Kreitz (2008) and Adelman

(1997) argued that all-inclusive descriptions of diversity makes it difficult to identify discrimination when specific categories such as race and gender are not salient. Once an all-inclusive value and commitment to diversity was identified, Black faculty members were then asked to describe their institutional identity and mission statement. The results show the disparity between how the university describes its diversity in official texts and how Black faculty members describe their university's identity. Specifically, Black faculty members did not make any reference to the term diversity or inclusion when describing their institutional identity and mission. I then asked faculty members explicitly why they did not make any reference to diversity. Each of the Black faculty members mentioned that the institution was not diverse. However, when I went on to ask faculty members "How does the institution communicate its commitment to diversity?" they often made reference to official actions that signaled to them that Saint Alexander University intends to become diverse. Thus, the theme *well intentions are meaningless, when communication is infrequent* emerged.

This major theme presented sub-themes that include (1) successful actions, (2) unsuccessful actions, and (3) ambiguous actions. These findings identify the actions with which Black faculty members most strongly and least identified when making sense of their university's value and commitment to diversity. Furthermore, these actions revealed a significant finding. Black faculty members identified more with official actions than official texts on diversity. Identification to official actions were shaped on two accounts. First, Black faculty members were either not seeing or had little knowledge of diversity rhetoric in the official texts. Second, a value and commitment to diversity was not reflected in the actual lived experiences of Black faculty members.

Although Black faculty members were able to identify official actions that communicated that their institution has intentions toward valuing diversity, a key finding that emerged is that Black faculty members felt that the university's leadership failed to communicate the "why" behind its actions. Put simply, Black faculty members were left to assume that these actions, in some way, contributed to the university efforts to become highly diverse and inclusive because communication is a means by which organizational members gather institutional direction, I asked Black faculty members "What expectations does Saint Alexander University have of faculty and staff based on its commitment to diversity? Nearly all faculty members, with the exception of two, mentioned that the university administration had not communicated any expectation of faculty members toward becoming a diverse and inclusive campus. Professor Reid's statement reflected a typical response: "That I can't tell you. I don't know what the expectations are. I know my expectation for myself." Although the university administration did not communicate to faculty members their role and expectations around diversity, faculty members were open to discussing steps they had taken on themselves. Consider the response from Professor Robinson:

Um, not really. I think there are programs and activities that you can choose to work in. For me, my impact is every time I step into the classroom because my students have never had a faculty of color in this college, so that's my opportunity to have an impact on them and the way that they see the world.

If we follow the notion that organizational leaders are responsible for shaping and defining the type of diversity an institution wants to see (Kreitz, 2008), then I argue that official actions are not enough. Saint Alexander University's leadership must explicitly communicate what diversity looks like for the university, as well as what is expected of

faculty and staff in order for the university to reach its diversity goals. The institution has to go beyond what is written in official texts to provide a step-by-step plan that provides meaning and context to the official actions. Otherwise, when communication is infrequent, Black faculty members are left to interpret the institutional direction based on their own interpretation.

Theme Two: Diversity Is About Demographics, Inclusion Is About Process and Culture

To make sense of the institution's value and commitment to diversity, faculty members did one of three things. They either (1) *developed their own definitions of diversity*, (2) *developed an understanding through personal interaction*, or (3) *dis-identified with institutional efforts around diversity*. These three approaches became sub-themes within the second major theme of *diversity is about demographics, whereas inclusion is about process and culture*. This second major theme still responds to RQ2: How do Black faculty members at Saint Alexander University identify with the university's identity as it specifically relates to diversity?

Developed Their Own Definitions of Diversity. Because the university leadership has not explicitly communicated its value and commitment to diversity beyond the institutional rhetoric, I found that Black faculty members generally broached diversity efforts based on their personal working definitions. As stated in the diversity literature, the problem with each faculty member working off their own definition is that it deepens the lack of clarity in understanding the institutional direction. For this reason alone, the university's leadership would benefit from making an intentional effort to communicate

its step-by-step plan toward achieving a diverse and inclusive campus culture.

Additionally, administration and campus leadership must clarify what is expected of faculty in achieving the institutional goals. To understand how Black faculty members, understand diversity or perhaps their working definitions, I asked them to describe diversity in their own words. Most definitions were narrow and limited to visible dimensions (Cox, 2001; Welburn, 1999). Following are examples that speak for the collective. Professor Jamison commented that diversity is when:

We can go to uscensus.gov and look up all the percentages of the population and we can filter by race, ethnicity, by gender, by sexuality and we can take all those percentages and then transplant them on to the demographics of a campus, then we are in a better position. When we have a president and provost that come from a marginalized or underrepresented group, I think then we are definitely making a progress.

Following the notion that diversity is about demographic comparison, Professor Hicks defined diversity from a programmatic and curriculum perspective.

I would say a curriculum that reflects the demographics of the students who are here or of the community. So, I think that's one thing. I also feel as though, let's say, if you go to the student counsel. That it would be reflective of the university demographics. Umm... that activities that relate to African Americans or things that are connected to African Americans for example, EOP. It won't be tucked in a building in the back of the university.

Many of the faculty member definitions of diversity almost always linked back to the concept of race. While race is salient, especially in the context of diversity discourse, it is a restricted dimension for the goal of diversity—the inclusion of all people. In fact, because Black faculty members see diversity through the narrow lens of race, most of their personal actions within Saint Alexander University reflected this value. Here is what Professor Hicks said about how he infuses race into his curriculum:

Um... when talking about race. I'm just very open about it in the class but I think it's also because of the type of class that I teach. Where it's going to be a part of the curriculum. So, if someone was uncomfortable with it then they probably would have dropped beforehand because they would know what the deal is, so if you can't handle that or even the words that I use, then move around.

In the same vein, Professor Robinson mentioned that she begins each semester off by challenging her students to critically assess a rhetorical document on diversity that is crafted by Saint Alexander University. She explains the following:

The one piece that I actually use in my class is the statement on human dignity. We start out with a discussion and we talk about the first couple of sentences in the statement that delineate the various types of diversity. So, its gender, its race, its sexual orientation, and its social class. It goes on and on, and so, there are eight or so characteristics that should be considered, and we have a conversation about how Saint Alexander University is doing on these things. Why have they written this statement? Why put this on paper?

Lastly, because many Black faculty members see racial diversity as a personal value, they communicated that their focus on equality is linked to a great obligation of sense of responsibility, especially because they come from a marginalized group and have been privy to oppressive institutional structures. Here is how Professor Jamison expressed his sense of responsibility.

For my Black students, I do feel I have a sense of responsibility to have an open door and be able to deal with them on a level or as this like I understand what you are going through. I have been there. If you need assistance, I am here and on top of that I have to make sure that it does not appear that I am valuing Black students over White students.

The above responses suggest that faculty are saying that they are expected to take on the role of supporting students because other people are not doing it. This also reaffirms my notion that Black faculty members look more toward official actions and programs and less to official texts when making sense of their university's commitment to diversity.

Developed an Understanding Through Personal Interaction. The interview transcripts show that faculty members also tried to make sense of their university's commitment to diversity through personal interaction. Faculty members noted that having one-off conversations with campus officials provided clarity. A problem with personal one-on-one conversations when communicating institutional identity is that they provide direction for single individuals thus, allowing for multiple interpretations in working toward achieving organizational goals. Here is how Professor Jamison responded after meeting with the director of diversity and inclusion.

I have had conversations with the president and the provost. It's been my experience with my interactions with all these folks who are at the top of the food chain that Saint Alexander University means well.

On a different account, I asked Professor Hicks to describe the university's resources that have been made available to him as a resource. He responded as follows:

Well, the office of diversity and inclusion. So, I can go over and talk to the director and run some ideas by him in terms of that diversity. I guess that's about it.

In a more assertive way, Professor Howard expressed his concern not having communicated with the campus president since he on-boarded the university.

I contacted the president last year about the fact that we had both been here the same amount of time and I thought like I have never meet him, and I didn't know if he actually knew any faculty of color. It was a very bold thing to do, but I was like...well if I get fired because of this, at least I'll be like I did something. So, he actually hosted a lunch for faculty of color to just listen to their experiences. I didn't get to go unfortunately because I was teaching during the time, that happens, but I heard it almost became like a 2-hour rant of faculty of color being like "This is what has been happening."

What I gather from these sentiments has very little to do with the context of the messages itself. What I hear faculty members saying is that they have become highly

proactive and intentional about increasing communication with members of the university's leadership team. It becomes apparent that faculty members want to have a voice and role in driving a culture of diversity and inclusion. They also just want to be heard.

Dis-identified with Institutional Efforts Around Diversity. Finally, in answering the question of "how do Black faculty identify with the university's identity as it specifically relates to diversity?" Black faculty members who did not develop and operationalize their own definition or seek meaning through a personal interaction, they detached themselves from the university's diversity efforts and found a sense of belonging through various social groups. For instance, Professor Jamison spoke about his attachment to his community. He explained the following:

I didn't come to Saint Alexander University honestly for the diversity at Saint Alexander University. I came to Saint Alexander University because it's in a city that's 40% Black. At my previous employer, I was only Black guy there, but it didn't matter because once five o'clock hit, I was able to do other things. Similar thing here. What Saint Alexander University does and does not do on the fronts of diversity and inclusion once I leave campus, I am not overly concerned with it.

Similarly, Professor Smith expressed his detachment from the institutional diversity identity as follows:

My identity isn't tied to academia. I was born Black, and I will always be Black, and that first and foremost and the most important identity to me. Everything else is more or less secondary. This [Saint Alexander University] just provides the means on how I get food on my table.

While the institution is still trying to figure out its direction regarding diversity, Black faculty members are looking to other avenues that provide them with a sense of diversity and inclusion. Such avenues include, but are not limited to, fraternity and sorority chapters, friends and mentors, as well as memberships to minority-serving

organizations. For instance, when I asked Professor Jamison if he identified with the university's diversity identity, he responded.

The reason why I struggle with this question is that Saint Alexander University is very isolated. If it makes sense, I identify more with my department, than I do with Saint Alexander University.

The above sentiment is reflective of how many Black faculty members described the socialization challenges at Saint Alexander University. They explained that they barely have any contact with faculty or students from other areas of study. Furthermore, most of their daily interactions take place within their specific college or department setting in which they are the only minority. Thus, how they experience diversity within Saint Alexander University is limited. Without institutional direction, Black faculty members assume that the university does not know where it wants to go. Beyond RQ2, asking Black faculty members how they identify and makes sense of their institutional value and commitment to diversity, a final theme of *the diversity experience is different for minorities* emerged. This theme responds directly to RQ3, which is, "How do Black faculty members perceive the rhetoric on diversity as reflective of their experiences?"

Theme Three: The Diversity Experience is Different for Minorities

If the goal of diversity is to create an environment where all organizational members are equally valued, then all faculty members should be experiencing their university's value and commitment to diversity and inclusion similarly, regardless of race. The final major theme that emerged in this study is *the diversity experience is different for minorities*. This theme is concerned with how Black faculty members experience diversity on a day-to-day basis, and whether the actual lived experience for

Black faculty members align with the university's avowed commitment to diversity as expressed in official texts. In getting to this question, I asked Black faculty members "What are the university's challenges when it comes to diversity and inclusion?" Further, "To what extent do you believe you experience Saint Alexander University differently than your peers?" Both questions are invaluable to the results of this study. After reviewing the transcripts, Black faculty members expressed that they did in fact experience diversity differently from their White peers, which they felt was largely shaped by their race. In what follows, I break down Black faculty member responses into six sub-themes. These sub-themes are (1) *lack of minority representation*, (2) *lacked sense of community for Black faculty*, (3) *token faculty members*, (4) *the negative stereotype of Black faculty*, (5) *Black faculty challenged by students*, and (6) *evaluations negatively impact advancement for Black faculty*.

Lack of Minority Recruitment. Based on the interviews, Black faculty members communicate that their experience of diversity on campus is different because both Black students and faculty represent a very small portion of the university demographic population. Therefore, they rarely come in contact with people who resemble them. Put simply, Black faculty members work in dominant White structures that does not reflect a cultural value for diversity. The need to diversify predominate White spaces is apparent at every level of the institution. Many faculty members mentioned that the lack of racial diversity at both the faculty and student level is due to the lack of funding toward cultural studies programs that primarily attract Black scholars and students. To start, Professor Jamison commented as follows:

Most of my friends that I went to grad school with, they were in areas like Black studies and education. A couple who were in sociology. That's it. I guess what I am getting to is we find that there are clusters of people of color who study certain things.

While every Black faculty member is not confined to the majors mentioned, Black faculty members are saying that if Saint Alexander University truly wants to value diverse, the university must invest in programs that attract this particular audience. This calls for a highly intentional approach to Black faculty recruitment. Furthermore, if the university is making the claim to value all people and all differences by creating an environment where "we" is everyone, the same level of commitment and resources that goes toward programs that are primarily founded and attended by whites must also be extended other cultural studies. Professor Hicks spoke to this need more clearly.

Not only do you bring someone here but you actually create an environment where they actually want to stay, and have resources for them to want to stay. So, like there is an African Studies program but from what I remember there is no funding, as of yet, for it. So, it's basically here, but it's not funded, so there is an issue there.

Keeping with the current sub-theme, Professor Clayton explained that by hiring additional Black faculty members in these specific areas, it will create a richer learning experience for all students based on the real-life application that comes from the minority experience.

I will be very frank with you. I am not saying that it is only an African who can teach African history. Or that only a Black can teach Black history, but you know, if you want to be conscious of those types of things you probably want to attract. Because if this is a person of color. Like a Black instructor teaching Black history. They're not just teaching from what they learned. They are teaching from experience. They are teaching from the communities in which they have grown up, and that is very powerful in terms of how you can communicate different experiences and how people are going to become somewhat interested in your class.

In addition to placing a focus on increasing and advancing cultural studies programs as a way to increase racial diversity among faculty, Black faculty members also believe that doing so will also increase the racial diversity among the student demographics. The reason being, is that minority students generally seek out colleges and universities that have programs and curriculum that support their culture. Professor Jamison spoke to this when I asked him if he would recommend the university as a good place to study.

There is not really a robust Black studies component here, so if students want to come here to study that, then they are going to lose out. I mean Saint Alexander University is expensive. I don't know if for students of color—if it's worth it. I really can't say that.

Overall, the diversity experience is different for Black faculty because they barely get the opportunity to connect and encounter other faculty and students that look like them. The racial diversity at Saint Alexander University contradicts Siegel's (2006) argument that the diverse makeup of today's workplace should resemble the broader society. Therefore, the reality that Black faculty members are the "other" becomes more obvious due to social isolation.

Lacked Sense of Community for Black Faculty. Based on the interviews, not only are Black faculty members saying that they need to see increased recruitment, they also desire a sense of community. For instance, Black faculty members communicated that there has been little attempt at the institutional level to bring Black faculty members together for the purpose of building relationships and expanding resources. The lack of institutional action has led Black faculty members to pursue such endeavors on their own. Professor Howard explained his attempt to build community among Black faculty. When asked how Saint Alexander University should go about diversity, he commented thusly:

I think part of it has do with the office of diversity and inclusion, I think they have to take a more proactive approach in terms of making these things happen. It can come from faculty. For example, I put together a little luncheon for faculty [of color] last year, but then people got in their feelings because I was new and trying to do this thing. I'm like but if you've been here for 15 years and you haven't done it, why you mad? So, the hierarchy of higher education gets in the way of some of these movements. I just want it to happen for the sake of all of us. Where some people want to do it to say "I helped the community." So my issue is that the president or the office of diversity and inclusion need to do something and make a consorting effort to help this faculty [Black faculty].

The above sentiment is reflective of many Black faculty members who desire to build relationships and community with one minority faculty members throughout the university. Black faculty members feel that at the institutional level, there is little initiative toward creating a formalized program. Thus, they take on the impression that the value of building a community among Black faculty is not an institutional priority. Professor Thomas spoke to subtle attempts to bridge a community among Black faculty that has been unsustainable.

There have been attempts for us to get together. When we do, it's like "Okay, where do we go from here?" And then it's like back into the grind because we know it can be so difficult to obtain tenure that you don't want anything to stand in the way. I think that's the battle that faculty of the color fight. I want to be active in diversity, I want to be active with students of color, you know. At the same time, I am on this clock that I got to show deliverables. I think we have a belief or reality that they just waiting for me to mess up so that they got something to say.

Faculty members also communicate a strong desire for community, they are also consumed with their day-to-day workload. Faculty members are concerned that their job demands may stand in the way of this happening (Jacobs, Cintrón & Canton, 2002). Still, above all, Black faculty feel that they are less connected to one another than their White counterparts. Professor Clayton spoke to a lack of community among Black faculty as a longstanding issue. He commented as follows:

I don't think I visited any faculty member in their home, and I've been here for almost a decade. I don't think I sat down and had a drink with a faculty on a Saturday. No, it has not happened. I'm not saying that people should invite me but at my previous institution, the people that I worked with were supporting kids in my village through scholarship programs, and so, there were kids who went to primary school through those types of programs, and so, we would meet once a month or something and talk about other things beyond academics but that has never happened here.

Based on the comment above, it becomes very clear that while faculty members realize that they may or may not visit their colleagues or get the opportunity to meet their family, they do desire a reason our purpose to come together. Professor Jamison mentioned that having such a community will ultimately change how they experience the institution. He commented as follows:

I would not be in such a hurry to get off campus. When my office hours are over, when my last class is done, I am gone. I think that maybe if I had another faculty person of color, that I could just kind of hangout with, let's go grab a brew or something, or let's go to gym, let's go to play some ball or something like that, I may be here more often. I am here when I have to be for the most part and when I don't have to be, I am somewhere else.

After reading the interview transcripts, it becomes very clear that when Black faculty members do not feel a sense of belonging; they tend to limit their day-to-day interactions. The aforementioned comment effectively speaks to this detachment.

Token Faculty Members. Black faculty member express concern with how Saint Alexander University targets many of the same faculty of color when it comes to diversity efforts. This speaks to Padilla and Chávez (1995) assertion that some faculty members are tokenized within their college or university which often leads to isolation issues. Several Black faculty members mentioned that they are overly called upon to speak on behalf of the Black race while others mentioned that they did not receive

enough exposure or that the way in the leaderships at Saint Alexander University speak about certain Black faculty members is unequal and unsettling. Black faculty members made it clear that being Black is not a monolith, meaning that all Black faculty are not the same. Therefore, they believe that there must be an intentional effort for the university to engage and celebrate all faculty when having diversity related discussions. Professor Howard responded as follows:

I think as an institution another thing that I find problematic is that there tends to be like this token Black faculty member who is kind of seen as the end of be all of Black faculty members on the campus. It almost feels like a flavor of the week type of thing, like you're just, you're the cool Black person of the mob or whatever and I don't know, there's something about the way it's presented that's very problematic to me. Where one person it's kind of highlighted over and over and over again, but you're not talking about the rest. There are other Black faculty members around campus doing research, and doing great things but those people aren't talked about.

Similarly, when I asked Professor Thomas what expectations did Saint Alexander University's leadership expect of her as a faculty member. She added:

You are expected to be the face of an entire race, and to me, that just shows you that you have a very elementary definition of diversity. All Black people are not the same, which boggles my mind because they don't think all the White people are the same, right? So, why are we all the same? You know what I mean? Just like there are geographical differences, there is educational, we have different values, you know.

The idea that Black people are not a monolith reflected the opinion of many Black faculty members when speaking about diversity. In fact, Professor Clayton communicated his sensitivities around racial identifiers. He commented:

I just got an email yesterday from a campus administrator, and she sent an email inviting African American faculty, and I got the email, right? So, I obviously know that she is sending out the email because I am a Black faculty, but you know for her, the word African American is an umbrella term that is inclusive of people coming from Africa. So, I emailed and back and said, should I come? I don't want to go because I'm not African American. These things are important.

Based on the above comments, Black faculty are expressing the importance for the university to realize that although some Black people look similar from the visual aspect, it is important to recognize that diversity exists within a particular race, culture, and/or category. Furthermore, when the many dimensions of difference are not seen within a particular race, it is possible for discrimination to exist, and discrimination impacts how Black faculty members experience their institution. Thus, the institution must be mindful of labels and identifiers when addressing Black faculty members.

The Negative Stereotype of Black Faculty. Many faculty members stated that they experience campus diversity differently from their White counterparts due to the negative stigma that comes with being Black. Specifically, negative stereotypes that regard Blacks as bad and incompetent. Such stereotypes have negatively shape the institutional experience for Black faculty members and their need for heightened sensitivity to function in their roles as faculty members. Professor Jamison mentioned how being Black changes the way he interacts with his students. He stated the following:

When I am in class, I have to worry about not scaring the students. When I am in meetings, I have to worry about not coming across as being arrogant. I have to manage my quote on quote hood sensibilities. I don't have to deal with micro aggressions as much as other people, which is a good thing. That said, there are other things that I have to manage. I am 6'2, 280-pound dark skinned Black man with a big voice. I have to make sure that people are comfortable a little more than I should have to.

As commented above, having to worry about not scaring the students is due to years of media framing and incidents that often shape Blacks as violent people. Furthermore, the faculty member mentioned the need to be sensitive to cultural norms and customs that may take on a different interpretation or deemed unacceptable if

communicated to a White audience. Professor Howard mentioned how being Black plays a role in what he wears to campus on a day-to-day.

I was warned when I took this job by some faculty members here, but also by my mentors “Do not walk on that campus wearing jeans.” I have never taught in jeans and I probably never will. You might not have been here when this was happening but “do you remember those security alerts that would go out whenever something was up? Before it always used to say race and high, and I fit. So, I’ll be damn if I get caught in this campus wearing hoodie and jeans trying to go anywhere. Because I don’t want to deal with that. I’ve heard it has happened to other faculty members, where they’ve been approached by campus police like “What are you doing in this building?” And you have to be like “This is...” you know, prove that you’re a faculty member. Which other people wouldn’t have to do that, but I think there are bigger issues, I think that is an issue but is also a reality of being Black in America.

The sentiment above communicates the constant stress of being Black on a predominately White campus. Several Black faculty members spoke to the need to prove their identity or that they belonged on campus at several points in their academic careers. These are issues that White faculty members are not having to deal with on campus. There seems to be this ideal of what a faculty member at Saint Alexander University is supposed to look like. What I hear Black faculty saying is that if we are on the road to becoming more diverse, everyone has to be trained to view people differently. In other words, faculty members are no longer limited to the visible dimensions of a White male. Professor Howard commented on how his students respond to his presence on the first day of class.

At the beginning of every semester is always fascinating when I walk through the door and these bright-eyed kids walk in and they’re like “Ah... Is this the right room?” And I’m like “Yeah, you’re here, welcome!” They look at me so confused, and it’s funny now, I used to get really in my feeling about it, but I think it’s funny now to see students react to me. It’s never going to be easy being a minority. Whether if you’re in higher education or not, and so I think you have to kind of take the battles and stay calm and realize that not everything can be about “Oh because I’m Black.” Like it just, it can’t.

While the above faculty member contended that everything cannot be reverted back to race, Professor Hicks mentioned that he was treated differently when other faculty members perceived him as a student on campus.

When I go to an office to ask a question someone would be a little abrupt but then all of a sudden, their attitude changes because they realize that I am a faculty member, and then their like, oh, I thought you were a student, but it doesn't matter. They still shouldn't act like that. So, it's a case where there is subtle ques. For example, when I go to a work room on the first floor and there are some secretaries who are watching fox news. There is no need to look at me like "why are you in here." I'm like, I can be in here. I don't care if it is your lunch break. It can be mine too and I can be in here if I want to. I'm not telling you to change the channel. I'm just being here. So, too bad.

Based on the above sentiments, Black faculty did not feel a sense of belonging on campus. This lack of connectedness is due to the unequal treatment they experience which is believed to be primarily due to their race. The final account within this sub-theme takes place at the institutional level. Professor Hicks mentioned that even when it comes to campus recruiting, Black faculty members go unacknowledged. Here is what he had to say:

Like even with the recruitment, I remember, recruiters would help parents and they would come by our offices and say this is where the professors are, and so, they would stand in front of the door but they wouldn't say anything, but then they would go next door to my colleagues' office where they would introduce themselves.

This comment is important to this study for a couple of reasons. First, the fact that campus recruiters do not make an intentional effort to introduce parents and new students to minority faculty leaves one to question "What behaviors might these experiences be shaping for new students as they enter the institution?" Second, when Black faculty are not acknowledged, it sends the message that they are not valued.

Black Faculty Challenged by Students. Throughout the interviews, faculty members described Saint Alexander University's student population using words such as rich and affluent. According to faculty members, students who attend the university generally come from families that are well-established, families that can afford to pay the expenses of a private, Jesuit education. In many ways, students feel privileged, and Black faculty members expressed how this privilege impacts how they experience the institution. Professor Howard described this privilege more explicitly.

So, Saint Alexander University depends more on the people whose parents can write the check because they don't have enough money to accept poor students. So that creates the sort of dynamic that you mentioned. You have these kids walking around like this is for them and rather than to them. That's the problem sometimes but also as a faculty member, it's interesting because when some of these students' kind of bring that into your class or into your office hours, I take it as a teachable moment to bring people back down to earth. I think it's necessary that faculty members help these kids realize that the world does not revolve around you. You are not that important. You need to do the work just like everybody else. Those types of lessons are really important for you people to learn because otherwise you will get smacked down when you get a job.

As expressed, faculty members feel that privilege comes with a sense of entitlement that, when allowed to manifest in campus and classroom experiences, fails to prepare students for the workplace. Furthermore, when privilege becomes an acceptable mindset, it poses additional challenges for faculty of color. Those you are often challenged on their ability to effectively facilitate a lecture. Professor Jamison described how he has to respond to students who exhibit characteristics of someone who is privileged.

What I do recognize is number one a lot of my students are rich White kids from Chicago suburbs and this is their first time seeing someone like me in the classroom. So, you know sometimes I have to flex on them. Sometimes I let them know I am much smarter than you are. Don't try me. For my Black students, I do since I have a sense of responsibility to have an open door and be able to deal with them on a level or as this like I understand what you are going through. I have been there. If you need assistance, I am here and on top of that I have to

make sure that it does not appear that I am valuing Black students over White students.

What I hear faculty members saying is that while White students feel like Saint Alexander University is for them, minority students find the university culture to be a challenging environment. This mindset of us versus them creates a racial divide and often times it becomes quite apparent that Black students feel like the “other.” However, because this mentality of privilege pervades that current culture, Black faculty members expressed concern with the level of disrespect they receive from students in classroom settings. Professor Zander commented:

A few years ago, I was teaching a grad class, and it wasn't going well, and at one point... I had one student who would like visibly huff and like halfway roll her eyes. So, I heard that they [the students] were able to openly talk about their dissatisfaction with the class to their other professors and advisors, and that felt like something in our departmental climate that was just wrong. Like you are a student, and you can be upset but go and bitch to your little friends off campus.

In the above comment, the faculty member communicated her displeasure with the idea a student was allowed to vent to her collegiate about her classroom performance. Not only was it disrespectful to her, but the university already has an environment where Blacks are often compared against White and feel the need to work twice as hard to be recognized for tenure and promotion (Turner, 2002). A more explicit situation where privilege and power came into play called for Professor Smith to stop his class after being openly challenged by a student. Here is what he commented:

The student body is used to dealing with White people as their authority of knowledge. They have had White teachers before. Whereas, being a Black faculty member, that's different for them. I get challenged more I think in class. For example, there was one White student who was constantly trying to challenge me during class. I would be lecturing and have test questions in class and have people go through sample questions. She would raise her hand and suggest why my answer wasn't the correct answer. I am now having to take time to help this White

girl get to the right answer because apparently I don't know what I am doing but she does. She knows the right answer even though I created the question. So, all right, so all while maintaining a level of calm because here is a White woman, and I am a Black male. The way in which I even say something could be threatening to a White woman. We already have to deal with the perception that Black folks aren't competent. Then you got students who are challenging you. Situations like this, I know White professors are not going through this.

This comment is reflective of the tensions that Black faculty members face daily in their institutional roles. Because they do not reflect the homogenous White faculty members of the past, students tell Black faculty members that they are not qualified and lack the credentials to serve as faculty members. Black faculty believe that the need for them to prove themselves to students make their institutional experience different to whites.

Evaluations Negatively Impact Advancement for Black Faculty. One of the most interesting findings in this study is the idea that student evaluations negatively impact advancement for Black faculty. To start, faculty identified challenges they experience when introducing race-related curriculum and how these critical conversations shape student's perceptions of faculty members. Professor Clayton added:

Sometimes you teach issues and things that are challenged. Such as very, very strong issues about the world. You're challenging orthodoxies and perceptions, and they are not always good things to say. You can't reach colorism and slavery without raising some of the moral issues. Sometimes these things can affect how you are perceived as a teacher. It's not that you don't have the knowledge but people are going to be evaluating you based on their own prejudice about what you have taught. So, those things are important in terms of getting an 18-year-old kid in his/her first college course to really start to question. However, if someone is teaching American history that glorifies how this country was built, it basically confirms what is already known. I mean that's the way I look at it.

Because Black faculty members have not historically been in positions of power at the institution, faculty members communicate that they are not seen to be as prepared as their White counterparts. Professor Zander explained it best:

I mean student evaluations are a whole thing. A thing that comes up consistently in my student evaluations is like, “Oh she isn’t organized.” And I have talked to other Black faculty and they are like “I get the same thing.” It’s an overabundance of them saying that, and it appears to be their own way of coding their displeasure.

Professor Zander continued to communicate how her intent to be transparent and build a connection with her students, actually worked against how students evaluated her.

My first or second year, I was updating my power points every day before lecture. So, they are done but I was like “Let me find this new information.” I am doing extra. So, one day, I went in and the Power Point that I was showing wasn’t my most recent version. I had added a new picture, the content is exactly the same but if I am giving you additional examples, I think, “Oh this is a better example.” Or, “This is a nicer picture.” Or something. So, I had said aloud like, “This isn’t even the right one.” Well anyway, it showed up in my evaluation. She doesn’t even have the most updated Power Point. Are you fucking kidding me? I was being transparent with you. It didn’t occur to me that I had to hide every flaw, every misstep. It has curbed my willingness to have that level of transparency with the students, which creates a little more division.

Faculty members communicated that while their presence is very much needed within the campus environment, they experience a great amount of resistance from students and that when they fall short of student expectations, evaluations directly impact their opportunity for employment and academic advancement. Moreover, as it stands today, such measures do not take into account the race-related struggles that exist at the institutional level.

Professor Hutchinson explained the impacts that student evaluations have on her personal health.

We can just start off with the evaluations. I think student evaluations create hostile working environment for faculty of color. I sort of had to go to therapy and get psychologically equipped to deal with the amount of hostility I was being directed toward me on any given basis. I think when I raise those type of issues, everybody goes like evaluations are evaluations, but if you had to ask me why it took me three extra years to get tenure, it all came down to my teaching evaluations. It was very clear that race and gender was playing a role in my evaluation scores and the fact that everybody kept on saying “No, no it’s because [name removed] is a bad teacher.” At what point are we going to admit that these

kinds of tools are implicitly creating implicit bias. Fostered and implicit bias against faculty of color. The students are consciously comparing you to the White male professor, you are never going to be that guy.

What I hear Black faculty member saying is that White students barely and rarely have the opportunity to be educated by a faculty of color. Therefore, they come to college with the expectation that their teacher will be a White male. Moreover, while this notion is mainly true, because they are not used to diversity in teaching styles and methods, they naturally assume that their professor of color lacks the competence to satisfactorily fulfill his or her role. Thus, this race and power issue can negatively impact the evaluations of Black faculty members, which ultimately play a significant role in the tenure process. Frost, Lehavot, and Meyer (2015) contend that faculty members who experience stress from prejudicial events usually experience negative health outcomes.

Overall, the way in which Black faculty members identify with their institutional diversity identity is largely based on official institutional actions. Moreover, because Black faculty members were unable to recall, and had little knowledge of, the official texts, they could only partially identify with their institutional value and commitment to diversity by identifying specific official actions that were supported by institutional rhetoric. Thus, the communicative documents alone had little impact on how Black faculty members understood their institutional commitment to diversity. The lack of impact of official texts were attributed to the fact that the institutional rhetoric is not central to the institution. In other words, the language on diversity was not living or breathing throughout the institution in a way that resonated with Black faculty members. The rhetoric was often expected to speak for itself as no explicit communication was provided from the university's leadership that provided Black faculty direction toward

diversity, as well as their expected role in driving institutional change. When actual lived experiences were taken into account, Black faculty member spoke about institutional challenges that reveal an evident disparity between the rhetoric and reality. Thus, the university's leadership must play an active role in communicating the type of diversity it hopes to achieve to Black faculty and layout specific steps it will take toward achieving a diverse and inclusive campus culture.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

Summary of Results

The definition of diversity is very important to understand to have a clear view of what diversity is and what it can offer contemporary workplaces. Many researchers have tried to successfully describe the meaning of diversity by classifying it into two categories: primary and secondary (Gardenswartz & Rowe, 1998; Loden & Rosener, 1991). These dimensions are a part of an individual's personality thus, adding to the diversity of individuals. Although it has been observed that primary dimension of diversity measure differences, such as visual features, age, gender, and race. Several researchers did not like this idea. According to Cox (2001) and Welburn (1999), primary dimensions are limited and does not give account to other differences that make up the whole person, which can be far more inspiring.

The definition presented by the Association of American Colleges and Universities is far more engaging as it includes every aspect of a human being. It provides an expanded view of diversity that is not limited to certain characteristics or aspects (Making Diversity Inclusive, 2017).

Within this study, the question arises as to why there is a need to study diversity in such depth. Well, it is because the United States of America is rapidly becoming a more diverse country. Minorities are outnumbering White people, which is making the working environment more diverse than ever before (Allen, 2010; Aronson, 2002). Hence, the term workplace diversity comes in. In the past, it is evident that minorities were not allowed to act differently because the structure provided to them harnessed

homogeneity. It is clear from studies that there are contradictory views about affirmative action and diversity such as some people think they both are the same phenomenon (Kelly and Dobbin, 1998) and others think that they are different (Barak, 2013).

Conflation between the two terms have led to Adelman's (1997) assertion that because diversity is defined in many different ways, the concept has lost its meaning.

Scholars Loden and Rosener (1991) provided a unique lens for understanding diversity. They explained that primary dimensions of diversity were reflective of narrow definitions which are limited to visible categories such as race and gender. Whereas, secondary dimensions encompassed a broader perspective of difference which includes but does not limit itself to educational level, geographical location, religion, marital status, and work experience (Mazur, 2010). Gardenswartz and Rowe (1998) expand upon Loden and Rosener's (1991) framework by adding two additional dimensions, personality and organizational dimensions. Understanding the concept of diversity from a dimensional perspective was important to this study by highlighting the extent to which Black faculty members view diversity (or difference) based on their personal definitions.

Apart from workforce diversity, post-secondary education is also promoting diversity (Barcelo, 2007; Clayton- Pederson et al., 2007; Moody, 2004; Phillips, 2002). Previously, non-White students struggled to gain access to higher education (Arcidiacono, Lovenheim, & Zhu, 2015; Anderson & Byrne, 2004). However, the trend has begun to change. Removal of discrimination from institutions of higher education was not possible without the intervention of U.S Government (Kelly & Dobbin, 1998). Multiple bills were approved to implement the needful acts and removed the quota system which was racial in nature (Arcidiacono et al., 2015; Garrison-Wade & Lewis,

2004). Discriminatory rules for minorities to get admission are no more in practice (McDowell, 1989). Presently, it is feared that the current (Trump) administration in the United States of America may roll back every advancement made in the education system. It is due to their policies are considered to impact minorities negatively.

Moreover, my research suggests that there are institutions who are not well prepared to welcome diversity which in return can result in their extinction. For this reason, before proceeding toward the findings I tried to give a theoretical framework for building the organizational identity and identification. This framework also helped me to formulate my research questions.

In response to my first research question, my analysis of the official texts helped to depict the institutional identity at one university through the eyes of one non-majority group of (Black) faculty members. First, I analyzed the mission statement which was extensive. Although the complete statement was reflecting diversity yet the worth noting term was “our.” It promoted the sense of oneness and belonging among students of diverse backgrounds and was used repeatedly in the mission statement. The words “community” and “all” also promote unity and oneness in the entire document whereas the word “whatever” represents that diversity of all people are welcomed. Additionally, the vision statement was quite clear in its meaning by using words like “embrace new and collaborative methods.” The statement is welcoming for diversity. Further, when I analyzed the values statement, out of six value statements, there were only two which claimed diversity. Words “partnership” and “collaboration” were offering diversity to nurture invaluable experiences. Lastly, the *Statement on Human Dignity and Diversity* was much open where it promised to be diverse and respect all people without any

discrimination. This allow inclusive language was an important observation as all workplaces, including the institution of higher education, are under pressure to communicate their value and commitment diversity.

After reviewing the interview transcripts, in responding to the second question of “How do Black faculty members identify with the university’s identity as it specifically relates to diversity?” The study revealed that many Black faculty members were unable to recall the language of diversity described within the official texts. Further, when asked to describe Saint Alexander University and its identity, the terms “diversity” and “inclusion” did not come up. Thus, I argue that because Black faculty members are not experiencing the institutional rhetoric on diversity specifically, identification is limited.

Because Black faculty members were not experiencing the official institutional texts on diversity, I went on to ask “How does the university communicate to you its value and commitment to diversity?” Based on this question, three dominant themes emerged. This study shows that within the themes, Black faculty members were able to make sense of their institutional intent to become diverse through official institutional actions. Positive actions reflected strong identification, bad actions reflected weak identification, and unclear actions lacked a sound position. These findings were important because they highlighted specific programs and actions that Black faculty members deemed to be important and impactful.

Although official actions communicated to Black faculty members the intent to become diverse, they communicated that these actions lacked institutional direction. More explicitly, Black faculty members indicated that the university’s leadership did not communicate the “why” behind the official actions. Also, Black faculty members lacked

understanding of their role in the institutional push to become diverse and inclusive. Therefore, they sought to understand the institutional direction in one of three ways. They either institutionalized their own working definition of diversity, sought direction through communication with other people, or chose not to make sense of their institutional value and commitment to diversity altogether. These findings revealed the importance for institutions of higher education spell out the type of diversity it wants to see, and the plan to getting there.

In responding to the second research question “How do Black faculty members perceive the rhetoric on diversity as reflective of their experiences?” The interview transcripts reveal that Black faculty members believed their institutional experience to be largely unequal to their White counterparts. Thus, Saint Alexander University’s commitment to diversity and inclusion of all human differences show some disparity. Black faculty members believe that the institution is not that much diverse and is not offering much to become diverse. They think the Saint Alexander University is not reflecting demographics, and are not sure whether it is heading toward its vision. Further, the Black faculty does not think that diversity is an institutional value. The findings clearly indicate that the reality is different from rhetoric or vice versa.

Perhaps, a large part of why Black faculty members does not see diversity as a central value at Saint Alexander University is because if we accept Henry and Evans (2007) definition of workplace diversity, which is, “a systematic and planned approach to recruit and promote a diverse mix of employees.” It is clear that while the university has made voluntary efforts to include Black faculty members into its predominately White structure, they university has to make its value and commitment to diversity a systematic

effort. Further, a deep commitment to diversity must become a critical function of the university. This approach would alleviate the need for Saint Alexander University to respond to changing demographics when the institution is committed to reflecting the diversity profile of society (Schonfeld, 2000).

In this final chapter, I detail the ways this study builds on organizational communication work, particularly in institutions of higher education as campus climates become increasingly diverse and inclusive of all human differences. I further explain how my findings may contribute to how colleges and universities communicate their value and commitment to diversity in official texts. Finally, I discuss the limitations of this study and provide suggestions for future research.

Theoretical Implications

Organizational Rhetoric Reinforces Institutional Identity. One of the major finding in this study is that Black faculty members either were not seeing the organizational rhetoric of they just were not able to recall it. Therefore, they were only able to partially identify with their institutional rhetoric on diversity as expressed through multiple official texts. Although many Black faculty members were unable to recall the rhetoric, when speaking about Saint Alexander University's mission statement, which is one single rhetorical site, several Black faculty members mentioned that they last recalled looking at the mission when they were applying for employment at the university. Organizational rhetoric speaks to organizational identity and how organizational members understand their organization.

Another finding as it relates to diversity is that Black faculty members still see diversity through the lens of affirmative action. When I asked faculty members to describe diversity, they often referred to demographics or narrow categories, such as race or gender. This is important to this study because this could play a significant role in how they interpret the reality of diversity in their lived institutional experience. More to the point, the lack of visible differences does not necessarily mean that the institution is not diverse. Future studies may seek to identify if faculty members express a stronger identification to institutions who communicate a narrow value and commitment to diversity versus institutions who take on an all-inclusive definition of diversity.

A final finding is that walking the walk and talking the talk is not enough. Both actions must operate simultaneously for workplace diversity to be deeply rooted within the institutional culture. In this particular study, although Saint Alexander University demonstrates its value and commitment to diversity through several official texts, Black faculty members turned to the official actions to find meaning. Furthermore, indicating that the rhetorical efforts alone were not sufficient. This finding tells us that colleges and universities must not only establish an identity as diverse, but they must also align official actions to their identity in order for diversity efforts to resonate. When the official actions do not align with the rhetoric, it is easy to conclude that Saint Alexander University's rhetoric on diversity merely serves as a window dressing that is absent in actual practice (Hoffman & Ford, 2009). Further, in order for identification to take place, the institutional diversity talk and institutional diversity walk must be parallel in shaping a diverse and inclusive campus experience for Black faculty members.

Pragmatic Implications

There were quite a few recommendations that came out of this study. Institutions must institutionalize programs and policies that support the minority experience. For instance, many Black faculty members noted that the lack of minority faculty on campus is primarily due to the fact that Saint Alexander University lacks sufficient programs and curriculum that reflect minority interests. Specifically, faculty noted that the university has an African American Studies program but mention that the program does not have faculty who are devoted to the discipline. Further, the program in and of itself, is largely underfunded. These comments support diversity in higher education literature in stating that most minority faculty fall within study areas such as education and psychology (Roach, 1999). Thus, institutions of higher education who wish to diversify its faculty must make an intentional effort to fund and value programs multicultural programs to the same extent as other university programs and initiatives.

A second finding within this study is that Black faculty members desire a sense of community. Faculty members often made comments about their isolated institutional environments and the need to connect with other minority faculty members. As expressed in the results, faculty member noted that their experience was different from their White counterparts because they had never been to one of their co-worker homes and most have never interacted outside of the context of the workplace. Similarly, Black faculty members stated that they had never had lunch with the university president. These particular findings are important because Black faculty members assume that these things are actually happening among White faculty members. This study suggests two things need to happen: (1) there is a need for socialization, (2) a sense of community and network play a huge role in how faculty members make sense of their institutional value

and commitment to diversity. Thus, institutions of higher education need to determine what minority faculty members expect. Within this finding, there is also a need to elevate the community and integration of Black faculty members. Colleges and universities may do this by developing programs that bring minority faculty members together on a regular basis. Second, as colleges and universities push to become diverse, there should also be an effort to bring all faculty together across many dimensions of difference to engage in dialog. This would help to tear down silo barriers that exist within the institution.

A third, and one of the most significant findings was the role that students play in the minority faculty promotional/advancement experience. For instance, faculty members mentioned how they are often challenged by students in the classroom and receive unfavorable reviews because White students are not used to having a Black professor. Therefore, when compared to White professors, students tend almost always to note opportunities for growth and development in faculty reviews. A couple faculty members also mentioned receiving harsh feedback to the extent that she is seeking therapy. Colleges and universities must take into account the diversity experience when structuring university processes and procedures to allow minority faculty members a fair chance at advancement. If this does not happen, then faculty members will continue to feel undervalued and the institution. An institution of higher education that values diversity should look to revise any and all practices that lead to hostile environments.

Fourth and finally, I thought it would be worth noting that Black faculty members had much to say during the interviews. Most faculty interviews went over the one-hour time period allotted for this study. This tells me that Black faculty members do not feel unheard and this research study was an opportunity for them to say what they needed to say. I

encourage college and university leaders to create a safe space for faculty members to view their ideas, opinions, and concerns frequently and consistently so that they do not necessary dialog does not build up or go unaddressed. To that point, not only do Black faculty members deserve a seat at the dinner table but if they truly are a part of the organization (the organizational family), then these feasts should in fact be happening more regularly. Thus, inviting consistent and transparent communication.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

Given the findings and conclusions presented in this study, there are particular limitations that need to be addressed. First, I interviewed participants at a private, Midwest faith-based institution. Future studies should take place at public colleges and universities, as well as community and technical colleges. It would be interesting to determine whether Black faculty members at other institutions of higher education share similar experiences related to how they experience diversity in the academy.

As a second limitation, this study included a small sample size of 13 participants. Because the sample size was so small, Black faculty members were hesitant to participate in the study. Even in the interviews, a few faculty members expressed concern with information disclosure and its potential negative impact on tenure. Due to the small number of Black faculty who hold PhD's, at least for now, future studies should look to include the perspective of other minority groups, as well as White faculty members. Continued studies related to diversity and identity will help the field of communication by understanding if and how different groups connect to their institutional rhetoric on diversity.

Third and finally, I asked Black faculty members how they perceived and identified with Saint Alexander University's rhetoric on diversity as it relates to their personal experience. This became a limitation simply because Black faculty members were asked to recall personal experiences that may or may not have been valid. For example, Black faculty members might think back to specific instances where they struggled, rather than reflect on how they experience diversity within their academic workplace on a day-to-day basis.

Conclusion

As the U.S. demographic population continues becomes increasingly diverse, so are institutions of higher education. This beckons a call for colleges and universities, especially predominately White institutions, to communicate their value and commitment to diversity. The low level of minority representation among faculty members in institutions of higher education show that previous efforts have not been effective. This study presents concrete findings that the way in which Black faculty members make sense of their institutional value and commitment to diversity is through official actions. The interviews show that in search for institutional direction on diversity, Black faculty members either operationalized their own definition of diversity, they made sense of their institutional value through interactions with other people, or they detached from identifying with the university's diversity efforts completely. These findings reveal that beyond the rhetoric, institutions of higher education must not only explicitly communicate their plans and directions regarding diversity but also spell out the roles

that faculty members are expected to take on in the push toward a diverse and inclusive campus culture.

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APPENDIX A

Interview Questions Guide*Let My People in:**A Comparative Study of Diversity Rhetoric to Reality in Institutions of Higher Education*
*Darvelle Hutchins***A. Individual's background**

- What identifying markers do you use to identify yourself?
- Tell me about yourself.
- What is your position here at Saint Alexander University?
- Describe your previous institutions including your graduate and undergraduate institutions?
- What degrees do you hold?
 - How would you describe the demographics?
- How long have you been employed at Saint Alexander University?

B. Institutional background

- Describe Saint Alexander University to me.
 - Have you worked for another higher education institution? How do they compare?
- How do you think others might describe Saint Alexander University?
- Describe the mission of Saint Alexander.
 - What would you say Saint Alexander University values are?
- How do you see these values reflected on a day-to-day basis?

Transition Statement: I talked about Saint Alexander University generally, but I would like to focus more on diversity. Why did or didn't you include diversity as a value for Saint Alexander University?

C. Research Question 1—How does Black faculty members perceive the rhetoric on diversity as it is reflective of their experiences?

1. How do you personally define diversity?
2. Does diversity mean anything different in higher education?
3. What do you think is Saint Alexander's working definition of diversity?
4. Does Saint Alexander University value diversity?
 - a. If "No", What do you believe is the reason behind the disparity between the official language and your daily institutional interactions?

- b. If “Yes”, How does your daily interactions fit w/ the university’s official language of diversity?
 5. How does the university communicate to you about its commitment to diversity?
 6. Have you looked at the official university documentation (specifically, the university core values, mission statements, policies, etc.) on diversity?
 7. How do you personally define inclusion?
 8. Do you believe Saint Alexander University value’s inclusion?
 - a. If “No”, What do you believe is the reason behind the disparity between the official language and your daily institutional interactions?
 - b. If “Yes”, How does your daily interactions fit w/ the university’s official language of inclusion?
 9. What are the university resources at Saint Alexander that are focused on diversity and inclusion? To what extent do you use them?
 - a. If so, what programs and/or resources?
 - b. If no, are you a member of an unofficial academic community that focuses on diversity and inclusion?
 - i. Would you be willing to describe your network?
 10. In what ways have you seen university leadership endorsing diversity and inclusion?
 11. What are Saint Alexander’s challenges when it comes to diversity and inclusion?
 12. To what extent do you feel Saint Alexander communicates its value for diversity, and how does that reflect reality?
- D. Research Question 2**–How do Black faculty identify with the university’s identity as it specifically relates to diversity?
1. What does Saint Alexander’s commitment to diversity mean to you?
 2. What expectations does Saint Alexander have of faculty and staff based on its commitment to diversity?
 - a. How are these expectations different from when you were hired?
 - b. How were you first made aware of these expectations?
 - i. How well are these expectations communicated?
 - c. How do you respond to these expectations?
 3. To what degree do you accept and value the differences of all people?
 - a. Do you believe your university share these same values?
 - i. If yes, how?
 - ii. If no, why not?
 4. Describe a truly diverse and inclusive campus environment.

5. Do you feel a sense of belonging at your institution?
 - a. Why or why not?
6. Would you recommend any changes to the university's commitment to diversity and inclusion?
 - a. What are those changes?
7. Would you recommend the university to family or friends as a good place to work or study?
8. To what extent do you believe you experience Saint Alexander University differently than your peers?
9. To what extent do you feel diversity changes your expectations and how you experience the institution?

APPENDIX B

MARQUETTE UNIVERSITY
AGREEMENT OF CONSENT FOR RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

*Let My People in: A Comparative Study of Diversity Rhetoric to Reality in Institutions of
Higher Education*

Darvelle Hutchins

Diederich College of Communication

Marquette University Graduate School

You have been invited to participate in this research study. Before you agree to participate, it is important that you read and understand the following information. Participation is completely voluntary. Please ask questions about anything you do not understand before deciding whether or not to participate.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this research study is to examine the degree in which institutions of higher education communicate their value and commitment to diversity in organizational rhetoric, and the extent to which the portrayed commitment to diversity reflects actual practice. It explores how organizational members come to understand and identify with an organization's adopted language of diversity. You will be one of approximately 26 participants in this research study.

PROCEDURES: You will participate in one interview that will be audio recorded to ensure accuracy. All digital audio files will later be transcribed and destroyed after one year beyond the completion of the study. Any hard copies will be shredded after one year. Transcriptions of data with all identifying information removed will be kept indefinitely and may be used for future analysis for conference presentations and research articles.

DURATION: Your participation will consist of an interview that will last no longer than 90 minutes in length.

RISKS: There are no foreseeable risks in participating in this study.

BENEFITS: While there are no direct benefits to you for participating in this study, it is hoped that in the long run this understanding will lead to increased diversity and inclusion in higher education institutions. These findings will lead to improvement in the ways that universities communicate their value and commitment to diversity and ways to close the gap between an organization's rhetoric (i.e. memos, mission statement, policies, etc.) on diversity to actual practice.

CONFIDENTIALITY: Confidentiality will be guarded in several ways. Audio recordings will be kept in a Marquette University office in a locked desk during the study. These

audio files will be destroyed one year after the completion of this study. Written notes will not contain any identifying information such as my name and personal information. Pseudonyms will be used in all transcriptions and any resulting presentations and/or publications. Individual quotes may be used in the final research project.

VOLUNTARY NATURE OF PARTICIPATION: Participating in this study is completely voluntary and you may withdraw from the study and stop participating at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you decide to withdraw from the study, your data will be returned to you or destroyed. You may skip any questions you do not wish to answer. Your decision to participate or not will not impact your relationship with the principle investigator, Darvelle Hutchins or Marquette University.

ALTERNATIVES TO PARTICIPATION: There are no known alternatives other than to not participate in this study.

CONTACT: If you have any questions about this research project, you can contact Darvelle Hutchins at (414) 306-0515 or Darvelle.hutchins@marquette.edu at any time. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, you can contact Marquette University's Office of Research Compliance at (414) 288-7570.

Please read the following statement and sign on the line below:

I HAVE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO READ THIS CONSENT FORM, ASK QUESTIONS ABOUT THE RESEARCH PROJECT AND AM PREPARED TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS PROJECT.

(Printed Name of Participant)

(Signature of Participant)

Date:

(Printed Name of Researcher Obtaining Consent)

(Signature of Researcher Obtaining Consent)

Date: