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The Recruitment of African American Graduate Students at the University of Arkansas, 2000-2010

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THE RECRUITMENT OF AFRICAN AMERICAN GRADUATE STUDENTS AT THE
UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS, 2000-2010

THE RECRUITMENT OF AFRICAN AMERICAN GRADUATE STUDENTS AT THE
UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS, 2000-2010

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education in Workforce Development Education

By

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ABSTRACT

The purpose for conducting this qualitative study was to identify how the U of A approached the recruiting of African American graduate students over a ten year period of time. Based upon best practices for recruiting African American graduate students which was identified in current and scholarly literature in the field, the study examined the recruiting practices at U of A from 2000-2010. The personal interview was the instrument of choice, and within this time period, 40 interviews were conducted. The participants included the chancellor, college deans, faculty, graduate coordinators and recruiters from the various departments and colleges which offered graduate degree programs, personnel from the Office of Graduate Recruitment and Support Services, personnel from the Graduate School Admissions Office, and other administrators who were identified as being pertinent to this study.

The findings presented models for best practices in the recruitment of minority students, especially African American graduate students. Relevant topics were discussed such as perceived barriers to the recruiting process, funding issues for graduate assistantships, and the perceptions of prospective minority students, campus faculty, and the general public regarding the campus climate. Conclusions and recommendations were also presented.

This dissertation is approved for recommendation
to the graduate council

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Context of the Problem

The demographics of the United States have changed significantly during the past decade. The U. S. Census 2000 Brief (2000) reported that racial minorities accounted for roughly one-third of the nation's population, but that proportion has markedly grown thereafter (U. S. Census Bureau News Release, 2009). In response to these changes, educational institutions from the primary to postsecondary level have been challenged with providing an educational climate and culture that is both attractive to, and productive for, minorities.

Through the enactment of the Second Morrill Act of 1890, land-grant institutions have been empowered by the state to increase the racial minority enrollment on their campuses (Echavarría, 1990). However, many universities and colleges do not have minority representation in the faculty and student body that is proportional to that within the state. As the Hispanic population continues to increase in the U. S., the African American population is still the largest minority population in the state of Arkansas—representing 13.0 percent (U. S. Census 2000 News Release, 2000), but African Americans continue to be significantly under represented on the campus of the U of A at Fayetteville.

The nation's overall minority population on July 1, 2008, was 104.6 million, or 34% of the total population. Minorities, defined as any group other than single-race, non-Hispanic White, increased by 2.3% from 2007 to 2008. With the accelerated growth of the minority population (U.S. Census 2000 News Release, 2009), educational institutions are continually developing and implementing programs that will increase the presence of racial minorities on their campuses (Haskins & Kirk-Sanchez, 2006; NIGMS, 2009; Wilds, 2000). And, although

recruitment practices may vary from one campus to another, the recruiting process is still a challenge for the educational institution that actively seeks to bring greater diversity to its campus (Haskins & Kirk-Sanchez, 2006; Reichert, 2006; Wilds, 2000).

Statement of the Problem

The University of Arkansas (U of A) first opened its doors to African American students 138 years ago and has since maintained some degree of diversity in both the student population and in the faculty and staff (Leflar, 1972; Morgan & Preston, 1990). Based on reports generated through the U of A the total population of African American graduate students was 0.5% in 2005 and increased slightly in 2009 to only 0.7% (U of A's Enrollment, 2000, 2005, 2009). Additionally, there was little empirical evidence that might explain the paucity of African American graduate students enrolled at the U of A.

This study examined the recruitment practices and institutional factors that influenced enrollment of African American graduate students at the U of A.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose for conducting this study was to identify how the U of A approached the recruiting of African American graduate students over a ten year period of time. Using best practices for recruiting African American graduate students identified by current and scholarly literature in the field, the study examined the practices at U of A in two time periods, between 2000-2006, and 2006-2010.

Research Questions

1. What institutional commitment was articulated in the recruitment of African American graduate students?

2. What strategies or best practices did the U of A employ in the recruitment of African American graduate students?
3. What were the greatest barriers or obstacles for recruiting African American graduate students to the U of A campus in Fayetteville?

Limitations of the Study

This case study was conducted at the University of Arkansas (U of A), located in Fayetteville, Arkansas. Although the U of A has off-campus sites located in other cities, this study was restricted to the central campus. The content of this study reflects the examination of the various techniques and strategies used in the recruitment of African American graduate students into the masters and doctoral degree programs. Throughout the course of this study, issues pertaining to other racial minorities will also be discussed but only as a means to provide a holistic view of African American graduate students as a minority group at institutions of higher education. Aspects of retention will be discussed primarily in relation to the recruitment of African American graduate students and will not be explored as a separate issue in this study.

The participants included the chancellor, deans, faculty, graduate coordinators and recruiters from the various departments and colleges which offer graduate degree programs, personnel from the Office of Graduate Recruitment and Support Services, personnel from the Graduate School Admissions Office, and other administrators who were identified as being pertinent to this study.

Definitions

For the purpose of the study, the following terms have been defined:

1. Barriers: any obstacles which may hinder or prevent minority graduate students from entering, remaining, or graduating from institutions of higher education.

2. Best Practices: the implementation of proven strategies and techniques.
3. Case study: a holistic and comprehensive study of a person, program, group, or institution which extends over a period of several months.
4. Cognitive dissonance: differences which exist between what is expected and what is actually happening.
5. Diversity: a co-existence of people who are of racial and/or cultural variety (difference).
6. Graduate degree programs: programs offered by a university specifically for students seeking masters level degrees and higher.
7. HBCUs: Historically Black Colleges and Universities.
8. Mentoring/Mentors: the advising, guiding, and coaching of a student by a faculty member or a more experienced graduate student.
9. Minority: those persons (groups) who are underrepresented in the total United States population, specifically African American (also referred to as Black), Asian American, Native American and Hispanic (Latino) American. These groups have also been referred to as people (students) of color.
10. PWIs: Predominately White Institutions.
11. Recruitment: the process of identifying and encouraging students to attend a selected institution.
12. Retention: the process of retaining students at a selected institution from the time of their enrollment through graduation.
13. Strategies: plans and procedures designed to accomplish desired goals.
14. Traditional students: White, middle to upper class students age 18-24.

15. U of A: hereafter, any reference made to the university which has been highlighted for the purpose of this study. This study will be limited to the main campus of the U of A system and will not include other institutions or branches in other locations within this system. The U of A system, which is the subject of the study, does include one campus that is classified as an HBCU, the U of A- Pine Bluff (UAPB).

Significance of the Study

In 2000, the chancellor assembled a group made up of more than 90 business, education, and government professionals, university faculty, students, and staff to form the 2010 Commission. He charged this commission with studying and presenting the case for the importance of the U of A in the state's cultural and economic future. This study subsequently resulted in two major reports generated by the 2010 Commission: First, "Making the Case" (2001), and Second, "Picking Up the Pace" (2004). The 2010 Commission was operating under the premise that the future of Arkansas was linked inextricably to the future of the U of A. In order that Arkansas would be competitive in the 21st century, the commission determined that U of A must focus on its vision: to become a nationally competitive, student-centered, research university serving Arkansas and the world (2010 Commission "Making the Case", 2000, p. 1). The 2010 Commission determined that projected recruiting results would take more than a decade to catch the competition and seal the vision.

The Commission further surmised that the U of A was strongly positioned to enhance the economic and social well-being of Arkansas' citizens by further engaging the talents of its faculty, staff, students, and administrators in addressing the economic, community, educational, and leadership aspects of broad-based development ("Picking up the pace, 2004, p. 23)." The

five goals that drove the commission's work were (a) improving academic quality and reputation, (b) increasing the size and quality of the student body, (c) enhancing diversity among students, faculty, and staff; (d) increasing public support, particularly from federal and state governments, and (e) increasing private support. Although significant progress was made within the four years that the commission was operating, clearly the 2004 report indicated room for improvement. Strides were made to achieve the goals but all fell short, thus jeopardizing the overall success in achieving the projected goals within the projected timeline, year 2010. Consequently, the significance of this study was based on general concern that the number of African American graduate students on the campus was still proportionately low.

One other significant factor in this study is that this researcher spent four years as a graduate assistant in the Office of Graduate Recruitment and Support Services, observing first-hand the recruiting practices of that office and various other colleges on the campus. The researcher also followed the enrollment trends of African American graduate students which contributed to the first-hand knowledge of the recruiting practices that were currently conducted on the campus during the course of this study.

Finally, this study will enable U of A graduate programs and the Graduate School to identify and to assess best practices currently administered. This study will also assist in identifying the strengths and weaknesses in the recruitment process and provide suggestions for enhancement. Such an in depth study of this nature has not previously been conducted on this campus.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

General Introduction

This chapter contains a review of literature related to the recruitment of African American graduate students. For clarity, the chapter has been divided into the following sections: the Historical Perspective of African Americans in Higher Education, Trends in US Population Demographics, Issues on Diversity in Institutions of Higher Education, African Americans in Higher Education, the Status of African Americans in Higher Education, Barriers to Recruiting African American Graduate Students, Successful Models for Recruiting African American Students, the African American Experience at the U of A, and the Effects of Change in Leadership.

Historical Perspective of African Americans in Higher Education

Since the time of the early settlers in America, the education of the African American has been an issue. From indentured servants to slaves to freedmen, African Americans have not found the road to formal education (elementary through higher education) easy. Discrimination against African Americans was not only practiced in day-to-day relations, but laws were established specifically to insure that the African population in America would receive substandard educational opportunities (Tidwell & Berry, 1993). Such discriminatory practices as openly refusing to provide any type of formal education to the Africans (and to the American Indian) were a direct reflection of the inhumane treatment administered by the majority population to deprive these racial minorities of their human rights (Brubacher & Rudy, 1976; Tidwell & Berry, 1993).

The struggle for higher education among African Americans has been a particularly dramatic one, originating in the days of slavery when laws were passed prohibiting Blacks to learn to read or write. Consequently, the first Black college graduate in America did not receive his degree until 1826, almost 200 years after the first college opened in North America (Brubacher & Rudy, 1976). Before the Emancipation Proclamation, experiments with Black education led to the establishment of institutions such as Avery College in Pennsylvania, Miner Academy in Washington D. C., Wilberforce University in Ohio, and Lincoln University in Pennsylvania (Brubacher & Rudy, 1976). According to Brubacher and Rudy, these experiments were not remarkably successful.

Realizing that the vast majority of Blacks lived in the Southern U. S. after the Civil War ended, sympathetic missionaries established schools in the South to educate freed slaves. They soon learned, however, that before the Blacks could benefit from a more advanced liberal education, the missionaries would have to increase literacy among the freed slaves by teaching them the basic rudiments of reading, writing, and arithmetic (Brubacher & Rudy, 1976). Some of these early schools were the Augusta Institute (organized in 1867) in Georgia, and later Morehouse College and Atlanta University in Georgia, and Talladega College in Alabama. In addition to northern church groups, the United States Army and the Freedman's Bureau were active in helping to get education for Blacks started after the Civil War (Brubacher & Rudy, 1976). Through the combined efforts of these entities, Howard University and Fisk College were founded for Blacks. Also, through the efforts of Booker T. Washington at Tuskegee and the Morrill Acts of 1862 and 1890, agricultural and vocational training came into being, opening opportunities for practical and applied education that was of particular interest to Black

populations (Brubacher & Rudy, 1976). By 1895, there were more than 1100 Black college graduates in the United States, with the majority graduating from Black colleges in the South.

Later in the early 20th century, Blacks became more adamant about receiving a liberal arts education. Dr. W. E. B. DuBois strongly protested the Tuskegee philosophy of vocational training, and his protests launched a nationwide consciousness for Blacks in higher education (Brubacher & Rudy, 1976). Standards and conditions in college were improved for Blacks through cases prompted by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) which reversed *Plessy v. Ferguson* of 1895. According to Brubacher & Rudy (1976), the first of the important cases of this nature was *Missouri ex real Gaines v. Canada* in 1938. In this case the Supreme Court ruled that the state of Missouri was denying equal educational opportunity to a Black student by giving him a scholarship to attend a law school in another state. Other states then began to establish separate professional schools for Blacks as part of their state university systems (Brubacher & Rudy, 1976). These separate schools were later outlawed by the Supreme Court in *Sweatt v. Painter* in 1950, and laws forcing Black students who were attending predominately White institutions (PWIs) to use segregated facilities were overturned in 1950 in *McLaurin v. Oklahoma State Regents* (Brubacher & Rudy, 1976).

Remarkably, the United States Supreme Court made a significant decision in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* in 1954 and declared segregation in public educational institutions unconstitutional (Brubacher & Rudy, 1976). Not until the passing of the Civil Rights Act in 1964, however, did the nation see a major change in the treatment of Blacks in education. This act impacted every aspect of life as it prohibited discriminatory practices in industry, business, colleges and universities doing contract work or receiving grants from the federal government. Based on the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the federal court later ruled in *Adam v. Richardson* in

1972 to cut off all federal funds in aid to institutions of higher education from 10 states where it was felt progress in the direction of desegregation was too slow and unsatisfactory (Brubacher & Rudy, 1976). The federal government also implemented this legislation in 1974 by demanding that colleges and universities institute Affirmative Action programs which would end all forms of racial discrimination in the hiring of staff, in the admitting of students, in the granting of financial aid, and in the allocating of dormitory space (Bowen & Bok, 1998; Brubacher & Rudy, 1976; Dworkin, 1998).

Brubacher and Rudy (1996) further report that the first ruling on this action occurred on April 23, 1974, in the case of *DeFunis v. Odegaard*. DeFunis alleged that the University of Washington's admissions program denied his application because he was White. The court ruled 5 to 4 that the case was no longer valid as he was allowed to attend Washington University Law School while the case was still pending, and he would graduate in June of that year (Brubacher & Rudy, 1996). Following DeFunis, two other major cases, namely *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke* in 1978 and *Hopwood v. Texas* in 1996 challenged and ruled against the admission of Blacks and other minorities into institutions of higher education based on their race (Dworkin, 1998).

Institutions of higher learning began to actively recruit African Americans for their graduate programs in the 1960s and early 1970s (Blackwell, 1988). Postsecondary institutions made apparent efforts to recruit minorities, especially African Americans, into higher education, both as students and as faculty. This effort was precipitated by a combination of events: the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s, demands from students, the commitment of some White faculty to institutionalize diversity in their departments, and the intervention of affirmative action in higher education in 1972 (Blackwell, 1988).

According to Wilson (1994), another major turning point in minority access to higher education occurred with the passage of the first GI Bill (also known as the Servicemen's Readjustment Act) for educational benefits in 1945. It was passed primarily to keep millions of veterans from disrupting the national economy by flooding the job market after the war. This bill was followed by the Korean War and the Vietnam War GI bills. The first GI bill enabled scores of veterans (including minorities) to attend college without having to depend on scholarships or previous educational achievement (Wilson, 1994).

To the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Wilson (1994) attributed the beginning of the second turning point in minority access to higher education. This act established Affirmative Action and instituted programs such as the TRIO programs: Upward Bound, Special Services, and Talent Search (Wilson, 1994). Wilson pointed out that in 1965, 600,000 African Americans were in college and 65% of them were in historically Black colleges or universities (HBCUs). By 1980, African American enrollment had doubled to 1.2 million but only 20% were in HBCUs. Also worth noting, most African American faculty members were not in tenure track appointments, and their positions were funded by grants issued on a tentative basis. Half of these professionals were in HBCUs, making their presence in mainstream institutions less impressive (Wilson, 1994). Stiffer admissions policies plagued the 1980s, and by 1981 the numbers were already on the decline.

During the administration of President Ronald Reagan, federal funding for higher education, including graduate education, also plummeted, forcing minorities to depend heavily on loans. After almost three decades since the first major national efforts to increase minority presence in higher education institutions, the groups with the lowest family and income per capita still relied heavily on loans to pay for their education while more affluent populations,

including Whites, received a higher proportion of grants and assistantships and relied on fewer loans (Melendez, 1994).

This particular study has focused on the recruitment of African American graduate students, yet the professional literature often generalized minorities to include other races as well. In this review, racial minorities have been discussed only as a means to eventually access specific information about African Americans, particularly African American graduate students.

Trends in Population Demographics

On January 13, 2000, the U.S. Census Bureau issued a report depicting its latest national projections on the size and composition of the United States. According to these projections of future demographic trends, the U.S. population, currently nearly 275 million, will approach 338 million in 2025, 404 million by 2050, and 571 million (more than double the current population) by the year 2100. In another 100 years, non-Hispanic Whites could drop from their majority status, 72% now to 40%. Hispanics of any race could rise to 33% from 12% today and Asians to 13% from 4%. Non-Hispanic Blacks are projected to stay the same at 13% of the population. The greatest decline will be among Whites as the overall birthrate is decreasing, and the overall birthrate in Native Americans, African Americans, Asian Americans, and Hispanics is rapidly increasing in the United States (Justiz et al., 1994). In all 25 of the nation's largest schools, minority students comprised the majority population (Carnegie Corporation Project, 1990).

Lofton (1995) also provided a thorough review of the literature from the U.S. Census Bureau and other statistical reports which project a rapid increase in the minority population and a steady decline in the White majority. Lofton's discussion not only indicated that economic contributions to this country would be largely dependent upon minority workers but also that an increase in minority college-age persons would rise. With this knowledge, according to Lofton

(1995), institutions of higher education would be wise to give greater consideration to the education of the minority population.

Issues on Diversity in Institutions of Higher Education

As demographers have predicted, the face of the U. S. population is changing rapidly from White, Anglo-Saxon, to a more ethnic make-up. What then will be the benefit for institutions of higher learning to recruit and admit more students of color, especially African Americans? What challenges arise in diversifying the campus?

With the controversy increasing over affirmative action, Milem and Hakuta (2000) contend that the affirmative action battle will go beyond the courtroom and will enter into a more moral domain as institutions of higher education continue to examine their mission: providing a quality education; and realizing that increasing racial and ethnic diversity on college campuses can only occur through a clear understanding of why affirmative action was a proper means to that end. Chang, Witt-Sandis, Jones and Hakuta (Milem & Hakuta, 2000) discuss four misconceptions about racial diversity in higher education that distort the debate over affirmative action.

The first misconception is that past inequalities in access and opportunities that racial and ethnic minority groups have suffered have been sufficiently addressed and no longer require attention. Trent and Associates (Milem & Hakuta, 2000) refute this myth by clearly documenting and discussing the impact of past and persisting inequities in access and educational opportunities for low-income and minority children in the United States. According to Milem and Hakuta (2000), the second misconception is that merit can be defined by test scores. Linda Wightman (Milem & Hakuta, 2000) discusses the misuse of these tests as the ultimate factor in determining whether or not students of color are admitted to college.

Third, Shana Levin (Milem & Hakuta, 2000) discusses the misconception that fairness is best achieved through race-neutral policy. Levin's refutation is that a colorblind approach will not improve conditions in our society as racism continues to exist in this country on an individual, institutional, and societal level. Levin further states that being "colorblind" will most likely preserve the racial status quo.

The fourth misconception is that diversity programs benefit only students of color. Here Milem and Hakuta (2000) cite Justice Powell's ruling in the Bakke case that the use of race is legal as one of many factors in college admissions because it enables institutions of higher education to reach their educational goals. Justice Powell (Milem & Hakuta, 2000) further established that race can be used as one of many factors in college admission because institutional diversity helps facilitate the "robust exchange of ideas."

Bowen and Bok (1998), former deans at two top universities, discussed yet another compelling misconception: Students of color who are admitted through such programs either are less qualified than other students who are not admitted or are simply unqualified for study at these institutions. Bowen and Bok (1998) found that Black students who were likely to have been admitted through affirmative action exhibited high levels of success across a variety of outcomes as they had strong academic credentials when they entered college, graduated in large numbers, and did very well after leaving college. Also worth noting, their study concluded that the more selective the institution, the higher the Black students' completion rate (roughly 90%). Milem and Hakuta (2000) strongly urge institutions to document findings from their own research that would establish diversity as an educational imperative for their campuses as well as the important role of racial/ethnic diversity in creating institutional diversity. To achieve their

academic mission Milem and Hakuta (2000) suggest that institutions should provide answers to the following questions:

1. How does the institution define diversity?
2. How do the institution's core educational goals relate to its diversity objectives?
3. What are the educational benefits of diversity to the institution?
4. What evidence can the institution provide indicating that these outcomes are being realized?
5. What evidence can the institution provide that demonstrates that it has enacted clear and consistent educational policies and practices that help ensure the benefits of diversity are realized?

Once clear answers have been given to these questions, individual institutions will be able to document the ways in which a diverse student body enhances the mission of the school and/or program in which it exists.

In a statement issued to the *New York Times* by the Association of American Universities (Milem & Hakuta, 2000), presidents from 62 research universities endorsed the following statement:

We speak first and foremost as educators. We believe that our students benefit significantly from education that takes place within a diverse setting. In the course of their university education, our students encounter and learn from others who have backgrounds and characteristics very different from their own. As we seek to prepare students for life in the 21st century, the educational value of such encounters will become more important, not less, than in the past. A substantial portion of our curriculum is enhanced by the discourse made possible by the heterogeneous backgrounds of our students. Equally, a significant part of education in our institutions takes place outside the classroom, in extracurricular activities where students learn how to work together, as well as to compete; how to exercise leadership, as well as to build consensus. If our institutional capacity to bring together a genuinely diverse group of students is removed- or severely reduced- then the quality and texture of the education we provide will be significantly diminished. (p. A27)

What then are the benefits of enhancing diversity on college campuses? Milem and Hakuta (2000) share four reasons listed by the American Council of Education and endorsed by 49 national education associations as to why many institutions believe that racial and ethnic diversity should be one factor among the many considered in admissions. First, it enriches the educational experience as we learn from those whose experiences, beliefs, and perspectives are different from our own, and these lessons can be taught best in a richly diverse intellectual and social environment. Second, it promotes personal growth - and a healthy society. Diversity challenges stereotyped perceptions; it encourages critical thinking; and it helps students learn to communicate effectively with people of varied backgrounds. Third, it strengthens communities and the workplace. Education within a diverse setting prepares students to become good citizens in an increasingly complex pluralistic society; it fosters mutual respect and teamwork; and it helps build communities whose members are judged by the quality of their character and their contributions. Fourth, it enhances America's economic competitiveness. Sustaining the nation's prosperity in the 21st century will require us to make effective use of the talents and abilities of all our citizens in work settings that bring together individuals from diverse backgrounds and cultures (Milem & Hakuta, 2000).

Taylor (1989) offers a different slant to the diversity issue. He sees something different about what African Americans bring to academe which he calls "a mandate for success without conquest" (p. 42). He describes the pivotal way Whiteness, thriving in a White dominated society or campus, has affected the lives of African American graduate students. Taylor's belief is that African Americans are no longer seeking to conquer White campuses by open disdain of European styles and influence, but they are shaping new strategies by "identifying arenas of research in academic contexts where their work is seen as a legitimate form of inquiry by faculty,

advisors, and mentors” (Taylor, 2000, p. 45). These new African American scholars, Taylor contends, will develop strategies that will benefit all people of color who have been economically disadvantaged and stereotyped for so many years. Taylor (1989) relates, “These young African American scholars have been ignited by their experiences on predominately White campuses and aspire to make a difference, not so much through militant endeavor, but through scholarly research for and about African Americans that will be universally accepted” (p. 45).

Ultimately, the long-term investment in actively recruiting minority students for institutions of higher education will create an environment in which students learn to be versatile as they are able to cope with multiplicities that occur from the interaction of the races. Consequently, less money will have to be spent on diversity training if students have had more exposure to minorities in school (Milem & Hakuta, 2000).

The Status of African Americans in Higher Education

The concern for African Americans’ participation in higher education continues to be high. According to a report from the National Center for Education Statistics (1999), the student body at the nation’s colleges and universities has become increasingly heterogeneous since the mid-1970s. Findings from this report indicate that the percentage of minority students increased from 15% of all students in fall 1976 to 25% of all students in fall 1995. This increase was due primarily to the growth in the enrollment of Hispanic and Asian/Pacific Islander students, whose enrollment increased about 4 percentage points for each group (NCSE, 1999). Black students accounted for 10% of the total enrollment at colleges and universities in fall 1995 and 1996. Hispanics made up 8% of enrolled students; Asian/Pacific Islanders, 6%; and American Indian/Alaskan Natives, 1% (NCSE, 1999).

In the *Seventeenth Annual Status Report of Minorities in Higher Education 1999-2000*, Wilds (2000) reports the decline in African Americans' participation in higher education still trails Whites. After decreasing during the 1980s, the number of college-age youth have hovered around 25 million since 1990. Between 1996 and 1997, the number of Whites increased slightly, while the number of African Americans and Hispanics remained roughly constant. During the 1990s, the number of youths in the African American college-age population increased 3.7%, compared to a 31% increase in the Hispanic college-age population. Also Wilds (2000) reports that in 1997, the college participation rate for African Americans increased by nearly 4 percentage points, to 39.8%, while that for Hispanics was up 1 percentage point to 36%. Although there has been somewhat of an increase, clearly African Americans still trail behind Whites by a significant margin and remain underrepresented at every degree level.

As a group, students of color made progress in all degree categories from 1996 to 1997, led by an 8.6% increase at the associate degree level (Wilds, 2000). Students of color also experienced combined increases of 4.8% in the number of bachelor's degrees earned, 6.4% in the number of master's degrees earned, and 5% in the number of first-professional degrees earned. Wilds (2000) also reports that during this one-year period, the rate of degree growth among students of color far exceeded that of White students at all degree levels. One explanation offered is that the percentage of Whites enrolling in higher education has decreased while the degree of minority enrollment has increased.

Also according to Wilds (2000), at the master's degree level, students of color have achieved proportional gains throughout the 1990s. They earned 15.4% of all master's degrees awarded in 1997, up from 12.4% in 1993 and 10.6% in 1987 with minorities accounting for 17.1% of graduate enrollment in 1997. African Americans experienced small to moderate growth

in all degree categories for 1997, ranging from a 3.2% increase at the bachelor's degree level to a 10.2% increase at the master's level. The number of African Americans earning doctoral degrees increased slightly by 1.5% in 1997 (Wilds, 2000); however, due to the small number of African-American students earning degrees at this level, the increase translated into a numerical gain of only 28 doctorates. Nevertheless, with a 23.2% increase in the number of doctorates earned from 1987 to 1997, Wilds (2000) reports that African Americans continued an upward trend in this category.

According to Wilds (2000), there was a 0.6 percent decrease in the number of engineering masters' degrees earned by African American men. Between 1996 and 1997, the number of masters' degrees earned in engineering increased by 1.8%. In 1997, African Americans recorded increases in the number of master's degrees earned of 10.5% in business, 7.7% in public affairs, 6.8% in the health professions, 4.7% in the social sciences, and 1.8% in engineering. While these percentages do show some increase in specific fields, there is still a shortage in the overall percentage of African Americans enrolled in graduate level work.

Black Issues in Higher Education (Borden, 2000) issued an analysis of U.S. Department of Education reports on the five-year trends in degrees awarded to African Americans by HBCUs versus all other institutions. Information for this report was collected through the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System program-completers survey conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics (1999). This report showed that from 1988-89 through 1997-1998, HBCUs continue to play a significant role in conferring degrees to African American students.

Borden (2000) reported that in 1988-89, 5.5% of all degrees were awarded to African Americans and 12% to minorities in general. The U.S. population at this time was approximately

12% African American and 24% minority. Since 1988-89, nearly 1.5 million postsecondary degrees have been awarded to African Americans and nearly 3.5 million to students of color. According to Borden's (2000) interpretation, the number of degrees awarded annually has increased by 80% for all minorities, 70% for African Americans, and only 12% for non-minorities. In 1997-98, the percentage of degrees conferred to African Americans was 7.5%, while the population percentage of African Americans was just slightly higher, still rounding to 12%. Minorities in total now comprise just less than 18% of the degree recipient population and 28 % of the U.S. general population.

Even though African American students and other minorities have made strides in enrolling in and graduating from institutions of higher education, the statistics show that these students of color are still disproportionate as compared to the number of White enrollees and graduates of colleges and universities.

Barriers to Recruiting African American Graduate Students

The concern for African Americans' participation in higher education continues to be high (Blackwell, 1988; Malveaux, 1996; Wilds, 2000). When an African American, Hispanic American, or Native American makes the decision to attend college, they are not making that decision lightly, for much is at stake. For many students of the majority as well as the minority, an economical barrier is a prime factor, but unlike majority students, minority students face additional barriers which are directly related to their race and culture that are critical factors in whether they succeed or fail (Alire, 1997; Blackwell, 1988; Matthews, 1994). African Americans and other racial minorities who finish their bachelors' degrees are less likely to attend graduate school because the personal sacrifice to attend the first degree program was too devastating financially and psychologically for them to consider higher education (Blackwell, 1988).

Unlike the majority population and the Asian American population, minority groups need greater assistance for graduate school than just having their tuition paid. Most will not venture too far from home as they not only need economical room and board, but they are also less likely to find suitable employment to supplement any college assistance they may be offered. Ross (1990) contends the possibility for many African Americans to receive a full financial package is hindered by the fact that most financial aid and student services counselors come from White middle-class backgrounds, and their life experiences often lead them to make assumptions about economic resources and economic decision-making which are invalid for a student from a low-income family. Many African American students are reluctant to apply for loans as they have either already incurred tremendous debt while obtaining their bachelor's degree, or they have been stretched to the limit of their resources and must now seek full-time employment (St. John & Noell, 1989).

Much of the financial assistance for graduate education is rendered through fellowships and research and teaching assistantships (Melendez 1994). Much of this type of aid is merit based, which often means reliance on standardized examination scores. Assistantships often depend on faculty who has research grants to dole out to students. African American and other minority students have traditionally not received a proportional share of such funds. In a study of 1,352 doctoral students in some of our larger public institutions, Nettles (1990) reported that while 54% of the White students in his study received a teaching or research assistantship, only 38% of the African American students received them. African American students also received proportionately fewer tuition waivers than did White or Hispanic students.

Some scholars have expressed growing concern regarding the number of foreign students who are receiving assistantships, which contributes to the depletion of funds available for

African American students. Melendez (1994) reported that African Americans receive fewer assistantships than both White and foreign students. Studies also show that non-U.S. born, temporary residents (international or foreign students) receive significantly more financial aid from universities than do African Americans, Hispanic Americans, and Native Americans (Burgess, 1997; Melendez, 1994). According to Burgess (1997), Chairman of the Department of Biological Sciences at the University of Pittsburgh, some universities and faculty groups aggressively recruit foreign students, yet few make recruiting trips to institutions in their own backyards that graduate large numbers of minority students. He remarks that many faculty members who are very comfortable requiring extra courses in English or undergraduate courses for foreign graduate students are unwilling to do anything extra for minority students who are U.S. citizens. Burgess (1997) boldly suggests that faculty members aggressively recruit foreigners because they seek cheap labor to further their [faculty members] careers along.

Colleges and universities may offer very generous minority scholarships to top achievers in the hope to attract the quality of students the institution is prepared to serve. Ross (1990) contends that such a practice will not work because the money is being directed at the “over-recruited, highest SAT-scoring minority high school graduates” (p. 16), and it does not allow the institution to make the internal change of targeting the addition of academically and pedagogically sound remedial courses in writing and mathematics.

These institutions believe that sufficient dollars committed to scholarships for top students will solve the institution’s problems in recruiting minorities; and that a university can serve well only those students who already have the necessary academic skills. Ross (1990) reports that institutions revealed “a subtle and very harmful prejudice” that only the very best minority students can succeed in White schools (p.16). A great number of potential students are

ignored because of their low test scores, which is often the result of a poor academic background and is not a true measure of the students' actual intellect nor of their academic potential (Ross, 1990). Students are aware of this and often develop an attitude (in early high school) of defeatism, believing that a college education is not attainable because of their low standardized scores (which ranks them in the 50-75 percentile). By the time these students have developed a desire to attend college (junior or senior high school year), their chances for success have been greatly minimized because their coursework is often deficient in college prerequisite content (Ross, 1990).

Not only do some institutions not provide sufficient financial assistance, but many often miss the mark in providing other types of support also. Because many minority students in undergraduate programs are first-generation college students, their families are more likely to be supportive of their attending college and completing a BA degree if they choose colleges close by (Alire, 1997). Minority students who are considering a graduate program in another state meet head-on resistance from what has been their main support system - their family. Besides feeling pressure at home, most minority students are also concerned about what will replace the family support system once they go away to graduate school (Alire, 1997). Alire also argued that institutions should not assume that graduate students are not in need of familial support systems simply because their maturity level should be greater than the maturity level of the average traditional undergraduate student. She encouraged institutions to develop mentoring programs, academic tracking systems, curriculums infused with multicultural concepts, and sensitivity within the administrators and faculty towards the minority student whom Alire (1997) described as "a naked person in front of a gaping world" (p. 41).

Another barrier that has exacerbated the problems with the recruitment of African American graduate students is the paucity of African American faculty and students already in graduate school. Scholars such as Blackwell (1988), Clark and Garza (Justiz, Wilson, & Bjork, 1994; Matthews, 1994) attributed this shortage to the underproduction of minorities, including African Americans, with doctoral degrees. The increase in African American faculty cannot be achieved until the pipeline of African American undergraduates and graduates has been sufficiently fed. According to Christoffel (Blackwell, 1988), almost 40,000 fewer Blacks were enrolled in college in 1984 than in 1976. An earlier report from the National Center for Educational Statistics (1999) showed Blacks were less likely than Whites to make an immediate transition from high school to college. Students who began their higher education at a 2-year college were far less likely to earn a bachelor's degree than their counterparts who began at a 4-year college.

In 1994, White graduates were twice as likely to enroll in a 4-year college as a 2-year college after high school, while Black graduates were about 1.5 times as likely. Blackwell (1988) suggested that this "White monopoly" (17) on graduate education not only limits the undergraduate pool for African American graduate students and faculty, but that this indicates a lack of institutional commitment to hold the recruitment of Black students as a high priority. The result can be that the scarcity of African American faculty members can add to the creation of an unfavorable climate for prospective students, and with fewer Black graduate students, the pool for Black faculty shrinks.

Other barriers to recruiting are often harbored in students' perception of a particular institution or of a particular degree program. In the *Seventeenth Annual Status Report of Minorities in Higher Education*, Wilds (2000) reported that African Americans have made

significant increase in the degrees conferred, but they are still underrepresented at every degree level. Onwuegbuzie (1999) suggested that fear of statistics courses deters prospective students from entering graduate school, and these fears often form at the undergraduate level. Because they have an inherent fear of failure and of being labeled of lesser intelligence, African American students do not wish to be discovered as imposters nor as incompetent.

Successful Models for Recruiting African American Students

Institutional commitment throughout the entire recruiting process is paramount. The institution must establish and communicate its level of commitment to enhancing the presence of minority students and the amount of effort it is willing to invest to achieve it. This includes not only establishing goals, but also developing the procedures necessary to attain them (Council of Graduate Schools, 1988). The institution's president (chancellor) plays a crucial role in articulating and supporting policies promoting a minority presence on the campus. It may not be possible to launch a successful program without clear directives from the chief executive officer. The responsibility of moral leadership resides both with the faculty and with the chief executive officers.

Even when the admissions requirements are quite liberal, with a nationwide increase in tuition fees and the reduction in grants and fellowships, a representative percentage of minorities are still not able to attain their bachelor's nor graduate degrees. In his book *Effective Ways to Recruit and Retain Minority Students*, Taylor (1989) presents techniques and programs devised by universities across the nation to recruit and retain minority students. Taylor also outlines his own model for recruitment and retention, which is actually an instrument that institutions could use for the purpose of self-evaluation. Taylor (1989) proposed three questions which he believes universities and colleges must answer if they are serious about recruiting African Americans:

Where do we find minority students? How do we recruit them? What things do we consider before we admit them?

Taylor (1989) suggests that institutions should target geographic locations throughout the nation with a sizeable proportion of African American population. Census data indicates that African Americans live primarily in the South, and institutions should decide how to deal with the problem of non-resident (out of state) tuition. For recruiting prospective graduate students, this would mean targeting HBCUs and other traditionally White institutions with a substantial Black student population. He suggests that institutions could figure out what percentage of their currently enrolled White students are non-resident and establish minority non-resident parity figures based on that percentage. Another suggestion Taylor (1989) offers is the implementation of computerized applicant pools that list the names of not only their state's minority students (including African Americans), but prospective minority students across the nation. One other strategy would be to tap into the network established by predominately Black institutions. Although his focus primarily targeted minority students for the undergraduate level, the model could easily be adapted for the graduate level.

Taylor (1989) also indicated that recruiters could develop a pamphlet or brochure for prospective [graduate] students, produce a series of video tapes for dissemination in institutions that emphasize faculty excellence, involve African American students currently enrolled on campus in the recruitment efforts, encourage each department or college to work with the Office of Graduate Recruitment in developing and implementing minority recruitment plans, use national search lists, develop a coordinated plan for telephone recruiting, use regional program networks, establish linkages with existing local, state, and national minority networks, and involve on-campus faculty as well as faculty from other campuses with the identification

process. Once completed, this model will allow institutions to make a comprehensive assessment of their minority student services delivery system with regards to activities through the various stages from pre-collegiate, recruitment, admissions, matriculation, retention, graduation, and post-graduation through alumni. As do many other researchers, Taylor (1989) stresses the need for total commitment and the combined efforts of the entire institution for real change to occur.

To enhance minority presence in graduate education, Jacqueline Looney (1992) conducted a study for the Council of Graduate Schools which surveyed the recruitment and retention programs of universities across the nation. From the results of the survey Looney (1992) devised a model for a comprehensive program to identify, recruit, retain, and graduate minority graduate students. Within the model, Looney also compiled the results of studies conducted by other researchers as they relate to her model. The elements of this model (strategic plan, institutional commitment, assessment, goals, strategies, implementation, and evaluation) once implemented, will enable Graduate Schools or individual departments to provide a holistic approach to developing a program that would significantly increase minority graduate student enrollment on the campus (Looney, 1992). Within the model, Looney (1992) named its various components and included examples of activities and strategies which were practiced at specific institutions across the nation to aggressively recruit minorities, especially African American graduate students.

Looney (1992) provided nine strategies for developing an effective recruitment program on the graduate level. First, she advises that faculty (and students) should travel to graduate and career fairs, to HBCUs, to PWIs with a high concentration of minority populations, and to sponsor group and individual visits to the home campus.

Second, institutions should network to establish linkages and collaborations between colleges, universities, and departments, and conduct workshops and symposia on home campuses as well as at other sites.

Third, faculty and recruiting officers should send student follow-up letters, brochures, and developing tracking systems to monitor students from application through degree completion.

Fourth, recruiting efforts should involve faculty to channel potential students to colleagues on other campuses with graduate degree programs in that area of interest; arrange campus visits for students to visit faculty; devise a “Handbook on Graduate Student Recruitment” to assist busy faculty members with tips on recruiting, and conduct recruiting workshops for program chairs, graduate coordinators and admissions personnel.

Fifth, institutions should advertise departmental brochures in journals and magazines; create fliers to highlight fellowship opportunities and mail to prospective students; create and distribute a graduate student newsletter featuring articles and general information of interest to graduate students; create a video and workshop facilitator’s guide for minority student recruitment; conduct a marketing analysis to help target radio and television spots.

Sixth, faculty and other recruiters should establish contacts with colleagues at other institutions with significant minority enrollment; plan visitations to these campuses; become involved in summer research programs; develop departmental handbooks profiling the faculty and programs within the department, along with admissions requirements, current students in the programs, and types and amounts of funding.

Seventh, involve students in corresponding with prospective graduate students about campus life and experiences; host prospects when they visit the campus; work in the

undergraduate summer programs on campus as role models and to recruit for the graduate school.

Eighth, Looney (1992) suggests that institutions should monitor the application and admissions process. Graduate school admissions officers should monitor and review admissions policies with the faculty, make cursory reviews of incomplete applications to help identify the most promising applicants early and inform faculty about the prospective student's potential, make personal contact with applicants to obtain needed information and to encourage them to attend, review final decisions of minority applicants and recommend fee waivers, and conduct a second review of rejected applicants to assure that no qualified minority applicants have been overlooked.

Finally, chancellors and deans should assure the financial package is competitive with those across the nation in order to draw the best and brightest qualified minority students to the campus (Looney, 1992). Looney indicated that funds could be provided for these various activities through university administration, grants, endowments from corporations and organizations, and other external funding sources.

Adams (1997), former president of the National Consortium for Graduate Degrees for Minorities in Engineering and Science, Inc. (GEM), contended that most undergraduate students have a poor understanding of graduate education and often will not consider graduate school as a strategic educational option after completing their baccalaureate degree program. Yet, the need for more graduate degrees in the workforce is increasing, and institutions are obliged to attract more students into advanced degree programs. The competition for graduating seniors (baccalaureate holders) between graduate schools and businesses often results in graduate schools losing potential students.

Adams (1997) devised a model to remedy this situation, or at least to enable graduate schools to compete more intensely, by concentrating on the dynamics of recruitment. Through this model, Adams (1997) labors to provide a systematic approach to the entire process of identifying, recruiting, retaining and graduating graduate students.

Adams (1997) emphasized that continuity, vivacity, and creativity are key elements to an effective recruitment program. Institutions should begin early during the student's undergraduate matriculation and establish a relationship between the student and the graduate school to help the student make the choice to pursue an advanced degree. Often the student has already established priorities that are incompatible with the process of applying and enrolling for full-time graduate study. According to Adams (1997), only those who submit an application can be considered for admission. Therefore, it is imperative that recruitment programs generate a large pool of well-qualified applicants, and recruiters should be creative in reaching prospective students. Without an application an institution has little chance of enrolling, retaining, and graduating students.

Steps in the recruiting process in the Adams Recruitment Model (1997) were identified as (a) establish recruitment goals, (b) identify applicant pool, (c) target prospects, (d) implement marketing strategies, (e) secure applications, (f) screen applications, (g) make admission offers, and (h) enroll students.

Providing faculty incentives could help to increase the enrollment of African American graduate students. Dr. Ted Greenwood (Fields, 1998), program officer of a five-year-old program funded by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, awards roughly \$3 million in grants annually to individual faculty members or clusters of faculty who have a proven track record for producing African American and other underrepresented doctoral graduates in mathematics, science, and engineering. To receive the award, applicants must submit a detailed plan for how

they intend to achieve the increased yield, such as recruitment activities, retention programs, and fellowship grants.

According to Greenwood, the foundation's strategic decision to award funds directly to faculty came after a thorough investigation into where and how students of color earned doctorates in the sciences. It was determined that even at institutions where administrative support for increasing production of minority doctoral students in math-based disciplines exists, the factor that most appeared to affect outcomes was faculty commitment. The degree of faculty commitment typically explained why some departments were more successful than others on the same campus.

Hammond and Yung (1993) conducted a study in which they collected information on the specific minority student recruitment and retention strategies used by 35 member schools of the National Council of Schools of Professional Psychology. The study provided a detailed description and analysis of how the professional schools currently addressed the issue of underrepresentation of ethnic minority students. From the review of the diversity practices used in other health professions, Hammond and Yung (1993) constructed a checklist of 14 general recruitment strategies used most often by the 35 member schools:

1. Personal contacts
2. Soliciting referrals from current students, alumni, and practitioners
3. Visibility of minority faculty and staff in all recruitment activities
4. Preadmission workshops and open houses
5. Invitations to campus lecture series and conferences
6. Recruitment materials especially developed for minority students
7. Visits to predominately minority institutions

8. Establishment of recruitment networks (state and private health, career organizations, colleges and universities)
9. Interest groups in the discipline area
10. Formal arrangements with feeder institutions
11. Preliminary education programs (secondary level)
12. Media presentations in undergraduate or high school classes
13. Joint undergraduate-faculty or undergraduate-graduate student projects
14. Public relations campaigns (e.g., feature articles on minority practitioners in local newspapers)

These strategies, though compiled from a national survey of health professions, were parallel to strategies used in other surveys and models (Adams, 1997; Looney, 1992; Taylor, 1989).

Hammond and Yung (1993) found the majority of those surveyed used only four of these strategies: personal contacts, soliciting referrals, minority faculty/staff visibility in recruitment activities, and formal preadmissions activities. They characterized the strategies most frequently used as casting a wide net; whereas, programs tried to reach minority students through high marketing of their product which did not pinpoint a particular population. Programs seemed most likely to rely on institutional contacts as good sources for referrals of individual students. Few schools held cultural events specifically for ethnic minorities, and even fewer reported any early outreach neither to feeder schools nor to students at lower levels of the educational pathway.

Most of the 14 activities were executed close to the beginning of the application process. As they concluded the study, Hammond and Yung (1993) advocated that institutions would implement more vigorous and diverse strategies, and they advised that institutions could attract larger numbers of students by facilitating the application process, advising on letters of

recommendation, providing stress management and time management training, helping students to polish interviewing skills, coaching students in preparing for entrance exams, and mentoring students throughout the recruiting and admissions process. African American students may not be as typically acculturated to ask for assistance, and recruitment programs should be sensitive to this (Hammond & Yung, 1993).

Perhaps one of the most effective tools in recruiting was the summer research initiative. In 1993, LaPidus, the President of the Council of Graduate Schools, gave strong support of summer research programs. Undergraduate students who have the opportunity to participate directly in research often find the experience a pivotal one in their consideration of what kind of career to pursue (Council of Graduate Schools, 1993). For many, it is the first experience to work with faculty outside of the classroom, and the enthusiasm for research, coupled with the idea of being a colleague and making a contribution to the solution of an interesting problem, are stimulating and thought-provoking. LaPidus (Council of Graduate Schools, 1993) remarked that students who have had no idea of what it means to do research find themselves seriously considering going to graduate school to prepare for a research career. Their faculty mentors play a vital role in getting them on the right track, and in many cases, eventually serve as their graduate advisors.

Summer research programs considerably benefit the universities as well. When students spend time at a school, they often begin to like it. This gives institutions more of an edge with the best and the brightest. Scholars have agreed that for African Americans, involvement in research as an undergraduate is a stronger predictor of later participation in and persistence toward the graduate degree than grade point average or standardized test scores. On the graduate level, summer research programs have greatly increased in the past decade in most major fields

of study such as public administration, business, science and engineering, agriculture, and education (Collins, 1990; Council of Graduate Schools, 1993; De Vito, 1992; Onwuegbuzie, 1999). These researchers agreed that such programs are key elements in the recruitment of African American and other minority graduate students.

African Americans often are not aware of alternative funding sources for graduate school, and will not readily attend if they must continue to depend on loans. Recruiters and other faculty can play a vital role in the student's success by increasing the student's knowledge of potential funding sources for graduate school. A number of other federal, state, and private support programs have been implemented to increase minority participation in graduate education. Melendez (1994) has compiled a summary of major programs which apply to African Americans and other minorities, including women. While many federal programs may not all target minorities, universities are responsible for targeting equitable distribution of such funds, assuring equal access to all federally funded programs for minorities.

Such federal programs as the Patricia Roberts Harris Graduate and Professional Fellowship Program, Women and Minority Participation in Graduate Programs, The National Aeronautics and Space Administration Program (NASA), and the National Science Foundation Minority Graduate Fellowships (GEM) are but a few of the existing funding programs. Also, Melendez (1994) reported that over half of all states provide funding for graduate study, and there are a considerable number of private funds available for minorities which emphasize teaching and research.

One productive program is the Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program that awards grants to colleges and universities specifically targeting students of color and low-income (under \$24,000), first-generation college students. The program has been

dedicated to the high standards of achievement inspired by Ronald McNair, the nation's second African-American astronaut. He was one of seven crew members aboard the space shuttle Challenger that exploded shortly after launch on January 28, 1986. This program is one of the federal TRIO college support initiatives, including Upward Bound, Talent Search, Student Support Services, Educational Opportunity Centers, and Training and Dissemination Grants (Grimmett, Bliss, & Davis, 1998).

According to these authors, the McNair program is located on 100 colleges and universities nationwide and works with target-group students who have an interest in, and the potential to succeed in, doctoral study. The program coordinates research forums and scholarly activities and provides support for students to travel to undergraduate research conferences. Each McNair participant receives a \$2,800 stipend to participate in research activities, usually during the summer (Hurd, 2000). Another popular program is the McKnight Doctoral Fellowship (Melendez, 1994) that provides tuition and fees and a stipend to African Americans to obtain a doctorate in a Florida institution of higher education. Other states have similar programs.

The African American Experience at the U of A

Public higher education in Arkansas began with the establishment of Arkansas Industrial University, chartered as a land-grant institution in 1871 at Fayetteville, which pledged to admit students without consideration of race, religion or previous condition (Lofton, 1995). There was immediate opposition to African Americans attending the institution, and as a result, the state constructed in Pine Bluff, Arkansas, the Branch Normal College in 1873 as a separate institution to accommodate the African Americans (Morgan, 1985); the institution was still considered a part of the U of A and subject to the same board of trustees. Branch Normal College remained under the auspices of the U of A and shared its land-grant status (previously established under

the Morrill Act of 1862) until the passage of the second Morrill Act in 1890. At this time, Branch Normal College received its individual status as a land-grant institution, becoming the second land-grant institution in the state. In 1927, it was renamed the Agricultural, Mechanical, and Normal College (AM&N) and severed its ties with the U of A. From the beginning, this institution was the source of continuous controversy related to funding, curriculum and training (Lofton, 1995; Morgan, 1985), and in 1972, the U of A again assumed administrative control of the college, and it was renamed as the U of A at Pine Bluff (UAPB).

Because African Americans were not welcome in schools that were inhabited by Whites, they had to seek educational opportunities outside of the state of Arkansas if the training they sought was not offered in Pine Bluff (Morgan & Preston, 1990). In 1943, Arkansas Legislative Act 345 established the State Tuition Fund that enabled African Americans to pursue graduate or professional training outside the state. Lofton (1995) provided a narrative of the Arkansas legislature and the entire state educational system before this practice was finally challenged.

In 1948, Silas Hunt was admitted into the U of A School of Law, becoming the first African American of historical record to enroll, and he was the first to be admitted south of the Mason and Dixon line without a court order (Morgan & Preston, 1990). Before the case of *Brown v. the Board of Education* (1954), only African American graduate students were on the campus, and the first African American undergraduate students were admitted in 1955 (Morgan, 1985). Dr. Gordon Morgan, the first African American instructor, was not hired until 1969. Perhaps the most definitive study tracing the history of African Americans at the U of A was completed first by Morgan (1985) and was later expanded in collaboration with his wife Dr. Izola Preston Morgan (Morgan & Preston, 1990).

Other landmark court cases that prompted legislative action affecting public education were Plessy v. Ferguson in 1895, Brown v. Board of Education in 1954, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and Adams v. Richardson in 1974. Adams v. Richardson eventually led to the enactment of Act 99 of 1989 which required that each state supported institution of higher education prepare a five-year affirmative action plan (Brubacher & Rudy, 1976; Lofton, 1995). This act mandated that each institution was to provide a part-time or full-time employee to assist in its recruitment of minority students.

Lofton's (1995) study evaluated the impact of Arkansas Act 99 of 1989 on cultural diversity at the two Arkansas land-grant institutions (the U of A, Fayetteville, and the U of A at Pine Bluff, formerly AM&N) from 1989 through 1994. During this five-year period, a total of 40 new African American students enrolled at the U of A, for a total enrollment of 713 African American students as compared to 12,597 non-minority students. Only two new African American faculty members were added during this time, giving a total of 67 minority faculty members (23 African American) as compared to 730 non-minority faculty members. Lofton (1995) suggests that Act 99 did not significantly impact the participation levels of minorities, particularly African Americans, during this period at the main campus.

In 1995, the Office of Affirmative Action and the Graduate School at the U of A created the Office of Graduate Recruitment and Support Services. Prior to this establishment, there was no record of a systemized approach to the recruitment of graduate students on the campus. Staffing consisted of the director and one part-time assistant. The part-time assistant position was made a graduate assistant appointment the very next year. A review of the job description for this office indicated the primary objective of the director was to recruit for all departments on the campus with graduate programs. Although the director was instructed to recruit all prospective

graduate students, she was also advised to place strong emphasis on the recruitment of African American, Hispanic American, and Native American prospective graduate students.

The basic recruiting strategies developed by the director consisted of traveling to HBCU's and other campuses with a sizeable population of students of color, following up on referrals from faculty members on and off the U of A campus by making telephone calls, and by sending letters and e-mail messages to prospective students. The director also developed fact sheets for dissemination to students at graduate and professional student conferences, at college and career fairs, and to include with mail out packages to students and to interested faculty on other campuses. She also arranged student visitations to the U of A campus, and she implemented and advised the Black Graduate Students Association (BGSA).

The Dean of the Graduate School developed the Benjamin Franklin Lever (BFL) Fellowship which paid the tuition for all qualified African American, Hispanic American, and Native American prospective graduate students. The qualifications for this tuition paid fellowship required a minimum 2.70 GPA, and the student must enroll in and maintain a minimum of 10 credit hours (which was later changed to 9 credit hours) per semester.

According to the U of A's Enrollment Report for Fall 1995, the graduate and professional student enrollment at the U of A totaled 1,939, of which 31 were African American. In Spring 1996, total enrollment was 1,892 of which 46 were African American. The Fall 1996 report showed 1,982 total graduate students with an increase in the total number of African American graduate students at 107. The African American graduate student enrollment had more than doubled since Fall 1995. By Spring 1997, the total U of A enrollment in Graduate School was 1,871, and 70 were African American. This was a significant increase as compared to Fall 1996 enrollment. Fall 1997 showed a total of 1,961 students enrolled in graduate school with a

decrease in the total number of African American students to 64 enrolled. Spring 1998 enrollment showed 2,085 total students enrolled in graduate school with only 93 African Americans in that total. Fall 1998 enrollment was 2,126 and of which 91 were African American graduate students. These figures were based upon only resident, on-campus graduate students, and excluded correspondence enrollment and non-degree seeking graduate students. Clearly, the enrollment of African American graduate students had improved since 1995, but the numbers were still quite low. The African American population in the state of Arkansas was 12%, yet the numbers of graduate students here at the university did not reflect that total percentage by far.

The Spring 2000 Enrollment Summary Report for the U of A showed a total student enrollment of 14,371. This is broken down to 11,236 undergraduates, 2,599 graduate and professional students, and 536 non-degree seeking students. A total of 893 (6.2%) of these students are African American and 184 of these are graduate/professional students. In 1999, the breakdown for faculty was 862 total members of which 774 (90%) were White and 29 (3%) were African American. Only 11 (2%) of the African American faculty were tenured.

In a preliminary report issued by the U.S. Census Bureau (2000), the total population of the United States as of April 1, 2000, was 274,520,000 (rounded to the nearest 1,000) of which 35,197,000 (12.8%) were African American. This same report has estimated the total population in this state as of April 1, 2000, was 2,351,000 (as rounded to the nearest 1,000) of which 12% of this population was African American. From 1948 with the enrollment of SH, the first African American student to be admitted to the U of A, to Spring 2000, the presence of African Americans on the Fayetteville campus had not been reflective of the African American population in the nation nor in the state. This effort would determine the best practices and strategies in the recruiting process at the U of A.

Chapter Summary

The chapter began with an historical perspective of African Americans in higher education. This perspective included significant court cases and laws passed to ensure equal access into institutions of higher education. The trends in population demographics prompted a discussion on issues regarding diversity, citing references from leading researches on the status of African Americans in higher education. This literature review also revealed specific models for the recruitment of African American students along with best practices in this field of study.

Chapter II concluded with the history of the African American student at the U of A. Based on the information presented in this literature review, specific concerns existed in the recruitment of minority students onto this campus. These concerns had perpetuated various studies and models for best practices in the recruitment of minority students, specifically for African American students. Consequently, the past enrollment reports and the findings of two surveys, one conducted internally and one conducted by an external team, have prompted the U of A to actively recruit more African American students and faculty.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODS

Introduction

The qualitative research process was conducive for this study as it gave the researcher the evidence required in order to surmise the extent to which the recruiting practices being instituted during this time period were synonymous with best practices as identified in the literature. The researcher would also be able to determine whether or not a sustained recruiting effort was maintained across the campus. Through qualitative inquiry, the researcher was able to identify the strengths and weaknesses in the recruiting process on the U of A campus, and look for any patterns which might emerge from a study of this kind.

Research Design

The theoretical framework for this study was based on both grounded theory (Corbin & Strauss, 2008), and a systems perspective (Patton, 1990). First, grounded theory is a research design in which the theory is generated directly from the data. Both Creswell (2007) and Shank (2006) indicated that the definition of grounded theory was ever evolving. Creswell leaned towards the definition created by Strauss and Corbin (Creswell, 2007, p. 63), “Grounded theory is a qualitative research design in which the inquirer generates a general explanation (a theory) of a process, action, or interaction shaped by the views of a large number of.” However, Shank (2006) identifies qualitative research as “a form of systematic empirical inquiry into meaning” (p. 4).

Theories are formed and validated through a comparative analysis of the data collected, and by what emerges from the review of that data (Creswell, 2007; Rossman & Rallis, 2003; Corbin & Strauss, 2008). The researcher creates new order from the old and uses a systematic set

of procedures which are grounded in a conceptual framework to include, but by no means is limited to, the overall genre and rationale, site and population selection, data collection procedures, data analysis, trustworthiness issues, and ethical considerations in order to develop inductively derived grounded theories about a phenomenon (Creswell, 2007; Rossman & Rallis, 2003; Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

Second, a hallmark of systems thinking is the notion that all parts of a system are so interconnected that simple cause and effect analysis distorts more than it illuminates because changes in one part of the system lead to changes among all parts and the system itself (Patton, 1990). Because the recruitment of minority students is potentially influenced by both policy and process, systems theory was an appropriate lens through which to analyze the data collected in this study (Patton, 1990).

Selection of Subjects

Subjects for this study were specifically selected based upon their roles in the recruitment of graduate students. The participants included deans, faculty, graduate coordinators and recruiters from the various departments and colleges which offer graduate degree programs, personnel from the Office of Graduate Recruitment as well as those from the Graduate School of Admissions. This cross section of individuals offered individual perspectives in the recruiting process and they provided insight into their interpretation of institutional goals. These individuals also shared specific strategies they used to recruit graduate students. Their responses to the open-ended questions generated through the interview (Appendix A), provided opportunities to identify additional sources to explore.

Persons in these categories were selected because they worked directly with the recruitment of graduate students and most people in these categories continued to work directly

with these students once they were admitted into Graduate School. These individuals shared how they identified potential graduate students and the strategies they used to recruit them.

Individuals also shared special needs within their areas/departments which could create barriers to the recruitment of graduate students, especially African American students. These individuals interviewed discussed specific incentives that their departments may have offered to attract these students, the goals and expectations as set forth within their own departments, and the degree to which they were meeting the goals and expectations as set by the institution for the recruitment of graduate students, especially African Americans.

Instruments

Several tools were used in this process. The primary data collection tool used for this study was the interview. In qualitative research, the interview is salient in determining what is really happening in that setting with those participants (Creswell, 2007; Patton, 1990; Shank, 2006). The researcher chose this method as it was the most effective way to collect responses to the research questions by taking me into the world of the participant (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). Through a series of 40 interviews, the researcher searched for meaning by comparing notes from each, by searching for patterns, by looking for strengths and weaknesses within the recruiting strategies, by finding gaps between what was expected (goals) and what was actually being done, and by determining acceptance of or resistance to changes in the recruiting process as deemed necessary through the interpretation of the institutional goals of the U of A.

For the personal interviews this researcher used the interview guide approach (Patton, 1990; Rossman & Rallis, 2003). This approach afforded the opportunity to pose specific topics regarding the recruiting process and institutional policy; simultaneously, this approach would also leave room for the participant to bring up topics and to discover others which may have

inadvertently emerge. By posing a series of open-ended questions (Appendix A), a researcher is able to capture the participant's perspective rather than the perspective of the researcher (Patton, 1990; Rossman & Rallis, 2006). Shank (2006) suggests that the interviewer would want to move towards creating a more intimate level of comfort during the interview but cautions not to push for standard disclosure as it wastes valuable time and often leads to a shared understanding rather than giving a true picture of the interviewee's perspective. Also, a push for more disclosure could be misinterpreted by the interviewee (Shank, 2006) and could place the interviewee as well as the interviewer in an uncomfortable situation. Finally, for accuracy and clarity, this researcher hired a professional transcriptionist to transcribe the tapes and create Microsoft documents. The researcher then used these documents to fashion member checks and to use in coding the data.

Also, a review of documents related to the recruiting of graduate students and the diversification of the campus revealed goals and current practices which were taking place on the university's campus. These documents included departmental forms and letters used in recruiting students, U of A web pages and catalogs to posit historical information about the campus, internal and external studies related to diversity and cultural climate at the U of A, and edicts sent throughout the campus which identified institutional goals and initiatives to further diversify the campus. The researcher examined these documents to identify current goals, policies, and practices which may have addressed increasing the presence of minority students on the campus.

Finally, as Shank (2006) explained, the researcher does matter. The researcher not only records and reports what is revealed in the study but also interprets those findings and discoveries. This researcher was also a viable instrument in this study for two reasons. First, this researcher was an African American graduate student enrolled at the U of A. This researcher lived near the campus and witnessed first-hand the interactions of students, faculty,

administrators and employees on the campus. Second, during the four years, this researcher was enrolled full-time on the campus, working in the Office of Graduate Recruitment and Support Services. The primary goal for this office was the recruitment of minority graduate students, especially African American graduate students.

While in this employ, the researcher gained specific knowledge of the recruiting process at the U of A. In part, the duties in this office included direct interaction with most of the graduate coordinators and department chairs in various departments on campus. Consequently, the researcher had already established a working rapport with most of the participants in this study; being mindful, however, of her own personal biases that she might bring to this study. The researcher kept a personal journal of her thoughts and assumptions throughout the course of the study. In this way, the researcher was able to examine personal thinking and focus more attentively on the data and what it actually presented, rather than on the researcher's own personal biases.

Data Collection

All interviewees were first contacted by letter or by telephone to obtain permission for the interview and to establish a meeting date. Once the initial contact was made, the researcher sent each subject a consent form (Appendix B) which also served as an introduction, and the form provided an explanation of the purpose for the interview and an assurance of confidentiality. The duration of the interviews lasted no more than 60 minutes each, and a secluded classroom or office was the site selected for the interviews. When a face-to-face interview was not feasible, the researcher compensated by e-mailing an electronic questionnaire or by conducting the interview via telephone. Of course, these alternative methods limited any personal contact and prevented the researcher from reading the body language of the constituents

(Patton, 1990). Also in this way, those being interviewed might not have spoken as freely as they would have in a face-to-face interview because they would not have been able to determine if they truly trusted the interviewer. With the exception of the e-mail questionnaire, all other interviews were recorded on cassette tape and later transcribed by a professional transcriptionist into Microsoft Word documents.

This researcher collected data through a review of related documents. These documents included departmental forms and letters used in recruiting students, U of A web pages and catalogs to posit historical information about the campus, internal and external studies related to diversity and cultural climate at the U of A, and edicts sent throughout the campus which identified institutional goals and initiatives to further diversify the campus. Also, these documents were instrumental in providing insight into what was happening on the campus in regard to the recruitment of graduate students, especially African American students. These documents gave insight into whether or not the practices and the goals were congruent.

Data Analysis

The data were reviewed and coded into categories for ease of future access and retrieval. Strauss and Corbin (1990) identify coding as “the operations by which data are broken down, conceptualized, and put back together in new ways” (p. 57). In grounded theory, coding presents a way to analyze the data in through open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. According to Strauss and Corbin (1990), open coding divides the data into categories which in turn points the way to future data collecting. After open coding, the researcher developed a paradigm matrix through axial coding. Axial coding allowed for the making of connections between categories and then developing subcategories from the main ones (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). As outlined in the paradigm model (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Strauss & Corbin, 1990), subcategories are linked

to a category in a set of relationships: casual conditions (what is there when you begin the research), phenomenon (what you are studying), context (people, places, situations), intervening conditions (things you cannot control – disabilities, gender, economic status, etc.), action/interaction strategies (things that people do to try to shape or mold their environment), and consequences (outcomes which occur from action taken or not taken). And finally, selective coding involves the integrating of all categories to form a grounded theory. From this theory suggested by Corbin and Strauss (2008), this researcher created a story based on the phenomenon.

The data collected and subsequent coding was necessary to create an index system to break the word processing file into text units. This process enabled the researcher to look for patterns. These patterns or combinations (Patton, 1990; Corbin & Strauss, 2008) were significant as they helped to interpret the connections between key players, their perceptions about the phenomenon and institutional goals for further diversifying the campus, the strengths and weaknesses in each of the departments and offices in relation to the recruitment of graduate students, and the effect these changes may have had upon these various offices and departments. These patterns and outcomes were reported through discourse and tables for illustration.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness was a key element in qualitative research. To assure that the research data was credible, multiple methods were used to collect and verify the data. Triangulation (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Marshall & Rossman, 1995; Patton, 1990) was achieved through prolonged and persistent engagement, member checks, and peer debriefings. Data was collected through personal interviews, observations, and document analysis. By mixing methods, biases and false information were reduced by comparing the data. Multiple perspectives were given

through the administrators, faculty, staff, and current graduates. These varied perspectives provided a means for assessing the quality and the effect of the recruiting process used at the U of A.

Prolonged and persistent engagement

One method of ensuring trustworthiness of the data was through prolonged engagement. Lincoln and Guba (1985) define prolonged engagement as the investment of sufficient time to achieve certain purposes: learning the “culture,” testing for misinformation introduced by distortions either of the self or of the respondents, and building trust. Prolonged engagement also required that this investigator was involved with a site sufficiently long enough to detect and take account of distortions that might otherwise have crept into the data. This researcher was directly connected with the campus as a graduate student, observer, employee, and researcher for a period of 10 consecutive years, 2000-2010.

This researcher was obliged to continue collecting data until no new data was coming forth, and all the categories had been saturated as well (Creswell, 2007; Strauss & Corbin 2008). Likewise, persistent engagement was a way of identifying anomalous information that did not answer the research question and may be one of the most difficult ways to ensure trustworthiness (Creswell, 2008; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This researcher focused by continuously writing the study or observations in a journal and comparing the entries to identify patterns and themes. The data was collected over a period of 10 years.

Member Checks

Member checks occurred to encourage the participants to review the typed transcripts of their interviews and observations and to offer feedback for clarification and for reduction of inconsistencies (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Miles & Huberman, 1994). These member checks

provided a comparison of the data by actual stakeholders in the research. Stakeholders were provided written transcripts of their interviews. Stakeholders provided their feedback to the researcher through e-mail messages, telephone calls, and face-to-face visits in their offices, respectively. Most of these sessions occurred within seven days of the initial interviews or observations.

Peer Debriefing

Lincoln and Guba (1985) also describe peer debriefing as a valid method of ensuring trustworthiness. In this process this researcher solicited the assistance of other researchers in the field to review the data, to play the devil's advocate, and to provide feedback. During these debriefing sessions, the impartial peers asked any questions which came to mind that would challenge the researcher's motives, techniques, and strategies for clarification. Those persons conducting the peer debriefings were selected from this researcher's general pool of colleagues as well as others who were recommended by the peers. These sessions were conducted by e-mail, by telephone, and by face-to-face visits at various locations which were selected at the convenience of the peers.

Chapter Summary

Chapter II entailed a discussion of the methods selected for this study. This was a qualitative study selected for the purpose of perpetuating a prolonged engagement of the practices used at the U of A for recruiting graduate students, especially African Americans. To achieve this end, the researcher conducted 40 personal interviews of university personnel who worked directly with graduate students. The participants included deans, faculty, graduate coordinators and recruiters from the various departments and colleges which offer graduate

degree programs, personnel from the Office of Graduate Recruitment as well as those from the Graduate School of Admissions.

The researcher hired a transcriptionist to transform the taped interviews into Microsoft Word documents for easier viewing and analyzing of the data. The researcher assured validity of the data through member checks and peer debriefing. After the data was verified, the researcher looked for patterns and themes that may have emerged through the coding.

CHAPTER IV
PRESENTATION OF THE DATA

Introduction

This chapter contains an explanation of the data collected at the U of A. The data included in this study were obtained from offices on the campus that dealt directly with the recruitment process of African American graduate students. These facilities were the Office of Graduate Recruitment and Support Services, the Graduate School, and other academic departments on campus that offered graduate degrees. The data collected primarily generates from transcripts of interviews which were conducted with administrators, faculty, staff, prospective graduate students, from observations, and from document analysis. The results of a focus group composed of faculty and staff who worked directly with graduate students also provided insightful information for this chapter.

Interviews were conducted with U of A administrators, faculty, and staff. Some additional comments by prospective graduate students (Appendix C) were also collected from various recruiting trips to HBCUs by this researcher. In an effort to bring structure to the textual materials and to protect the identities of those interviewed, this researcher used open coding as suggested by Strauss and Corbin (1990). This method enabled comparisons to be made in the data until patterns emerged into categories. To identify the method of data collection and the location of specific data within that method, the following codes were used:

- O: Observations
- INT: Interview
- A: Document
- S: Interview, students

CG: Interview, Dean of Graduate School
CW: Interview, Chancellor of the U of A
VCSA: Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs
WC: Interview, Director of Affirmative Action
VD: Interview, Director of Graduate Recruitment 1
BD: Interview, Director of Graduate Recruitment 2
JJ: Interview, Director of Graduate Recruitment 3
CR: Interview, Recruiter for Arts & Sciences
CP: Interview, Student Focus Group
GC: Interview, Graduate Coordinators
F/SFG: Faculty/Staff Focus Group

Summary of the Study

Trustworthiness

To assure that the research data was credible, this researcher used multiple methods to collect and to verify the data through triangulation (Denzin, 1978; Marshall & Rossman, 1995; Patton, 1990). This researcher conducted interviews, made observations, and analyzed documents that were related to this study. By mixing methods this researcher reduced biases and false information by comparing the data. Multiple perspectives were achieved through the interviews with administrators, faculty and staff. These varied perspectives provided a means for assessing the quality and the effect of the recruitment of African American graduate students at the U of A.

Prolonged engagement. One method used in this study to ensure trustworthiness of the data was prolonged engagement. Lincoln and Guba (1985) defined prolonged engagement as the

investment of sufficient time to achieve certain purposes: learning the culture, testing for misinformation introduced by distortions either of the self or of the respondents, and building trust. Prolonged engagement also required that this investigator would be involved with a site long enough to detect and take account of distortions that might otherwise creep into the data. These distortions may come from the investigator or from the respondents.

Likewise, Lincoln and Guba (1985) identify persistent engagement as a way of getting rid of anomalous information that does not answer the research question and may be one of the most difficult ways to ensure trustworthiness. This researcher stayed focused by continuously writing up the observations. Prolonged and persistent engagement (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 1990) enabled this researcher to compare data and to identify patterns in the recruiting process and in the methods used by various departments and colleges to recruit students, especially African American graduate students, to the U of A. Prolonged engagement was assured by the length of time of the investigation, 2000-2010. Over 100 hours were spent in data collection, over 100 hours in transcribing, and over 120 hours in analyzing and writing.

Member checks. Conducting member checks was another method used to ensure trustworthiness. Member checks occurred as the researcher encouraged the participants to review the typed transcripts of their interviews and observations and to offer feedback for clarification and for the reduction of inconsistencies (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). These member checks provided cross validation of the data by actual stakeholders in the research. Most of these sessions occurred within seven days of the initial interviews or observations.

Peer debriefing. Peer debriefing was the third method used to ensure trustworthiness. Lincoln and Guba (1985) described peer debriefing as a valid method of ensuring trustworthiness. Likewise, peer debriefing of the data also provided additional insight into the

credibility of the data as other fellow doctoral candidates reviewed the data to determine if there were any gaps between what was collected and what was actually the researcher's interpretation of the data. During these debriefing sessions, the impartial peers would ask any questions which came to mind that would challenge my motives, techniques, and strategies for clarification. These reviews took place on both an individual basis and in group sessions with time and place being jointly determined by the peer reviewer(s) and the researcher.

Audit trail. The audit trail was the final method used to ensure trustworthiness. An audit trail was created to enable a cross-referencing of data, and attach priorities to data that might otherwise have remained undifferentiated prior to the actual writing had occurred. Lincoln and Guba (1985) listed six categories for the audit trail of which five used in this study were as follows:

1. raw data, including electronically recorded materials such as audio cassette recordings; written field notes, unobtrusive measures such as documents and records and physical traces; and survey results
2. data reduction and analysis products, including write-ups of field notes, summaries such as condensed notes, unitized information (as on 3 x 5 cards), and quantitative summaries; and theoretical notes, including concepts and hunches
3. data reconstruction and synthesis products, including structure of categories (themes, definitions, and relationships); findings and conclusions (interpretations and inferences); and a final report, with connections to the existing literature and an integration of concepts, relationships, and interpretations

4. process notes, including methodological notes (procedures, designs, strategies, rationale); trustworthiness notes (relating to credibility, dependability, and confirmability); and audit trail notes
5. materials relating to intentions and dispositions, including the inquiry proposal; personal notes (reflexive notes and motivations); and expectations (predictions and intentions).

Hard copies of all transcribed material were filed by type. Audio tapes were numbered, coded with the date of the interview and the code names of the participant(s). Tapes were then filed chronologically by the tape number and cataloged on 3x5 index cards which were kept in a locked file box.

Data Analysis

The literature review revealed several models and strategies for effectively recruiting minority graduate students, specifically African-American graduate students. Based on the literature presented in Chapter II, five common strategies emerged: (1) foster complete institutional commitment, (2) establish an aggressive and effective model of recruitment, (3) set-up a viable mentoring program, (4) create a pipeline that will begin in high school and continue through the student's undergraduate program, (5) provide a competitive financial package. The data in this study was analyzed in order to determine whether or not these best practices were evident on the U of A campus.

A series of 40 interviews were conducted by this researcher with U of A administrators, vice chancellors, college deans, department heads, and with other faculty members who were directly responsible for and made connection with prospective graduate students – namely, department chairs, graduate coordinators, Graduate School directors, faculty recruiters, and other

department recruiters. Three basic questions were developed to indicate the extent of the U of A's compliance with the aforementioned best practices.

Research Questions

1. What institutional commitment was articulated in the recruitment of African American graduate students?

Institutional commitment is a necessary component in diversifying the campus. Researchers Adams (1997), Looney (1992), and Taylor (1996) see recruitment as a process that begins with the top officials at an institution and trickles down to faculty and staff. In this process, the need to buy in must be made obvious to all stakeholders in order for the plan to work. Stakeholders must assess the campus and identify strengths and weaknesses in every area, and then goals must be set in relation to those findings. Once goals are established, steps to implementation should be developed and questions answered regarding accountability, the acquisition of necessary resources, etc. In response to this question, this researcher began at the top with the chancellor at the U of A. Since the chancellor was the lead administrator, his perspective on campus diversity was crucial.

In the year 2000, this researcher conducted the first of two interviews with the chancellor of the U of A, hitherto known as CW. At the time of this interview, CW had served as chancellor for three years. The first objective in this interview was to determine whether or not CW had any concerns regarding the racial diversity on this campus. The second objective in this interview was to determine whether CW had any proclivities for enhancing the minority population on this campus. CW's response was quoted directly from the interview transcripts as follows:

I lived in Washington D.C. for three years. I was in Atlanta for almost 20 years, and I hadn't realized that I took for granted what was just sort of everyday with me. I said, "In the Administration Building there's one Black person on the fourth floor. There's maybe one on the third floor." I said, "The number of African Americans in the Administration

Building I think you can count on one hand. This is not right. It is not representative of Arkansas. It's certainly not representative of this country. I don't know what I'm going to do about it, but it's very obvious that we have not been progressive in minority representation." ...and I started calling into question, "Why is it that I go to football games and I noticed that everybody in the pep band is White, and all the cheerleaders and pompom squad members are White? And you have the basketball players... There are very few White people on the basketball team. Now, doesn't that strike you as strange? This is not representative. If I look at the *Traveler* staff, is it representative?" Every place that we look where we have a group of students stand up to represent the U of A, we ought to be conscious about how they look. So I talked with the athletic director for men, with the athletic director for women now we need to be more conscious of that. No minority students come out to tryout? Probably the reason they don't is they don't think that they'd get chosen because they're making decisions based on what they see. They think that there is some subtle bias in the selection process that's going to preclude them. You've got to go out and actively recruit and get these people to come. You've got to demonstrate that you are, in fact, interested in having their open competition. You want everybody to feel free to compete. So it's begun to change now. Last year we did have African American cheerleaders and on the pompom squad, not as many as we should, but since I've been here I've learned to measure progress not in miles but in inches.

As the interview continued, CW related these additional comments which gave rise to his concerns about the lack of racial diversity on the U of A campus.

CW: "When I came here as chancellor in 1997, it was very obvious to me that we had a long way to go in the area of diversity... The media was interviewing me and someone asked, 'Well, what do you miss most about Georgia Tech?' and I said, 'Well, actually, it isn't what I miss most about Georgia Tech. It's that I've come to realize what I miss most about Atlanta. I miss the diversity of Atlanta.' "

CW: "I don't want to be a cookie-cutter kind of an institution... everybody look alike, they think alike, they learn alike."

CW: "Every place that we look where we have a group of students stand up to represent the U of A, we ought to be conscious about how they look."

The Chancellor seemed equally concerned that when spending money to recruit faculty and students, the intent would not be misinterpreted.

CW: "If we had set aside money and put it in a pool and said, 'You can use the money in this pool if you're supporting minority graduate students or you're recruiting minority faculty,' Well, what would that have said? That you have potentially as a message is that you had to use some set aside funds to do this, and in some sense, those individuals aren't competitive in the large pool. What you've just said is "You're not as good." We're very concerned about that, about the mindset that seems to exist."

CW: “I think that people understand that we’re talking about going after the best people. And by the way, while you’re at it, let’s make sure you’ve got a diverse pool. And so that’s the approach that we’re trying to take in this.”

CW: “When it comes to hiring for key positions, I don’t think that we will have done our job if we don’t have a diverse pool of people to look at.”

The second interview that this researcher conducted with the chancellor was in the year 2005. The purpose of this second interview was specifically to follow-up, to determine if there were any additional goals, and to learn of any progress made since the first interview. The chancellor had this to say in that 2005 interview,

...As far as diversifying... the third 2010 Commission Report... it’s sort of a mid-course assessment of how we’re doing. And we’ve gained ground in some areas, and we’ve lost ground in other areas. The one area for all of – as far as my report card, if you will – I give the worst grade on what we’re doing in diversity. I mean, we’re just not making the kind of progress that I thought we would make by this point in time. And every time that I bring that up and discuss it, people want to give me all the excuses for why we aren’t doing it, but I just don’t believe that excuses are really appropriate.

He further elaborated that diversifying the campus is “the very highest priority of this administration.” Some of the concerns he articulated were as follows:

CW: “We want to see our African-American graduation rate equaling that of the other student body.”

CW: “In 1997 we had 326 minority students, and this fall we had 340, and that’s very disappointing that we’ve only grown by 14. Although these numbers reflected a combination of graduate and undergraduate students in 1997, by and large, the growth of the African American student population on the campus, as a whole, was significantly underrepresented.”

CW continued to express his desire to make the campus more inclusive as follows:

CW: “What we are trying to do is to reach the point of critical mass for all different segments of the campus, so that if you are from an underrepresented group, when you’re on our campus, you don’t feel like you’re alone. You don’t feel like you’re just one of so few. You never get to see somebody that looks like you. What we’re trying to build is an inclusive campus. We want a campus that is broadly representative of Arkansas, of the United States, and indeed, of the world. And we want to create an atmosphere, an environment, in which people feel included.”

CW: “It’s everybody’s job to help make this campus more inclusive for everyone.”

As far as perpetuating the buy in across the board, CW pointed out the following:

CW: ‘I am convinced that the vice chancellors and the deans have seriously engaged the issue [of diversity], that it’s a high priority for them as well. I think that the biggest obstacle, if I had to identify anything, it’s not so much indifference. And it’s not so much apathy as it is, ‘I can’t do much about this. It must be somebody else’s responsibility.’ And that’s the attitude that we’re trying to change. There’s going to be a clear understanding that it is everyone’s responsibility and that everyone can do something about it.’

From the deans and vice chancellors, CW expected that information to trickle down through the various departments regarding his expectations of them for recruiting and enrolling more minority students, especially African American students. For the purpose of this study, their comments have been compiled collectively and are listed in no particular order. The following are direct quotes extracted from the transcripts of their interviews:

This researcher sought to discover the extent of the commitment made by the deans and by those who were in contact with graduate and prospective graduate students. As a subsequent goal, this researcher endeavored to determine the recruiting strategies, if any, that the recruiters of graduate students in each program or college might employ. In 2000, this researcher interviewed two of the existing four academic deans (Agriculture, Engineering), one dean and one assistant dean of the Graduate School, and one vice chancellor. This researcher began with the deans and vice chancellor because CW had stated, “I laid out for the deans and the vice chancellors: This is what we have to do to reach our 2010 goal of 66 percent six-year graduation rate. We want to see our African American graduation rate equaling that of the other [White] student body.”

The following chart provides a summary representing the responses of deans and vice chancellors to research question #1. These responses were taken from the transcripts of interviews given by the faculty and staff who were directly responsible for either recruiting graduate students or who worked with graduate students interested in entering into the graduate programs targeted in this research. These interviews were taken in 2000 to 2001. As the chart indicates, most departments with graduate degree programs in 2000-2001 were unaware of the chancellor's desire to diversify the campus. None of the departments identified produced goals.

Table 1

Summary of Graduate Degree Program Responses

Categories of interview responses for the 20 representatives of the graduate degree programs	# of Responses
Are aware of the Chancellor's Diversity Goals	2
Are unaware of the Chancellor's Diversity Goals	18
Passively Recruit	8*
No Recruiting Initiatives	8
Have Goals for Recruiting Minorities	0
Believe that the Graduate School should do all the recruiting	14
No Assistantships Reserved for Minorities	18
Assistantships Reserved for Minorities	2
Have Adequate Funding	0
Need More Assistantships	20
Expect the Graduate School/Chancellor to Fund more Assistantships	20

*This number reflects some overlap.

All of the departments stated that they were in need of more money to recruit the best and the brightest. All expressed a concern that the Graduate School should provide more funding to the individual departments.

Next, and upon the recommendation of CW, this researcher interviewed the vice chancellor for student affairs. The VCSA was also selected because of the influence she had over student enrollment and curriculum. She reports directly to the chancellor, and based on the responses she made during the interview, it was clear that the VCSA also shared the chancellor's vision for increasing the minority presence on the U of A campus.

VCSA: "As we begin to become much more strategic and intentional about our efforts to address this issue, and if we just focus on African American students, then as we become more strategic and intentional, we have to understand that it's a multi-faceted issue."

VCSA: "You have to be much more proactive about going out and finding your – your candidate pool, and go out and find minority candidates."

VCSA: "Yes, I've bought into his [CW's] vision. We must be working with our students to make – to ensure that they have those diversity encounters as part of their educational process. And it's not an optional piece. We don't tell them they can opt out of math. It's a requirement."

VCSA: "Well, the plan [Diversity Plan] would get the blessing of the executive committee, which is the chancellor and all the vice chancellors."

VCSA: "Numbers are important but they're not the end. We also must focus on what happens to them once they get here."

VCSA: "There's always an obstacle. ...And so to do this well and do it right requires that everybody think about it in a different way. ...One of the reactions that I will often get, especially from faculty, is 'You know, you want me to do this on top of everything else that I'm doing?' And my answer is, 'No, I don't want you to do this. I want you to do what you do ordinarily, differently.' ...See, it can no longer be viewed as extra."

2. What strategies or best practices did the U of A employ in the recruitment of African American graduate students?

When interviewing the recruiters of graduate students at the U of A, this researcher sought to discover whether or not active or passive recruiting practices existed within the departments that offered graduate degree programs. As a subsequent goal, this researcher endeavored to determine the recruiting strategies, if any, that the recruiters of graduate students in each program or college might employ.

This next collection of quotes originated from department heads and graduate coordinators who may or may not actively recruit students for their graduate programs. Some departments had graduate coordinators and some did not: therefore, this researcher interviewed the department heads who fulfilled the duties of a graduate coordinator. The focus for these interviews was to determine which departments did or did not actively recruit graduate students, especially African American graduate students. If, in fact, active recruiting was taking place, the researcher would then identify best practices which would be revealed during the course of the interviewing process. All of these interviews were conducted within the years 2000 - 2006. Their comments were randomly extracted from the various transcripts and listed in no particular order. Those comments that were duplicated were not repeated.

1. "Recruitment is important and is going on."
2. "Well...one way [to recruit more African American students] would be to invite people like Ed February to come here and give talks to the student body. You know, you go to places and you don't want to join an organization that don't have folks like you in it. If you don't feel comfortable...I wouldn't feel too comfortable maybe joining a purely Hispanic organization or department and you wouldn't find diversity. I understand folks might not feel too comfortable coming into a lily-White department that's all...you know what I mean. And so I think that seeing people of your own ethnic background and whatnot helps."

3. "We haven't actively gone out and recruited so much. We've made fliers. We are advertising our department telling what we do. The other big part has been certain faculty people would call up friends of theirs that are in other departments that are teaching where they award baccalaureate degrees and ask if they have any good students."
4. "We need to build our undergraduate majors, and we are trying everything we can think of to do that. We haven't been extremely successful in this."
5. "If an African American student applied for an assistantship and met the qualifications for an assistantship, he might definitely get an assistantship, even if his qualifications weren't that high as maybe a white student's. We have never faced this, though."
6. "If we are really serious about recruiting African Americans, we ought to be going to places where African Americans go to high school, and we ought to be giving presentations on environmental matters and things like that, but we're not doing that."
7. "We certainly want to diversify, but we don't know how to do this."
8. "We do have a speakers' exchange where members of the faculty will go and speak at elementary schools and some high schools, but we are not often invited."
9. "We don't recruit for minorities. We are looking for the best and the brightest. We are not specifically looking for minorities."
10. "Recruiting is best handled by faculty."
11. "We depend on the Graduate School to do recruiting for us."
12. "The biggest recruiters to an institution are its students. If the students aren't happy, then they will tell you. If you can get someone to come in through your undergraduate programs, then they will be more willing to go through your graduate program."
13. "We don't have to recruit. Students just come to us on their own."
14. "We don't recruit."
15. "We make no concentrated effort to recruit African Americans for our programs."
16. "Our department goals do not address diversity and we don't use campus resources to recruit."

Based on information gleaned from these interviews, most recruiting practices were of a passive nature in the form of sending out fliers and brochures, emailing information, providing

descriptions of programs on the university's webpage, and making phone calls. The more active recruiting practices were in the form of a speakers' exchange to elementary schools and to some high schools, limited student visitations to the U of A campus, faculty visitations to other campuses but only when a faculty member was willing to go, and hosting a booth at the NWA Mall although the interviewee admitted that this action was not very productive.

Another best practice is to strengthen the pipeline. This can be done by visiting high schools and undergraduate institutions and in establishing relationships with counselors and colleagues there. Both high school counselors and colleagues on college campuses can identify potential students for graduate programs. It is equally important for faculty and recruiters to become well-acquainted with students whom those colleagues have targeted.

Pipelines are strongly encouraged within the institution as well. Identifying and mentoring undergraduates will encourage current students to remain on the campus to pursue a graduate degree. Again, faculty members are the key to enriching this undergraduate pool by encouraging, nurturing, and educating the undergraduates through the ins and outs of what is expected as a graduate student.

At the time these interviews were conducted, the George Washington Carver Research Program was the only collaborative mentoring component that this researcher could identify on the U of A campus to encourage minority undergraduates, specifically African American students, to consider the U of A for their graduate work. In order to define the program, this researcher extracted information directly from the U of A homepage.

The George Washington Carver Research Program is an initiative of the U of A designed to increase the racial diversity of the graduate and professional student body. The program, which was originally designed and implemented by WC in the Office of Affirmative Action,

seeks to identify, interest and recruit graduates of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) as graduate students through the establishment of institutional linkages between the U of A Graduate School and participating Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

All Carver interns work directly with a faculty mentor and are exposed to various aspects of graduate study including standardized test preparation, research and presentation skills, and the graduate application and funding process.

The program was created in 1997. That summer two Southern University undergraduate students completed paid six-week internships in agriculture under the supervision of U of A faculty members in the Dale Bumpers College of Agricultural, Food and Life Sciences.

In 1998, a total of nine undergraduate students from Southern University and the U of A at Pine Bluff completed summer internships in Agriculture. In 1999, six undergraduate students from Southern University and the U of A at Pine Bluff completed internships in Agriculture. That same year, the Sam M. Walton College of Business and the College of Education and Health Professions agreed to support Carver interns from Alcorn State University, Tougaloo College, and Jackson State University.

In 2001, internships in Chemistry, Chemical Engineering, Poultry Science, and Micro Electronics Photonics were added and Dillard University, Xavier University, and Prairie View A&M University joined the program as partner institutions. Since its creation, the Carver program has continued to gain momentum. In 2005, four new partnerships were established: Mississippi Valley State University (MS), Langston University (OK), Lincoln University (PA), and New Mexico Highlands University (NM) the first Hispanic Serving Institution. The program was also extended to 8 weeks and the intern stipend increased.

During his tenure at the U of A, CW made clear his feelings about the project: “I’m very supportive of the George Washington Carver Project.” Other than this statement, his comments in the interview did not specifically address his goals for increasing the African American graduate student numbers, but his comments did express his desire to increase diversity on the campus throughout the student body, which would include graduate students as well.

3. What were the greatest barriers or obstacles for recruiting African American graduate students to the U of A campus in Fayetteville?

To avoid duplications, responses that addressed question #3 have been recorded collectively for all 40 interviews conducted with administrators, faculty, and graduate recruiters.

Funding. CW stated in retrospect that he had seriously underestimated the [financial] challenges that a number of the minority students face, as he remarked, “I should have given a much higher priority to needs-based scholarships, and I didn’t. I thought that if you wanted to attend the U of A through the combination of the academic challenge scholarships statewide, several Pell grants, low interest loans, you could get the money to go to college, and you could do it here.”

Additional comments reflected through the interviews with administrators, faculty, and recruiters also addressed the lack of funding and the sources from which the assistance should flow.

1. “We need more money. We don’t have the resources to add more assistantships to our programs. Tell the Graduate School to give us more money.”
2. “If the chancellor wants us to provide assistantships for minorities, then ask him if he is going to give us the money to do this with.”
3. “We need more funding to be more competitive.”
4. “We have limited assistantships and none of them are designated specifically for minorities. We are looking for the best and the brightest regardless of their race.”

5. “We have no money to provide incentives for faculty to recruit.”
6. “It’s too expensive to bring students to our campus to visit our programs.”
7. “We are trying to do great things on just a little bit of money. Administrators need to become more committed to it.”
8. “Few minorities enroll in our program. Those who qualify generally enroll at other schools that offer higher financial assistance.”
9. “We need an African American faculty member. They are even harder to find than graduate students and will generally take higher profile, higher paying jobs elsewhere.”

Accessibility. Regarding access, CW also pointed out that proximity of a two or four year college was not a serious problem in Arkansas. CW stated, “Most of the underrepresented minorities are not located near Fayetteville and would have to pass by several other colleges and universities to attend school in Fayetteville. Relatives are concerned that their child would have to go so far from home.”

Area Perception and Campus Climate. The historical perspective regarding the U of A has well been established, yet the perception of the campus by both White and minority communities has not been well received, especially by African Americans. Even the administrators, faculty and staff who were interviewed were well aware of the existing perception that some may hold about the U of A. This awareness is reported here through comments made during the interviews

1. “There is a very small cohort of African Americans in Northwest Arkansas. Also, some outlying communities around Fayetteville are probably not highly receptive to African Americans or to other non-Caucasian groups.”
2. “The lack of a strong African American community in the area is a barrier.”
3. “It is not cost effective to recruit for our department because there are so few opportunities to recruit African American graduate students into our program.”

4. "We think the addition of an African American Assistant Professor will help to attract minority graduate students into our programs."
5. "Clearly, the small number of African American faculty was of deep concern."
6. "There is not an African American pool to pull from in our programs."
7. "I don't know how to recruit. I don't know all the methods one might use."
8. "Diversity plan? I didn't know we had a diversity plan."
9. "I heard something about a diversity plan, but it was all just talk."
10. "The turn-around time is too slow between applying and admittance into the program. Something needs to be done about that."
11. "Students lack interest in attending school here."

Preparedness. Concern was expressed by those interviewed that many of the African American students arrive on the campus and are ill-prepared for the rigor of graduate level course work. This lack of preparedness does not fit well with the desire of this university to be research competitive with other institutions of higher learning in the nation. This concern is reflected in the comments

1. "Many of the African American students who attend HBCUs are generally ill-prepared to conduct research or to survive in the rigor of the academic classwork."
2. "We accept students with low background preparation. We give them a chance to enter and then we try to correct the deficiencies."
3. "I have recruited an African American, but there is simply not a pool of undergraduate minority majors to draw from in Arkansas or from anywhere else."

Perception of Prospective Students. During the four years employed in the Office of Graduate Recruitment and Support Services, this researcher recruited for the Graduate School in the absence of the Director. The researcher attended college fairs and set up informational booths on college campuses in Arkansas, Missouri, Mississippi, Louisiana, Georgia, Tennessee, Illinois, Arizona, and New Mexico. Over a period of these four years, this researcher recorded comments

made by undergraduates who either voluntarily visited the U of A table or were deliberately and purposefully coerced by the researcher to give a few minutes of their time to listen to what the U of A had to offer. Overall, these prospective students, both in Arkansas as well as those out of state, did not speak favorably about the U of A. See Appendix C for these students' comments.

Chapter Summary

The data for this chapter was compiled through personal interviews with the U of A chancellor, vice chancellors, college deans, department chairs, and recruiters. Relevant U of A documents were also reviewed, specifically the recommendations recorded in the report of the Diversity Task Force which was compiled in 1998. Other documents mentioned in this chapter were the 2010 Commission Reports and the student comments compiled by this researcher from a series of recruiting trips across the country.

As depicted in the data, the chancellor accepts the responsibility for being the harbinger for change regarding the diversity issue on the campus. He set goals and articulated those goals and expectations to his key administrators, deans and vice chancellors, which he expected those goals to be shared within their colleges.

Forty interviews were conducted to determine the best practices on the U of A campus for the recruiting of minority graduate students, especially African American students. The chancellor articulated his goals to the deans of each college. Some departments expressed having knowledge of the plan and others reported having no knowledge of a plan. All parties interviewed shared their disappointment that there were few resources to attract qualified African American graduate students and that there were too few assistantships to go around.

Additionally, persons interviewed shared their recruiting strategies which primarily consisted of passive modes of recruiting such as sending e-mail messages, making telephone

calls, and distributing brochures. Some barriers to the recruiting of African American graduate students consisted of lack of competitive funding, lack of preparedness of students from HBCUs, and negative perceptions that persons within and without the state may have of the U of A campus. The responses to the questions were categorized and summarized in a series of quotes which were reviewed in this chapter.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of the Study

The purpose for conducting this study was to identify ways in which the U of A approached the recruitment of African American graduate students. Using best practices for recruiting African American graduate students as identified by current and scholarly literature in the field, the study examined the practices at U of A during the years 2000-2010. Specific recruiting models identified in Chapter II provided steps for best practices in the recruiting process. This literature review also revealed that with the changing demographics in the United States and the increase in the minority population, institutions of higher learning would greatly benefit from the contributions that minorities would make on the campus.

The significance of this study was based on the researcher's general concern that the number of African American graduate students on the U of A campus was still proportionately low compared to the overall population of African Americans in Arkansas. An in depth study would enable U of A graduate programs and the Graduate School to identify and to assess best practices initiated at that time by other institutions of similar demographics. This study was also conducted to identify the strengths and weaknesses in the present recruitment process on the campus and provide suggestions for enhancement. A study of this nature had not previously been conducted on this campus.

To achieve a closer examination into this phenomenon, this researcher conducted qualitative research methods consisting of interviews, observations, and a review of documents. The primary data collection tool used for this study was the interview. In qualitative research, the interview is salient in determining what is really happening in that setting with those participants

(Creswell, 2007; Patton, 1990; Shank, 2006). The personal interview was also the most effective way to collect responses to the research questions by taking the researcher into the world of the participant (Rossman & Rallis, 2003).

Meaning was sought by conducting a series of 40 interviews from which to compare notes, to search for patterns, to look for strengths and weaknesses within the recruiting strategies, to find gaps between what was expected (goals) and what was actually being done, and to determine acceptance of or resistance to changes in the recruiting process as deemed necessary through the interpretation of the institutional goals of the U of A.

The interview guide approach (Patton, 1990; Rossman & Rallis, 2003) was used to conduct the personal interviews. Those 40 individuals interviewed consisted of one chancellor, two vice chancellors, two college deans, three department chairs, one director of affirmative action, thirteen graduate coordinators, eight other faculty members, nine recruiters, and one support staff.

Data was also collected through a review of related documents. These documents included departmental forms and letters used in recruiting students, U of A web pages and catalogs to posit historical information about the campus, internal and external studies related to diversity and cultural climate at the U of A, and edicts sent throughout the campus which identified institutional goals and initiatives to further diversify the campus. Also, these documents were instrumental in providing insight into what was happening on the campus in regard to the recruitment of graduate students, especially African American students.

Finally, as Shank (2006) explained, the researcher does matter. This researcher recorded, interpreted, and reported the findings and discoveries that were revealed through the research. This researcher was a viable instrument in this study for two reasons. First, the researcher was an

African American graduate student enrolled at the U of A. As a student, the researcher lived near the campus and witnessed first-hand the interactions of students, faculty, administrators and employees on the campus. Second, during the four years on the campus, the researcher worked in the Office of Graduate Recruitment and Support Services. The primary goal for this office was the recruitment of minority graduate students, especially African American graduate students. While in this employ, the researcher gained specific knowledge of the recruiting process at the U of A. Duties in this role included direct interaction with most of the graduate coordinators and department chairs in various departments on campus. Consequently, rapport had already been established with these graduate coordinators, department chairs, and other personnel who recruited graduate students. In order that personal biases might not be brought into the study, this researcher kept a personal journal of thoughts and assumptions throughout the course of the study.

Additionally, Chapter V addressed conclusions, discussion, and recommendations for the future.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to determine factors in the recruitment of African American graduate students at the U of A. The patterns which emerged from the data were directly reflected in the discussion of the findings which were addressed in each of the research questions.

1. What institutional commitment was articulated in the recruitment of African American graduate students?

When this study began in 2000, the research revealed that the U of A Chancellor was well aware of the disproportionate number of African American students on the campus, and he

had already set goals to address this problem for both undergraduate and graduate populations. In so doing, he articulated these goals to the college deans in hopes that they would address this issue with their faculty and staff. He conveyed in both interviews (2000 and 2006) that his disappointment continued as he saw no real action taking place to improve this situation.

When the deans of the colleges were interviewed in 2000, none intimated having any knowledge of the chancellor's goals, albeit limited knowledge. Likewise, those concerns did not trickle down to faculty and staff in the various degree programs. Most of the faculty interviewed had not heard of the chancellor's concerns. Some had heard but did not have a plan to recruit more African American graduate students. Most were dependent upon the Graduate School to do any recruiting. Still others did not recruit and saw no need to do so.

Consequently, when more interviews were conducted in 2005-2006, the chancellor had taken direct steps to make the deans and faculty aware of his concerns and of his goals. He instituted the 2010 Commission to address goals of the university, including specific goals for recruiting, enrolling, and graduating minority students. All departments and faculty were required to attend sensitivity trainings specifically to address campus climate and to become familiar with the set goals for increasing the minority presence on the campus. During this time, the colleges and departments went from having no plan to each having detailed plans for the recruitment and the retention of minority students, especially African American students. These interviews conducted in 2005-2006 revealed that all faculty and staff were now aware of both the diversity plan for the U of A and the diversity plan for their department.

Through the interviews conducted in 2005-2006, the discovery was made that the Office for Institutional Diversity and Education had been created to primarily focus on the issue of improving campus climate and supporting faculty and staff. This director reported directly to the

Provost and Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs (VCSA). In terms of this study, measures have now been taken to insure accountability of all involved and to move the U of A campus closer to achieving the goals set by the chancellor for diversifying the campus.

2. What strategies or best practices did the U of A employ in the recruitment of African American graduate students?

In 2000 the discovery made through the interviewing process was that the recruiting efforts implemented in the various graduate programs were more passive than active. Most relied on brochures and fliers, e-mail contact, and occasional phone calls to students. Very few faculty members visited undergraduate campuses, and practically none had set up contacts on other campuses with faculty there. All areas relied heavily on the Graduate School to do the recruiting although the majority did not know that the Office of Graduate Recruitment and Support Services even existed in the Graduate School.

Also worthy of mentioning is that the George Washington Carver Project began in 1997 as a means to recruit more African American graduate students. In essence, this project was set up to bring African American undergraduates from participating universities to conduct research at the U of A under the watchful eye of specific mentors. However, in 2000 through 2006, few departments were even aware that the George Washing Carver Project even existed. Each year thereafter the numbers have increased significantly for this particular project, but across the board, no real increase in graduate student numbers seem to have occurred in regard to African American students.

3. What were the greatest barriers or obstacles for recruiting African American graduate students to the U of A campus in Fayetteville?

By and large, the interviews revealed that adequate funding for students was lacking. Funding included scholarships, assistant ships, and stipends. Not only were the various programs begging for more money for assistantships, but these departments were insistent that the Graduate School or the chancellor should provide the funding. Accessibility was another concern as U of A is situated in the far Northwest corner of the state, and there were other institutions closer to the students' homes. Considering this location and the general public's perception of the U of A campus, minority students might not feel comfortable in a place where there were few who looked like them. Also, the interviews revealed that generally the African American prospective graduate students were not academically prepared for graduate level work and would not fare well in this environment.

Conclusions

This researcher has made the following conclusions based upon the evidence revealed through the interview process:

1. The Chancellor understands that he is the change agent for this institution and that a commitment for institutional change begins with him.
2. The effort has been made to bring further diversity to the campus which would also relate to increasing the African American graduate student population, but the follow through is slow to develop. Each college and degree programs have developed a diversity plan to recruit more minority students to the campus; however, the increase in the African American graduate student population has still remained low.
3. Funding is still a major issue for the recruitment of African American graduate students.

Some departments look to the Graduate School or the chancellor to find money for more assistantships, stipends, grants, etc.

4. The general public's negative perception of U of A and the northwest Arkansas area is still a barrier to overcome. Students want to feel welcome on campus, but they often do not feel welcome when there are few on the campus who look like them.
5. Recruiting efforts are still not reflective of the models that have been identified as exemplar such as the models identified in Chapter II of this document (Looney, Adams, etc.).
6. Faculty members do not receive incentives for recruiting and are not motivated to do so. Faculty could be compensated with additional research assistantships to offer students, more time off from the workplace, etc.
7. Faculty members can have the greatest influence in recruiting African American students by visiting other college campuses regularly and establishing good rapport with faculty and students there. Once these lines of communication have been set in motion, faculty on other campuses can begin to identify undergraduate students who have potential to be successful in graduate level work.
8. Faculty members do not know how to recruit and should be trained on the latest best practices for recruiting graduate students, especially African American graduate students.
9. Since 2000, the U of A has taken significant steps to bring more African American students to the campus, but there is still a long way to go before the numbers will be proportionate with those in the state.

Recommendations for Practice

In summary, the recommendations to the U of A are based on the evidence gathered in this study. Steps should be taken to help the stakeholders deal with the inevitability of change that the chancellor has proposed to diversify the U of A campus. Once these steps have been taken, additional measures may be taken to evaluate the effectiveness of these steps.

Additionally, professional personnel should be identified and trained to work with faculty to improve the racial climate on campus, particularly for minority graduate students. This work, that might include training, the development of related materials, workshops, and even rewards or incentives, needs to respect the academic culture and the ideas of academic freedom yet also bridge the necessary conversations about how a college campus can send unintentional messages about acceptance on the campus. If the climate is not conducive to welcoming all students, then some students will continue to be reluctant in coming to the campus, and the current students on the campus will not have been exposed to a greater learning experience.

Each department may benefit from establishing active recruiting practices. Exemplar models for recruiting minority students should be examined, and steps should be taken to implement those practices. Accountability measures should be established in order that deliberate action is taken in the recruitment of African American graduate students. Each department should also look at the institutional goals set forth by the chancellor for diversifying the campus, and steps should be taken to assure that each department is contributing to the accomplishment of those goals.

Recommendations for Future Research

First, a future study could be conducted on the evolution of change within the organization: the process and its effect. This would provide feedback for the present stakeholders

as well as to serve as a guide for others. Second, this study concluded in 2010; therefore, another feasible study would be a follow-up to identify any changes made since that time. Conducting a comparative study would also provide substantial evidence to assess progress made in this area, if any.

Chapter Summary

Research was conducted at the U of A to identify best practices in recruiting African American graduate students. The research showed that steps had been taken to institute a climate change on the campus and to implement goals for increasing the minority presence on the campus. Research also concluded that the change process was slowly taking place and it was being instituted from the top down. There were some discrepancies in funding sources for assistantships for these graduate students and in who should be doing the actual recruiting of these students. Through the summary of the data, conclusions drawn indicated that the chancellor embraced his role as the harbinger of change, and he set in motion plans to bring the rest of the faculty and administrators on board. The research also showed that most of the recruiting efforts were left up to the Graduate School rather than each department or degree program taking responsibility for doing its own recruiting. The final sections in Chapter V include recommendations for practice and recommendations for future research.

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APPENDIX A
INTERVIEW GUIDE

OPEN-ENDED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Departments and Colleges

1. What goals has your department/college set for the recruitment of minority graduate students?
2. What strategies has your department/college developed to achieve these goals?
3. What strategies does your department/college use to actively recruit minority students on this campus? Off this campus?
4. How adequate are the tools and resources for reaching your recruiting goals?
5. How adequate is the African American undergraduate pool on or off this campus?
6. Where do you recruit for African American graduate students?
7. How many slots are available for new graduate students in each of your degree programs? Example: Masters level? Doctoral level? Post-Doctorate level?
8. What types of financial assistance does your department/college offer minority students?
9. How many slots for assistantships are reserved for minority students?
10. Should minority recruitment be centralized or de-centralized?
11. What mentorship programs exist in your department/college?
12. What incentives does your department offer faculty to recruit?
13. What incentives does your department offer to students to recruit?
14. Please elaborate on whether or not you feel pressure to recruit more minorities into your graduate programs.
15. What is the graduate committee=s criteria for evaluating prospective graduate students?
16. Students in the past have stated that they did not pursue admission to U OF A after submitting their applications because of the slowness of the department in making its decision. What process do you use in evaluating packets? What is your turn-around time from start to finish?
17. What collaboration, if any, exists between your department and the Office of Graduate Recruitment and Support Services?

18. In your opinion, what would be the criteria for establishing and maintaining an effective partnership between your department and the Office of Graduate Recruitment and Support Services?
19. What other comments or concerns would you like to share that have not been addressed in this interview?

Recruiters

1. What reasons can you give as to why more African Americans do not apply for graduate school?
2. What reasons can you give as to why more African Americans are not accepted into Graduate School?
3. Should minority recruitment be centralized or de-centralized?
4. What strategies does your department/college use to actively recruit minority students on this campus?
5. How adequate is the African American undergraduate pool on or off this campus?
6. Where do you recruit for African American graduate students?
7. What are the determining factors for selecting sites for recruitment?
8. What incentives do you receive for your recruiting efforts?
9. In your opinion, what would be the criteria for establishing and maintaining an effective partnership between your department and the Office of Graduate Recruitment and Support Services?
10. What other comments or concerns would you like to share that have not been addressed in this interview?

APPENDIX B
INFORMED CONSENT

INFORMED CONSENT

TITLE: The Recruitment of African American Graduate Students at the University of Arkansas, 2000-2010

RESEARCHER: Rhonda F. Vanlue Gray, Ed. D Candidate
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

DESCRIPTION: The present study is interested in identifying strategies and best practices at the U of A in the recruitment of African American graduate students. The purpose of the interview will be to determine your perception of the policies and recruiting practices which you may have experienced with this university. The data collected will be pertinent in identifying strategies and best practices in the recruitment of African American graduate students at this university. This study may also serve as a tool to apply in the recruitment of other minorities as well. The interview should take not more than sixty (60) minutes. Upon your consent, the interview will also be audio recorded.

RISKS AND BENEFITS: Some of the interview questions may be sensitive in nature and could create some anxiety for individuals being interviewed. You have the right to refuse to answer any questions which you may perceive as unfavorable. There are no physical risks involved.

The benefits of participation include the satisfaction of contributing to research concerning the development of the recruitment of African American graduate students. Your candid comments will greatly enhance the study as it relates to this university and to a global recruiting concept.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION: Participation in this research is voluntary with no pay or credits.

CONFIDENTIALITY: You will be assigned a code number that will be used to identify your responses. All information will be notated anonymously and recorded anonymously should you permit the researcher to audio tape the interview. Only the researcher will know your name, but she will not divulge it or identify your responses to anyone. All information will be held in strict confidence. Data will be locked and assessable only to the researcher. In the study and all related reporting of the data, this institution shall be referred to as a southwestern public institution of higher learning, known as the U of A). While specific positions may be addressed in the data, no mention of your name nor any other personal information will be divulged neither in the collecting, processing, nor reporting of the data, drafts, proposals, nor in the finished document (dissertation).

RIGHT TO WITHDRAW: You are free to refuse to participate in this study or to withdraw from this study at any time. Your decision to withdraw will bring no negative consequences.

INFORMED CONSENT: After you have read this entire document, please sign and date this document as an expression of your agreement with its content and as an expression of your consent to participate in the study.

_____The researcher has my permission to record this interview.

Participant's/Interviewee's Signature

Date of Interview

APPENDIX C
PROSPECTIVE STUDENT COMMENTS

Students' Perception of the U of A

Collected by Rhonda F. Gray

During my various recruiting trips, I have documented comments that students have made regarding Arkansas and the U of A. Although there were many similar statements were made, I did not record any that were duplicates.

1. Never been there, don't want to go.
2. No recreation like skiing, mountain climbing, etc.
3. I want to go into the classics and Arkansas doesn't have the better programs in literature and history.
4. Too far away.
5. No appeal compared to other schools like California, for instance.
6. Don't like the location, too remote.
7. I picture Arkansas as a poor state, poor Whites, and I am not comfortable with that.
8. Don't know anything about Arkansas or the U of A and don't care to know.
9. The area is not appealing. It is too rural and too country. The people are backwards and of low mentality.
10. It's a cultural shock. Too many White people. Not enough black people. Not accustomed to that.
11. What does Arkansas have to offer minorities – people of color? Not the place for us.
12. Been there before, did not feel welcome. Didn't see hardly any Black folks.
13. Our elders teach us not to leave our immediate radius of family support. Arkansas is too far away. (American Indian)
14. U of A does not offer enough money to help me in school. Other schools offer a better long-term package.
15. Not enough money.
16. Too cheap. Need more help than just tuition.
17. U of A doesn't participate in the top fellowship programs like the McNair and the Woodrow Wilson that gives us more money than just tuition.
18. Who would be on the campus to go to when we needed help from our own kind?
19. Can't foresee having a good experience at your campus. I'm used to a faster lifestyle and the U of A just doesn't offer that.
20. Not enough minorities on the faculty. Need to see my own kind somewhere on the campus. Just having a few minority faculty is not enough.
21. Don't want to go to school in the South. Arkansas is too hick.
22. Other schools suit my lifestyle better.
23. I'm afraid to go to the U of A. Isn't that where all the KKKs are?