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Navigating Straight Waters: The Lived Experience of How Out, White Gay Males Have Successfully Navigated the College Presidential Search Process

Document Type

Dissertation

Degree Name

Doctor of Education (EdD)

Department

Executive Leadership

Subject Categories

Education

Comments

Lesbians and gays are one of the most ostracized and marginalized groups in the U.S. (Rankin, Weber, Blumenfeld, & Frazer, 2010). With a limited number of out, gay leader to study, minimal research has been conducted on how gays have navigated their way into visible leadership positions (Fassinger, Shullman, & Stevenson, 2010; Snyder, 2006). The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the lived experience of how out, White gay males have successfully navigated the presidential search process. The study utilizes the framework of social dominance theory, queer theory, and co-cultural theory in exploring the historical and current environment for lesbian and gays within the U.S. This national study utilized a qualitative, phenomenological approach. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 10 participants. Study findings included: (a) most gay men have a non-traditional career pathway to the presidency; (b) mentoring and networking plays a significant role for gay men in the pursuit of a career as a college president; (c) while gay men are resilient in overcoming the dominant heteronormative culture impacts, dominant culture beliefs continue to play a significant role in the search process; (d) gay men believe that being out during the search process speaks to their integrity and character; (e) gay men strategically utilize two communication approaches when communicating with the dominant culture in an effort to assess if the heteronormative environment will be affirming; and, (f) in deciding on institutional fit, gay men seek to synergize their skill set and values with that of the hiring institution.

Navigating Straight Waters: The Lived Experience of How Out, White Gay Males Have
Successfully Navigated the College Presidential Search Process

By

Bil Leipold

Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree
Ed.D. Program in Executive Leadership

Supervised by

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St. John Fisher College

May 2014

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Dedication

I would like to thank the LGBTQ Presidents' Organization and the research participants for their contributions to this study. Without your participation and support, this study would not have been able to be completed. My sincere love and thanks to Dr. Claudia L. Edwards and Dr. Mary Alice Donius for all of their guidance, patience, and support. You both knew how and when to challenge and support me. Not once did you waiver in your confidence in me, and I cannot thank you enough for your unyielding love during this process. There are not enough words to express my gratitude and admiration for you. I will forever be humbled in your presence. To the faculty of St. John Fisher College (CNR), thank you for pushing me in every conversation to go beyond my limit and to encourage me to think larger than I had ever thought possible. For my teammates in CT3—simply put—I love each and every one of you. You have each made this journey remarkable, and I never could have done this without you. To my cohort members, I have learned to trust the process.

To my Rutgers family, Dr. Raphel Caprio, Dr. Bonita Veysey, Dr. Barry Qualls, and Dr. Susan Shurman, I would have never begun this journey or succeeded without you. Each of you pushed me to enroll, and each of you pushed me to graduate. Each of you gave selfless numbers of hours for conversations about this research, and each time I came away from our conversations a better scholar. To my Rutgers UHR colleagues, thank you to you all for stopping by my office to check in and ask how it was going.

To my neighbors and friends in Wanamassa, New Jersey, thank you for all of the laughter and glasses of wine. More than once during this journey, you provided me with humor and great experiences on the front porch. Furthermore, you all never once said no when I asked you to help with items around my house when I had to sneak off to write.

To my Mom, Linda Gibbons, and my father, Patrick Gibbons, I know that you have sacrificed so much for me to get an education. Your endless love and support are perhaps the greatest gift that I have ever been given. I know that the last three years you have not seen much of me, but I promise more time now that the writing has been completed. Jennifer, Lance and Sidney, and my family, thank you for your patience and supportive phone calls. You are all loved.

To my immediate family, my four furry children: Livingston, Wanamassa, Zander, and Willouby, thank you for being supportive and patient as I went through this journey. With every arrival home from a day out writing, you provided unconditional love and happy faces. And finally, to my partner, Joe, thank you for being you. Your endless support and encouragement during this process has touched my heart and soul. I could not imagine this journey of life without you.

Biographical Sketch

Bil Leipold is currently the Sr. Associate Dean for the School of Criminal Justice at Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey. Mr. Leipold attended Shippensburg University of Pennsylvania from 1988 to 1992 and graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in English. He attended Norwich University from 2007 to 2009 and graduated with a Master of Art Sciences degree in Organizational Leadership.

Bil has had a career in higher education for more than 25 years. Mr. Leipold has had the opportunity to work in numerous administrative areas that include: student services, athletics, human resources, and academic affairs. Over the past two years, Bil has been a member of the team that provided oversight to the integration of Rutgers University and the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey. During the integration of these two institutions, Bil provided leadership and direction for the integration of human resources. Bil also has had the opportunity to speak on issues of social justice, homophobia, and leadership at hundreds of colleges and universities. Throughout his speaking career, Bil has had the privilege to be the keynote speaker at various national and regional student leadership and professional development conferences. Bil had also been the recipient of the Diversity Arts of the Year awarded by *Campus Activities Magazine*.

Mr. Leipold came to St. John Fisher College in the spring of 2011 and began doctoral studies in the Ed.D. Program in Executive Leadership. He pursued his research in *Navigating Straight Waters: The Lived Experience of How Out, White Gay Males*

Have Successfully Navigated the College Presidential Search Process under the direction of Dr. Claudia L. Edwards and Dr. Mary Alice Donius and received the Ed.D. degree in 2014.

Abstract

Lesbians and gays are one of the most ostracized and marginalized groups in the U.S. (Rankin, Weber, Blumenfeld, & Frazer, 2010). With a limited number of out, gay leader to study, minimal research has been conducted on how gays have navigated their way into visible leadership positions (Fassinger, Shullman, & Stevenson, 2010; Snyder, 2006). The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the lived experience of how out, White gay males have successfully navigated the presidential search process. The study utilizes the framework of social dominance theory, queer theory, and co-cultural theory in exploring the historical and current environment for lesbian and gays within the U.S. This national study utilized a qualitative, phenomenological approach. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 10 participants.

Study findings included: (a) most gay men have a non-traditional career pathway to the presidency; (b) mentoring and networking plays a significant role for gay men in the pursuit of a career as a college president; (c) while gay men are resilient in overcoming the dominant heteronormative culture impacts, dominant culture beliefs continue to play a significant role in the search process; (d) gay men believe that being out during the search process speaks to their integrity and character; (e) gay men strategically utilize two communication approaches when communicating with the dominant culture in an effort to assess if the heteronormative environment will be affirming; and, (f) in deciding on institutional fit, gay men seek to synergize their skill set and values with that of the hiring institution

Table of Contents

Dedication.....	iii
Biographical Sketch.....	v
Abstract.....	vii
Table of Contents.....	viii
List of Tables.....	x
List of Figures.....	xi
Chapter 1: Introduction.....	1
Introduction.....	1
Problem Statement.....	6
Theoretical Rationale.....	8
Potential Significance of the Study.....	27
Statement of Purpose.....	27
Research Questions.....	28
Definitions of Terms.....	28
Chapter Summary.....	29
Chapter 2: Review of the Literature.....	33
Introduction and Purpose.....	33
Topics Analysis.....	36
Chapter Summary.....	67
Chapter 3: Research Design Methodology.....	70

Introduction.....	70
General Perspective	70
Research Context	73
Research Participants	74
Instruments Used in Data Collection	77
Procedures for Data Collection and Analysis	81
Summary	84
Chapter 4: Results	85
Research Questions.....	85
Data Analysis and Findings	87
Summary of Results	141
Chapter 5: Discussion	151
Introduction.....	151
Implications of Findings	152
Limitations	161
Recommendations.....	162
Conclusion	164
References.....	177
Appendix A.....	187
Appendix B.....	189
Appendix C.....	191
Appendix D.....	195
Appendix E	197

List of Tables

Item	Title	Page
Table 3.1	Themes and Sub-Themes	83
Table 4.1	Overview of Research Participants	88
Table 4.2	Age of Research Participants	89
Table 4.3	Terminal Degrees Earned by Research Participants	89
Table 4.4	Type of Institution	90
Table 4.5	Student Enrollment at Current Institution	90
Table 4.6	Method of Search	91
Table 4.7	Frequency of Sub-Themes in Participant Interviews	100
Table 4.8	Tenured Faculty Before Presidential Appointment	101
Table 4.9	Previous Position Before Presidential Appointment	102
Table 4.10	Number of Presidencies During Career	103
Table 4.11	Learned About Search Process	121
Table 4.12	Relationship Status During Search	135

List of Figures

Item	Title	Page
Figure 1.1.	Co-Cultural Theory	Error! Bookmark not defined.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction

The Stonewall riots of 1969 marked the official beginning of the lesbian and gay rights movement in the U.S. In the years immediately following the riots, the lesbian and gay community began to organize and rally for equal treatment and civil rights (Brewer, 2003; Brumbaugh, Sanchez, Nock, & Wright 2008; Davies, 2004; Gates, 2011; Herek & Glunt, 1993; LaMar & Kite, 1998). In the four decades since the riots, recent data suggest that approximately 4–7% of the U.S. population identifies as lesbian, gay, or bisexual (Gates & Newport, 2012, 2013). The newly reported population numbers differ from the 10% that has historically been reported (Black, Gates, Sanders, & Taylor, 2000; Gates & Newport, 2012, 2013; Herek, Norton, Allen, & Sims, 2010; Pruitt, 2002; Smith & Gates, 2001). Several researchers have noted that estimating the population of lesbians and gays is complex due to the concept of behavior versus identity (Black et al., 2000; Cooke & Rapino, 2007; Gates, 2011; Herek et al., 2010; Pruitt 2002;). Researchers have explained that past studies about the lesbian and gay population have relied on individuals who have self-identified as lesbian and gay; thus, the studies did not include individuals who may have been involved in homosexual behavior (Black et al., 2000; Cooke & Rapino, 2007; Herek, Norton, Allen, & Sims, 2010; Gates, 2011; Pruitt 2002;). The study by Black et al. (2000) noted that the ambiguous definition of homosexuality may have led past studies to omit those individuals who might be engaging in same-sex behaviors and have same-sex attractions. The issues of culture, race, ethnicity, and

gender further complicate an individual's willingness to self-identify as lesbian and gay; self-identification for those in various cultures would bring about increased scrutiny and isolation (Glick & Golden, 2010; Lambert, Ventura, Hall, & Cluse-Tolar, 2006).

Measuring the lesbian and gay population is further complicated due to the lack of government-sanctioned and supported measurement instruments like the United States Census. The census is absent of any true measures for the entirety of the lesbian and gay population (Black et al., 2000; Cooke & Rapino, 2007; Gates, 2011; Herek et al., 2010; Pruitt 2002;;). Pruitt's study (2002) examined the estimated population as reported by the pro-and anti-gay groups' websites. The study concluded that that anti-gay groups' websites reported the lesbian and gay population to be 1–3% of the U.S. population (Pruitt, 2002). Pro-gay websites were more likely to report the estimated lesbian and gay population to be 7–10%; the estimated numbers are derived directly from the Kinsey studies in late 1940s (Pruitt, 2002). Pruitt's (2002) study concluded that anti-gay websites are under reporting the estimated number of the lesbian and gay citizens within the U.S., and they continue to challenge the faulty research of the pro-gay website population estimates.

While the numbers of lesbians and gays are difficult to track and quantify, the documented struggle for equal rights has been documented for more than 40 years (Brewer, 2003; Brumbaugh, Sanchez, Nock, & Wright 2008; Davies, 2004; Gates 2011; Herek & Glunt, 1993; LaMar & Kite, 1998). While there has been progress toward greater acceptance in the past decade for lesbians and gays, visibility of “out” lesbians and gays, especially in leadership positions, is still under represented in comparison to

heterosexual colleagues (Fassinger, Shullman, & Stevenson, 2010; Gates & Newport, 2013; Snyder, 2006).

Currently, there are 29 states that have laws permitting employers to openly discriminate against lesbians and gays (Human Rights Campaign, 2011a). Lesbian and gay individuals fully expect to face some type of discrimination in the workplace directly related to their sexual orientation (Embrick, Walther, & Wickens, 2007). A number of research studies have concluded that lesbian and gay individuals, as a group, face considerable challenges and are seen as the least accepted when compared to other marginalized groups (Rankin, Weber, Blumenfeld, & Frazer, 2010).

Outside of leadership roles within national-, regional-, and community-based lesbian, gay, and bisexual mission-focused organizations, visible and influential “out” lesbian and gay self-identified leaders have been historically absent (Fassinger et al., 2010; Snyder, 2006). “Out” refers to the openness that a homosexually or bisexually identified individual has with their sexual orientation and identity and is willing to share their identity with others (Levine & Evans, 1991). Snyder (2006) and Fassinger, Shullman, and Stevenson (2010) wrote that there is a dearth of significant research and literature related to lesbian and gay leadership because there is a limited number of out lesbian and gay leaders to which researchers have access.

During the summer of 2012, media outlets reported that work environments are becoming more inclusive for lesbians and gays (Aschkenasy, 2012; Kwoh, 2012). However, while environments are being more inclusive, there are still no out lesbian and gay chief executive officers leading a Fortune 1000 company (Aschkenasy, 2012; Kwoh, 2012; Lapowsky, 2012). Several national media outlets have printed stories chronicling

the experience of lesbian and gay emerging leaders in the workplace. These stories encapsulate the struggles that lesbians and gays have with coming out at work and the anticipated negative outcomes that may be attached to being out at work (Kwoh, 2012; Lapowsky, 2012; Slobodzian, 2006; Snyder, 2006). Aschkenasy (2012) and Kwoh (2012) stated that while national attitudes toward lesbians and gays are becoming more positive, and workplace environments have become more inclusive, there are still challenges for emerging lesbian and gay leaders in the workplace. Self-identification or being out as lesbian or gay continues to hold a stigma in the workplace and beyond (Hewlett & Sumberg, 2011; Kwoh, 2012; Lapowsky, 2012; Slobodzian, 2006; Snyder, 2006).

On the national level, members of the 113th U.S. Congress welcomed seven out, lesbian, gay, or bisexual members who were all elected during the fall 2012 election cycle (Peters, 2013). In January 2013, the U.S. House of Representatives swore in six out members, and the U.S. Senate swore in one out lesbian woman (Peters, 2013). Before then, the U.S. Congress only had one out gay male leader from 1987 through 2013 (Peters, 2013). With the announcement of newly appointed U.S. Ambassadors in June 2013, the President of the United States has more than doubled the number of out lesbians and gays serving in primary diplomatic positions (Washington Post, 2013). In 2009, the article states that there were two out gay men serving as U.S. Ambassadors, and with the announcement in 2013, there are six out lesbians and gays serving as U.S. Ambassadors as of June 2013 (Washington Post, 2013).

Lesbians and gays face a combination of adversity and progress in higher education (Iconis, 2010; Rankin et al., 2010; Renn, 2010). The research on out lesbian

and gay leaders is limited to college student development. Research examining the pathway from college to a leadership position after graduation for an out lesbian or gay leader is non-existent (Renn, 2010). Researchers have concluded that studies on out lesbian and gay leaders in leadership positions may be limited due to the historically negative environment that has existed for the lesbian and gay community (Coon, 2001; Fassinger, 2008; Fassinger et al., 2010; Hewlett & Sumberg, 2011; Snyder 2006). The *Advocate*, a leading lesbian and gay magazine, in collaboration with Campus Pride, a nationally recognized student advocate group, published an equality index for out lesbian and gay college students (Windmeyer, 2007). The equality guide for students examines the policies, outreach efforts, and services provided by colleges and universities for lesbian and gay students (Windmeyer, 2007). Windmeyer (2007) stated that no such equality index or study exists for institutions of higher education as it relates to out lesbian and gay faculty, staff, and administration (Windmeyer, 2007).

Adversity in the workplace for lesbians and gays can be seen in the ranks of higher education leadership, especially within the role of the president (American Council on Education, 2012; Bridges et al., 2008; Eckel & Hartley, 2011; Hamilton, 2004; Kim & Cook, 201; Waring, 2003). Within higher education, the National Center for Educational Statistics currently reports that there are 4,495 degree-granting institutions of higher education (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2013). A majority of those degree-granting institutions are led by White, married men, over the age of 50, with a doctorate (American Council on Education, 2012; Eckel & Hartley, 2011; Kim & Cook, 2013).

Bornstein (2003) stated that “an individual’s particular background and identity characteristics are most significant in the search process and the early stage of presidency” (p. 29). Dowall (2007) stated further that “candidates who are in some significant way different from the group that dominates the institution and its leadership face some special challenges in senior [academic] searches” (p. 12). Individuals who are underrepresented from the dominant culture, whether they identify as lesbian or gay, individuals of color, or as a woman, are assumed to be incompetent until proven otherwise (Bornstein, 2003; Moody, 2011). Bridges, Eckel, Cordova, and White (2008) noted that presidential candidates outside the dominant culture are often criticized about their leadership styles, or they are peppered with more questions than those candidates from the dominant culture.

The American Council on Education’s (ACE) 2012 president’s survey results supported the notion of Bornstein (2003), Dowall (2007), and Moody (2011). The data from the survey show that individuals of color lead 9% of the four-year, degree-granting institutions, and that percentage includes those presidents of color who are leading historically black colleges and universities (American Council on Education, 2012; Kim & Cook, 2013). Women lead approximately 26% of four-year, degree-granting institutions (American Council on Education, 2012; Kim & Cook, 2013). The survey did not track the number of lesbians and gays in the role of president (American Council on Education, 2012; Kim & Cook, 2013).

Problem Statement

ACE has been calling on institutions of higher education to diversify the office of the president by providing more access to women and individuals of color (American

Council on Education, 2012; Bridges et al., 2008; Eckel & Hartley, 2011; Kim & Cook, 2013; White & Eckel, 2008). Over the past decade, ACE's research has confirmed that an overwhelming majority of college presidents are older, white, married men with doctorates who have moved into the position of president from the academic ranks (American Council on Education, 2012; Bridges et al., 2008; Eckel & Hartley, 2011; Kim & Cook, 2013; White & Eckel, 2008). Pathways to the position of the president have been created and implemented by ACE and the American Association of State Colleges and Universities in an effort to attract women and individuals of color to the college presidencies (Hamilton, 2004); however, the call for diversification has not included lesbians and gays (American Council on Education, 2012; Bridges et al., 2008; Eckel & Hartley, 201; White & Eckel, 2008).

The current and past college presidential surveys conducted by ACE have not provided data related to sexual orientation (American Council on Education, 2012; Bridges et al., 2008; Eckel & Hartley, 2011; Kim & Cook, 2013; White & Eckel, 2008). With the beginning of the 21st century, out lesbians and gays are beginning to be appointed as college and university presidents (Hexter, 2007). A group of out college and university presidents gathered in the summer of 2010 to create a group that would serve as role models for the lesbian and gay community and advocate for out lesbian and gay professionals, who are looking to seek higher administrative offices within higher education (Chicago Tribune, 2010; Inside Higher Education, 2010; LGBTQpresidents.org, 2012; Masterson, 2011). The 42 members of the group include past and current sitting college and university presidents who have successfully traversed the search process (LGBTQpresidents.org, 2012). The National Center for Educational

Statistics currently reported that there are 4,495 degree-granting institutions of higher education (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2013). Thus, the membership list of ACE's LGBTQ Presidents group confirms that lesbians and gays lead less than 1% of the degree-granting institutions (LGBTQpresidents.org, 2012).

With less than 1% out of the 4,495 degree-granting college presidents identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender, it is important to gain some insight into what is the lived experience of out, White gay male candidates who have successfully navigated the college presidential search process?

Theoretical Rationale

This study examined how out, White gay males have successfully navigated the presidential search process. It offers insight into how out, White gay male candidates experienced the search process and how decisions were made by the successful candidates as to institutional fit. Three theoretical perspectives were utilized to frame the study. Social dominance theory provides and illustrates how hierarchies are established and create dominant and subordinate groups (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). Queer theory explores how hierarchies, especially institutions, such as the church and the government, have created labels and categories and how such labels lead to the further subordination of individuals (Butler, 1990, 2004; Foucault, 1978, 1985, 1986; Sullivan, 2003). Co-cultural theory examines how language and interactions with dominant group members work to further isolate subordinated individuals.

Social dominance theory. Social dominance theory was authored by Jim Sidanius, a professor of Psychology at University California at Los Angeles, and Felicia Pratto, a professor of Psychology at the University of Connecticut (Sidanius & Pratto,

1999). The authors provided a synthesis of traditional sociological and psychological theories with critical ideas from evolutionary psychology in an effort to describe the various nuances of discrimination and oppression (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). Social dominance theory is described as a complex interplay between groups and individuals. With an individual, power, prestige, and position are derived through intellect, achievement, and politics. With group membership, power, prestige, and position are derived via group membership identities (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). Hierarchy is first established via group membership and, in most cultures, groups are created by age, gender, and an arbitrary-set identity. Sidanius and Pratto (1999) stated that members of groups seek methods to reinforce the hierarchy or dismantle the hierarchy. Those looking to reinforce the hierarchy will participate in hierarchy-enhancement activities and rely on myths and various acts of terror (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). Those looking to dismantle the hierarchy will participate in hierarchy-attenuating activities and look to confront the myths and various acts of terror (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999).

Origins of social dominance theory. Social dominance theory draws and synthesizes theories from psychological, social-psychological, structural-sociological, and evolutionary models (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). Theories, upon which social dominance theory is built, include authoritarian personality theory, realistic group conflict theory, and Marxism (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999; Sidanius, Pratto, van Laar, & Levin, 2004; Sidanius, Levin, van Laar, & Sears, 2008; Walls, 2005). Authoritarian personality theory emerged in the 1950s and is centered on dominance within human relations. Authoritarian personality theory emerged from child-rearing perspectives where children were humiliated and ostracized, and then rewarded with affection for

immediate obedience (Niens, Cairns, Finchileshu, Foster, & Tredoux, 2003; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). More recently, Druckitt (1989) redefined the authoritarian personality as an attitude and not a personality. Druckitt (1989) further explained that an authoritarian personality is where an individual or group is submissive to the correct and appropriate authority and that submissiveness is rewarded (Niens, Cairns, Finchileshu, Foster, & Tredoux, 2003).

Realistic group conflict theory, originated in the 1960s, suggested that real groups are locked in combat and competition over materials and symbolic resources. Realistic group conflict theory is often viewed as a simply understood and conveyed theory that is rooted in good and bad groups (Jackson, 1993). This group competition ultimately produces a winner and a loser. The winning and losing by the groups leads to negative stereotyping of the losing group, in-group solidarity, and the perception of a group threat (Jackson, 1993; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999).

Karl Marx, a German philosopher, authored a perspective on capitalism and materialism that focuses on defining a hierarchy based on socio-economic class (Rose, 2006; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). Marx believed that with capitalism, the factory, land, and production owners, the bourgeois, created and sustained a system that sought to hold the workers, the proletariat, from acquiring upward mobility. Furthermore, Marx believed that the construction and continued enforcement of classism created a hostile relationship between the owners and the workers (Rose, 2006; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999).

Evolutionary theory provides an understanding that those organisms that have and possess the psychological and behavioral characteristics that allow them to produce

offspring within certain environments will survive across time (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999, p. 27).

Social dominance theory overview. Social dominance theory provides a framework to describe oppression through a series of complex connections between individuals and groups. Individual-based social hierarchy suggests that individuals derive power, prestige, and position in the hierarchy through intellect, achievement, and politics (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). Group-based social hierarchy suggests that groups derive their prestige, power, and position from identities associated with group-based identities such as religion, race, tribe, clan, sexual orientation, and class (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). Sidanius et al., (2008) posited that “social dominance theory . . . focuses on both individual structural factors that contribute to the various forms of group-base oppression” (p. 846). The author’s research finding indicated that social dominance theory is a process that “creates and recreates group-based social hierarchies” (p. 849). Thus, a person may have more access and power belonging to a group-based hierarchy and, in turn, the group membership permits access as an individual to more power and prestige (Walls, 2005).

Sidanius and Pratto’s (1999) theory postulated that social dominance, first and foremost, described oppression as being centrally focused around group-based hierarchies. They identified three major areas of group hierarchy: (a) age, (b) gender, and (c) an arbitrary-set system. The authors stated that age and gender-based hierarchies exist within all social systems and have existed since the emergence of hunter-gather societies. As an example within the U.S., men and older individuals are at the higher end of the hierarch, and women and youth are at the lower end of the hierarchy. An arbitrary-

set system “is filled with socially constructed and highly salient groups based on characteristic such as...one group’s political and/or material dominance over another” (p. 42). The arbitrary-set system may change depending on the context and social structure of a certain culture (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). As an illustration of the arbitrary-set system, Sidanius et al., (2008) described that Whites are at the higher end of the hierarchy and African Americans are at the lower end of the hierarchy.

According to social dominance theory, group-based hierarchies work to counterbalance influences of the hierarchy (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). “Hierarchy-enhancement” (HE) refers to a group that works toward enhancing the hierarchy; thus, the group actively works toward ensuring social inequality. Because of the mission of the organization and membership, the Klu Klux Klan can be seen as a hierarchy-enhancing group that is actively working to ensure group-based inequality. “Hierarchy-attenuating” (HA) refers to a group that works toward a greater level of social equality. The Human Rights Campaign works to confront the myths related to lesbians and gays by providing current statistics on various laws and issues facing the lesbian and gay community (Human Rights Campaign, 2001a, 2001b). Sidanius et al., (2008) stated that institutions of higher education, depending on their mission, may be seen as a hierarchy-attenuating group. Social dominance theory is concerned with the interactions that exist with interpersonal, intragroup, intergroup, and institutions to reinforce and stabilize hierarchies (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). The repeated interactions then serve to create the process by which the group-based and individual-based hierarchies are preserved.

Social dominance theory identified that three processes drive group-based hierarchies: aggregated individual discrimination, aggregated institutional discrimination,

and behavioral asymmetry (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). Aggregated individual discrimination “refers to the simple, daily, and sometimes inconspicuous individual acts of discrimination by one individual against another” (p. 39). Examples may include the refusal of a supervisor to promote an individual based on race, sexual orientation, or gender. The authors stated that the collection of numerous incidents of aggregated individual discriminatory acts can lead to clear and salient groups within hierarchies and institutions.

Through social infrastructures exacting rules, procedures, and actions, social institutions work to create aggregated institutional discrimination (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). Discrimination created by social institutions can be described as conscious, deliberate, overt, and at other times, they can be unconscious, unintended, and covert. To provide context to the social dominance theory and sexual orientation within the U.S., 29 states have laws that provide employers with the right to terminate employees if they discover that their employees identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual (Human Rights Campaign, 2011a). Social dominance theory further articulates that group-based hierarchies utilize terror against subordinates, ensuring hierarchy stability (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999; Walls 2005). Sidanius and Pratto (1999) concluded that terror can be carried and sanctioned by the state (official terror); can be carried out by state officials, but not overtly sanctioned by the state (semi-official); and carried out by individuals (unofficial). In each case, terror seeks to protect the dominant hierarchy and intimidate or harm subordinates within the hierarchy.

Sidanius and Pratto (1999) articulated that social dominance theory’s behavior asymmetry is cooperative and that subordinates within the hierarchy may enhance their

subordination by actively participating within the prescribed rules and social patterns produced by the group-based hierarchy. Behavior asymmetry refers to the “behavioral differences that both contribute to and are reinforced by the group-based hierarchical relationships within the social system” (p. 43). “Socialization patterns, stereotypes, legitimizing ideologies, psychological biases, and the operation of systematic terror” (p. 43) serve to reinforce the group-based hierarchy. In this case, some lesbians and gays may choose not to come out at work because they might be denied a promotion or, in some cases, be fired for the very act of coming out (Fassinger, 2008; Hewlett & Sumberg, 2011).

Group-based hierarchies rely on legitimized myths to enhance the hierarchy. According to Sidanius and Pratto (1999), “legitimizing myths consist of attitudes, values, beliefs, stereotypes, and ideologies” (p. 45) to aid in creating intellectual and moral justification for continued social divide within a hierarchy. Myths within social dominance theory are not necessarily true or false, but the myths “appear to be true because enough people in the society behave as if they are true” (Sidanius & Pratto, p. 104). Legitimized myths, in concert with hierarchy-enhancing groups, serve to create an ongoing justification for social inequality (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). Hierarchy-enhancing groups confront the very misnomer of the myth in an effort to create a great level of social equity. Sidanius and Pratto (1999) wrote that an individual’s belief in the legitimized myth only serves to support the group-based hierarchy and thus lead to supporting or creating laws and public policy in support of the myth, thus, creating the overall process from individual-based to group-based hierarchies. One example using this framework would be the argument around gay marriage and Proposition 8 in

California. Once in court, supporters of Proposition 8 claimed that lesbians and gays should not be permitted to marry because it would ultimately destroy the sanctity of marriage between a man and woman. The opposition argument to Proposition 8 contended that creating such a law would ultimately create a group of second-class citizens for lesbians and gays, thus, making the law unconstitutional (Huffington Post, 2012).

Sidanius and Pratto (1999) expressed that social dominance orientation is a personality trait that predicts social and political attitudes within a given social structure. Furthermore, social dominance orientation also measures an individual's preference as to where they belong within a given group-based hierarchy. Social dominance orientation is influenced by three factors: socialization experience, situational contingencies, and temperament. Social dominance orientation is higher among those members of a dominant group-based hierarchy. Conversely, social dominance orientation is lower among those members of subordinate groups within group-based hierarchies. Sidanius and Pratto's (1999) research supported that men, Whites, and heterosexuals have a higher social dominance orientation than women, African-Americans, lesbians, and gays. According to social dominance theory, the higher the social dominance orientation, the more likely an individual favors dominance over a subordinate group of people.

Social dominance theory seeks to understand the process of oppression. Using the framework of social dominance theory, those individuals who are part of a group-based hierarchy use their high level of social dominance orientation to behave in a manner that reinforces their orientation and, thus, reinforce and support the group-based hierarchy. Furthermore, individuals with high social dominance orientation belonging to

a group-based hierarchy are more likely to support legitimized myths and create hierarchy-enhancing actions in an effort to support their status and position. Whereas, individuals with low social dominance orientation are more likely to use their status within the group-based hierarchy to actively work to reduce social inequality; however, social dominance theory suggests that individuals with low social dominance orientation may continue to discriminate against others outside of their group because they find themselves in social roles that suggest that they should continue to act as such (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999).

Social dominance theory has come under scrutiny for factors related to measurement issues with regard to the social dominance orientation tool (Schmitt & Branscombe, 2003; Schmitt, Branscombe, & Kappen, 2003; Turner & Reynolds, 2003). Researchers suggested that social dominance theory focuses too much on oppression and the cooperative nature of the subordinates, and it proposes that the theory does not provide a way to break the cycle of oppression. Also, researchers challenged the methodological approaches taken by Sidanius and Pratto and suggested that the theory for measuring social dominance orientation can be better founded within the framework for social identity theory. Furthermore, articles by Schmitt and Branscombe (2003) and Turner and Reynolds (2003) identified theoretical inconsistencies related to attitudes toward intergroup inequalities as measured using the social dominance inventory. Schmitt, Branscombe, & Kappen (2003) reported that “how people orient themselves towards inequality will be a function of what social categories come to mind when ‘general’ attitudes toward inequality are assessed” (p. 163). In short, researchers are challenging the mindset when an individual completes the social dominance orientation

tool; thus, the context of thoughts is critical to completing the social dominance orientation inventory. As such, the social dominance orientation inventory is not static but, rather, measures an individual's response in context to a situation when an inventory is taken. Schmitt and Branscombe (2003) argued that dominant and subordinate groups hold "attitudes toward inequality that are relatively consistent with their in-groups' interests" (p. 184). For example, a White male who identifies as gay may rate himself high within the social dominance orientation inventory if he categorizes himself as male while taking the inventory. The same male may see himself as gay while taking the social dominance orientation inventory and report having a low social dominance orientation. The criticism is on how an individual positions himself or herself when taking the inventory, especially if that individual has a potential to see him or her in competing group-based hierarchies (Schmitt et al., 2003).

Turner and Reynolds (2003) challenged the very foundation of social dominance theory and provided an array of arguments against the theory. First and foremost, Turner and Reynolds argued that the evolutionary foundation of the three critical components of social dominance theory (gender, age, and arbitrary-set) is arrived at through an evolutionary process that cannot be validated. Turner and Reynolds suggested that dominant and subordinate groups emerged from historical context and struggle, thus, creating a complex division of labor, roles, responsibilities, and expertise. Turner and Reynolds' largest issue with social dominance theory is that it provides no positive possibilities for moving toward social and political change.

This study examines how members of a dominant group—White older men, who seem to have the traits and intellect of the U.S. hierarchy, may find it difficult to navigate

the established hierarchy once they come out as gay. In this study, identifying as an out gay male will be considered an arbitrary set. Sidanius & Pratto (1999) stated that an arbitrary set system is socially constructed based on a group's political and material dominance over another group. Thus, once an older White male comes out as gay, the ability to navigate the U.S.-established hierarchy may become much more challenging and complex.

Queer theory. Queer theory seeks to examine how institutional rules create and perpetuate a rigid construct defining sexuality and sexual behavior through labeling that is exclusively defined by the dominant heterosexual culture (Butler, 1990, 2004). The created and perpetuated labels and rigid rules seek to undermine and invalidate the experience of those who fall outside of the dominant culture. Queer theory seeks to examine the culture and the institutions that have created the construct and challenge the essence of those cultural rules (Butler, 1990, 2004).

Origins of queer theory. The root of queer theory is taken from Foucault's works (1978, 1985, 1986). In his examination of sexuality, Foucault explored the historical and sociological context of sex and sexuality from the perspective of the Victorian era. In his works, Foucault challenged the Victorian discourse around sex and sexuality and concluded that religion, medical, and psychological institutions have spent a great deal of time creating rules for sex and sexual interactions. Foucault pointed out the irony in the institutions' need to create rules limiting sex and sexuality results in the overwhelming need for institutions to continually publically talk about sex (Foucault, 1978). Foucault ultimately challenged the rules that have emerged and wrote that there are no universal truths regarding sexuality and sexual behavior. In the end, Foucault's work proposed that

the hierarchy and power of the Victorian age have led to the creation of the rigid societal boundaries and understanding of sex and sexuality of the 20th century. Foucault suggested that a binary understanding of sex and sexuality has emerged from the Victorian era: heterosexual and marriage are good and the norm, and all other sexual activities outside of marriage and procreation are to be punished and/or treated. Foucault (1978) suggested that in resisting the hierarchy and power, one can create much dissonance and discourse.

Queer theory overview. Queer theory began to emerge in the late 20th century; vast conversations began to surface around the definition of queer theory. Kirsh (2000) proposed that “queer” has three constructs: (a) principle, (b) activity, and (c) theory. Principle is the deconstruction of gender and sexuality in literature, film, and music as it relates to the academic disciplines. Activity is seen as the queering of culture with the reinterpretation of characters within novels and films. Queer theory leads to the “rejection of all categorizations as limiting and labeled by the dominant power structures” (Kirsh, p. 42) within a given society. Abes and Kasch (2007) described queer theory as “critically analyzing the meaning of identity, focusing on intersections of identity, and resisting oppressive social constructs of sexual orientation and gender” (p. 620).

Butler (1990, 2004) expanded Foucault’s work and became one of the cornerstones for this theoretical framework. Butler challenged the notion of there being a binary system of male and female; feminine and masculine; and heterosexual and homosexual. In challenging the hierarchy of societal structure, Butler asserted that there is no real gender. Butler argued that categorizations of people, whether by regimes or liberators, work as an instrument of the hierarchy to further define power. Butler

explained the concept of performativity as individuals creating gender and sexual identity through behaviors. She further noted that that gender and sexual identity is not determined by attraction or psychological factors but, rather, via actions that one engages in and then uses to create an identity if they choose to do so. From Butler's perspective, performative behaviors can be utilized to create identities. However, behaviors are not repeated in the same manner each time; thus, identities are ever changing. Butler challenged the concept of gender and sexual identity by confronting the very notion of the language and concept of heterosexual, lesbian, and gay. In short, Butler believed that the labels and identities seek to incorporate people into created social hierarchies that, in turn, lead to the power structure and oppression.

A basic foundation of queer theory is that heteronormative behaviors and understandings are central to western cultures (Warner, 1991). Heteronormative is described as using heterosexuality as the norm to understand gender and sexuality; heterosexuality is the lens used to view constructs such as religion, laws, and institutions (Abes & Kasch, 2007; Warner, 1991). Sullivan (2003) confirmed Warner's perspective and wrote that "heterosexuality, as it is currently understood and experienced, is a (historically and culturally specific) truth-effect of systems and power" (p. 39). An example of heteronormative construct would include the examination of the text edited by Weill (2009). The text is a collection of perspectives on the college presidency provided by current and past presidents. The authors wrote about the role of the spouse and family in supporting the office of the president and the college. A male president and his wife reported how they use the role of marriage and family to become the appropriate face and to support the mission of the college. The chapter is full of heteronormative

examples of how couples, family, and higher education seek to serve the university community. The chapter never seeks to provide a perspective for a lesbian or gay male president.

Queer theory has been criticized as being too academic and not easily accessible for most readers (Green, 2002). Queer theory has been seen as elitist and often as a very complex set of ideas rather than providing a framework from which to work (Green, 2002).

Queer theory is a “theory that tends to lapse into a discursive, burdened, textual idealism that glosses over the institutional character of sexual identity and the shared roles sexual actors occupy” (Green, 2002, p. 522). Green argued that by dismissing the labels of lesbian and gay, the queer theorist have dismissed the people, community, and history of a marginalized group. Green postulated that the historical and political struggle of lesbians and gays is ultimately dismissed with theorists like Butler. Specifically, Green argued that queer theory does not capture the developmental process of coming out for lesbians and gays and ignores the communities that have been built as part of the gay and lesbian struggle. In short, individual narratives and shared experiences of lesbians and gays are stripped away with queer theory (Green, 2002).

There is also a community of academics that believe that queer theory was built from the foundation of lesbian and gay studies. From this perspective, queer theory has also been criticized for creating an anti-identity space. This anti-identity space is a core challenge to the academic leaders in gay and lesbian studies, thus, creating a conflict between a community of scholars and critical theorists (Jogose, 1996; Green, 2002; O’Driscoll, 1996). Most lesbian and gay studies researchers have a central belief that

identity is fixed and constant and not the fluid, ever-changing, and performative identity as queer theory articulates (Green, 2002; O’Driscoll, 1996). Identity is the core to the study of gay and lesbian history. Queer theory challenges the notions of identity and the hierarchy of identity, but in an ironic twist, queer theory is also challenging the very essence of gay and lesbian studies (Green, 2002; O’Driscoll, 1996).

There is a major focus in the use of the word “queer” as it relates to queer theory. Academics have written that the use of the word queer often muddies the waters (Green 2002; Jogose, 1996; Kirsch, 2002; O’Driscoll, 1996). The word queer has been used by lesbian and gay studies as an identity; whereas, queer as been used by queer theorists and post-modernists as a political challenge to identity politics (Green 2002; Jogose, 1996; Kirsch, 2002; O’Driscoll, 1996). Often the two uses of the word queer can be in direct opposition to each other, thus, confusing the reader about the intention of the writer.

In this study, queer theory is utilized to examine the institutionalized perspective of a president of a college or university and the values associated with the role of president within that college or university environment. The study examines how out, White gay males experience the heteronormative process and policies associated with the search process and those of colleges and universities conducting the search process. Furthermore, the study will examine how out, White gay males adapt to being successful within the process.

Co-cultural theory. Co-cultural theory is based is a communication theory examining the interactions between traditionally subordinated groups and dominant groups. Co-cultural theory seeks to bring voice to the subordinated group experience, especially when a member of the subordinated group perceives that there are cultural

differences pertinent to the interaction or exchange (Orbe, 1998a, 1998b). Co-cultural theory is grounded in a phenomenological approach and is more interested in obtaining the lived experience of an individual and, as such, makes room for various perspectives (Orbe, 1998a, 1998b).

Origins of co-cultural theory. Co-cultural theory has emerged from muted group theory and standpoint theory (Orbe, 1998a, 1998b, 2005). Muted group theory speaks to the process of how marginalized group members learn to communicate within the dominant hierarchy (Ballad-Reisch, 2010; Kramarae, 2005; Orbe, 1998a, 1998b). Muted group theory was originally established by anthropologists to provide a framework for how Black women communicate within a White, male-dominated society and concluded that every society has dominant groups and subordinated groups (Orbe 1998a, 1998b). Muted group theory postulates that the language and methods of interactions are created by the dominant group, and members of the subordinated group must adopt the language and interactions of the dominant group in order to try to express themselves. Often times the language and prescribed interactions of the dominant group do not capture the context, essence, and experience of the subordinated group members (Allison & Hibbler, 2004; Ballad-Reisch, 2010; Kramarae, 2005; Orbe, 1998a, 1998b).

With muted group theory, the behavior of the dominant group works to diminish the experience and knowledge of the subordinated group by dismissing and interpreting the events of others; the knowledge of the marginalized group is not honored; and the subordinated group is encouraged to see themselves as less than the dominant group (Kramarae, 2005). Findings from Kramarae (2005) revealed that subordinate members who speak up against the dominant group are likely to be punished.

Standpoint theory, developed by feminist scholars from sociology and political science, focuses on how individuals use “labels to describe their place in society” (p. 58), and it is grounded in “societal positioning” (Kramarae, 2005, p. 234). Standpoint theory postulates that no, one perspective is the ultimate experience, and while there is shared experience, no two individuals have the same lived experience (Orbe, 1998a). Standpoint theory purports that by “understanding the field of experience is critical to understanding his or her daily communication experience” (Orbe, 1998b). Because dominant group members often create language and communication from their experience, subordinated group members know more about dominant group members than dominant group members know subordinated group members (Orbe, 1998a).

An overview of co-cultural theory. Like standpoint theory, co-cultural theory is grounded in a phenomenological approach and is more interested in obtaining the lived experience of an individual and, as such, makes room for various perspectives (Orbe, 1998a, 1998b). Co-cultural theory provides three major tenets: (a) members of subordinated groups (women, individuals of color, gays, individuals with disabilities), though vastly different, share similar societal positioning that is outside of the dominant group; (b) in an effort to navigate the dominant culture, members of subordinated groups need to adopt certain communication behaviors in effort to have any measure of success; and (c) members of the subordinated groups navigate various oppressive challenges (sexism, ableism, heterosexism, classism, racism) in similar methods but vary depending on the standpoint of the approach (Orbe, 1998a, 1998b).

Orbe’s (1998a, 1998b) co-cultural theory framework suggests that marginalized group members have to make choices on how to approach the members of the dominant

culture. The first choice has to do with the *preferred outcome* (Burnett et al., 2009; Orbe 1998a, 1998b). With the preferred outcome in mind, the member of the subordinated group must first make a decision as to “what communication behavior will lead to the desired outcome” (Orbe 1998a, 1998b, p. 243) that is needed for this interaction. Within the preferred outcome, the subordinate member must decide if the desired outcome should be assimilation, accommodation, or separation. With assimilation, the subordinated member looks to eliminate any cultural or perceived differences (Orbe, 1998a, 1998b). Accommodation has the dominant group members reinventing the rules that all members, subordinate or dominant, can incorporate into their life experiences (Orbe, 1998a, 1998b). And with separation, the subordinated group member refuses to adapt or form a “common bond” with the dominant group (Orbe, 1998a, 1998b).

The second choice has to do with the *communication approach* (Burnett et al., 2009; Orbe, 1998a, 1998b). With the communication approach, again, there are three approaches: (a) non-assertiveness, (b) assertiveness, and (c) aggressiveness. With non-assertiveness, the member of the subordinated group puts the needs of the dominant group before his or her own, and the approach is often described as non-confrontational (Orbe, 1998a, 1998b). An assertive approach has the subordinated group member emphasizing commonalities as a means to build bridges with the dominant group members; this approach is often very strategic (Orbe, 1998a, 1998b). With an aggressive approach, the subordinated group member utilizes “behaviors as described as hurtfully expressive, self-promoting, or seeks to assume control over others” (Orbe, 1998, 1998a, p. 247). Orbe (1998a, 1998b) suggested that preferred outcomes and communication approach are often used together to provide a more nuanced and richer description of the

behaviors (Orbe, 1998a, 1998b). All of the approaches must take into consideration the individual’s field of experience, abilities, situational context, and perceived costs and rewards (Burnett et al., 2009; Orbe, 1998a, 1998b).

	Separation	Accommodation	Assimilation
Nonassertive	Avoiding Maintaining Interpersonal Barriers	Increasing Visibility Dispelling Stereotypes	Emphasizing Commonalities Developing Positive Face Averting Controversy
Assertive	Communicating Self Intragroup Networking Exemplifying Strengths Embracing Stereotypes	Communicating Self Intragroup Networking Utilizing Liaisons Educating Others	Extensive Preparation Overcompensating Manipulating Stereotypes Bargaining
Aggressive	Attacking Sabotaging Others	Confronting Gaining Advantage	Dissociating Mirroring Strategic Distancing Ridiculing Self

Figure 1.1. Adapted from “An Outsider’s Within Perspective to Organizational Communication: Explicating the Communicative Practices of Co-Cultural Group Members” by M. Orbe, 1998a, *Management Communication Quarterly*, 12(2), p. 242.

In this study, co-cultural theory is used to examine the lived experience of how out, White gay males navigated a presidential search experience that is embedded within the dominant heterosexual culture. Many of the White older males who have engaged in the process may appear, from group membership, to have access to language and communication; the act of self-identifying as gay and being out, though, may impact how one chooses to communicate with the other group during the presidential search process.

The study will examine the lived experience of out, White gay males and their perspectives of navigating the process from the standpoint of an out, gay male.

Potential Significance of the Study

With the lack of studies on lesbian and gay leadership (Fassinger et al., 2010; Snyder, 2010), this study adds to the existing literature, especially for out, lesbian and gay college staff and administrators. This research study, with these findings, is one of the few scholarly works to document the lived experience of out, White gay male college presidents and how they perceived and maneuvered various challenges during their presidential search process. The findings from the study also add to text and articles about how the general search process for presidential candidates (McDade, Dowall, Marchese, & Polonio, 2010; Neff & Leondar, 1992; Dowall, 2007) may ascribe to a heteronormative hierarchy and how such hierarchy may affect out, White gay candidates during the process.

The study is one of very few studies to bring together the social dominance, queer, and co-cultural theories to explain the perspective of an historically marginalized group that has recently emerged in leadership positions within higher education. As for co-cultural theory, this study is one of the few that extends the theory to the higher education presidential search process. Furthermore, the study seeks to discover pathways to the college presidency, and other higher education administrative leadership positions, for other lesbian and gay administrators and faculty.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study was to examine the lived experience of how out, White gay males have successfully navigated the presidential search process. The lessons

learned from this study can be shared with emerging lesbian and gay leaders who aspire to become academic leaders within higher education. Furthermore, the lessons learned can be shared with those members of the higher education community who construct and implement search processes and who serve on search committees.

Research Questions

The research questions for this study are:

1. How does an out, White gay male's past experience shape his approach to the presidential search process?
2. How does an out, White gay male presidential candidate learn about the presidential search experience?
3. What are the perceptions of the presidential search process from an out, White gay candidate during the presidential search process?
4. How does a successful out, White gay male presidential candidate make a decision on institutional fit?

Definitions of Terms

Closeted: A lesbian or gay man who is not open about her or his sexual identity.

The person would not be open about her/his sexual orientation during the presidential search process (Wall & Evans, 1991).

Gay: A man who is emotionally, physically, spiritually, and sexually attracted to another man (Levine & Evans, 1991).

Heterosexual: An individual who is emotionally, physically, spiritually, and sexually attracted to a person of the opposite sex (Walls & Evan, 1991).

Hierarchy: An arrangement of categories based on human qualities. By arrangement, hierarchies have the dominant members at the top, and subordinates follow under the dominant position (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999; Sidanius, Levin, van Laar, & Sears, 2008).

Homosexual: An individual who is emotionally, physically, spiritually, and sexually attracted to a person of the same sex (Levine & Evans, 1991).

Lesbian: A woman who is emotionally, physically, spiritually, and sexually attracted to another woman (Levine & Evans, 1991).

Out: A lesbian or gay man who is open about her or his sexual identity. The person is open about her/his sexual orientation during the presidential search process (Levine & Evans, 1991).

Chapter Summary

More than 40 years after the beginning of the lesbian and gay rights movement, there are still no federal laws that protect lesbians and gays from discrimination, and more than half of the United States have laws permitting discrimination against lesbians and gays in the workplace (Brewer, 2003; Brumbaugh et al., 2008; Davies, 2004; Herek & Glunt, 1993; Human Rights Campaign, 2011a; LaMar & Kite, 1998). Within higher education, outside independent organizations have begun to track and measure colleges and universities that support and create a positive environment for lesbian and gay undergraduate students (Windmeyer, 2007). Unfortunately, there are no such reports or measures for out lesbian and gay faculty, staff, and administrators.

There is minimal research focused on lesbian and gay leaders. The current research suggests that there are a limited number of out, lesbian and gay leaders to study,

especially as it relates to pathways to leadership positions after college (Coon, 2001; Snyder 2006; Fassinger 2008; Fassinger et al., 2010; Hewlett & Sumberg, 2011; Renn, 2010). In the national call for diversifying college and university presidents, out lesbians and gays are not included in the call to action (American Council on Education, 2012; Bridges et al., 2007; Eckel & Hartley, 2011; White & Eckel, 2008). Recently, there has been the creation of the LGBT President's Organization to aid in the professional development of out, lesbian and gay educational professionals who are aspiring to take on leadership positions (Chicago Tribune, 2010; Inside Higher Education, 2010; LGBTQpresidents.org, 2012; Masterson, 2011).

The purpose of this study was to examine the lived experience of how out, White gay male candidates have successfully navigated the presidential search process and what lessons can be learned from the lived experience of the current out, White gay males who have successfully navigated the process. In addition, this study was to discover what lessons can be passed on to emerging lesbian and gay leaders within higher education who aspire to become college presidents, and what lessons can be passed on to search firms, search committees, and those who work to construct and implement the presidential search process. Research questions and operational definitions for the study were proposed. The findings of the study will add to the limited research on out, lesbian and gay leaders, and it will provide new literature on how out, White gay administrators navigate the search process within higher education.

For this study, Sidanius and Pratto's (1999) social dominance theory was used to examine how a gay male, a member of a subordinate group within the U.S., experiences the recruitment process to become a college or university president. Social dominance

theory, being focused on group-based hierarchies, suggests that the recruitment process for a higher education institution is created and implemented from a dominant-group perspective, and the rules and procedures of the recruitment process might pose potential challenges for a member of a subordinate group such as an out, gay male (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). In examining the current national data on out gays and lesbians, the data suggested that many of the constituents aligned with the institution constructing the search process identify as heterosexual and, thus, are members of the dominant population (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). Various researchers have concluded that being an outside member of the dominant group may make the recruitment process difficult and challenging (McDade et al., 2010; Neff & Leondar, 1992; Dowall, 2007).

By utilizing queer theory as a framework to examine the recruitment process for college and university presidents, the process may be established within a binary construct that seeks to provide access to heterosexually identified individuals while providing unconscious hurdles for individuals who identify as gay or non-heterosexual (Butler, 1990, 2004; Foucault 1978, 1985, 1986; Kirsh, 2000; Sullivan 2003; Warner, 1991). Kirsh (2000) concluded that laws, religion, and institutions are established in a heteronormative construct; thus, an institution of higher education may establish its recruitment process for a president within a heteronormative construct. Queer theory is used to examine the search process to see if any portions of the process are established in a heteronormative process.

With the use of co-cultural theory, the study seeks to examine how the out, gay White male candidates navigated the communication process, especially as a subordinated group member (Orbe, 1998a, 1998b). Co-cultural theory postulates that

dominant group members create language and communicate from their perspective or standpoint, while subordinated group members speak from their standpoint by learning to adopt the dominant language; however, the language of the dominant group may never adequately capture the experience or the nuances of the subordinated group members (Orbe, 1998a, 1998b). Orbe's (1998a, 1998b) co-cultural theory is grounded in the lived experience of the subordinated group member, and it examines the method as to how the members of the subordinated group make meaning or contextualize their experience within the dominant culture. Co-cultural theory suggests that members creating and guiding the presidential search process may use language and communicate from a heterosexual, dominant-group perspective. The out, gay male candidates may communicate from a subordinated perspective; thus, the candidates would need to learn to adapt to a dominant, heterosexual, communication approach. This study examines if and how any of the out, White gay male presidential candidates utilized the co-cultural theory's preferred outcomes and communication approaches (Orbe 1998a, 1998b).

Chapter 2 provides a theoretical framework for analyzing the literature; provides a review of the literature as it relates to the historical and contemporary environment for lesbians and gays within the U.S.; and gives the current demographics for college and university presidents with the U.S. Chapter 3 details the methodology, research context, participants, data collection, and data analysis for the study. Chapter 4 provides an analysis of the data that was collected from participants. Chapter 5 provides a more detailed discussion of the findings from Chapter 4, and it provides an overview of the implications for the findings provides an overview of the limitations of the study, gives recommendations for future research and practitioners.

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

Introduction and Purpose

The research conducted by Rankin et al. (2011) concluded that gays are one of the most ostracized groups within the U.S. This chapter seeks to examine how gays have been historically marginalized and continue to face challenges with acceptance within the U.S. (Brewer, 2003; Brumbaugh, Sanchez, Nook, & Wright 2008; Davies, 2004; Herek & Glunt, 1993; LaMar & Kite, 1998). The chapter explores the evolution of the gay rights movement within the U.S. and explores the contemporary move toward greater acceptance within the 21st century (Harms, 2011; Gates & Newport, 2013; Loftus, 2001; Keleher & Smith, 2008). Fassinger et al. (2010) and Snyder (2006) concluded in their research that the numbers of out gay leaders are limited and that sufficient research has yet to be conducted to capture the lived experience of lesbian and gay executive leaders, especially those who have become college presidents. This study will utilize social dominance, queer, and co-cultural theories to provide a framework for examining the literature.

The purpose of this study examines the lived experience of how out, White gay males have successfully navigated the college presidential search process. The individuals appointed to college presidential positions should affirm higher education's promise around access and success. Furthermore, college presidents should reflect the members of the higher education community and, as a group, should represent the

diversity of students, faculty, staff, and administrators that make up that community (Eckel & Hartley, 2011; White & Eckel, 2008).

The 2012 American Council on Education report on the American college presidency found that the position of the president is dominated by older, White, heterosexual men who hold doctorates (American Council on Education, 2012). The findings in the recent report affirm that White heterosexual men have historically held the office of the president since at least 1986 (American Council on Education, 2012; Bridges et al., 2008; Eckel & Hartley, 2011; White & Eckel, 2008). Women now account for more than 26% percent of the college presidents marking an increase of 3% from the report that was published in 2006 (American Council on Education, 2012; Bridges et al., 2008; Eckel & Hartley, 2011; White & Eckel, 2008). Individuals of color accounted for less than 13% percent of college presidents indicating a decline of approximately 1% since the last report in 2006 (American Council on Education, 2012; Bridges et al., 2008; Eckel & Hartley, 2011; White & Eckel, 2008). While the 2012 survey conveyed the urgency for attracting and hiring more women and individuals of color, the report is silent on the sexual identity of the college presidents. The survey instrument used to collect the data does not inquire about the sexual identity of the college president (American Council on Education, 2012). The lack of sexual identity data continues to make the out, lesbian and gay presidents invisible.

In providing leadership in and beyond the academy, college presidents can serve as role models and provide insights on how they have risen to become top executives. With the lack of out, lesbian and gay leaders to study (Coon, 2001; Fassinger, 2008; Fassinger et al., 2010; Hewlett & Sumberg, 2011; Snyder 2006), out, lesbian and gay

college presidents have a unique opportunity to inform research and provide pathways to aspiring lesbian and gay educational leaders. This is especially important in light of research confirming that lesbian and gay employees expect that they will deal with discrimination in the workplace directly related to their sexual orientation (Embrick, Walther, & Wickens, 2007).

Currently, the LGBTQ President's Organization collected 42 names of self-identified sitting out, lesbian and gay college presidents in the U.S. and throughout the world (LGBTQpresidents.org, 2012). In accounting for the 4,495 degree-granting institutions of higher education (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2013), the membership list of the LGBTQ President's Organization accounts for less than 1% of the overall degree-granting presidential population. Thus, the individuals on the membership list have been successful in navigating the college presidential search process.

This chapter provides a topical analysis of the relevant literature and includes an analysis of the following areas: (a) historical analysis of attitudes toward lesbians and gays in the late 20th century and early 21st century; (b) framing perspectives about lesbians and gays; (c) estimated populations of lesbians and gays in the United States; (d) workplace issues for lesbians and gays; (e) college environment for lesbians and gays; (f) role of the college president; and (g) the search process for college presidents. The review sets out the research studies that have been conducted on lesbians and gays, lesbian and gay leaders, college presidents, and the presidential search process. This chapter seeks to provide an overview of the how lesbians and gays have navigated within a heteronormative environment created by the dominant culture that is embedded in heterosexual privilege.

Topics Analysis

The social dominance, queer, and co-cultural theories provide a framework to examine the current environment within the U.S. and institutions of higher education as it relates to hiring an out, White gay male executive. Sidanius and Pratto's (1999) seminal work provides a meta-analysis of critical theories that are based in psychology and sociology leading to a synthesis of theories in a new understanding of oppression in societal structures. The study includes the creation of a new quantitative tool, Social Dominance Orientation, which measures an individual's understanding and support for socially constructed, group-based hierarchies. The tool was distributed to more than 18,000 respondents in 11 countries. The research population included a sample of more than 4,500 middle school children and college students and randomly selected respondents that brought the entire research population to over 18,000 (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). Social dominance theory provides a framework for exploring how hierarchy based societies have a complex interplay of individuals, groups, and policies to continue to oppress members of marginalized groups. Individually based social hierarchy suggests that individuals derive their power, prestige, and position in the hierarchy through intellect, achievement, and politics (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). Group-based social hierarchy suggests that groups derive their prestige, power, and position from identities associated with group-based identities such as religion, race, tribe, clan, sexual orientation, and class (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). In examining both the individual and group-based hierarchy characteristics of an institution during the presidential search process, the study examined whether the institution's characteristics played a role in the hiring of an out gay male president.

Queer theory provides a post-modern framework that utilizes critical theory in examining how the presidential candidate and the hiring institution approached the issues related to a candidate being open about their homosexuality. Kirsch (2000) described queer theory as “critically analyzing the meaning of identity, focusing on intersections of identity, and resisting oppressive social constructs of sexual orientation and gender” and bringing to light the term *heteronormative*, as a means to describe the dominant heterosexual culture of the U.S. (p. 620). In short, queer theory seeks to challenge the current hierarchies within a society while at the same time challenging individuals who participate within the hierarchies. Butler’s (1990) seminal work challenged the notion of individuals and groups ascribing to hierarchies of gender, sex, and sexual identities within a given cultural context.

Co-cultural theory examines how historically marginalized groups seek to communicate with the dominant culture (Orbe 1998a, 1998b; 2005). Orbe’s (1998a, 1998b) research was embedded in the qualitative phenomenological approach and sought to examine the lived experience of marginalized groups and how they seek to communicate within dominant cultures. The study provided a meta-analysis of organizational communication theory and provided a newly constructed theory that synthesized an under-represented individual’s approach to communication within a dominant culture (Orbe 1998a, 1998b). Orbe (1998a, 1998b) noted that co-cultural theory has three tenants: (a) members of subordinated groups will share similar societal positioning that is outside of the dominant group; (2) members of subordinated groups will need to adopt certain communication behaviors in an effort to have any measure of success when communicating with members of the dominant culture; and (3) members of

the subordinated groups will navigate various dominant group interactions in similar methods but may vary depending on the standpoint of the individual.

Co-cultural theory provides a framework for how marginalized group members choose to enter into communication with members of the dominant culture. For members of marginalized groups, communication decisions are encapsulated in preferred outcomes and communication approach. With preferred outcomes, a member of the marginalized group must first ascertain the goal of the communication interaction and then he or she will need to choose an outcome this is defined as assimilation, accommodation, and separation (Orbe, 1998a, 1998b). The second choice has to do with the manner in which the communication occurs or the communication approach. Communication approaches are defined as non-assertive, assertive, and aggressive (Orbe 1998a, 1998b). In all, Orbe (1998a, 1998b) provided nine communication approaches that a member of an under-represent group must choose to communicate with members of the dominant culture.

Historical analysis of attitudes toward lesbians and gays in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. Lesbians and gay men have long been fighting for acceptance and civil rights. Since the Stonewall Riots of 1969, the lesbian and gay community has been working with, and adopting, the lessons learned from African Americans and women who have long been involved in the civil rights movement (Beemyn, 2003; Morris, 1999). Wald, Button, and Rienzo's (1996) study provided a quantitative analysis of the adoption of gay rights ordinances within 126 randomly selected counties and 125 cities within the state of Florida. The study was used as a theoretical framework of urbanism/diversity and social movement theory to explain political movements of lesbians and gays that have led to the election of self-identified lesbian and gay officials

(Wald et al., 1996). The literature within the study found that the end of the World War II, with the mass movement of lesbians and gay men to urban centers, saw that the “emergence of a number of protective organizations that signaled a growing sense of identity and group consciousness among homosexuals” (p. 1154). In a 1999 study, Button, Wald, and Rienzo’s quantitative study used a purpose sample of 101 U.S. cities and 25 countries with antidiscrimination ordinances to explore the use of urbanism/diversity and social movements theory to understand how lesbians and gays adopted the lessons of women and African-Americans to become elected officials. Since the 1970s, Lesbian and gay people have organized as an oppressed group, mobilizing to lobby for local, state, and national legislation; elect out officials; and protest in favor of nondiscrimination laws and policies (Button, Wald & Rienzo, 1999). The research of Button et al. (1999) draws from the methods and strategies used by Blacks, Latinos and women who sought to change the social fabric through democratic principles.

Lesbians and gay men faced adversity and hostility within the United States since well before the Stonewall Riots (Brewer, 2003; Brumbaugh, et al., 2008; Davies, 2004; Herek & Glunt, 1993; LaMar & Kite, 1998). Numerous regional and national quantitative research studies which have included randomly selected participants concluded that a large portion of the American population has held negative attitudes towards lesbians and gay men, and some attitudes have begun to change within the past two decades (Brewer, 2003; Brumbaugh, et al., 2008; Davies, 2004; Herek & Glunt, 1993; LaMar & Kite, 1998). Negative attitudes towards lesbians and gay men saw a huge increase during the 1980s, in large part because of the AIDS crisis and the attachment of the AIDS crisis to the gay community (Brewer, 2003; Brumbaugh, et al.,

2008; Davies, 2004; Herek & Glunt, 1993; LaMar & Kite, 1998). Brewer 's (2003) analysis of archived data from three national quantitative National Election Studies surveys found that negative attitudes towards gays and lesbians saw a marked decrease from 1992 through 1998. Herek and Glunt 's (1993) national quantitative study on attitudes towards gay men and personal contact with gay men with a population of 937 English-speaking participants found that over 63% of those surveyed had a negative attitude towards lesbians and gays. In 1998, only 54% percent of those surveyed held negative views of lesbians and gays (Brewer, 2003). LaMar and Kite's (1998) quantitative study that measured the attitudes towards lesbians and gays with a convenient sample of over 200 college students found that the negative reactions towards lesbians and gay men are complex and embedded in beliefs that "gay people are threatening or dangerous, that gays deserve condemnation, and that contact with gay people should be avoided" (p. 189). LaMar and Kite (1998) posit that heterosexual men's reactions to gay men have more to do with a possibility of arousal and potential sexual encounters than any other factors, thus, supporting the long standing research indicating that sexuality and gender are interlaced and are embedded within the overall negative attitudes of those surveyed (Markowitz, Rieger, & Roloff, 2010).

Kite and Whitley's (1996) quantitative research study based on the meta-analysis of national surveys with more than 500 respondents found that heterosexual reactions to lesbians and gay men changed as it was measured against three distinct and different areas: attitudes towards homosexuals as people; attitudes towards homosexual behavior; and attitudes toward gay peoples' civil rights. Kite and Whitley's (1996) research and methodology were the first to remove the concept of sexual practices and provide a

framework around the idea of civil rights (Brewer, 2003; Brumbaugh et al., 2008). A major finding of the study was that respondents were likely to have negative reactions to behaviors, but were more likely to support the civil liberties of gays. Since Kite and Whitley (1996) study, researchers have changed the method in which measuring attitudes towards lesbians and gay men have been conducted (Brewer, 2003).

Matthew Sheppard's murder in 1998 is documented as one of the major turning points in changing the negative attitudes towards lesbians and gay men (Brewer, 2003). Brewer (2003) found that the national outcry and sympathy about the crime had an impact on the American public due to the nature and extensive media coverage of the event. The study found that 86% percent of surveyed Americans support the basic civil liberties and the freedom of expression for lesbians and gay men, as opposed to 62% in the 1970s (Harms, 2011). The research of Button et al. (1999) also confirmed that lesbians and gay men are making civil right inroads via the political process by supporting gay friendly candidates and electing out lesbian and gay officials.

Research over the 1990s and early 2000s continued to reveal that heterosexual men continue to hold more negative attitudes toward lesbians and gay men, and heterosexual women hold higher negative attitudes towards lesbians (Brewer, 2003; Brumbaugh et al., 2008; Davies, 2004; Herek & Glunt, 1993; Kite & Whitley 1996; LaMar & Kite, 1998; Rowatt, Tsang, Kelly, LaMartina, McMuller, & McKinley, 2006;). Markowitz, Rieger, and Roloff's (2010) quantitative study with a convenient sample of over 170 participants on attitudes toward same sex marriage supported the findings of past research that heterosexual men have a negative attitude towards gay men, but found that heterosexual men were positive about the idea of lesbians having the right to marry.

In the same research study, heterosexual women were more positive than heterosexual men in supporting gay men in the right to marry, but had negative attitudes on lesbians' rights to marry.

The literature provides support that the overall environment within the U.S. has been historically negative for lesbians and gays. The social and political environment within the U.S. has been established by a dominant heterosexual culture. More than half of those heterosexuals researched have a negative view of lesbians and gays (Brewer, 2003; Brumbaugh et al., 2008; Davies, 2004; Herek & Glunt, 1993; Kite & Whitley 1996; LaMar & Kite, 1998). Kite & Whitley's (1996) quantitative research study revealed that dominant culture holds negative beliefs that lesbians and gays are dangerous and that the gay community should be avoided. The dominant culture has socially constructed a perspective that has led to the creation of a hierarchy enhancing (HE) behaviors and legitimizing myths (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). LaMar and Kite's (1998) research revealed that heterosexual men's reactions to gay men have more to do with the possibility of arousal and potential sexual encounters; thus, the gay male was often seen as predatory. Hierarchy enhancing perspectives increased within the dominant culture related to lesbians and gays in the 1980s directly linked to the AIDS crisis with the belief that the crisis was created by and perpetuated by the lesbian and gay community (Brewer, 2003; Brumbaugh et al., 2008; Davies, 2004; Herek & Glunt, 1993; LaMar & Kite, 1998).

Research also shows that when research questions about lesbians and gays were constructed to include the concepts of civil rights rather than sexual behaviors there was a decrease in the negative perspectives about members of the community. Research has

revealed that the notion of civil rights and empathy for the lesbian and gay community has led to a hierarchy attenuating (HA) approach (Kite & Whitley, 1996). The literature also reveals that the murder of Matthew Shepard created a greater hierarchy attenuating perspective built around empathy (Brewer, 2003).

The negative perspectives about lesbians and gays provided by the literature would conclude that the negative attitudes are embedded in the notion of the performative, or the act of sexually being with someone of the same sex (Butler, 1999, 2004; Sullivan, 2003; Warner, 1991). The dominant culture has created a binary construct where opposite sex attraction has been established as the norm, and same sex attraction has been constructed as abnormal or threatening (Butler 1999, 2004). The research provides evidence of a heteronormative society where strong beliefs are embedded in a heterosexual context and those outside of the context are viewed as negative and not trustworthy (Sullivan, 2003; Warner 1991).

Framing perspectives about lesbians and gays. According to most of the research reported during the past two decades, Americans are of two minds as it relates to lesbian and gay rights (Brumbaugh et al., 2008; Davies, 2004; Herek, 2000; Loftus, 2001; Smith, 2011; Whitley & Ægisdóttir, 2000; Wilkinson & Roys, 2005). Brumbaugh, Sanchez, Nock and Wright's (2008) quantitative Midwest tri-state telephone survey of over 970 respondents studying the changing attitudes towards gay marriage found that women, Whites and younger individuals are more approving of gay marriage than men, Blacks and older individuals. Over the past 20 years, "American's are conflicted over their core values surrounding the perceived sanctity of family and marriage and their own rising individualism and efforts to tailor their life experiences to their personal choice"

(Brumbaugh et al., 2008, p. 347). Numerous quantitative research studies have found that the Americans are more likely to support civil liberties for lesbians and gays, but still have an issue with homosexual behavior (Brumbaugh et al., 2008; Herek, 2000; Loftus, 2001). With the dawn of the 1990s and the beginning of the 21st century, support for the civil liberties of lesbians and gays has steadily increased, and the opposition to lesbians and gays claims to civil rights has become more vocal (Brumbaugh et al., 2008; Herek, 2000; Loftus, 2001). The conversations around issues related to lesbian and gay rights have been framed in two distinct arenas: morality and civil liberties (Brumbaugh et al., 2008; Davies, 2004; Herek, 2000; Keleher & Smith, 2008; Lambert, Ventura, Hall, & Cluse-Tolar, 2006; Loftus, 2001; Rowatt, et al., 2006; Whitley & Ægisdóttir, 2000; Wilkinson & Roys, 2005;;).

Those who have framed homosexuality around morality have focused their conversations around homosexual behavior and the ability for an individual to choose their sexual orientation (Herek, 2002; Lambert et al., 2006; Loftus, 2001; Rowatt et al., 2006). In a quantitative study where a convenient sample of over 170 respondents were asked to react to vignettes that was conducted by Wilkinson and Roys (2005), the findings confirm that those identifying as have more religious orientation reacted negatively to lesbian and gay individuals. In Loftus' (2001) quantitative research study utilizing archived data from the General Social Survey found that those restricting the civil liberties of the lesbian and gay population are more likely to support the restriction of other under-represented groups. Those who oppose homosexuality tend to have a conservative political ideology, a strong relationship with authoritarianism, and a strong religious ideology (Herek, 2002; Loftus, 2001; Rowatt et al., 2006; Whitley &

Ægisdóttir, 2000). Research studies such as Herek's (2000) quantitative analysis with convenient sample of college students, and Davies (2004) quantitative study with over 500 respondents within a convenient sample have confirmed that those who oppose homosexuality believe that there are defined gender roles for men and women within the United States and the behavior of lesbians and gays violate those gender roles (Brumbaugh et al., 2008; Davies, 2004; Herek, 2000; Whitley & Ægisdóttir, 2000; Loftus, 2001; Wilkinson & Roys, 2005;).

Stories of ex-lesbians and ex-gays who have changed their sexual orientation from lesbian or gay to heterosexual have reinforced the perspective of those opposing lesbian and gay rights (Davies, 2004; Herek, 2002; Loftus, 2001; Rowatt et al., 2006; Wilkinson & Roys, 2005). Another reinforcing argument from the opposition about lesbian and gay rights is the belief that lesbian and gay behavior is immoral (Davies, 2004; Herek, 2002; Keleher & Smith, 2008; Loftus, 2001; Whitley & Ægisdóttir, 2000; Wilkinson & Roys, 2005; Rowatt et al., 2006;). The quantitative research study of Rowatt et al. (2006) conducted at predominantly Protestant colleges in the South with a convenient sample size of nearly 130 participants found that those participants with religious beliefs had more negative perceptions of behaviors and less negative perceptions about gay individuals. Wilkinson and Roys' (2005) study concluded that those with strong religious beliefs affirm that homosexual behavior is immoral, and the person engaging in homosexual behavior has a choice about the behavior; the perspective of love the sinner, hate the sin.

The research around those individual who oppose lesbian and gay engage in hierarchy-enhancing (HE) behaviors (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999; Sidanius, Pratto, van Laar,

& Levin, 2008). As the research shows, those opposed to lesbians and gays are relying legitimized myths and are seeking to protect the dominant culture by using morality and intellectual justifications (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999, 2003; Sidanius, Pratto, van Laar, & Levin, 2008). The research further provides evidence that individuals in the dominant culture who do not support lesbian and gay individuals and are more likely to protect the hierarchy of the dominant culture by seeking to restrict other under-represented groups (Loftus 2001; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999, 2003; Sidanius, Pratto, van Laar, & Levin, 2008).

Previous research has investigated the impact of religiosity on support of homosexuality (Rowatt et al., 2006). These studies have found a strong correlation between the frequency of attendance at religious services and an increased negative attitude toward lesbians and gays (Lambert et al., 2006; Wilkinson & Roys, 2005). While various religious affiliations have been documented in each of the previous research studies, Christians were the primary participants in the studies about religiosity and negative attitudes towards homosexuality (Keleher & Smith, 2008; Rowatt et al., 2006). One of the main cornerstones of Queer Theory is that institutions, such as religion, create and establish dominant cultural rules embedded in a binary construct that favors a heteronormative perspective (Abes & Kasch, 2007; Butler, 1999, 2004; Foucault, 1978, 1985, 1986; Warner, 1991). The protection of the dominant culture based on morality is an act of hierarchy enhancing (HE) by dominant group members (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999).

Those advocating for the civil rights of lesbians and gays have focused on the minority status of the lesbian and gay population, the need for equal treatment, and the increased diversity within in the demographics of the United States (Button et al., 1999;

Herek, 2000; Keleher & Smith, 2008; Loftus, 2001; Pruitt, 2002; Smith & Gates, 2011). Lesbian and gay advocates have focused on the minority status (Bernstein, 2005; Herek, 2000; Loftus, 2001; Pruitt 2002;). Many researchers have discovered that those who support the lesbian and gay population believe that sexual orientation is genetic (Lambert et al., 2006; Loftus, 2001). Bernstein's (2005) research study conducts a meta-analysis on identity politics, the intersection of social movements, and how under-represented group members utilize the imposed socially constructed reality to explain the movement outcomes such as barriers and goals. Herek's (2000) study provides a meta-analysis of literature around sexual prejudice proposes that lesbians and gays continue to move toward a more visible community with cultural interests, political interests, and economic might "attitudes to gay people are psychologically similar to majority attitudes racial, ethnic, and other minority groups" (p. 253). Women on average tend to be more supportive of lesbian and gay civil rights than men (Brewer, 2003; Brumbaugh et al., 2008; Davies, 2004; Herek & Glunt, 1993; Kite & Whitley 1996; Keleher & Smith, 2008; LaMar & Kite, 1998; Loftus, 2001; Rowatt et al., 2006). Researchers have discovered that lesbian and gay couples earn up to thirty percent less than heterosexual couples (Berg & Lien, 2002; Black, Gates, Sanders & Taylor, 2000; Pruitt 2002; Fisher 2010). The research study of Black et al. (2000) utilizes twenty years of archived national data sets such as General Social Survey, the National Health and Social Life Survey and the 1990 U.S. Census in an effort to provide a number of lesbians and gays within the U.S. and provide a demographic overview and the economic disparity that exists between heterosexuals and homosexuals. The study concluded that gay men are disproportionately concentrated in more urban areas and gay couples are earning

substantially less than heterosexual couples (Black et al., 2000). Carpenter's (2005) quantitative research study utilizing data from a decade of California-based respondents to the General Social Survey concluded that generalized findings from the Black et al. (2000) may not be consistent due to methodological issues when the group conducted their analysis, and that there may not be a statistically significance difference regarding pay disparity between gay men and heterosexuals.

Researchers have also discovered that there is a positive correlation between the increase in diversity of demographics in the United States and the increase of positive attitudes toward lesbians and gays (Button et al., 1999; Loftus, 2001). The quantitative study of Button et al. (1999) utilizing theories on urbanism/diversity and the social movement theory suggested that the increased education levels within the United States has also led to an increase in positive attitudes toward lesbians and gays (Loftus, 2001; Keleher & Smith, 2008). Keleher and Smith's (2008) quantitative study of two decades of data collected from the General Social Survey discovered that generational replacement has also had a positive impact on the increased positive attitude toward the lesbian and gay community. Generational replacement refers to the older generation dying off and being replaced by a more tolerant and accepting younger generation (Keleher & Smith, 2008). In the study, Keleher and Smith (2008) suggested that, with each new generation that education levels rise and each generation, has an increased positive attitude towards lesbians and gays.

Estimated population of lesbians and gays. Estimating the population of the lesbian and gay population has become one of the disputed facts for those who support and oppose lesbian and gay rights because the population of lesbians and gays would

have an immediate impact on policy debates (Black et al., 2000; Cooke & Rapino, 2007; Herek, Norton, Allen, & Sims, 2010; Gates, 2011; Pruitt, 2002). Estimating the true number of the lesbian and gay population is fraught with difficulty and researchers have been trying to find a way to adequately track the number of lesbians and gays with the United States since the early 1970s (Black, Gates, Sanders & Taylor, 2000; Cooke & Rapino, 2007; Herek et al., 2010; Gates, 2011; Pruitt 2002). The seminal research study on homosexuality was completed by Dr. Kinsey and his associates and concluded that 10% of males are homosexual (Kinsey, Pomeroy, Martin & Gebhard, 1948). Research studies in the past 30 years have disputed the Kinsey research project by highlighting the flaws within the methodology and population sampling; the sample population only included white men (Black et al., 2000; Herek et al., 2010; Pruitt 2002).

Those who oppose supporting lesbian and gay civil rights have also continually espoused that the population of the lesbian and gay population is grossly overestimated at 10% and have provided research that shows the lesbian and gay population to be between one and three percent (Loftus, 2001; Pruitt 2002). Those opposing the lesbian and gay community seek to create and perpetuate a legitimizing myth as it relates to the numbers of lesbian and gays (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999).

Those who support the civil rights of gays and lesbians believe that lesbian and gay population is between 5-10% (Loftus, 2001; Pruitt 2002). In their meta-analysis of the literature around the estimated populations of lesbians and gays, Pruitt (2002) and Black et al. (2000) suggested that each side of the population debate has an interest in supporting their representation of the lesbian and gay population because laws and policies may or may not be established based on the number of individuals that will or

will not be protected. Pruitt's (2002) research focused on mining data websites that featured both pro and anti-gay frameworks and concluded that both groups provided estimated numbers based on faulty research and inconclusive evidence. Furthermore, the true numbers of lesbians and gays may provide a challenge or hierarchy-attenuating approach to the dominant culture (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999).

A majority of the previous research studies have relied on convenient samples where the population from the study were pulled from gay bars, gay pride events, gay newspapers, gay-friendly internet sites, gay neighborhoods, community based organizations, and national advocacy organizations (Black et al., 2000; Herek et al., 2010). Several researchers have noted that estimating the population of lesbians and gays is complex due to the concept of behavior versus identity (Black et al., 2000; Cooke & Rapino, 2007; Herek et al., 2010; Gates, 2011; Pruitt 2002). Researchers have explained that past studies about the lesbian and gay population have relied on individuals who have self-identified as lesbian and gay; thus, the studies did not include individuals who may have been involved in homosexual behavior (Black et al., 2000; Cooke & Rapino, 2007; Herek et al., 2010; Gates, 2011; Pruitt 2002). The quantitative study of Black et al. (2000) noted that the ambiguous definition of homosexuality may have led past studies to omit those individuals who might be engaging in same sex behaviors and have same sex attractions. Furthermore, the issues of culture, race, ethnicity, and gender are involved with an individual's willingness to self-identify as lesbian and gay; self-identification for those in several cultures would bring about increased scrutiny and isolation (Glick & Golden, 2010; Lambert, Ventura, Hall, & Cluse-Tolar, 2006). Again, past studies have not included representative samples for the population of the United States. Measuring

the lesbian and gay population is further complicated due to the lack of government sanctioned and supported measurement instruments like the United States Census (Black et al., 2000; Cooke & Rapino, 2007; Herek et al., 2010; Gates, 2011; Pruitt 2002). The United States government utilizes the census to measure a multitude of identities and factors within the United States population that include ethnicity, gender, age, education, country of origin, veterans, income, household ownership, number of members in household, language spoken at home, and distance between home and work (United States Census, 2012); the census is absent of any true measures for the entirety of the lesbian and gay population (Black et al., 2000; Cooke & Rapino, 2007; Herek et al., 2010; Gates, 2011, 2011; Pruitt, 2002).

To estimate the lesbian and gay population, Smith and Gates' (2001) quantitative study utilized data from the Voter News Service from the elections held in 1999, 2000, and 2001, where respondents self-reported their sexual identity. The Voter News Service reported that that lesbian and gay voter turnout was between 4 and 5% of the individuals who showed up to vote (Smith & Gates, 2001). The Williams Institute and Gates' (2011) quantitative research study analyzed archived data from three national surveys and two statewide surveys studies where respondents self-identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender. The data of the five surveys revealed that the overall lesbian and gay population is approximately 3% of the United States population (Gates, 2011). Gates (2011) further deduced from the data that over 8% of the United States population has engaged in sexual behaviors with another person of the same gender and that 11% of population reported having same-sex attraction.

As indicated earlier, the United States Census does not provide any measures for counting single lesbians and gays (Black et al., 2000; Cooke & Rapino, 2007; Herek et al., 2010; Pruitt, 2002). In 2000, Black et al. conducted a study that examined the data from the 1990 Census in effort to provide a projection of the number of partnered lesbians and gays in the United States. In 1990, the Census for the first time permitted the “household head to report an unmarried partnership” (Black et al., 2000, p. 140) and then provide the gender of the person in the partnership. Black et al. (2000) cross referenced the data from the unmarried partnership question with the gender of head of household and the gender of the partner in the unmarried partnership to provide an estimate of the number of lesbians and gays in committed relationships. The study’s authors estimated the population of the total lesbian and gay population to be 5% of the overall United States population and concluded that more than 30% of lesbians and gays were involved in committed relationships (Black et al., 2000). Smith and Gates (2001) replicated the Black et al. (2000) study with the 2000 Census data; however, the U.S. Census Bureau reported that the data from 1990 and 2000 cannot be compared because of methodology flaws related to the classification of households (Smith & Gates, 2001). The replicated study provided similar findings to the Black et al. (2000) study that 30% of the lesbian and gay population were living in committed relationships. Smith and Gates (2001) further indicated that lesbian and gay couples had moved beyond the urban and coastal centers to settle down in more rural areas. In the 2012 and 2013, two different Gallup studies concluded that approximately 4% of the U.S. population identifies as lesbian, gay, or bisexual (Gates & Newport, 2012; Gates & Newport, 2013). While there were conflicting reports for the lesbian and gay population and the challenge

to historical data (Black et al., 2000; Gates & Newport, 2012; Gates & Newport, 2013; Herek et al., 2010; Pruitt, 2002; Smith & Gates, 2001), the data suggested that the lesbian and gay population in the U.S. is between approximately 4–7%.

Without an appropriate measure of the lesbian and gay populations, policies and laws are less likely to be implemented by the dominant culture, and group-based hierarchies are more likely to discount the estimated lesbian and gay population, thus, looking to discount the population as a whole (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999).

Workplace issues for lesbians and gays. Lyons, Brenner, and Fassinger's (2005) quantitative study, utilizing the theory of work adjustment with a national random sample of approximately 400 respondents, highlighted a research study from 1996 that found that between 25 and 66% of lesbian and gay employees reported experiencing discrimination at work due to their sexual orientation. Hewlett and Sumberg's (2011) quantitative national research study, with a purpose sample of nearly 3,000, for the Center for Work-Life Policy revealed that 48% of lesbian and gay employees are not open about their sexual orientation at work, 42% feel isolated, and over half of those surveyed believe their careers have been stalled by their sexual orientation. In concert with national opinions on homosexuals, Hewlett and Sumberg's (2011) research found that 37% percent of heterosexual women and 52% of heterosexual men prefer that lesbian and gay employees keep their personal lives out of the workplace.

The quantitative study of Lyons et al. (2005) about lesbian and gay employees in the work environment found that lesbian and gay employees' perceptions of the workplace environment have an impact on “workplace outcomes that include job satisfaction, psychological distress, organizational commitment, and occupational choice”

(p. 539). Embrick, Walther, and Wickens' (2007) qualitative case study, involving in-depth interviews and observations, discovered that many lesbian and gay employees firmly believe that they will encounter discrimination in the workplace due to their sexual orientation. Lyons et al. (2005) reported that out employees are more satisfied with their jobs than those gay and lesbian employees who are in the closet. However, research concluded that closeted employees are more satisfied with their income, and out employees are less satisfied with their income. With regard to pay disparity, Fassinger's (2008) meta-analysis of literature on the challenges and opportunities related to under-represented groups in education and work found that out gay men and lesbians earn up to 23% less than heterosexual employees. Black et al. (2000) further uncovered pay disparity with regard to lesbian and gay employees. In an examination of the 1990 and 2000 United States Census data, partnered gay couples earned 22–30% less than married heterosexual couples (Berg & Lien, 2002; Black et al., 2000; Fisher, 2010).

The case study of Embrick et al. (2007) proposed that working-class lesbian and gay employees must navigate a hiring process that is cumbersome and often filled with multiple land mines. The first stage of the hiring process is that the potential employee is vetted by a network of other organizational employees to ensure that they are comfortable with the potential employee. Secondly, the potential employee is interviewed by a local supervisor who often ignores state and federal policies and laws asking personal questions that might reveal the potential employee's sexual orientation. If the potential employee passes the interview, the potential employee is then passed on to the third stage of the interview process where her or she is interviewed by a person in a higher management position who has a greater understanding of the state and federal guidelines,

but who is better skilled to judge the potential employee's skill set and fit within the organization. If the potential worker passes the third stage, the potential employee is hired and placed on a probationary period to see if they can fit within the organization's culture. The probationary position permits the organization to try out the employee before the organization further invests in the employee with the cost of benefits. During the probationary period, the employee experiences the organizational culture and is tested to see how he or she will react to any potentially anti-gay comments and issues. The probationary period further permits the hiring organization to dismiss the employee if he or she does not represent the organization's best interest (Embrick et al., 2007).

In line with protecting power and prestige, institutions, and the group-based hierarchy, the workplace is designed within a heteronormative environment that seeks to provide privilege and protection to heterosexuals through aggregated institutional discrimination whereby the policies and procedures of the institution are designed to favor the dominant culture (Butler, 1999, 2004; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). Furthermore, non-dominant culture members are exposed to aggregated individual discrimination that is perpetuated by members of the dominant culture who may work to actively dismiss the experiences of members of the non-dominant culture (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). Those choosing not to come out and who remain quiet about their sexual orientation are acting in behavioral asymmetry as influenced by the dominant culture (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). Furthermore, communication approaches by those choosing to remain quiet about their sexual orientation are participating in a non-assertive-accommodation style and look to blend in with members of the dominant culture (Orbe 1998a, 1998b).

College environment for lesbians and gays: The literature review for the Wald et al. (1996) quantitative study wrote that “university communities proved a crucial set of allies and promoted an environment conducive to the gay rights movement” (p. 1160). In 1968, a year before the Stonewall riots, a handful of colleges and universities began to see the emergence of gay and lesbian groups on campus. Beeyman’s (2003) historical analysis of lesbian and gay groups on campus wrote that the emergence of the Student Homophile Leagues (SHL) began with small numbers and as an extension of the student antiwar, African-American, and civil rights groups. The SHL groups made progress with other student groups on campus by “speaking unabashedly to others about their personal experiences” (Beemyn, 2003, p. 204). The SHL groups were viewed as extremely controversial by the college administration and were secretly supported by lesbian and gay faculty at the institutions (Beemyn, 2003).

Rankin, Weber, Blumenfeld, and Frazer’s (2010) mixed-method national study with a convenient sample of more than 5,000 respondents concluded that faculty and staffs on college and university campuses are dealing with some of the same issues that students faced in the middle of the 20th century. While more than 80% of lesbian and gay faculty and staff are open about their sexual orientation, 42% of faculty and 33% of staff have considered leaving their current institution due to their perception that is an unfriendly environment. One-fourth of lesbian and gay faculty and staff respondents reported being harassed on campus by students and colleagues because of their sexual orientation. In Iconis’ (2010) meta-analysis of the literature, lesbian and gay students reported that faculty remained passive when witnessing overt homophobic behaviors from other students in classrooms and hallways. The passivity of faculty and staff

colleagues in such homophobic incidents have added to the unpleasant perceptions that lesbian and gay faculty and staff have about the campus environment (Iconis, 2010). Nineteen percent of surveyed lesbian and gay faculty and staff reported that they have been denied employment or advancement due to their sexual orientation (Rankin et al., 2010). The Rankin et al. (2010) study concluded that the campus climate for out, lesbian and gay faculty and staff is unwelcoming and found that faculty and staff have seriously considered leaving their institution due to the environment.

Renn's (2010) meta-analysis of the over 30 years of literature concluded that most of the lesbian and gay research in higher education focused on the psycho-social development of lesbian and gay student leaders and their identities, leaving questions about the lesbian and gay leadership development unaddressed. Queer theory has been an essential theoretical framework used to examine lesbian and gay student identities (Renn, 2010). Renn conducted a meta-analysis of lesbians and gays in higher education and discovered that a majority of the research focuses on the lesbian and gay student-development process. Renn recommended that new research include the experience of college and university faculty and staff—especially administrators.

Even institutions of higher education, which may be more accommodating to members of non-dominant cultures, or may be hierarchy attenuating, are institutions designed by members of the dominant culture and look to advantage group-based hierarchies through aggregated institutional discrimination (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). The impact of the dominant culture permeates roles, processes, and policies that look to either minimize or discount the members of non-dominant culture (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). The data of harassment with the Rankin et al. (2010) supported that aggregated

individual discrimination continues to support group-based hierarchies (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999).

Role of the college president. The primary role of the university president has remained the same over the past five decades; the president is the face of the institution (Birnbaum, 1992; Eckel & Hartley, 2011; Weill, 2009). Weill's (2009) collection of stories and advice from past and current college presidents categorizes the roles of the president into the following areas: role model; chief administrative officer; communicator; chief town-gown relationship coordinator; fundraiser; keeper of traditions; negotiator of alumni, parents and legislatures; and a guardian of student learning and development. The president must be versatile with his or her approach. Perhaps the largest challenge of the president is in understanding that he or she is leading within a shared governance culture where listening and communication are paramount (Weill, 2009).

Fleming's (2010) quantitative study sought to understand the faculty's view of the president, with a randomly selected national population, provided an overview of the role of the president as one that is filled with ambiguity, and that ambiguity is "increased due to the variety of individuals and circumstances claiming influence over what and who the presidency is and how presidential power and authority affects the overall mission of the institution (p. 253). Bornstein's (2003) qualitative research involving a meta-analysis of literature around organizational communication, management, psychology, and sociology, with 13 in-depth interviews from a purposeful sample revealed that the person in the role of the president must deal with five primary factors that are essential to creating legitimacy for their role as president. Bornstein (2003) defined legitimacy as

“the accumulation of trust [that] cannot be mandated or purchased, it must be earned” (p. 19). The five factors include: individual, institutional, environmental, technical, and moral. The individual factors refer to the characteristics that make up the individual’s background, career path, identity characteristics, and how he or she fits with the institution (Bornstein, 2003). The individual factors of the person inhabiting the role of the president are essential for cultivating external relationships that must be built in an effort to secure additional resources needed for the institution (Bornstein, 2003; Weill, 2009). Furthermore, under-represented members coming to the role of president may find it difficult to create relationships externally because members of the dominant culture may challenge their leadership and competency. Those under-represented individuals who have had a successful presidency have proven themselves with a consistent record of success, technical competency, and a strong service ethic (Bornstein, 2003). Presidents representing members of subordinated identities may find that older faculty members closer to retirement and with challenges from unlikely sources are the hurdles for their success and legitimacy. Many of the constituents named above had worked to create the culture of the institution and, thus, may look for candidates to preserve the current culture of the institutions through hierarchy-enhancing behaviors and seek to undermine any new challenges to the culture (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). Bornstein (2003) noted that, once a proven track record has been established within the campus and externally, that notion of an under-represented status may disappear. Fleming’s (2010) research revealed that the president’s approach to establishing and engaging in personal relations to eliminate ill will with stakeholders is critical to the shared governance approach.

Institutional legitimacy is constructed through practices, structures, and habits (Bornstein, 2003). The stakeholders of the institution are closely examining the decisions of the president to look for competence and commitment. During the early stages of the role, the community members are watching to see what priorities are going to be established, who the president's trusted advisors will become, and if those advisors are members of the faculty (Birnbaum, 1992; Bornstein, 2003). Faculty will often seek to understand the president if the president understands the culture of the institution, especially as it relates to shared governance. In essence, the dominant culture is seeking to see if the outsider or new president will understand the dominant culture methods and messages (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). As the presidency continues, members of the community will be seeking to see if governing board members and faculty senate members will support initiatives or block important changes set forth by the president (Bornstein, 2003). Environmental legitimacy is founded in whether the institution can weather the nuance set forth by limited finances and resources. Environmental legitimacy is embedded in the concept of competence and the president's ability to navigate the unpredictable challenges that may limit the daily function and future of the institution (Bornstein, 2003).

Visionary leadership and the appropriate management of academic, fiscal, and external affairs encompass the concept of technical legitimacy (Bornstein, 2003). The president should be able to articulate a vision that embodies the values and traditions of the institution while establishing goals that are understood by all stakeholders and still provide enough flexibility for potential challenges. With technical legitimacy, the president manages complex decisions and relationships that may be disputed by the

faculty and other members of the institution; stakeholders will examine how the president behaves and reacts to any of the challenges that may be faced within this area (Birnbaum, 1992; Bornstein, 2003). Finally, moral legitimacy refers to the ethical behaviors that the president displays and encompasses during his or her time in office (Bornstein, 2003). In this area of the legitimacy, the stakeholders of the institution are examining the president's personal behaviors to ensure they are ethical and not derived from power and prestige. On a professional level, stakeholders want to examine decisions and approaches related to: providing academic decisions managing of finances establishing appropriate relationships with civic engagement during potentially difficult situations and dealing with personnel issues (Birnbaum, 1992; Bornstein, 2003). In this area, communication and strategy-related communication is critical, especially for those from under-represented groups (Orbe, 1998a, 1998b). Fleming's (2010) research noted that how a president utilizes the power and prestige of the office to engage or alienate the faculty in the governance process can be seen as a violation of professional behavior—especially within an educational institution.

Eckel and Hartley (2011), along with the American Council on Education (2012), provide a report that emerged from a summit of distinguished scholars documenting that college presidents in the 21st century face new complex and challenging issues, which include but are not limited to, leading in a more global and diverse society while dealing with diminishing resources. Today's college presidents are being asked to lead in a fast-paced, changing society while working within the slow-changing culture of higher education (Eckle & Hartely, 2011). A new university president must be able to transform how the institution goes about the business and delivery of education.

Search process for the college president. Cook and Kim's (2013) study examined archival data that had been collected via a national survey conducted by the American Council on Education (2012) from 2007 through 2012. King and Gomez's (2008) study analyzed the archival data from 1986 through 2006 on the pathway to the presidency, which was collected as part of a national survey conducted by the American Council on Education. Cook and Kim's data showed in 2013 that a large majority, 64%, of candidates who were hired to become presidents held academic leadership positions, such as department chair, dean, or chief academic officer, before becoming president. In 2012, approximately 44%, up 3% from 2007, of college presidents held the chief academic officer position before becoming president (Cook & Kim, 2013; King & Gomez, 2008). Candidates who were considered non-traditional in their pathway to the presidency came from outside higher education or from a non-academic positions; 23% came from outside higher education, and 16% were non-academic officers (Cook & Kim, 2013).

Senior executives within colleges and universities tend to be more diverse (King & Gomez, 2008). Academic leadership positions within the university tend to be men, with women accounting for 27% for academic deans and 44% for administrative officers (Cook & Kim, 2013). While there have been gains with women moving into academic leadership positions, research confirms that individuals of color have seen a decrease in the number of individuals holding academic leadership positions, and in 2012, only 6% of chief academic officers were individuals of color (Cook & Kim, 2013). Individuals of color comprise 88% of the chief diversity officer positions. Fifty percent of chief academic officers are promoted from within the institution (Cook & Kim, 2013).

Bornstein's research (2003) found that "an individual's particular background and identity characteristics are most significant in the search process and the early stage of presidency" (p. 29). Dowall's (2007) text, written by a career search firm consultant in an effort to provide insights and recommendations to presidential candidates and search committee members, states that "candidates who are in some significant way different from the group that dominates the institution and its leadership face some special challenges in senior [academic] searches" (p. 12). Individuals who are under-represented from the dominant culture, whether they identify as lesbian or gay, as an individual of color, or a woman, are assumed to be as incompetent until proven otherwise (Bornstein, 2003; Moody, 2011).

Rooted in the "exclusionary practices of America's past" (p. 5), dominant group members who serve on search committees may not fully understand that their dominant group status may create a defensiveness stance toward presidential candidates who have characteristics that are outside of the dominant culture of the institution (Kaye, 2006). Kaye's (2006) article provided an overview of the historical and institutional policies and practices of the dominant culture that continues to hamper the recruitment and retention of historically under-represented individuals into the faculty ranks and executive positions. There often is an assumption that members of the search committee will prioritize diversity (Kaye, 2006). A dissonance exists between calling for a diversified candidate pool and a diverse search, and ensuring that diversity is achieved via the search process (Bridges et al., 2008; Kaye, 2006).

Members of the search committee who are of the dominant culture may work to undermine the search process (Kaye, 2006). Many search committee members have

embedded in their unconscious the beliefs and values of the dominant group and the existing group stereotyping, especially since many members of the search committee are from the dominant group (Bridges et al., 2008; Kaye, 2006; Simplicio, 2007). Often members of search committees are not provided with any training that will uncover individual biases related to diversity, and they bring their unchallenged biases to the search process (Kaye, 2006).

If search committee members' perspectives are not embedded in a defensiveness posture, they may be swayed by more senior and politically astute members of the faculty or administration and may not challenge that search committee member for fear of being a target in the future (Simplicio, 2007). Kayes (2006) labeled this behavior as consent and cooperation of the dominant group. Furthermore, groups looking to maintain the dominant culture, like unions and faculty senates, may meet with search committee members to discourage any support of a candidate that is outside of the dominant culture (Simplicio, 2007).

Under represented individuals, such as women and individuals of color, continue to be "under estimated for their potential to lead" (Bridges et al., 2008, p. 5; Simplicio, 2007). Bridges et al. (2008) wrote that "candidates who appear to be most out of line with traditional perceptions draw the greatest scrutiny" (Bridges et al., 2008, p. 12). The research of Bridges et al. (2008) and Moody (2011) revealed that candidates outside the dominant culture of the institution are often scrutinized by having to provide more references, being barraged with more questions around credentials and leadership, and having more members of the search committee visiting candidate's campuses to inquire about accomplishments and leadership style.

Bridges et al. (2008) noted that there is apathy for diversity and institutions may be unable to sustain an ongoing impact. This is especially true for institutions that may have hired a woman or an individual of color who has since left. The overall notion from the institution is “diversity is a one-time commitment that, once accomplished, can be replaced with other priorities” (Bridges et al., 2008, p. 7). Furthermore, contradicting legal decisions, fluid definitions of diversity, and the negative perspectives of affirmative action have led to colleges and universities to pulling back on the commitment to diversity with outside candidates (Bridges et al., 2008). Diversity may be difficult to sustain with institutions that have not committed to building academic programs and co-curricular events that sustain and celebrate the notion of diversity (Bridges et al., 2008).

There is a lack of development for under-represented groups, such as women and individuals of color, within higher education, especially when women and individuals of color do not have the formal level of authority (Bridges et al., 2008; Cook & Kim, 2013). Research has noted that there is a fear of White men providing constructive and negative feedback to under-represented individuals due to potential allegations of racial discrimination (Bridges et al., 2008). While fellowship programs have been established to aid individuals of color with mentorship and training for academic leadership, the reach has been limited (Bridges et al., 2008).

McDade, Dowall, Marchese, and Polonio’s (2010) article explored the role of a search firm within the presidential search process and asserted that search firms hold an essential role in the presidential search process. In 2012, over 60% of the presidential search process occurred with the assistance of a search firm (Cook & Kim, 2013). Search firms can serve as an essential role in the search process. McDade et al. (2010) provided

an overview of the role of the search firm within the process of the presidential search process. Search firms often are secured to aid in the recruitment and credentialing for the presidential candidate pool (McDade et al., 2010). Search firms rely on their vast network of contacts to persuade candidates to consider positions that may fit the profile of the institution or the institution's needs. McDade et al. (2010) further noted that "we [search firms] can help the search committee decide which criticisms to be concerned about" (p. 49). While search committees ask for non-traditional candidates, the search committee tends to become more conservative and risk adverse (McDade et al., 2010). The candidate pool for presidents has expanded to include women, but there currently is a dwindling number of individuals-of-color presidential candidates (Bridges et al., 2008; McDade et al., 2010).

Bridges et al. (2008) noted that search firms are more conservative in their approach to recruiting candidates for the position of president (Bridges et al., 2008). Search firms often move toward candidates who represent a traditional career path within higher education. Search committees are seeking past presidents and proven executives, thus, limiting the candidate pool and not expanding the candidate pool to include leaders outside of the traditional pathway to the presidency (McDade et al., 2010). McDade et al. (2010) noted that past experience and success as an executive leader is an indication that the candidate is more likely to be a success in the new position.

Higher education is microcosm of the larger society, and the leaders within higher education should represent that community (Bridges et al., 2008). With higher education organizations and researchers calling for the diversification of college presidents to better mirror the university community (American Council on Education, 2012; Bridges et al.,

2008; Eckel & Hartley, 2011; White & Eckel, 2008), it is essential to have a better understanding of the population of the lesbian and gay community in an effort to truly identify if gays and lesbians are under-represented within the position of the college president. Currently, the demographic research involving the office of the college president does not include data on lesbian and gay college presidents (American Council on Education, 2012; Bridges et al., 2008; Eckel & Hartley, 2011; White & Eckel, 2008). However, the current membership list of the recently formed LGBTQ President's Organization includes a total of 42 self-identified lesbian and gay presidents who serve at degree-granting institutions (LGBTQpresidents.org, 2012). The National Center for Educational Statistics currently reports that there are 4,495 degree-granting institutions of higher education (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2012). Thus, the current membership list of the LGBTQ Presidents Organization represents less than 1% of the current sitting college presidents.

Chapter Summary

This chapter provided a glimpse of the historical and contemporary struggles of the lesbian and gay community within the United States (Brumbaugh et al., 2008; Brewer, 2003; Davies, 2004; Herek & Glunt, 1993; LaMar & Kite, 1998). Today, approximately 5% of the United States population identifies as lesbian or gay with more than 30% living in committed relationships (Black et al., 2000; Cooke & Rapino, 2007; Herek et al., 2010; Pruitt, 2002). Laws that openly discriminate against lesbians and gays are active in more than half of the states (Human Rights Campaign, 2011a), and the federal government has yet to enact laws that will ultimately protect the lesbian and gay community (Human Rights Campaign, 2011a). While general attitudes about lesbians

and gays have changed over the past 50 years (Brewer, 2003; Brumbaugh et al., 2008; Davies, 2004; Herek & Gant, 1993; LaMar & Kite, 1998), the general population still has negative perceptions about the behaviors of lesbians and gays that are squarely founded in the notion of gender roles and expectations (Brewer, 2003; Brumbaugh et al., 2008; Davies, 2004; Herek & Gant, 1993; LaMar & Kite, 1998; Markowitz et al., 2010).

While the U.S. population has increased its support of civil liberties for lesbians and gays, numerous lesbians and gays continue to deal with negative environments within the workplace and across college and university campuses (Iconis, 2010; Rankin, Weber, Blumenfeld & Frazer, 2010). There continues to be limited out, lesbian and gay leaders, thus, impacting social scientists' ability to study the perspectives of out, lesbian and gay leaders (Coon, 2001; Fassinger, 2008; Fassinger et al., 2010; Hewlett & Sumberg, 2011; Snyder, 2006). The American Council on Education (2012) has called for the office of the college president to be more diverse and, over the past decade, numerous reports have accounted for the fluctuating presence of women and individuals of color in the college presidential position (Bridges et al., 2008; Eckel & Hartley, 2011; White & Eckel, 2008). However, the American Council on Education's (2012) presidential report is silent on the number of lesbian and gay college presidents (Bridges et al., 2008; Cook & Kim, 2013; Eckel & Hartley, 2011; White & Eckel, 2008). By examining the membership list of the LGBTQ Presidents Organization (LGBTQpresidents.org, 2011) and the number of degree-granting institutions of higher education (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2013), there are currently less than 1% of out, lesbians and gays serving as college presidents.

Sidanius and Pratto's (1999) social dominance theory suggests that societal hierarchies are in place to limit the mobility of under-represented groups in an effort to maintain power by the dominant groups. Within each society, there are individuals and groups that work actively to either enhance the hierarchy or challenge the hierarchy structure, thus, creating a tension between the dominant group and subordinated groups (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). The dominant group works on various levels, both overtly and covertly, to create policies, rules, and myths about the subordinate groups in an effort to keep power and access (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). Queer theory suggests that the dominant group has worked and continues to work to create labels and define behaviors that push individuals and groups to the margins (Butler, 2000). Queer theory and social dominance theory both postulate that individuals seeking to cling to labels and identity are overtly active in maintaining the hierarchy of the dominant group (Butler, 2000; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999).

Chapter 3: Research Design Methodology

Introduction

This study examined the lived experience of how out, White gay males who have successfully navigated the college presidential search process. In spite of the growing numbers and the successful diverse coalitions that have been established, gaining access to the higher levels of administration within higher education continues to be difficult (American Council on Education, 2012; Bridges et al., 2008; Eckel & Hartley, 2011; Hamilton, 2004; Kim & Cook, 2013; Waring, 2003). To date, less than 1% of U.S. college and university presidents identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual (American Council on Education, 2012; Kim & Cook, 2013; LGBTQpresidents.org, 2012). Through the method of phenomenological qualitative research, this study examined the lived experience of out, White gay college presidents who have successfully navigated the presidential search process.

General Perspective

With the understanding that members of subordinated groups may have a more challenging time navigating the college and university presidential search process, the study explored what is the lived experience of out, White gay males during the search process (Dowall, 2007; Moody, 2011). For the purposes of this research, the following questions were examined: (a) How does an out, White gay male's past experience shape his approach to the presidential search process? (b) How does an out, White gay male presidential search candidates learn about the search experience? (c) What were the

perceptions of the presidential search process from an out, White gay male candidate during the presidential search process? and (d) How does a successful out, White gay male presidential candidate make a decision on institutional fit?

Members of marginalized groups who are navigating senior administrative searches potentially face challenges that may not be obvious or seen by members of the dominant group (Dowall, 2007). “An individual’s particular background and identity characteristics are most significant in the search process and the early stage of presidency” (Borstein, 2003, p. 29). Lesbians or gay men, individuals of color, or women are assumed to be incompetent until proven otherwise by individuals of the dominant culture (Borstein, 2003; Moody, 2011).

Yin (2011) provides five features of qualitative research:

(1) studying the meaning of people’s lives, under real world conditions; (2) representing the views and perspectives of the people in the study; (3) covering the contextual conditions within which people live; (4) contributing insights into existing or emerging concepts that may help to explain human social behavior; and (5) striving to use multiple sources of evidence rather than relying on a single source alone. (p. 7 & 8)

The phenomenological approach looks to examine what and how individuals perceive a lived experience and focuses on the participants’ perceptions of that lived experience (Creswell, 2007; Heidegger, 1994; Kvale & Brickman, 2009; Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). The narrative feature central to a phenomenological approach ensures that research participants are sharing their stories as they relate to the subject of the study (Kvale & Brickman, 2009). This study focused on capturing the lived

experiences of out, White gay men who have successfully navigated the college presidential search process. The study sought to uncover the career pathway and decision-making process utilized by out, White gay men during the college presidential search process and who have been successful in obtaining a presidential position. Thus, a phenomenological approach was the most effective manner to approach the study.

Positionality. Qualitative researchers must be concerned about their relationship with research participants and the extent to which they position themselves as “insiders and outsiders” (Herr & Anderson, 2005). Horvat (2013) noted that it is critical for the researcher to frame him or her identity relative to the research as both an insider and an outsider. In the case of this study, the researcher can be seen as an insider because of his sexual identity, his position as administrator at an institution of higher education, and his role as partner of a sitting out college president (Herr & Anderson, 2005). The researcher has worked in higher education for more than 20 years and has been an out, gay man for more than 25 years. The “inside” positionality of the researcher may aid in developing an increased connectedness and standpoint with the research participants that may lead to generating greater trust and an increased sharing of information during the semi-structured interview (Herr & Anderson, 2005; Horvat, 2013).

Horvat (2013) also provided an overview as it relates to the “outsider” positionality. With regard to this study, the researcher can also be viewed as an outsider by the participants of the study. The researcher is not a sitting college or university president and has never participated as a candidate within the presidential search process. Furthermore, the researcher has never participated as a candidate within a tenured faculty search. Because of these factors, the researcher must be aware of the discomfort

participants might have in being fully open about their personal experiences with navigating the search process for college presidents.

Research Context

In 2010, through the Council on Education, a group of out, lesbian and gay college and university presidents created the LGBTQ Presidents' Organization (Chicago Tribune, 2010; LGBTQpresidents.org, 2012; Masterson, 2011;). The mission of the organization, as stated on their website, aims to “advance effective leadership in the realm of post-secondary education, support professional development of LGBTQ leaders in that sector, and provide education and advocacy regarding LGBTQ issues within the global academy and for the public at large” (LGBTQpresidents.org, 2012). Today, the number of out, lesbian and gay members of the LGBTQ Presidents' Organization is 42. Members of the LGBTQ President's Organization mailing list comprised out, lesbian and gay college and university presidents who know of the existence and mission of the group and joined voluntarily (LGBTQpresidents.org, 2012). Members of the group lead a variety of institutions of higher education, which include but may not be limited to, community colleges, four-year degree-granting schools, and specialized schools such as graduate schools, professional schools, and academic experience programs. The members of this group lead private and publically funded institutions. Within this group, members lead institutional size ranges from student enrollment of 300 to 10,000. Members of the group are college and university presidents that hale from institutions around the United States and around the world. For this study, the research was conducted on a national scale.

Research Participants

Through the process of purposeful selection, this study focused on LGBTQ members who are current sitting out, White male college presidents. Purposeful samples are chosen to examine a “particular setting, persons . . . for the important information they can provide that cannot be gotten as well from other choices” and the participants were deliberately selected (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008; Teddlie & Yu, 2007; Yin, 2011). Patton (1990) affirmed that a purposeful sample can provide an information-rich population that can provide insight and experiences that are central to the research topic. For the purposes of this study, a criterion sampling was utilized. Patton (1990) described criterion sampling as a method where all proposed and selected participants meet predetermined criteria central to the study. For this study, the criteria for the study included the following: the participant must have been out during the presidential search process; the participant is a current sitting college president; and the participant is the president of a U.S.-based degree-granting institution of higher education.

A letter was sent to the co-chairs of the LGBTQ Presidents’ Organization requesting a copy of the membership list. Once the list of members was received, the researcher communicated via email with one of the co-chairs of the LGBTQ Presidents’ Organization to discuss the demographics of the members. The group includes 42 members, 22 who identify as White males (Middleton, 2013). Three of those White males are leading institutions of higher education in foreign countries. Three of the remaining White males are past presidents who are either retired or serving in another administrative role at an institution of higher education (Middleton, 2013). The

remaining 16 White males are presidents at community colleges, four-year institutions, and professional schools.

A letter of invitation via email was sent to all 16 proposed participants who met the criteria of the study (Appendix A). The proposed participants were provided 10 business days to reply to the emailed invitation. Of the 16 proposed participants, 10 responded in the affirmative that they would participate in the study. One of the 16 proposed participants had stepped down from his position weeks before the invitation; thus, he did not meet the criteria of the study. Two of the proposed participants declined to be part of the study. Three proposed participants who were sent the invitation did not respond. Several attempts were made via email to reach out to the three proposed participants who had not responded to the initial invitation, but no reply to the invitation was ever received. Overall, more than 60% of the proposed research participants agreed to be a participant in the study.

The researcher made deliberate choices about locations when conducting a qualitative research study (Yin, 2011). In the original proposal, a decision was made to conduct the interviews in the offices of the proposed research participants. However, due to the national focus of the proposed research, scheduling face-to-face interviews became unrealistic. As a result, some interviews were conducted via telephone. Criteria for conducting telephone interviews were created. The first criterion of geographical location of the proposed participant was created. If a proposed participant was located in the West or Northwest and agreed to be a participant in the study, a telephone interview would be conducted. The second criterion for conducting a telephone interview was established based on the potential time constraints of the participants' calendars and

availability. If the participants' calendar commitments would not permit in-person interviews, a telephone interview would be conducted.

Participants agreeing to be interviewed were sent an email to arrange a time and date for the interview. Before interviews were conducted, the participants were emailed and asked to complete an informed consent form (Appendix B). All of the participants completed and emailed back their completed consent form before the interviews commenced.

With the 10 participants who agreed to be part of the study, five interviews were conducted in person and included participants located in the Midwest and Northeast. Of the five interviews that were conducted via telephone, two participants were located in the West, and one was located in the Northwest in accordance with the location criterion for telephone interviews. The remaining two, who were interviewed via the telephone, were located in the Midwest and Northeast; both had replied with scheduling constraints and met the second criterion laid out for proposed telephone interviews

Semi-structured interviews can provide a roadmap for the interviewee and ensure that critical questions and concepts are explored during the interview process (Willis, 2007). Semi-structured interviews permit the participants to contribute more of a narrative and an account for themes and information than might not have surfaced during the literature review (Willis, 2007). Holstein and Gubrium's (2011) described the use of interviews in exploring an individual's experience of maneuvering through institutional rules and hierarchies. Through the use of semi-structured interviews, the research participants are provided with a time to share their experiences and narratives. Within

the narratives, the participants can describe their feelings, perceptions, especially as it relates to their potential status within a hierarchy (Holstein & Gubrium, 2011).

Within a qualitative phenomenological research study, the aim is to study the lived experience of the participants through their narrative and interpretation of the events (Creswell, 2007; Heidegger, 1994; Stake, 2010; Yin, 2011). Smith et al. (2009) wrote that phenomenological studies are better suited for a small number of participants. For this study, a total of 10 interviews were conducted.

In an effort to protect participants' identities and to ensure anonymity, all study participants were coded with a letter of the alphabet. All digital information related to the research participants has been stored within encrypted files and stored on a password-protected personal laptop of the researcher. All paper documents related to the research participants are stored in a locked filing cabinet located at the researcher's home office.

Instruments Used in Data Collection

Open-ended, semi-structured interview questions were used to interview the participants (Appendix C). The semi-structured questions were created to elicit responses around the research questions of the study:

1. How does an out, White gay male's past experience shape his approach to the presidential search process?
2. How does an out, White gay male presidential search candidate learn about the search experience?
3. What were the perceptions of the presidential search process from an out, White gay male candidate during the presidential search process?

4. How does a successful out, White out gay male presidential candidate make a decision on institutional fit?

The research questions and proposed semi-structured questions were composed as a result of the themes and issues that were discussed by a panel of out LGBTQ Presidents that presented at the 94th Annual Meeting for the American Council on Education in Los Angeles, California. During the presentation, panel members spoke about the experiences related to the search process, which included but were not limited to, campus visits, proposed spousal visits, governing board members' reactions, alumni and business leaders' interactions, and search firm discussions (McCabe, Crossman, Stranley & Drugovich, 2012).

Furthermore, the questions were designed from the theoretical framework within the study. The questions were constructed to elicit responses from participants in an effort to gain an understanding of the lived experience of members of a marginalized group within a process that is constructed by members of the dominant culture (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). Dowall (2007) and Bornstein (2003) found that college presidential candidates who have identities outside of the institution's dominant culture may find the search process arduous. The questions were constructed to capture the perception of out, White gay men who were successful in navigating a process designed to support the heteronormative experience (Butler, 1990, 2004). Lastly, Orbe (1998a, 1998b) wrote that marginalized group members strategically have to choose how they will communicate with members of the dominant group when entering into conversations and communication exchanges. The questions were constructed to capture those experiences during the search process.

A panel of experts was convened to review the semi-structured interview questions that were used for the research participants. The panel was utilized to account for validity, especially as it related to the semi-structured interview questions (Cresswell, 2007; Kvale & Brickman, 2009). To ensure that the “method investigates what it purports to investigate” (Kvale & Brickman, 2009, p. 246) members of the panel were referred to the researcher by members of the LGBTQ Presidents’ Organization. The panel of experts consisted of three out, White gay males who had experience in the role of a college president. Two of the panel members were past presidents, and one panel member was a current, sitting president. Each member was sent an email inviting them to serve as a panel member, and the email included an overview of the study and the proposed questions for the study. All three panel members provided feedback on the organization and construction of the proposed questions. Several changes were made to the proposed questions as a result of the feedback received from the panel members. The panel members further suggested that input from qualitative experts be sought for further validation.

With that feedback, a second panel of qualitative experts was convened. Members for the second panel of experts were selected because of their expertise in qualitative research methodology. All three members of the second panel are tenured professors within a nationally ranked research university located in an urban area on the East coast. Individual meetings occurred with each of the second panel members. During the meetings, the updated questions were reviewed, methodology was explored, and the current literature around the research topic was discussed. With the feedback from the second panel of experts, the proposed questions were updated, once again, to

account for the feedback received from both panels. The current list of proposed semi-structured interview questions (Appendix C) was shared with members of both panels.

The HT Recorder for the iPad was utilized during the interviews to capture the participants' responses verbatim. In addition, hand notes were taken during each interview so that the researcher could capture concepts and perspectives while listening to the participants' responses. Hand notes were also taken so that the researcher could provide follow-on questions in an effort to garner further insight or to dig deeper into the participants' responses to the open-ended questions.

All proposed and selected participants were coded with a letter of the alphabet to ensure anonymity. Participants' consent forms were stored in an unmarked file and within a locked filing cabinet in the researcher's home office. All digital files, including recordings and handwritten notes, were stored via an encrypted file on a locked personal lap top computer of the researcher. All paper documents associated with the research were stored in an unmarked file and kept in a locked filing cabinet in the researcher's home office. All information coded with a letter of the alphabet were stored separately from any personal information associated with the proposed and selected participants. A third party transcriber was employed to transcribe the digital recordings into Microsoft Word documents. The third-party transcriber completed and submitted a confidentiality agreement before any digital files were delivered to the transcriber. Once the transcribed files were received from the third party, a review of the transcribed files was conducted by the researcher to ensure accuracy. Proposed participants' or selected participants' names or identifying information will never be published in any work based on this study.

Procedures for Data Collection and Analysis

The process of making sense of the data with phenomenological research requires that the research provides a description of the phenomenon by interpreting the meaning of the narratives that were collected during the interview process (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). Yin (2011) provided a structure for approaching the analysis of the interviews. The process for analyzing data contains five stages that include compiling data, disassembling data, reassembling data, interpreting data, and concluding (Yin, 2011). Compiling data refers to organizing the text from the interviews into a database or data book. Creating the database or data book is the process of making sense of the data and becoming comfortable with the data. The data book is created from listening to the saved interviews, reading the transcripts of the interview, and examining the handwritten notes (Creswell, 2007). Chase (2011) suggested that data book construction should begin with documenting the interviewees' voices and statements (Chase, 2011). In examining the data, patterns and themes should begin to emerge. In this first stage, themes include: use of specific language; shorter statements with similar meanings; and longer narratives that provide insight to complex issues. The focus is on looking for commonalities across all of the interviews (Yin, 2011). The commonalities are then coded; some are coded "in vivo codes" or exact words from the participant(s) (Creswell, 2007; Chase, 2011; Yin 2011).

For this study, a code book was created via a Word document. The researcher listened to each recorded interview, reviewed the transcripts of the interviews, and reviewed the handwritten notes from each interview. After reviewing the recorded interviews, transcriptions and hand written notes, an initial list of codes was created

(Appendix D). The initial codes were created as Yin's (2011) research described. Codes were created using statements from the responses from the participants; using both shorter and longer statements. There were a total of 69 original codes.

In the disassemble stage, re-examining the written transcripts, re-listening to the taped interviews, and re-assessing the field notes is critical (Yin, 2011). During this stage, conceptual frameworks are created and initial data coding may be altered to provide for various insights. This stage is often long and complex in nature (Yin, 2011). In the third stage, reassemble, the data book is placed into phase hierarchies where concepts are supported with the specific data and patterns. Hierarchies are established due relationships that exist within the coding. For this study, initial codes created during the first stage of the code were re-examined, along with the recordings of the interviews, the transcripts of the interviews, and the handwritten notes. The initial codes were updated, once again, to account for any codes that were missing from the first stage. After the initial codes were updated, initial themes were created from respondents' overlapping and common responses. Also during this phase, a theoretical lens was used to sort overlapping themes into a larger pattern of responses. An initial set of 12 themes and 35 sub-themes were identified within the study. The hierarchy of themes was ranked based on the number of times that the respondents spoke to the issue during their responses to the open-ended questions.

In the final two stages, interpretation and conclusion, Yin (2011) wrote that broader and more complex themes should have arisen during the first three stages and that the last two phases are centered on giving meaning to the data in concert with the literature review. This study incorporated the last two stages into major findings. After

several re-examinations of the initial set of themes, several areas were collapsed into others to account for a broader conversation. In the end, a total of nine themes and 25 sub-themes were identified (Table 3.1).

Table 3.1

Themes and Sub-Themes

Themes	Sub-Themes
Career Path	1. Tenured Faculty 2. Previous Position Before Role of President 3. Non-Traditional
Presidential Aspirations	4. Life-long Dream 5. Experience with Other Presidents 6. Experience in Other Roles
Learning to Navigate a Heteronormative Environment	7. Gradually Coming Out 8. Completely Out 9. Effects of Being Out 10. Location
Avenues of Learning	11. Attending Institute 12. Mentor 13. Learned on My Own
Sharing Stories	14. Negative Stories from LGBT Colleagues 15. Information Shared from Past Search Experience
Increased Acceptance	16. Changing National Environment for LGBT People
Strategic Communication	17. Coming Out During the Search 18. Direct Conversation with Board About Being Gay 19. An Issue of Integrity 20. Hearing from LGBT Board Members
Relationship Status During Search	21. Partnered 22. Single
Institutional Fit	23. Access to Education 24. Commitment to Social Justice 25. Skill Set Match

Summary

This chapter provided the methodology of how the study was conducted. The methodology utilized was a qualitative, phenomenological approach. The study took place on a national level and consisted of selected participants being invited to engage in semi-structured interviews. The semi-structured interview questions were created via the literature review and the theoretical framework discussed in Chapters 1 and 2. The semi-structured questions were vetted by two separate panels of experts. Membership of one panel consisted of past and current presidents who fit the criteria of the study. The membership of the second panel consisted of qualitative research design experts. The questions were designed to capture the lived experiences of the research participants.

The participants were chosen from the LGBTQ Presidents' Organization membership list. A purposeful sample was selected utilizing the following criteria: the participant must have been out during the presidential search process; the participant is a current sitting college president; and the participant is the president of U.S.-based degree-granting institution of higher education. For this study, criteria were established for determining whether an interview with the participants would take place in person or via the telephone. The selected participants were invited to participate in the study via email. Once participants agreed to be a part of the study, they completed an informed-consent document and returned the document via email.

All semi-structured interviews were digitally recorded, transcribed, coded, and analyzed. An exploration of the data collected for the study is provided in Chapter 4.

Chapter 4: Results

Research Questions

This purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to study the lived experience of how out, White gay males have successfully navigated the college presidential search process. The participants were asked a series of semi-structured questions that were created to elicit responses that would answer four research questions. The semi-structured questions were developed from the theoretical framework of social dominance theory (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999), queer theory (Abes & Kasch, 2007; Butler 1990, 2004; Kirch, 2000) and co-cultural communication theory (Orbe 1998a, 1998b).

Research question #1. *How does an out, White gay male's past experience shape his approach to the presidential search process?* Three factors spoke to the past experiences of the participants: past positions within their career trajectory that provided skill set development; past experiences in working and living in a heteronormative environment as a gay man; and the past experience of being out as a means to demonstrate his integrity and character. For the participants, the various roles held during their careers provided them with the needed skill set to be a viable candidate within a presidential search. As for living in a heteronormative environment, participants spoke to how they learned to navigate the heteronormative environment in and out of the work environment. Being out at work and during the search process was essential in providing the dominant culture with an insight into the participants' integrity and character.

Research question #2. *How does an out, White gay male presidential search candidate learn about the search process?* Participants spoke about the factors of mentoring and networking as means to learning about the presidential search process. While a small number of the participants attended formalized institutes to learn about the search process, a majority of the participants spoke about having a mentor to help and guide them through their career and the search process. While the mentor may not have been gay, the mentor provided insight and counsel on the search process. Participants also spoke to the need to network and learn from other colleagues during the search process.

Research question #3. *What were the perceptions of the presidential search process from an out, White gay male candidate during the presidential search process?* The participants spoke about the process of being embedded in a heteronormative environment and that they had to choose to strategically utilize various communication approaches when communicating with the dominant culture in an effort to assess if the heteronormative environment would be affirming. Participants believed that the process and the individuals who implemented the process were more likely to be operative from a heteronormative perspective with language and approaches. Participants also explained that they had to make an effort to strategically come out to the dominant culture and chose to do so with an educational approach.

Research question #4. *How does a successful out, White gay male presidential candidate make a decision on institutional fit?* In deciding on institutional fit, gay men sought to find an appropriate match between their skill set and the needs of the institution. Participants looked for a match between their values and the values and

mission of the institutions. Participants also sought out institutions that were in more affirming locations. For this study, that meant urban locations.

Data Analysis and Findings

In an effort to capture the lived experiences of the participants, semi-structured interviews were conducted. In all, 10 interviews were conducted with participants located in seven different states. Before providing an analysis of the data and the findings, a biographical overview of the participants is provided.

Descriptive analysis. Biographical overviews for each participant were provided in an effort to provide an introduction to the lived experience or the story of the participants that partook in the study (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). To construct the biographical overviews, the researcher used the recording and notes that were taken during the participants' interviews. Tables 4.1 through 4.6 provide an overview of the research participants' institutions and years of experience within the role of president.

Following the biographical overviews, this chapter provides an overview of the analysis of the data, the findings related to specific research questions, and a summary of the study results.

The participants in the study were from around the nation and provided an array of experiences within higher education and beyond. Table 4.1 provides an overview of participants' institutional location, size, and funding and the participants' years in the role of president. The regional location of the research participants and their respective institutions included three from the Northeast, three from the Midwest, three from the West, and one from the Northwest. Beyond the regional locations, nine of the 10 research participants described their institution's location as urban, and one described the

location as rural. Institutional size was varied. Five participants led small institutions, three led mid-sized institutions, and two led large institutions (Carnegie Foundation, 2014). Institutional funding was split evenly; five presidents led publicly funded institutions and five presidents led privately funded institutions. Research participants varied in years of experience in the role of president with five of the participants having more than five years in the role and five having fewer than five years.

Table 4.1

Overview of Research Participants

Participant	Regional Location	Urban/ Suburban/ Rural	Institution Size	Institutional Funding	Years in Role of President
President A	Northeast	Urban	Large	Public	>5 years
President B	Northwest	Urban	Mid-size	Public	<5 years
President C	West	Urban	Small	Private	<5 years
President D	Northeast	Urban	Small	Private	<5 years
President E	Midwest	Urban	Mid-size	Public	<5 years
President F	West	Urban	Large	Public	>5 years
President G	Northeast	Rural	Small	Public	>5 years
President H	Midwest	Urban	Small	Private	<5 years
President I	Midwest	Urban	Mid-size	Private	<5 years
President J	Northeast	Urban	Small	Private	<5 years

The ages of the participants ranged from the mid-40s to the early 70s, with seven of the 10 of the participants in the 40 to 55 age bracket and three in the age bracket of 56 and older, as shown in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2

Age of Research Participants

Age	40–55	56 and older
# of Participants	7	3

With regard to terminal degrees earned, Table 4.3 demonstrates that five of the 10 participants have earned a Ph.D., four have earned an Ed.D., and one participant has earned a degree in professional training.

Table 4.3

Terminal Degrees Earned by Research Participant

Degree Earned	Ed.D.	Ph.D.	Other
# of Participants	4	5	1

Tables 4.4 and 4.5 provide more detailed overviews of the current institution led by the research participants. Community colleges were led by three of the participants, four-year, doctoral degree-granting institutions were led by four of the participants, and specialized schools were led by three of the participants. Within the specialized schools, one third, or one participant, led a graduate school. Student enrollment directly relates to institutional size. Institutions with student enrollment of 3,000 or fewer were led by five of the 10 participants; institutions with student enrollment of 3,000 to 9,999 were led by three participants; and institutions with student enrollment exceeding 10,000 were led by two of the participants.

Table 4.4

Type of Institution

Institution	Community College	Four-Year	Specialized School
# of Participants	3	4	3

Table 4.5

Student Enrollment at Current Institution

Student Enrollment	10,000 or more	3,000 to 9,999	100 to 2,999
# of Participants	2	3	5

A little more than half of the participants, six out of 10, indicated that the search that resulted in their current appointment was led by a search firm (Table 4.6). Of those involved in search-firm-led searches, one participant was serving in an interim president position before the search commenced, and he was part of the search-firm-led process that led to his permanent appointment. The other participants were part of searches that were led by the institution. Less than half, four out of 10, participated in searches that were led by the institution. All of the participants in the institutional-led searches learned during the search that the institution had some fiscal limitations that forced it to engage in hiring a search firm.

Table 4.6

Method of Search

Method	Search Firm	Institution
# of Participants	6	4

President A. President A is in the third presidency of his career. He held presidencies in the South, Northwest, and Northeast. President A entered into higher education from the corporate world, and his first role within higher education was that of a vice president. As for his first presidency in the South, he stated,

I had a reputation in the [state], and I knew a lot of people. So when they took a chance on me and gave me my first presidency, this small rural community college, it was a first in many ways, but it wouldn't have worked real well, because it was [a southern state], and it's still sort of the Bible belt, and if I wasn't known and respected, I know I wouldn't have gotten that position.

When asked when he came out, President A explained that, "I officially came out in [the late 2000s], I think many people would say, those that I worked with or worked for have said that they knew I was, but since I didn't talk about it they didn't know." When moving to the Northwest, he stated, "You know I'm not hiding this anymore and so if people want to accept me that's great. Now it was [the Northwest]; it's just the way it is, people accept everybody for who they are, so it wasn't that big of a deal." He is currently the president at a large Northeast urban community college. He lives off campus and has been with his partner for more than 30 years. He was partnered when going through the search process for his current position.

President B. President B is in the first presidency of his career. His career in higher education has followed a traditional pathway from assistant professor to dean to provost to president—all at four-year public doctoral-degree-granting institutions. He worked at several institutions in the Northeast before moving to the Northwest. President B stated that he was, “. . . out in graduate school. I was not out in my initial search for a faculty position.” He came out to a mentor in his first faculty position.

That was really the first coming-out moment ,and then I was pretty much out from that point on, because I had no reservations in disclosing that, and I was just sort of getting into the community, so it just sort of came out across campus in that way at that moment.

He is currently leading an urban public four-year graduate-degree-granting institution in the Northwest. He lives off campus and has been with his partner for more than 14 years. He was partnered when going through the search process.

President C. President C is in his second institutional leadership position. He worked in the private sector after graduate school and moved into higher education via a faculty position. Within higher education, President C has navigated his way from a faculty position to dean to the chief executive officer. President C has been out since graduate school. “I was a teaching assistant, ran a residence hall, and was a graduate student advisor for programming. So, I started out pretty much as out and so that essentially continued throughout my journey.” Currently, he is a president of urban, private four-year graduate-degree-granting institution in the West. He lives off campus with a partner of five years.

President D. President D is in his first presidency. He worked in a specialized school within higher education on both the West and East coasts. He began working in higher education as an entry-level staff member and was promoted to various leadership positions within student services and enrollment services. Before completing his doctorate in the Midwest, he moved into an academic leadership position within a private Midwest four-year degree-granting institution. After several years at the Midwest institution, he was promoted into the provost position. President D stated that he

came out in college and, ever since then, I have been out. I was out from the very first job that I had . . . being out in [a West-coast urban setting] was not a difficult thing to do—thank goodness—but I would have been out anyway because, at that time, it was who I am, and I was not ever going back in the closet.

President D currently leads an urban, private specialized school that grants undergraduate and graduate degrees and is located in the Northeast. He and his partner of 17 years both live on campus. President D was partnered when going through the search process.

President E. President E is in his first presidency. He began his career in an entry-level staff position at a large four-year public doctoral-degree-granting institution on the West coast and then moved to an urban area in the Northeast where he accepted a staff position at a public agency. After obtaining his graduate degree in the Northeast, President E moved back to the West where he entered back into higher education and moved through various staff positions at a large public, urban four-year graduate-degree-granting institution and was awarded tenure as a faculty member. President E was then awarded a fellowship in the president's office where he assumed various administrative positions and found himself moving back and forth between academic leadership

positions and numerous roles within the president's office. After a few years, he moved into a dean's position at a new institution at an urban public four-year graduate-degree-granting institution in the West. From his dean's position, he moved to the Midwest where he served as provost at a mid-sized public doctoral-degree-granting institution. When asked when he came out, he described that,

when I was younger, I might talk about it to other people at work, about romantic interests . . . there was a bunch of us who were young and, you know, talking about people we were dating and things like that.

He continued to describe that people at work.

We would be talking about whatever political hot topics were going on at the time . . . there were quite a lot of gay people at [the institutions where I worked], so we would see each other in various places then, of course, people were starting to get sick from AIDS and there was the whole politics about HIV and AIDS.

Currently, President E leads a Midwest urban, public four-year doctoral-degree-granting institution. During his search process, he was single, and he currently lives off campus.

President F. President F is in his second presidency. After he received his undergraduate degree, he began working for a large federal agency. He entered a career in higher education while earning his Master's degree. In the beginning of President F's higher education career, he worked mostly in student services and enrollment services at publically funded urban institutions located in the West and continued to move back and forth between urban community colleges and urban four-year public doctoral-degree-granting institutions. He was appointed vice president of specialized school that awards Master's degrees in the urban Northwest. President F has had various vice presidential

positions in the West and Northwest, all at urban institutions, before being appointed to his first presidency at an urban, four-year public doctoral-degree-granting institution in the West. When asked about coming out, he responded that,

I went back to graduate school to work, at first, for my Master's degree to get back into higher ed. I made a conscience decision at that time that I would be out. My co-workers knew I was gay, and so it was a matter of just living with integrity as far as not feeling like I had to be in the closet to now navigate my professional career.

President F leads a large urban community college in the West. He was partnered during his last presidential search and lives off campus.

President G. President G is in his first presidency. Before his higher education career, President G worked for an international organization where he conducted research and advised elected and appointed policymakers on the intersection of labor, higher education, and policies. He has worked in over 70 countries where he has worked closely with university presidents, ministers of education, and other educational administrators. A portion of his research has been focused on secondary education. Beyond research, President G also has also taught internationally on at least three continents. When asked about coming out, he responded,

Post-university work, I have always been out . . . I came out in [the late 1970s] when I was [a teenager]. It was a time before HIV or before we knew about HIV. It was a different world back then, and it was, I suppose, it was kind of daring to do it at that age. But then, as far as the work environment, I've always been out at

work, at home, and in school. I've never been in the closet as an adult really; I just haven't been.

President G was appointed president from outside of higher education. President G currently leads a small rural community college in the Northeast. He was single when conducting his presidential search and lives off campus.

President H. President H is in his first presidency. He began his career in higher education as a student volunteer on a student helpline and continued to take on other leadership roles. He entered a traditional graduate program, and during that program, he would often seek out opportunities to volunteer his professional skills to clients in a Southeast urban location. He later became a faculty member at a specialized graduate school in the Southeast, where he also led a publicly funded, county-based agency. President H has continued his path as a faculty member at specialized graduate schools. He has worked in the Southeast, the West, and the Midwest. He led a small independent school in the West before he was appointed president at his current institution. When asked about being out, he responded,

I was out a graduate student. I experienced some real homophobia as a graduate student. I had many good experiences, too, but there was a faculty argument over me where there was a faction of the faculty that thought that I should be turned out because I was queer.

He is currently the president of an urban specialized graduate institution located in the Midwest with an international campus. He was partnered when conducting his search and lives off campus.

President I. President I described his career path as “super traditional.” He obtained his undergraduate degree with the goal of entering into a business career; however, he soon discovered a passion for the humanities. His undergraduate passion led him to his graduate work and then on to a new tenure-track faculty position in the West at a large land-grant, four-year doctoral-degree-granting institution. As an assistant professor without tenure, he was asked to become a program director. He was tenured at that institution and was promoted, through several years, to associate and full professor. He was then asked to be an assistant and associate dean. After years as the associate dean, he was promoted to an acting dean position and then was eventually appointed as the dean. After serving several years as dean, he applied to become the chancellor at the same institution but was not offered the position because he was gay. With one year on his dean’s contract, he searched for a provost position and was appointed provost at a rural ,four-year public doctoral-degree-granting institution in the Midwest and then on to system-wide academic leadership position at a large urban, four-year public doctoral-degree-granting institution in the Mid-Atlantic region. After a few years at the Mid-Atlantic institution, an opportunity to apply to a presidential position was presented to him via a search firm associate. The search firm associate encouraged him to apply. When asked when he came out, he explained that during his the years earning his tenure, he was married and with children. He stated, “I came out gradually, first to people in gay spaces.” He went on to explain that his partner, a professor at the university, helped him to come out to his staff and others.

So I just gradually came out, just suddenly I was out. I lived my years out, how do I say this . . . I’m using the word “lived” to mean active verb meaning you live

a timeline. I lived myself out, you know, because circumstances made it possible.”

President I is currently in his first presidency at an urban, private four-year degree-granting institution in the Midwest. During his presidential search, he was partnered. He and his partner have been together for more than 30 years, and they live off campus.

President J. President J is in his first presidency. He obtained his degree from a large urban, private four-year doctoral-degree-granting institution in the Northeast. His career started outside of higher education where he began his career working with large fine arts venues in the urban Northeast. By pursuing professional opportunities and networking, he found a mentor who provided counsel on how to learn about and apply his technical skills in his chosen field. With that advice, he relocated to a rural Northeast location where he worked for the summer. The connections he made during that summer led to an opportunity to work for a renowned venue and organization in another urban location in the Northeast.

After many years and various positions with this organization, he finally was appointed to a leadership position within the organization. After several years, the organization had gone through tough transitions, and as he began thinking about his next career move, he was approached by a board member from an institution of higher education and encouraged to apply for the presidential position. When asked when he came out, he replied,

I was [mid-20s] when I came out. I was studying at college when Stonewall happened. I was aware of what was going on, and I knew that I was gay but had

not come out, and then in that following year the world came out, I mean it was phenomenal.”

He continued, “Interestingly, when I moved to [an urban Northeast location], I realized it was still somewhat of an issue . . . the [organization] was pretty reserved, button down.”

President J leads an urban, private specialized school that grants undergraduate and graduate degrees and is located in the Northeast. He was single during his presidential search and currently lives off campus.

Cross analysis of participant interviews. Upon the completion of the interviews, all of the data was cross referenced, and it was determined that there were nine themes with 25 sub-themes that were collapsed down from 69 original codes (Appendix D). The themes and sub-themes were created in an effort to tell the stories of the participants of the study. The nine themes included (a) career path, (b) presidential aspirations, (c) learning to navigate a heteronormative environment, (d) avenues of learning, (e) sharing stories, (f) increased acceptance, (g) strategic communication, (h) relationship status during the search process, and (i) institutional fit. Table 4.7 provides an overview of the themes and sub-themes.

Table 4.7

Frequency of Sub-Themes in Participant Interviews

Themes	Sub-Themes	% of Participants Who Discussed Sub-Theme
Career Path	1. Tenured Faculty	60
	2. Previous Position Before Role of President	100
	3. Non-Traditional	70
Presidential Aspirations	4. Lifelong Dream	10
	5. Experience with Other Presidents	40
	6. Experience in Other Roles	70
Learning to Navigate in a Heteronormative Environment	7. Gradually Coming Out	20
	8. Completely Out	80
	9. Effects of Being Out	70
	10. Location	60
Avenues of Learning	11. Attending Institute	30
	12. Mentor	60
	13. Learned on My Own	30
Sharing Stories	14. Negative Stories from LGBT Colleagues	70
	15. Information Shared from Past Search Experience	40
Increased Acceptance	16. Changing National Environment for LGBT People	70
Strategic Communication	17. Coming Out During the Search	90
	18. Direct Conversation with Board About Being Gay	100
	19. An Issue of Integrity	90
	20. Hearing from LGBT Board Members	30
Relationship Status During Search	21. Partnered	50
	22. Single	50
Institutional Fit	23. Access to Education	70
	24. Commitment to Social Justice	80
	25. Skill Set Match	100

Theme I: Career path. Seven of the participants described their career paths as having roots in higher education. With those having career beginnings within higher education, three of those participants had careers that progressed through the faculty ranks from assistant professor. The other participants with higher education careers began their careers as staff members and then progressed through the administrative ranks. Three the study participants came to higher education directly from outside of higher education to an administrative role prior, or directly, to the role of president.

Sub-Theme I: Faculty. Of the participants, six out of 10 became tenured faculty members during their career in higher education before being appointed president (Table 4.8). Six of those earning faculty tenure did so through faculty appointments, and three of those with tenure before their presidential appointment, earned tenure in conjunction with an administrative appointment. The other four out of the 10 participants who were appointed to presidential positions did not have tenure because their administrative positions within higher education did not provide a tenure option, or the participants were appointed to the role of president from outside of higher education.

Table 4.8

Tenured Faculty Before Presidential Appointment

Faculty Rank before Role of President	Tenured Faculty	Other
# of Participants	6	4

Sub-Theme II: Previous position before role of president. Before being appointed to the role of president, six of the participants in the study served in provost or chief executive officer positions at other institutions of higher education as shown in

Table 4.9. Of those who had served in the role of provost before their appointment to president, all but one had also served in the role of dean for a school or academic division.

President D stated,

Being dean was the best job I ever had before this one. Being provost was one of the most important jobs I ever did before. Well of them were, but it [being provost] really prepared me, and it got me into Boards and things like that, so I got to see things that I would never have gotten to see if I had just remained a dean.

Those serving in chief executive positions had worked at institutions that might be considered specialized schools, and the traditional role of provost might not have existed. Administrative vice presidential positions were held by two of the research participants before they were appointed president. The remaining two of the participants were appointed to the role of president from careers outside of higher education. Of those appointed from outside of higher education, one participant had extensive experience with higher education.

Table 4.9

Previous Position Before Presidential Appointment

Position Held before Presidential Role	Provost/CEO	Vice President	Outside of Higher Education
# of Participants	5	2	2

Of the participants in the study, four out of 10 had the opportunity to serve at more than one institution as president or chief executive officer (Table 4.10). Two

participants, now serving as president or chief executive officers at two or more institutions, have been chief executive officers at specialized schools. President H explained,

[I]was recruited [to] take over a small independent school in [a Western state] . . . Well very surprising to me, I really enjoyed doing this type of work, being in this type of role. So that changed my career path; I probably would have stayed a practitioner and faculty member.

One of the participants served in an interim capacity in the chief executive position before being permanently appointed. A majority of the participants, six, have served in the role of president at one institution. As for future career plans in seeking other presidential positions, two of the participants indicated that they would like to continue to lead their institution, if the Board will support them, until retirement.

Table 4.10

Number of Presidencies During Career

# of Presidencies	1	2–3
# of Participants	6	4

Sub-Theme III: Non-traditional. The concept of non-traditional career pathways was referred to by seven out of the 10 participants. When asked about the meaning of non-traditional career paths, all of the participants who labeled themselves as having a non-traditional career paths explained that they had not sought a career in the faculty ranks. Four of the participants began their careers in higher education as a staff member in areas ranging from student services to academic support areas.

President D explained,

Started working at [institution's name] as a secretary for four months, and then I became an assistant director of admissions and then director of career planning and then became dean admissions and alumni and then became dean of enrollment and alumni. During my last two years here, I started my doctorate [institution's name] where during the traditional year via distance and during the summer I was there.

President F provided his account,

I've had a lot positions, so I started off at the university in housing, and I was in residence life, and after three years of doing that, I went over to [institutional name] to be director of student development . . . the last vice presidency that I had had enough things that I was involved in that gave me the credits, if you will, on the instructional side. I had instructional pieces within my world, so I eventually applied for a presidency. I think it gave me a little broader credibility and not just in the student services.

President E moved back into higher education after he moved to the East coast urban location to accept a position in a large public agency. He explained,

I was a professional librarian, and I came back to [institution's name], and I came back to take a job as a librarian. In the [institutional system name], librarians are not faculty, they're academic staff. After a few years, I moved to another institution, [institutional name], and the librarians there are faculty, we were part of the faculty senate, we taught either library-related subjects, or if we were qualified and able to teach other subjects.

One participant, President A, began his career in the corporate world and made his transition into higher education via an administrative vice presidential position. President A explained, “It was non-traditional, and so I was in the corporate setting first, and then I joined academia.”

Two of the participants in the study entered the role of the presidency from outside of higher education. President G explained,

I’m such an atypical candidate; I publish quite a bit, and I’ve done a lot of work that I think is interesting, but I’m definitely atypical, and I was concerned about was I even a viable candidate . . . I am what I would consider a fairly non-traditional candidate. I’ve been working with thousands of university and college presidents, ministers of education, administrators of higher education, and I’m comfortable in both secondary and higher education settings.

In this study, three of the 10 research participants described their career pathway as traditional because it had included a career progression from an assistant professor to associate professor to full professor to dean to provost and finally to the role of president. One of the participants who had a career that progressed through the faculty ranks had originally begun his career outside of higher education and then searched for an entry-level faculty position. With regard to his pathway, President C stated,

I wrote my dissertation and worked in law firms, actually, because I was interested in perhaps in being a lawyer for quite a bit of time. So, I worked in private industry for those years, and when my dissertation was finished, I was hired to be an adjunct professor at [institution’s name]. I taught at four different

institutions, and then wound up becoming an assistant professor, an associate professor, and then I was dean.

Two of the participants who had explained their career paths as traditional had moved into an entry-level faculty positions immediately after completing their terminal degree. President I stated that his career was “super traditional” and the “accidental” president career was a series of accidents of being in the right place at the right time. President I explained,

I’m telling you all of this not because of the particulars, but because I am so traditional for my generation. I got a Ph.D. in [discipline], and I got a job as an assistant professor at [name of university]. I was promoted to associate and tenured, and promoted to full. I did all the things you had to do to be successful. I got interested in students in a different kind of way, and I became a program director, and then an assistant dean, and then an associate dean, and a dean and provost. Ultimately, to my great surprise, I became the president. It was all an accident.

Experience in one’s career was essential to being appropriately prepared to take on the role of president. Examining the full career trajectory of the participants provided a fuller understanding of their complete career path to the role of president. While career paths were varied, three of the participants had the more traditional experience within the faculty ranks that led to the positions of dean and provost and then to the president. Those participants describing their career paths as non-traditional provided insight on how they navigated the higher education hierarchy toward the presidency. Seven of the participants described their career pathways as non-traditional. Five began their career in

staff positions within higher education, and two came to higher education from the outside. With the five participants who indicated that they were staff members at one time in their career, they provided accounts where they sought out opportunities to learn about curriculum development and faculty governance. In the end, six of the participants landed in the role of a chief academic officer or chief executive officer before becoming president—roles that are seen as training grounds in higher education before taking on the role of president. The two participants who came from outside of education had been asked to lead due to their professional experiences and connections to their specific disciplines.

Theme II: Presidential aspirations. Participants of the study expressed varying experiences with understanding when they wanted to become a president. One participant indicated that he had a career aspiration of becoming a president. This participant came to the role of the presidency from outside of higher education. With the remaining participants, a majority, or seven of the 10 participants, came to the understanding that they wanted to become president when serving in other roles within higher education. Those serving in other roles in higher education became aware of their desire to become a president while either serving as a dean or administrative vice president. Several participants in the study, four in 10 participants, sought out opportunities to become a fellow or special advisor to a president during their career. Those seeking experiences with another president did so with the intention of learning about the role and work of president. Three of the participants were called upon to lead based on their professional reputation and known track record.

Sub-Theme IV: Lifelong dream. One participant indicated becoming a college president was a career aspiration. When asked about wanting to become a president, President G responded with a sense of exhilaration about his wanting to be a college president.

This is a career aspiration that I've had for a very long time. This not something that fell into my lap; this is something which I prepared myself; this is something that I sought out and this is something that is very meaningful to me. I kind of feel that I can have a large impact on institutional development, regional development, economic development, people's lives, and I think I've done it in a large-policy level internationally, but I think bringing it down to ground level at home, it's bringing all of the stuff that I've learned globally to bear on my community for a lot of people, and that's very important to me.

Sub-Theme V: Experience with other presidents. Several participants, four out of 10, sought out opportunities to learn from, and be mentored by, presidents during their career before taking on a larger leadership role such as vice president, dean, or provost. The participants actively looked for opportunities to expand their leadership perspectives and to gain a larger understanding on how an institution of higher education was run. President E provided this account of working with a president.

The President there had a faculty fellow position, so that's what I did initially, and within a year, I became an executive assistant to the president. I also had the title of university planning officer, so I was responsible for strategic planning, and then the budget office started reporting to me. I got some more assignments, and

then we changed presidents. It was about nine-month period. I was the acting chief financial officer and vice president for the finance administration.

Sub-Theme VI: Experience in other roles. A majority of the participants, seven out of the 10, came to the realization that they wanted to become a president while serving in other administrative and academic roles at their institutions. The perspectives on the reason for becoming a president varied from being an overachiever to having a positive impact on an entire community through leadership. The overarching theme in this group was that leadership approaches and ideas mattered. Mentored by a president while in the role of the dean and provided with encouragement, President B commented,

I would say that I had no sense of that evening being a possibility prior to my becoming a dean. When I became a dean, I sort of had a sense of really enjoying administration. My mentor said, “You have a real talent for administration, and you will have an impact on thousands of students every semester.”

On his perspective for wanting to become president, President D paused and reflected on his role as dean and understanding that he had something to offer as a leader,

I think it became fairly quickly after I became the dean. The reason I became a dean, I think, it’s all just part of trajectory . . . I just realized that I wanted to put an imprint on what I had, and I had an imprint I wanted to put on an institution that I knew that I could not do that if I remained the dean of enrollment or did something further in student services. So, I wanted to run my own college with my own ideas of how a college should run.

Presented A spoke about his observations and the realization that he had something to offer through his leadership.

The reason I did, quite frankly, is because I had worked for a couple of presidents, directly for, and I thought if he can, they were all males, if he can do it, I knew I could do it and maybe better.

President F reflected that he has always taken on leadership roles from the time he was an undergraduate and through his career. He simply stated with confidence, “I am an overachiever . . . I was just have always been driven, you know.”

Other than two of the participants, they learned that they wanted to become president while serving in other roles within higher education. From the data, the roles of vice president, dean, and provost provided opportunities for the participants to develop essential skill sets to lead within higher education. The roles also provided opportunities for participants to observe presidents, reflect on their career aspirations, and come to an understanding that they wanted to become president.

Theme III: Learning to navigate a heteronormative environment. All of the participants spoke about the process of learning to navigate a heteronormative environment as a gay individual. The participants spoke of when they came out and how, and what it meant to be gay in a heterosexual dominant culture. Many of the participant’s shared seminal moments in their career where being out had an impact. In describing the seminal moments, participants provided insights as to how they perceived the heterosexual environment and individuals. Participants spoke to both the positive and negative perspectives that being out might have on their career. Participants provided insight on how being out shaped their search process, especially as it related to finding an affirming location to live and work. A large majority, nine out of 10 of the participants, were open about their sexual orientation over the course of their career trajectory. A

point of nuance—all of the participants stated that they would never deny their being gay if asked directly when employed in past positions. One participant, in describing his career path, indicated that he was married with children during the first part of his career and then gradually came out over the course of his career. Another participant described that he was not explicitly out at work but indicated that never hid his identity.

The degree to being out varied from having indications of their sexual orientation on their resume to having a known reputation of an out, gay professional in their field to bringing up the issue of sexual orientation during the final stage of the search process. All of the participants further explained that being out as a professional had a potential effect on their careers, both a negative and positive.

Sub-Theme VII: Gradually coming out. Two participants indicated that they would not describe themselves as being out during their entire career. The two participants described the effect of the dominant culture on their experience and how that dominant culture shaped their perspectives. One participant indicated that he lived in a location that would not have been conducive to him being out at work, because it would potentially have had an impact on his working relationships. President A reflected and then commented,

I think many would say, those that I worked with or worked for, would say that they knew I was, but since I didn't talk about it . . . in [the late 2000s] at that point, I said I am not hiding this anymore, and so if people want to accept, that's great . . . if I can't be accepted professionally or personally for who I am, then I'll just suffer the consequences, and so that's pretty much what it was. I was doing things alone and not with my partner.

President A's tone changed when he described his not being out in his first presidential position and then moving to being out in his second presidential search. The tone was much more confident with a sense of pride and defiance in his choice to be out as he began his search during the second search.

The other participant had entered his entry-level faculty position as a married man with children. Over a course of time, the participant indicated a very painful realization that he was a gay man. President I explained,

After years in my marriage, it became increasingly clear, after a lot of difficult conversations, that it wasn't going to work . . . I don't even remember, I remember when I came out to myself, which was the hardest thing to do. I remember looking in the mirror and thinking and saying, "You know, you can't do this; admit it, you're a gay man." . . . I came out gradually, first to people in gay spaces. So I just gradually came out, just suddenly I was out. I lived my years out, how do I say this . . . I'm using the word "lived" to mean active verb meaning you live a timeline. I lived myself out, you know, because circumstances made it possible.

During the conversation about coming out while married, President I's tone changed and became much more melancholy and provided a sense of apprehensiveness as he understood that being out was going to affect his family, especially his spouse and children.

Both participants indicated that they had been publically out in their careers for some time. There is one narrative that spoke to the degree of openness about his sexual orientation with regard to entering a job search for an entry-level faculty position that is

worth noting. President B provided an account of where he began conducting his faculty search by not being completely open about his sexual orientation because he was worried about potential implications of being open during the search. President B disclosed his sexual orientation to a faculty mentor at his new place of employment. The faculty mentor had described himself as the department matchmaker and offered to help find President B a date. It was during this conversation that President B outed himself to the faculty mentor. During the conversation, President B's tone provided a sense of caution as he was speaking about coming out to his colleague, but then his tone changed to a sense of relief when the colleague did not hesitate to provide support. President B disclosed that he has never, not been out again.

Sub-Theme VIII: Completely out: Of the participants, eight would describe themselves as being completely out in their past positions. The participants described that others around them knew that they were open about their sexual orientation. When asked about his being out during the search process, President J explained that he had been out for a long time and chose to explain his impression of moving from one Northeast urban location to another to take on a new professional experience during an earlier time in his career. "Interestingly, when I moved to [an urban Northeast location], I realized it was still somewhat of an issue . . . the [organization] was pretty reserved, button down." President J's response included a sense of surprise when learning about the environment for gays in moving from one urban location in the Northeast to another and indicated a new sense of caution about his new location. On the other side of the spectrum, President B confidently commented about his being out throughout his career, "Anybody who knows me knows I am gay. I was explicitly out in my interviews."

Of the participants, four in 10 articulated that they believed that they were out on their resume because of their research involved lesbian and gay issues or past professional positions indicated a relationship to the LGBT community. Furthermore, the participants had spoken about having community service leadership roles in organizations that dealt with HIV and AIDS and numerous other LGBT organizations on their CVs. President E laughed with amusement as he recounted a conversation with a search firm consultant, a member of the dominant culture, and their reaction to his resume and research, “One time, one of the search firm people read my CV, and she said, ‘You know, if I read your CV, you sound like an angry lesbian, because of the title of your book.’” President E’s conversation with the search consultant provided insight as to how the dominant culture would perceive him and potentially have an impact about what career opportunities he may find as a non-dominant group member.

Sub-Theme IX: Effects of being out. The participants in the study provided perspectives on how being an out gay professional had an impact on their career and the choices of how to approach situations within their work environment. Several of the participants spoke about the negative impacts that being out had on their career; how being out in a heteronormative dominant culture would have a potential negative impact on their career opportunities. The narratives provided insight to what the participants learned about the dominant heteronormative environment and beliefs of the dominant culture. The narratives also provided the internalized effects of the dominant culture on the participants. President A spoke about his beliefs and the caution he took about not being out and the potential the negative effect of being out might have on his career. “I

don't think it would have derailed me, but I do think it would have stunted by career trajectory. I don't think I would have gotten the promotions that I did get along the way.”

President H provided a perspective of how being out had an impact on his experiences with supervisors who were part of the dominant culture,

I had some setbacks because of some barriers in my path because I was gay. I've had great supervisors, I've had a couple of supervisors who were uncomfortable with me and who gave me some “shit” in performance review situations because I was queer. [A supervisor] didn't like that I was smart mouthing and especially that I was gay. So, I would get recognized less than others, I ended up being passed out of his portfolio because of that.

During the conversation, President H's tone and body language was a mix of defiance and frustration as he spoke about the situation about the supervisor who had targeted him.

One of the participants in this group further explained that while he has been out, there are times when he chose to deflect the question surrounding his sexual orientation because that issue would distract from his professional experience or the work that needed to be completed. President G provided this insight to his being out during the search process and his choice to be cautious about focusing on his sexual identity instead of his focus on his professional experiences, “It [being out] made me anxious about the process more than I think I would have been if I were straight.”

President B recounted a story about how students, members of the dominant culture, on campus reacted to his coming out,

There were students who, when they discovered that I was gay, were actually, in one instance, visibly shaken by it, but they would move to the back of the classroom or those kinds of things. I was walking across campus one day when someone yelled, “Faggot” out of the window at me, or I least assume it was for me.

During the recounting of the story, President B’s tone had changed from a matter a fact storytelling cadence to more of a disappointed tone with a sense of bewilderment when he provided specific experiences when students had reacted to his being gay. The reaction of the students provided a reminder that members of the heteronormative dominant culture may hold negative perceptions about members of the non-dominant culture.

Participants also shared perspectives about being out as a candidate and the internalized effects of being a member of a non-dominant group. President C provided this insight as to his reflections about going through the search process as a member of the non-dominant culture,

I think going through [the search process] as a gay man is a whole layer of challenge that is burdensome because you’re, you know, you’re constantly wondering, “Are these people going to be accepting of this or not.,” because it’s certainly not that people are terribly accepting of, there’s all kinds of jobs that, frankly, I would never apply for because I know that I would never get them.

President C’s reflection included several pauses as he collected his thoughts on the process and the caution he described when speaking about the institutions not being as accepting of gay males. President C, who was in an interim position, provided this

reflection of having to navigate a heteronormative culture. He reflected on several situations where he chose to enter into the situation understanding the he may have known more about how a member of the dominant group might react to his being a member of a non-dominant group,

I mean, there are times that I'm meeting with a very conservative donor out by myself, and I think the conversation is modified for them to some degree. There are people that will ask, well, "Do you have children?" And I usually, generally speaking, I will say no. Sometimes, I'll say no because I am gay, and I have a partner and that's not a choice we've made. Or, they'll ask me my wife's name, and I'll say I'm not married; in some cases, I say, "No, I'm not. My partner's name is [name of partner], he's a man." So I'd say I modify my answer to some degree based on who I'm speaking with, but this does not happen a lot.

President C's tone changed to a more cautious and reflective tone as he spoke about interacting with more conservative donors. Beyond the negative accounts, several participants provided stories of how being out became a positive for them and their colleagues. President H reflected in more confident tones on a situation where he utilized his non-dominant membership to bridge with other non-dominant group members,

Being gay made me very interested in justice issues, very interested in social change. My outsider status as a gay man, I think, has led me to observing from the margins and seeing things that are different than conventional ways to get things done. I knew I was coming into an environment that was very heterosexist, and the only reason I took the risk [to come out] is that I found enough yearning from the different folks I met to make the place a different kind of place.

Participants spoke at length about finding an affirming location in the U.S. to live and work. Almost all of the participants, nine of the 10, spoke about wanting to find an institution that was located, from their perception, in a more accepting and affirming region of the U.S., which included Northeast, Midwest, West, and Northwest. Beyond region, participants were looking for an urban location that would provide more diversity and access to cultural venues. From their experiences and learning about dominant group members and the dominant environment, the participants navigated toward regions and urban locations that potentially minimized the effects of the dominant culture. President F summed up the sentiments in a matter-of-fact tone, as did a majority of the participants,

I know there are a lot places in the country that I probably couldn't work or wouldn't work, so I've chosen places that have been, for the most part, very affirming so, obviously, living on the West coast and now in [an urban location on West coast], it's pretty easy from my perspective.

One participant, 10% of the participants, sought out an opportunity in a rural location because of his connection to the location, and he had a better understanding of how to navigate the dominant culture in that location. President G stated with pride and delight, "This is my home state; this is where I wanted to be."

Sub-Theme X: Location. More than half of the participants, six of 10, during their interviews, spoke about the perceived difficulty of living in the South as an out, gay president. The perception of the six participants was that the South reinforced a heteronormative environment that would be unwelcoming to non-heterosexuals. When asked about how being out impacted his professional journey, President C commented

with a fairly confident tone, “I don't think a large system in the South is going to hire a gay man and his boyfriend to be president.”

With regards to his search, President D explained in a matter-of-fact sense, “I never would have moved to the South anyway, but I certainly would never have moved [us], it just would not have crossed my mind. I made doubly sure that door was locked and not happening.”

President E commented confidently,

I ruled out any place south of the Mason Dixon Line. I was not interested in, you know, even though there are some nice places there, I just thought it's not a good cultural fit for me. I had talked to people in the past who worked at even public universities [in the South], or wherever the level of people inquiry into your church life and your personal life; I just thought I don't want to deal with that and that I might not be welcome there.

President E further provided this commentary with a nurturing approach,

[The issue of my sexual orientation] came up in one reference, you know, one of my friends was a reference, and she expressed, this was a job in [Southern state], she asked the search consultant if this was a safe place for my friend to move . . . she [my friend] had some concerns.

President A explained confidently,

I had a reputation in the [Southern state], and I knew a lot of people. So when they took the chance on me and gave me my first presidency, this small rural community college, it was a first in many ways, but it wouldn't have worked real well [being out] because it was [Southern state], and it's still sort of the Bible belt,

and if I wasn't known and respected, I know I wouldn't have gotten that [position].

Participants spoke to their belief about the environment of the heteronormative South and concluded that it would not be a location that would be affirming to their working or living. From the participants, the South was perceived as highly religious and unsafe for non-heterosexual individuals.

Of the participants in the study, nine described their institutions as being located in urban areas. Participants spoke about the need to have access to a diverse population and cultural activities. The perception from the participants was that urban locations were more welcoming to non-dominant group members. Some participants spoke about having the need to disconnect from work and having the anonymity of living and working within an urban location. President A described, in appreciative tone, the need for diversity and the urban location as a safe haven for non-dominant group members,

I will say, and I have said this before, that there's a large Jewish population here. Therefore, the arts, the culture, and all are very supported. They have been nothing but fantastic to us, and there's even a gay rabbi here in town with his partner.

President B provided this insight to the decision around searching for an institution in an urban location that would be more affirming and have the potential effect of living in a rural area,

I think we were looking, when we were moving to the presidency, we were hopeful that it would be in an urban area so that was a factor for us. So, I think social things were important but not totally determinative because you can always

move. We always trusted that if something didn't work out, that we would be able to deal with it four or five years and then move again.

President F provided a perspective about the anonymity of the urban experience,

The great thing about being a president at [institutional name in an urban area] was I could be in public, because there's so many people there, most people didn't, the vast amount of people didn't have any idea who I was. I wouldn't have had the privilege in [institutional name in rural area] and every time I would show up at the grocery store, it would have been front page news, right . . . so that was part of it, I didn't want to play my life out on the front page of a local rag.

Table 4.11

Learned About Search Process

	Attended Institution	Mentor	Other
# of Participants	3	6	3

Theme IV: Avenues of learning. Participants learned about the search process through a variety of means. Of the participants, six described using mentors as part of the learning experience (Table 4.11). Of the six participants who had a mentor, few had a mentor who spoke to them about the realities of entering the search process as a member of a non-dominant group. Only three participants learned about the presidential search process by attending institutes and professional development opportunities. Those same participants attending institutes also described using mentors to have conversations about the search process; thus, attending institutes was not the only method of learning about the search process. Of the three participants who attended institutes, all of them indicated

that there was no conversation during the institute sessions about how the search process might be experienced from a candidate who might not fit into a dominant culture. Of the three remaining participants who learned about the search process from another approach, two described they learned about the search process from reading job advertisements for presidential positions and reading professional journals and industry-specific publications. One participant did use a search consultant as a means of traversing the search process in the year before he was appointed to the role of president.

Sub-Theme XI: Attending institutes. Participants who attended institutes accounted for three of the 10 participants. Those attending institutes indicated that they had attended one of the following events: the Institute for Management and Leadership at Harvard, the American Council on Education Fellows Program, and the Executive Leadership Academy sponsored by the American Association of State Colleges and Universities. All of the participants who attended the institutes made it clear during their interviews that the institutes did not have any information on how identifying as a gay man might have an effect on the search process. The institutes provided an overview of the search process from a more dominant culture perspective. Those participants who attended institutes made it clear that they did solely to rely on the institute as their means of education. The participants utilized mentors throughout the search process.

President B described the institute he attended after he was encouraged by his president to attend and take advantage of learning about the presidential role and skill sets needed for the role,

I went to the Executive Leadership Academy. When I participated, it was exclusively for academic officers who wanted to move into the presidency. As

part of the program, there were presidents of other institutions. I shadowed presidents at [institutions' names]. So I really took any networking opportunities that I had to be able to develop those skills and then to see if I was really cut out for the position [of president].

Sub-Theme XII: Learning from a mentor. A little more than half of the participants, six of the 10, explained that they did use a mentor to learn about the search process. In accounting their use of mentors, participants described not only learning about the process from mentors, they also stated that they continued to seek out the counsel of their mentor throughout the search process. In describing his mentor, President C stated that he used a mentor about learning about the process, but did not have a person to speak with about the search process as gay man,

I had a mentor, yes; in general, I had a mentor. Did I have a mentor about being a gay president? Definitely not. How does one learn how to do this job? I don't think you can learn this job except [by] being in a job like this. I think if you haven't been a president before, it's really hard to grasp all of the areas you have to tackle and do reasonably good at each one of them and you kind of learn by fire.

President E provided this encounter with a mentor, who was from the dominant culture, but spoke about having a gay son and providing insight from his perspective,

[My mentor] came out to me as a father of a gay son, so we had that, you know, a poignant conversation. So, I would say he was very aware that I might face some difficulty, or he was very aware of the issue.

Sub-Theme XIII: Learned on my own. Three of the participants indicated that they had learned about the search process on their own. A common theme with those participants learning about the process on their own was the reading of college presidential position announcements and accessing other higher education publications. When explaining about how he learned about the process, President D stated,

I learned about it, I think, from talking with other people. Also, I just looked. I spent several years before I went to the next level. I spent two or three years of looking at ads in the *Chronicle* about those jobs that I wanted. I was doing my homework and sort of go through scenarios of how I would write a letter or something in my head and mostly not actually writing it.

President C stated, appreciatively, that he relied on learning about the process from his colleagues, “I have friends who have been through the process; I know recruiters, so I’ve learned now about it, but [there is] more information [and] professional interactions at conferences.”

President G provided his experience and spoke about relying on his experience and his reading of industry publications,

I’m a student of higher education, and I paid very close [attention] to the way it operates in the U.S., and I paid very close attention to the advertisements. I read the *Chronicle* every day; I read *Higher Ed* every day.

Theme V: Sharing stories. A fairly large group of participants in the study, seven of the 10 participants, provided accounts of stories from colleagues who had gone through the search process and made reference to using those stories as tales of caution about the search process. A little less than half of the participants, four of 10, shared their

experience of being a candidate in past search processes as a candidate. Two participants explained the search process as “extremely political” and that search firms are there to provide a pool of candidates, and they may not always look out for the best interest of the candidate or the institution.

Sub-Theme XIV: Negative stories from LGBT colleagues. A large group of participants, seven in 10, provided accounts of a colleague’s experience with the search process. The participants told the stories as a way of providing context to what it meant to be out during the search process; stories about what it was like to be a member of a non-dominant group during the search process. The narratives reinforced the dominant culture impact on those who are from members of non-dominant groups. President E reflected in hushed, saddened tones on the following, “There was an out, gay chancellor of the [Western institution], and [it] ended up being a tragic suicide.”

President A explained in tones that were of disappointment that had heard this account from others, “I have friends who are gay or lesbian presidents, and there are donors who went to them to say either, ‘I want my money back or I’m never giving you another dime.’”

Sub-Theme XV: Information shared from past search experiences. Of the participants in the study, eight had participated in more than one presidential search before being appointed to his current position. As a candidate in the search process, the participants had particular experiences that they shared during the interviews. The stories of past experiences in the search process of failed searches provided insight to how non-heterosexual members encounter dominant-culture perspectives during the search process. Furthermore, the stories reinforce the heteronormative experience of search

committees embedded in dominant culture. President B provided two different accounts of searches where he ran into heteronormative barriers and described the situations with frustration and disappointment,

[In one search], I was really disheartened by the behavior of the search consultant. He [the search consultant] was just not prepared, in my view, to handle the realities of [the] search with minority candidates in the pool. [In another search], it was the only rural, truly rural, search that I was in, and one of the reasons we looked at that position was because it was in a mountainous areas. Concerns not voiced to me [by the search committee] except by the search consultant who said, “Yeah, there were concerns [about] success in fundraising and about community and things like that, never anything that was direct.”

President D provided the following accounts of dominant culture barriers and his tone was filled with disappointment and disgust,

There were three jobs, all presidencies, where I know that it was impacted, because I had heard back from people who were on the search committee. In one case, I heard from the member of the board who told me that it impacted and it was negative; it was fatal. They [the board] started talking about me the he [the chair] found out I was gay . . . he [the chair] stopped the whole search. In another case, the older members of the board were uncomfortable with my being gay and weren't sure that I was a good fit.

President I explained his experience as a non-heterosexual candidate when he ran into the heteronormative dominant culture where his tone went from matter of fact to

more of a tone of disappointment and determination, “I was nailed because I was gay; I know that because people in the room said that’s what happened.”

Theme VI: Increased acceptance. More than two thirds of the participants, seven of 10, provided their perception about the current U.S. national environment around lesbian and gay issues. The participants, who commented on the national environment, indicated that increased acceptance around lesbian and gay issues has led to the increased numbers of gay presidents being appointed in the last few years. The perception is that the heteronormative environment may be changing. While there has been a number of a gay president appointed in the past few years, participants believed that gay presidents have yet to be appointed to larger institutions. Reinforcing the dominant culture has only provided limited access. Dominant culture has continued to influence the thinking of the non-dominant candidate. In reflecting on the national environment, President A commented on the changing national environment with a tone of astonishment, “I would say that [in] the last three to five years, our LGBT issues have just zoomed to the forefront; I mean it has been fabulous.”

President D provided his thoughts on the changing national attitudes and the speed of the change with a sense of pride and elation,

I’ve seen, even from [the] 2011–12 season to the 2012–13 season, I saw a big difference in how people talked to search consultants, talked about gays, me as a gay candidate. A huge change in that one year. I think the whole change in society has been so massive and so quick.

And he continued where his tone moved to a more complex mix of disappointment and pride, “While there has been an increase in the number of out, gay presidents being appointed, we are leading smaller boutique institutions at the third-tier.”

President C explained his perspective about access for non-dominant members and the influence of the heteronormative environment with a tone of frustration,

If you look at who are the out, gay presidents there aren't a whole lot from big major research universities. I mean it's almost all small private profits and, in a lot cases, very socially progressive values. I just think the landscape of institutions that I would consider, 10% and 5% would consider me.

Theme VII: Strategic communication. All of the participants indicated that communicating to the search firm, the search committee, and the board members about their sexual orientation was a critical part of the search process. Of the participants in the study, nine of the 10 participants indicated that they had strategically thought about how to communicate their sexual orientation to the search firm or the search committee during the first few interactions. The members of the non-dominant culture had to strategically think through how they would advise members of the dominant culture about their identity and, in doing so, would have to think through the potential implications of doing so. All of the participants shared that they had direct conversations with the board when it came to finalize the details of the appointment. The direct conversations were meant to explore to the understanding that members of the dominant culture would have to potentially contend with as a result of appointing a leader from a non-dominant group.

Sub-Theme XVII: Coming out during the search. Of those participants who had been involved with search-firm-led searches, there was a strategic thought process on

how the participant, a candidate, would come out to the search consultant or the search committee during the search process. Participants provided insights on their thought process as to how they, a non-heterosexual individual, would communicate their identity to members of a heteronormative dominant group. Participants provided perspectives on how they maneuvered the issue of coming out to the search firm during the search process. President D provided his approach in communicating with the dominant culture and how he would assess the heteronormative environment by the responses of the individual to whom he was speaking. He provided this insight with a confident approach because he was aware of what he was gaining from the interaction,

During the search process, when headhunters would call me, I would always say to them, at some point in the initial conversation—usually at the end, “Now, I’m gay, and is that going to be a problem with the search? Because if it is, let’s not waste your time or mine.” If, when you [are] ask[ed] the question about being openly gay as a candidate, they respond immediately. There were three primary answers. “No problem at all, I know we’ve already talked with the search committee about this issue and they’re fine with it.” Or, they’d say, “Well, they’ve had a long tradition of being open, and I’m sure it’s not a problem.” So, it’s sort of an assumption on their part, [but] they have not talked about it. Or, a sort of stumbling, “ahs” and “ummmms.” Then there was a fourth one that I got really rarely, but occasionally, “No, that doesn’t seem to be a good fit for you.”

President B explained his confident approach when interacting with heteronormative environment and members of the dominant group,

My answer was to include a statement [that] was always, without exception, at some point I would say, “You know, I was talking to my partner [name of partner] last night about just this thing, and he said something along those lines.”

So there’s always, in that first question, a reference to my partner . . . I always discussed with search consultants, “What is the atmosphere on campus? Is the committee going to have an issue with having a same-sex couple, is the board going to have an issue, or is the campus going to have [and issue with] a president with a same-sex partner?”

President I provided this account on how he approached a situation where he disclosed his sexual orientation within a heteronormative environment,

Somebody asked the question about values or how did I feel about affirmative action, I thought, “Oh there’s the softball question.” So I said, “Well, I understand discrimination probably better than most people would know.” I approached it from my own personal point because, as a gay man, I face it all the time. Every person at the table, 15 people, all sat up and then the conversation got interesting.

Sub-Theme XVIII: Direct conversation with the board about being gay. Of the participants, nine provided a narrative that involved having a direct conversation with the board about their sexual orientation. According to the participants, the conversations with the board were to ensure that the board members, members of the dominant culture, understood that there may be potential implications attached to hiring an out, gay male, a member of a non-dominant group. President C explained his confident and respectful conversations with the board in the following manner,

I made it an issue because I think that it's important for me to be, you could say, all the important things about me that need to be said so the people [running the search] can make an important decision about whether they want me to come and work with them, and that's certainly a big part of my life. I talked about my hobbies, and I talked about my partner because that's my family. When you interview for the job, they want to know about your spouse—whether they say it or not. They want to know who is sitting at the table with you when you have donors over to your home, and who's going to be coming to events with you, so I thought it was important that I share who my partner was, his name, [and] what he did for a living.

President A provided the following respectful and confident narrative about relating his experience as a non-dominant group member to members of the dominant group,

In the interview process, here, I met with the board for the final dinner, and I did ask them if being gay was going to be an issue, that they needed to tell me now, and I will go away without any lawsuit or anything. I did not want them to be embarrassed at all.

President A was providing the board with a way out of the hire if there were issues with his being gay, and he was looking for affirmation and support from the board if issues would emerge due to his sexual identity.

President H explained his respectful approach to engaging dominant group members in a conversation about hiring a non-dominant group member,

I took at least two opportunities to [talk about my sexual orientation], I was pretty sure they knew that I was gay because of faculty members, you know, there was a faculty member that knew me that was involved in the search. But I wanted to make sure that they knew what they were getting in for, and I knew what I was getting in for. So, I used masculine pronouns to describe my partner and then said I was a gay man. You know, I was watching the room really, really closely.

President H recounted that he was looking for any uneasiness with individuals during the conversation.

President J stated that during his search process, he took the lead in openly discussing his identity and the potential implications for being the leader in a heteronormative environment,

Certainly, by the time I became a candidate for this job, I was 49 years old, so I was as out as I was going to be, and I was certainly not about to take a job where that would be an issue. So I wanted to make sure it was on the table.

President J continued,

I brought it up. A member of the board of trustees said, “Yes, we are aware, we’re actually hoping that your relation[ship] with the gay community will activate philanthropy from that corridor.” The trustee member stated, “What’s the issue?” That was the last time that it came up.

Sub-Theme IXX: An issue of integrity. Many participants, nine of 10, stated that they believed that being open about their sexual orientation was essential part of the process. Participants explained that being open about their sexual orientation was about integrity, and the institution needed to understand who they were. The participants

indicated that not being open about their non-dominant group membership would have a negative impact on their character and provide turmoil for the dominant cultural members.

President F provided a scenario where he used his identity as a gay man at an interview to connect with the student members who were interviewing him and non-dominant group members. He joyfully described the interaction the following way,

Almost 85% of the students there were non-Caucasian, large Latino population, large Asian population. If you can imagine a community with about 15 people there are only three Caucasian people sitting around the table, okay. So, I knew exactly what question I was going to come up [with], which would lead to me to outing myself. I felt like, given this diverse environment, it might appear that I don't have any credibility. When the diversity question came up in the interview, I laid it out and said, "As a White male, I've had privilege most of my life. At the same time, as a White gay male . . ." I didn't lose a person at the table.

President F further, confidently, commented that being clear about his identity was essential for being a role model for others who may be learning to navigate a heteronormative environment,

Part of the reason that I am out is because I didn't have any role models group, up right; it was like when I was an undergraduate, certainly, and [in the] early part of my graduate school, so part of [it] for me was integrity, so I had this privilege of being in this position, and I owe it to the other gay and lesbian people in this world to be out right, especially the students.

President I respectfully, and in a nurturing manner, explained that he always has to address a heteronormative environment,

Even today, I have to tell new trustees that I am gay because they don't know. I do it artfully, usually by the same [way] I always did it. I say something about [partner's name] at a trustee dinner with the spouses and then [my partner] is there with me, "Who's this guy?" "This is my partner." "Oh your partner, you have a business?" "No, he's my life partner."

President G proudly provided this perspective on his need to disclose his sexual orientation to the dominant group,

I do think I have a public obligation to make sure that I feel very responsible for being a good example. I think gay people who work with me, the gay people in my state, the gay students that come to my institution, the gay people around the country, who are aspired to this kind of work. I do think that this notion of role model is out there, and it's very important because I turn to these role models when I need them.

President B provided this perspective on going through searches and disclosing his non-dominant identity to dominant group members,

Going through these search[es] with integrity . . . and that meant being out and that meant talking about my partner, because we knew that if I was going to have a presidency that was going to be a 24/7 job, and so it could not be kept separate from our personal relationship, and some of that, in fact, was the way we knew I would handle the job. I've talked to other presidents who are gay and where not out [at] their interviews, and so it's about how I needed to handle that to protect

my relationship, to model the kind of president that I wanted to be when I eventually made the choice.

Sub-Theme XX: Hearing from LGBT board members. Two of the participants learned that the board that was hiring them had at least one member that identified as lesbian or gay. The contact with the gay and lesbian member of the board confirmed, for the participants, that the institution and the board were open to having members of non-dominant groups in positions of influence. President A was delighted to learn that fact after he was hired, that his sexual orientation was not a point of discussion during the hiring process, “There was a board member who is gay, who worked here as an employee, and he indicated to me later that it wasn’t even a discussion point when they were evaluating the candidates.”

President F confidently expressed that he learned about his experience of learning about the identity of board members and his academic reputation, “I had two lesbians on the board . . . and there is enough written about my being gay.”

Table 4.12

Relationship Status During Search

Relationship status	Partnered	Single
# of Participants	5	5

Theme VIII: Relationship status during the search process. During the search process, half of the participants were in relationships and half of the participants were single (Table 4.12). Of the participants that were in relationships, three participants’ partners were invited to campus as part of the interview process. Two participants made

it clear in their interviews that they had partners. At the time of this study, participants who were in relationships described their relationships as being from five years to almost 33 years. Participants who were single provided their own insight to the search process.

Sub-Theme XXI: Partnered. During the search process, half of the participants in the study described accounts of how search committee members engaged the participant about their partner or engaged the partner in the search experience. Being partnered had an effect on the search process. Having a partner during the search solidified the participants' sexual orientation identity; it was a physical and visual reminder of the non-heterosexual identity, especially to the dominant culture. Three of the participants had their partner actively involved in the on-campus search process. Two participants chose not to involve their partner in the formal search process. Engaging their partner provided the participants with insight into the dominant culture's perspectives about potentially having a leader from a non-dominant culture. A participant, who was single, provided a narrative where being partnerless during a search often left him wondering when it was appropriate for him to let people know about his sexual orientation. Thus, he was worried about how to demonstrate to the heteronormative culture that he was not a member of the non-dominant culture.

Of those participants who spoke about their partner to the search committee, three described experiences where their partners were invited to a campus visit, and their partners were asked to engage the institutions' constituents during the visit. While their partners were not involved with campus visits, two participants ensured that the search committee and board understood that they had a partner.

President B enthusiastically recounts the following experiences with his partner during the search process and their experiences with the dominant culture,

The searches that went well for the presidency were searches where they engaged him [my partner], when they invited him to campus, they made him very much part of the interview, they were very committed to his happiness in the process and very validating as a couple.

President D explained his experience with pride when talking about his partner in heteronormative environments,

So of the three interviews I took over a two-year period, two of them, I went with [partner's name] to campus. For instance, at this one institution, when I was the finalist, [partner's name] and I went to campus and we had a great time.

President H commented with a sense of pride that his partner, not involved in the formal search process, did have a presence at the interview and thereafter,

There were many questions about him [my partner], but he was not physically part of the search process. He [my partner] ended up being like a really important part of the role and a much more part, a much bigger part of this community than I would have foreseen.

Sub-Theme XXII: Single. Participants who were single during the search process provided a different perspective to their search experience. The presidents, who were single during the search process, were adamant that being single had an impact on their search process, especially in confirming their non-dominant status with the dominant culture. President E describes his experience in trying to navigate a heteronormative environment as a single gay man,

I've talked to people that have partners that say, "Yeah, I had a lot of issues because I have a partner." But, it is equally difficult for you when you don't have a partner because, then, how do you make it [your sexual orientation] obvious when you know you're not asking to bring your same-sex partner, so people dance around the issue. If I had a same-sex partner, they [constituents] couldn't overlook that. [That's] one of the things I talked to my PR person about when I was being interviewed by the newspaper about my personal life. I talked to him about [how] I don't want to make a big declaration, you know, because heterosexuals don't do that. I don't have a partner and that, indeed, has been one of the challenges of doing the job.

Theme IX: Institutional fit. The participants provided insight as to how they made the decision on institutional fit. All of the participants made it clear that they had a skill set and past experiences that matched the needs of the institutions' current needs. In one case, the participant indicated that the founding history of the institution was a critical factor; the history matched with his particular skill set in a unique way. With three of the participants, the need for an understanding of workplace development and community business needs was a criterion for their match to the institution. Two participants had past experiences working at the institutions that they now led, thus, providing them with insider status and a sense of the institutions' needs. More than half of the participants, seven of 10, spoke about their institution's mission as it related to access to education and the desire for the institution to have in-house and outreach programs that focused on student success and increasing degree attainment. The

institutions' commitment to diversity was another issue that participants spoke about in detail. More than half of the participants spoke about their diverse student body.

Sub-Theme XXIII: Access to education. A majority of the participants, seven, indicated that an institution's access to education was a critical criterion for accepting the position. The three presidents who lead community colleges spoke about the need to have programs that would align with the workforce and the needs of the community and surrounding areas. President E has partnered with high schools in the area so that talented youth have the ability to begin experiencing college at an earlier stage of their academic career. All of the publically funded institution leaders spoke about the access to education and the importance that access had in their making the decision about the position; it aligned with their past work and value systems.

President B reflected with a sense of pride about his institutions commitment to educational access, "Increase the degree attainment in [area of the Northwestern state], do community-based research that supports the community."

President C provided this insight with regard to his institution and access to education, "Our main initiatives are not focused on student success . . . that's partially due to [the] lack of college preparation so, in that case, we're working, trying to work, more extensively with our [high] schools to make sure students are better prepared."

Sub-Theme XIV: Commitment to social justice. Two presidents had programs that were aligned to international needs, and they spoke about the need to provide access to learning within a global context. Furthermore, all of the participants located in an urban area spoke about the diversity of their current student body and the diversity of the surrounding community as a critical factor with regard to institutional fit.

President I proudly provided this insight on his institution's founding and the importance it had on his decision making, "They [the founders] created their own institution where everybody would be welcome who was qualified for admission otherwise; no discrimination whatsoever, even though it was legal to discriminate at that time."

President F in a matter of fact tone commented about his institution's values, "I think the value of inclusivity is crucial."

Sub-Theme XV: Skill Set. All of the participants provided perspectives about matching the appropriate skill set and background of the candidate to the institution and the needs of the institution at that given time. Almost all of the participants who are currently leading specialized schools, three, spoke to the specialized skill set and understanding that was needed to match with the educational needs of the institutions. Again, the community college presidents provided insight on how important it was to have knowledge and a background in workforce development and community business needs

President A provided his perspective on institutional fit and the need to match his skill set with the institution's needs, "You're going to try and interview for a presidency where they need your skill set . . . you have to make sure that you find that fit. By doing my own research beforehand, which you have to do an awful lot."

President C provided this insight to his perception on skill set and institutional fit, "You know, I think from a leadership perspective, you have to figure out what are the challenges of the institution to make sure it matches your skill set. So if I wasn't to relate to the programs, the faculty, and the mission, I would not have

taken this job, but assuming I could relate to or understand, appreciate the value of this things, that's the very next thing, you know, is it a physical space I want to live in.

Summary of Results

The results of the study were discovered through the use of semi-structured interview questions with 10 self-identified out, White gay males who were current sitting presidents of U.S.-based degree-granting institutions. The theoretical framework aided in the creation of the semi-structured questions. The theoretical framework and the research questions provided a road for coding the results into 10 major themes and 25 sub-themes.

The four research questions included:

1. How does an out, White gay male's past experience shape his approach to the presidential search process?
2. How does an out, White gay male presidential search candidate learn about the search experience?
3. What were the perceptions of the presidential search process from an out, White gay male candidate during the presidential search process?
4. How does a successful out, White gay male presidential candidate make a decision on institutional fit?

The findings for the study were discussed in accordance with the research questions and included:

1. Most gay men have a non-traditional career pathway to the presidency.
2. Mentoring and networking plays a significant role for gay men in the pursuit of career as a college president.

3. While gay men are resilient in overcoming the dominant heteronormative culture impacts, dominant culture beliefs continue to play a significant role in the search process.
4. Gay men believe that being out during the search process speaks to their integrity and character.
5. Gay men strategically utilize two communication approaches when communicating with the dominant culture in an effort to assess if the heteronormative environment will be affirming.
6. In deciding on institutional fit, gay men seek to synergize their skill set and values with that of the hiring institution.

Finding I: Most gay men have a non-traditional career pathway to the presidency. The career path of the participants played a significant role in their pathway to their presidency. While the initial look at the data suggested that the career paths for a majority, six, of the participants were from provost or CEO and then to president, a closer examination of the participants' career trajectories found that a majority of the participants had a non-traditional pathway to the presidency. When examined, the data beyond the role held before the role of the president revealed that seven of the participants have had roles that could be considered non-traditional. Five of the participants emerged from staff roles or practitioners within higher education. Two participants held roles outside of higher education. Only three of the participants had a career path in the faculty ranks to dean, provost, and then to the presidency.

Tenure also played a critical role in the career path trajectory. Of the 10 participants, six earned tenure during their time in higher education. Again, a closer

examination of the data revealed that three of the participants earned tenure as a result of acquiring administrative roles that provided tenure opportunities. Three of the participants, who had entered the faculty ranks at the beginning of their careers, had earned tenure via a more traditional pathway as they rose through the faculty ranks.

Eight of the participants found that previous roles within higher education helped them to come to the realization that they wanted to become presidents. The roles of dean, vice president, CEO, and provost played a critical role in exposing the participants to broader institutional needs and goals. Two participants that emerged to the role of president from outside of the academy had career experiences that uniquely prepared them for the role of president at their respective institutions.

Finding II: Mentoring and networking plays a significant role for gay men in the pursuit of career as a college president. The participants in this study spoke about the importance being mentored. A majority of the participants spoke about relying on mentors to discuss the search process and how to navigate the search process. The mentors were not exclusively other lesbian and gay individuals but, rather, individuals who had knowledge of the search process and provided insight on how the search process might unfold. Participants also spoke about their need to network with other colleagues in the hopes learning about the experience through the sharing of stories from past experiences. Three of the candidates attended formalized training institutes where the curriculum was founded in the presidential search process and experience. However, the institutes did not provide curriculum on what the search process would be like for a member of the non-dominant culture. A small number of participants spoke about learning about the process from reading industry-based publications.

Finding III: While gay men are resilient in overcoming the dominant heteronormative culture impacts, dominant culture beliefs continue to play a significant role in the search process. The heteronormative environment established by the dominant culture had an impact on the participants as individuals and on the search process. By coming out, participants acknowledged that they were not members of the dominant culture and had to learn the art of navigating a heteronormative environment as a non-dominant group member. The dominant heteronormative environment taught participants that coming out would potentially have a negative impact on their career. The data showed that several participants internalized dominant culture perspectives about being gay and being out in the workplace. Several participants spoke about not being out at some time in their past positions because they believed it would have had an impact on opportunities for advancement. A few participants spoke about seminal events that occurred over the course of their career where members of the dominant culture had an adverse response to their being out, or they spoke about witnessing how other lesbian and gay men were treated by dominant group members. When speaking about the events, the participants had a tone of disappointment and frustration. Other participants spoke about having a sense that being out provided a sense of caution or complexity when entering into job searches; perhaps a complexity that would not exist if the participant were a member of the dominant culture. Reinforcement of dominant culture came through the stories that were shared when participants spoke about other lesbians and gays who had gone through the search experience and direct individual experiences in being involved in past failed searches. Those involved in failed searches had come to find out from members of the search committees that they were not offered the position

because of their sexual identity. When speaking about failed searches, and when they learned they did not get those positions because of their sexual identity, the participants spoke with disappointment and frustration and then switched their tones to one of determination and intrepidity when heading into new searches.

Data provided insight that participants had a sense of their traversed dominant culture perceptions from being perceived as a member of the dominant culture as a White male, and with the act of coming out, was able to contextualize the experience of being a non-dominant individual within a heteronormative environment. Several participants spoke with pride about their ability to bridge with members of other non-dominant groups by speaking to their experience as living as a gay man in a heteronormative dominant culture. Furthermore, several participants spoke about the responsibility of being out as an issue of integrity because it directly spoke to their character and the obligation they had to other lesbian and gay members of the community.

The internalized dominant culture messages about being gay also had an impact on where individuals would search for presidential positions. Many participants spoke about having some limited opportunities and looked for positions in more affirming locations, which would be more open to having a gay presidential candidate. The data showed that participants chose not to seek opportunities in the South or rural locations due to their perceptions of how the dominant culture would respond to their being out. Participants also spoke about the current changing national environment for lesbians and gays and how the changing environment may have led to the increased number of appointments of out gay male presidents in the past few years. The dominant culture still had an impact after presidential positions were secured. Several of the participants

provided their analysis of the current profiles of out, gay presidents. Participants indicated that the current sitting presidents are only at small or boutique-like institutions and that a gay president has yet to be appointed to a large research university. In short, gay presidents had access to leadership positions, but they had only limited access to high-profile institutions in higher education.

As for the search process, the search processes encountered by the participants were established and run from a heteronormative dominant culture context. While the data did not have direct statements about this, the data provided insights into how the participants approached the search process as if it was run from a heteronormative dominant culture perspective. Numerous times, the participants spoke about having to come out to individuals who were guiding or participating in a heteronormative-embedded process that was established from a heteronormative context. A few participants spoke about the about the heteronormative reactions of search-firm consultants in their search process and that search firm consultants were not prepared to deal with the issues of non-dominant candidates.

Several participants who attended formal presidential preparation seminars indicated that the seminars were silent on how to navigate the search process as a member of a non-dominant group. Most participants learned about the search process from mentors and colleagues; however, little to no information was available to the participants on how to navigate the process as an out, gay male. The data revealed that the very presence or understanding that there was a partner reaffirmed the non-dominant identity of the candidate within a heteronormative environment. Candidates who were

single during the search process found it difficult to affirm their sexual identity to the dominant culture.

Finding IV: Gay men believe that being out during the search process speaks to their integrity and character. All of the participants spoke about being out during the search process as having integrity. The data showed that being out was a matter having integrity and ensuring that the dominant group members would have a clear understanding of who the participants were during the search process. Integrity was also directly related to the perception of the participants' character. Participants provided commentaries on wanting to make sure that the dominant group members running the search and making decisions on the hiring would have a clear sense of who was going to lead their organization if they were appointed to the presidential role. This was especially true when board members were meeting with the participants in the final stages of the interview process. The data provided insights as to how the participants, then candidates, engaged in direct conversations with the board members about ensuring that they, the board members, understood the potential implications of hiring a member from the non-dominant culture. The conversations were led by the participants as way to help members of the dominant culture, the board members, to have a better understanding of how some constituents of the institutions, members of the dominant culture, may respond to the idea of a newly appointed leader not being a member of the heteronormative dominant culture.

The data also showed that various participants believed that it was their responsibility and obligation to be open about their sexual identity during the search process and that it had a direct impact on the lesbian and gay members of the institution.

According to the participants, being open about their sexual identity during the search process was about being a role model for students and other members of the community. Participants also articulated that they had never had the chance to encounter a visible out, gay leader during their educational journey and that this was their way of providing that visibility as a leader.

Finding V: Gay men strategically utilize two communication approaches when communicating with the dominant culture in an effort to assess if the heteronormative environment will be affirming. Participants articulated that they strategically thought through how they would communicate their non-dominant identity to the dominant culture. A small group of participants indicated that they had indicated their non-heterosexual status within their resume or cover letters by providing information on their research and community activities, which spoke to lesbian and gay issues. Others had conversations with the search-firm consultants when they first inquired about the potential to enter the search. The conversations with the search-firm consultant would first be to inquire about the position and institution and then move to direct conversation about the heteronormative environment of the institution. The direct conversations with the search-firm consultant were to see if the institutions' dominant culture would seriously consider the candidacy of a gay male. Participants would listen to how the consultant responded, in an effort to gain an understanding of the comfort level of the consultant and then to gain an understanding of the institutions' environment. In short, the non-dominant culture member would listen to the responses of the members from the dominant culture to gain an understanding of how they described the dominant-culture environment of the institution or client. In listening to the responses of the

consultant, the participants made a determination on whether the dominant culture understood the questions that were being asked or whether the dominant culture of the institutions would provide access to a member of the non-dominant culture.

During interviews, participants found strategic moments to speak directly or indirectly to their sexual identity. In some cases, participants explained that they used masculine pronouns to describe their partner status and visually watch the interviewers, mostly members of the dominant culture, to see how they would respond to the information that was just shared. Participants also described moments during the interview process when issues, such as affirmative action or diversity, were raised that they would use those moments to disclose their non-heterosexual identity as a means of contextualizing their non-dominant experiences within a dominant culture. Again, participants articulated that they were very aware of the individuals in the room and their reactions to the information.

Participants articulated that they entered into direct conversations about their non-heterosexual status with board members during the final round of interviews. The participants explained that their direct conversations were a means of explaining to dominant culture members the potential implications of hiring a non-dominant group member as a leader for their organization. During these direct conversations, participants were listening and looking for any emerging issues of discomfort from members of the dominant group.

Finding VI: In deciding on institutional fit, gay men seek to synergize their skill set and values with that of the hiring institution. All of the participants explained that a large part of institutional fit was determined on whether the skill set of the

participant matched the needs of the institution at that time. In defining skill set, participants explained that it was an accumulation of professional experiences that one brought with them to the role of the president at that time. Mission and values of the institution matching with the participants' values was also a critical factor in institutional fit. Several sub-themes, such as access to education and commitment to social justice, were essential to various participants. Issues around access and social justice provided participants with insights to not just the institutions' statements but also to the institutions' actions related to non-dominant group members. The match between the institutions' mission and action provided a more complete picture as to whether a leader from a non-dominant group would have the support from the community to lead the institution.

While not directly stated as having a direct relation to institutional fit, both the treatment of the participant, as a candidate, and the institutions' regional and urban location had an impact. The treatment of the participant and their partner had an impact on their decision with institutional fit. The data provided insight on how participants looked at the institutions' dominant culture and how that culture would provide access for a member of a non-dominant group. Participants with partners also commented on if the institutions' dominant culture would also embrace their partner during the search process. The location of the institution played a critical role on institutional fit. Many participants spoke about finding an institution in a location that was more affirming to work and live; participants sought out locations that were more affirming to members of the non-dominant group.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Introduction

The purpose of this study examines the lived experience of how out, White gay man have successfully navigated the college presidential search process. This study utilizes the theoretical framework of social dominance theory (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999), queer theory (Butler 1990, 2004; Kirch, 2000; Abes & Kasch, 2007) and co-cultural communication theory (Orbe 1998a, 1998b). The information was gathered for the study by conducting semi-structured interviews with 10 current sitting college presidents who led degree-granting institutions of higher education within the U.S. Each of 10 participants was part of a purposeful sample chosen from the membership list of the LGBTQ Presidents' Organization.

The lessons learned from this study can be shared with emerging lesbian and gay leaders who aspire to become academic leaders within higher education. Furthermore, lessons learned can be shared with those members of the higher education community who construct and implement search processes and who serve on search committees. The purpose of this chapter is to discuss in detail the findings from Chapter 4; to provide an overview of the implications of the findings as they pertain to the literature, practice, and policy; to discuss the limitations of the study; and to propose recommendations for future research, researchers, and practitioners.

Implications of Findings

This study has five major implications that are presented below. The five implications focus on the literature, professional practices, and opportunities that can be extended as a result of the study.

Implication 1: The findings are consistent with the theoretical framework utilized for the study. The results and findings of the study are in line with the theoretical frameworks that were utilized to conduct the study.

Social dominance theory. While the participants in the study may have been seen as members of the group that would have benefited from the dominant culture as White older men, the act of coming out as gay moved the participants into an arbitrary set where heterosexual identity is seen as the dominant culture. It is critical to acknowledge that the participants still benefit from having the status of group-based privilege as White older men, but their status is minimized due to the public acknowledgement of their sexual orientation.

The search process for college presidents is designed by members of the dominant group in an effort to protect the institution and dominant group status; however, institutions of higher education might be seen as less active in maintaining group-based hierarchies than other institutions. The institutions and the members of that institution who design and implement the search process create the process from a group-based perspective and unintentionally design the process to potentially exclude members of non-dominant cultures. Even if members of the institutions are members of non-dominant groups, they are more likely to engage in group-based behaviors in an effort to protect the institution.

Group-based hierarchy plays out in the stories that were shared by participants as they speak to the internalized messages that the dominant group has created to minimize the access of non-dominant group members. Various participants shared perspectives where they were worried and burdened with the thought of going through the search process as an out, gay male; they were concerned that they would not be taken as serious candidates during the search process because of their sexual orientation. Stories from participants about failed searches, where they were not chosen as the president because of their sexual orientation, reaffirmed the dominant culture belief system around sexual orientation. Even well-intended individuals within group-based hierarchies provided reaffirmation of the dominant group belief system. In two stories that were shared, support individuals who were heterosexual provided words of caution to the participant about the search process and what it might be like to enter the search process as an out, gay male. Participants actively bought into the legitimizing myths of the dominant culture by seeking out employment opportunities that are not located in Southern and rural locations.

There is evidence that several participants were involved in behavior asymmetry by not being out in past positions and believing that being out would limit their opportunities for advancement. As such, they chose not to be out in past searches. Several participants spoke about having limited options as it related to institutions that would hire non-heterosexual individuals, and they chose to limit their involvement to those particular searches. Various other participants chose not seek out opportunities for employment in regional locations and institutions that they believed were squarely founded in the dominant culture.

Several participants spoke to the aggregated, individual discrimination that came about from members of the dominant heterosexual group, which included individuals using derogatory names, lack of recognition for their contributions within the workplace, and feedback from past failed searches, where they had learned that a search chair blocked the search process as a result of learning of their sexual orientation. Aggregated institutional discrimination was seen in several stories that were shared about search-firm consultants. The belief from several of the participants was that search-firm consultants may not be prepared to deal with non-heterosexuality as part of the search process and, as a result, act on behalf of the institution to limit the candidates' ability to have contact with the search committee members. Further evidence of the aggregated institutional discrimination came with the stories where participants were not hired because of their sexual orientation. In short, the members of the search committee made a decision on behalf of the institution that an out, gay male would not be the appropriate fit for the institution or the values of the institution.

Participants sought employment opportunities at institutions and in locations where they believed were more hierarchy attenuating. Participants sought out opportunities in more urban locations and at institutions that had a value around access to education and were committed to social justice and diversity. Further evidence of hierarchy attenuating came with how the institution treated the candidate's partner during the search process. There were several stories where partners were invited to campus and provided access to the institution during the campus-visit portion of the search process, which was an act of hierarchy-attenuating behavior by dominant group members during the search process.

Queer theory. The search process, by its very nature, is created by an institution to protect and affirm the rules and policies of the current culture of the institution; thus, the search process is embedded within the dominant culture of that institution. Institutions of higher education are an extension of the U.S. culture and were created within a heteronormative binary framework where non-heterosexual members may be unintentionally invalidated by the search process that has been designed by the dominant culture. Thus, the search process for a college president might be created and implemented to find a heterosexual leader that best exemplifies the values of the institution.

By the act of coming out and labeling himself as gay, the participant actively removes himself from the dominant culture and becomes an outside where navigating the dominant culture may become more challenging. Furthermore, that act of labeling oneself is a conscious act of participation in the social hierarchy and confirms that the individual may have less access to positions of power and prestige. Several participants in the study found this to be true when sharing experiences of seminal moments where members of the dominant culture treated them differently or with hostility. Participants also shared stories of past failed searches when they learned they did not get the position because of their sexual orientation. This is also seen when participants describe their search and voiced concern for how they would be seriously considered for a presidential position by a limited number of institutions. This is further demonstrated when participants spoke about looking for affirming places to live and focused their searches on regional and urban areas where they believed it would be easier to navigate in a heteronormative environment.

The performative act of having a same-sex partner as part of the search process, whether shared via verbal communication and represented via the visual by being together in-person, is another reminder to the heteronormative dominant culture that the participant is not a member of the dominant culture. In the study, one of the participants shared his story of not having a partner and how he struggled to share with constituents that he was gay and not heterosexual as assumed by his constituents; these are the nuances of navigating a heteronormative environment.

Co-cultural communication theory. Overall, the participants in this study strategically made a choice to communicate with both a non-assertive-accommodation and an assertive-accommodation communication styles. Both styles permit the members of under-represented groups to approach the dominant group members in an educational and networking-style that looks to increase the collaboration and respect among both groups. In this study, participants looked cues from the search-firm consultants and search committee members to better assess the environment, in an effort to see if the dominant culture would be open to having an out, gay leader. The verbal and non-verbal reactions of the search-firm consultants and the search committee members provided insight on how the institutions' dominant culture would either welcome an out, gay male leader or discourage the candidacy of an out, gay leader. Participants actively sought out opportunities to observe reactions of the dominant group by using masculine pronouns when discussing their relationship status.

Furthermore, participants looked for bridging opportunities to connect with other non-dominant group members and to provide context to their lived experience of living in a heteronormative environment. In doing this, participants were using a non-assertive-

accommodation communication styles in an effort to gain insight into the overall environment. Non-dominant group members utilizing the non-assertive-accommodation communication style permit the individual to avoid direct conflict and seek to have the individual participate within the confines of the dominant culture; the individual is engaged in learning about the dominant culture's expectations. Participants may have chosen to engage in this particular communication style during the initial contact and interview stage because the preferred outcome was to be among the top candidates within an interview stage.

As participants moved into the hiring phase of the search process, more direct or assertive conversation were realized with members of the board, in an effort to educate the board members about the potential implications of hiring an out, gay male for the leadership position. In this phase of the communication, the participants moved into an assertive-accommodation style as a means of educating the dominant culture and to provide transparency about any issues that might emerge with members of the dominant culture. During this phase of the process, non-dominant group members look to seek a balance between the individual's needs and the needs of the dominant culture; this communication approach is to find cooperation between non-dominant and dominant culture members in an effort to change the organization's culture and policies.

Implication 2. This study advances the current research and literature on lesbian and gay executive leaders, diversifying the presidency, and providing insight to career paths beyond the role held before the presidency. This study adds to advance the current research on lesbian and gay executives, diversifying the presidency, and career trajectories to the presidency. As for lesbian and gay executives, the current

literature is limited on the examination of the lived experience of lesbian and gay leaders in executive positions. Thus, this study provides insight on the search experience for out, White gay males who have moved into executive positions within higher education. In higher education, the literature, thus far, has focused on expanding the presidential search process to be more inclusive of individuals of color and women, and it has not included lesbian and gays. The research provides insight on how out, White gay men have experienced the presidential search process. The research provides a new insight into an under-represented group and their methods of navigating a dominant culture process.

The findings from the study move the lesbian and gay executives into higher education from the closet and the shadows to a more visible perspective. Future research and industry-based initiatives should seek to include lesbians and gays and look to minimize their current invisibility. The research provides the potential for women, individuals of color, and lesbians and gays to synergize their efforts in the hopes of working to reduce the effect that the dominant culture has on the search process for all executive positions, which can include vice presidential, decanal, provostial, and presidential positions. Continuing to separate under-represented groups and having them working independently can only serve to support the dominant culture and the dominant culture processes and policies.

Implication 3: Those conducting presidential search processes should examine how the process can become more open to those candidates with non-traditional career paths. As the study shows, the search process is historically established to favor more traditional candidates who have moved from the ranks of the faculty into the role of the president. The current literature continues to call for the

process to be more open to candidates from non-traditional career paths in an effort to increase the pipeline for the presidential positions. The participants in this study have non-traditional career paths that can fit the needs of the institutions.

For those who are creating and implementing the search process for the role of president, a new paradigm should be created in an effort to expand the current process to include more non-traditional candidates. Search firms and search committees should seek alternative methods to recruit candidates from the more non-traditional areas of higher education and outside of higher education. For search firms, this might mean expanding their databases to include candidates from the non-profit sector and non-academic businesses. To do this, search firms could partner with national and regional organizations outside of higher education to create a more robust talent-management strategy that introduces the business practices of higher education to the non-academic world. For search committee chairs, they could introduce best practices and talent-management and recruitment strategies that will best speak to non-traditional candidates outside the faculty ranks and outside of higher education. Search chairs might update recruitment materials that can better speak to candidates who do not fully understand the higher education and faculty environments.

Implication 4: Those providing mentorship to gay men who aspire to executive roles within higher education need to become more visible and accessible.

The study provides the coming out of out, White males who are in the role of president. Beyond out, White gay males, there gay men of color, lesbians of color, and lesbians who have been successful in navigating a heteronormative environment to become executives in higher education, and they have yet to be heard and seen. At this moment in our

history, there is only one affinity group that seeks to provide insight and mentorship for lesbians and gays in executive positions, and that group has a relationship with one nationally recognized organization. The current affinity group should expand their message and information to include other national organization and regional organizations in an effort to expand their membership. Furthermore, the group could partner with national, formalized higher-education-executive institutes in an effort to expand the group's visibility and mission.

Implication 5: Those conducting presidential search processes should examine how the process mirrors and reinforces heteronormative beliefs and practices. Members of the dominant culture often create processes that protect the power and access to institutions. In this case, the study provided insight as to how individuals and groups of dominant groups have created a search process that is embedded and protected by those in a heteronormative dominant environment. Thus, those creating and implementing presidential search processes are encouraged to examine proposed search processes in an effort to uncover any intended and unintended barriers that seek to keep out members of non-dominant groups. While the ultimate goal would be to eliminate the influence of the dominant culture within the search process, a realistic goal would be to create a more hierarchy-enhancing process where members of the dominant group would create an experience and environment that would be affirming for members of non-dominant groups.

With this implication, it is critical that those designing and leading searches evaluate all elements of the search, which would include but would not be limited to: (a) written documents related to the search and the institution; (b) practices that are to be

implemented during the search process; (c) practices implemented by the institution as it the way it relates to recruiting new employees; and (d) amending language utilized by the search-firm consultants and the search committee members. Because members of an institution are the integral part of the search design process, institutions need to consider partnering with individuals and groups from outside the institution, when conducting an evaluation of the process and the environment, because members of the dominant culture may not always be aware of how processes and policies have an impact on non-dominant culture members.

Limitations

Absence of triangulation. Triangulation strengthens and corroborates the information of the participants from three to various methods of gathering information (Yin, 2011). The outcomes of the study are in line with the theoretical framework utilized for the study. The population for the study was small, and conducting a focus group would have eliminated individuals that were invited to participate in interviews and, as such, erode the overall number of participants that could have been utilized for the hour-long, semi-structured interviews. Currently, there is one known membership list of out, lesbian and gay college and university presidents (LGBTQ Presidents' Organization, 2012) and seeking out participants beyond this membership list who fit the criterion for the study would have been impossible. Furthermore, archival data is non-existent for the population that was examined in the study, as demonstrated in the literature review.

Generalizability. The findings of this study should be viewed with caution. Small population sizes are commonly used for phenomenological studies (Smith et al.,

2009). The data can only speak to the participants that agreed to be part of this study. While the data and stories provide insight, the stories and accounts collected are only representative of the 10 participants within this study and should not be generalized to include all out, White gay males in executive positions within higher education.

Recommendations

Recommendations for future research. In an effort to expand the literature on the topic, future research opportunities include conducting research with women and individuals of color who identify as lesbian and gay to gain an understanding of their lived experience. To further add to literature, a replication of this study could be conducted to compare differences and similarities; the study would account for triangulation. The literature would also benefit from a study that is conducted by comparing the lived experience of lesbian and gay U.S. college presidents to that of internationally situated lesbian and gay college presidents.

Recommendations for practitioners. Currently, there is little known about the true numbers of lesbians and gays in executive positions—especially in higher education. Organizations, such as the American Council on Education, conducting surveys on the college and university presidents, can include questions asking respondents to identify their sexual identity on future presidential surveys and move the data collection effort beyond the federal guidelines. This will aid in gaining a larger understanding of the number of lesbians and gays who are leading institutions of higher education, and this will lead to further research on the subject.

In an effort to increase the diversity of candidates who can participate in the pipeline to the role of president, formal training institutes, such as the American Council

on Education and the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, need to include information that can speak to the realities and challenges of navigating the presidential search process as a member of a non-dominant group. The sessions can provide a forum to have open conversations about dominant cultural issues and provide potential approaches that will aid non-dominant candidates in navigating the search process. Formal training institutes can partner with established lesbian and gay organizations within higher education in an effort to create a mentor program for lesbian, gay, and bisexual emerging professionals who might have presidential aspirations.

In an effort to create a more affirming search experience for non-dominant group member candidates, search firms can seek out collaborative relationships and training from leading scholars who can provide an overview of the lesbian and gay experience within higher education and the workplace. Search firms can partner with lesbian and gay organizations to enhance their understanding of their role in unintentionally supporting a heteronormative dominant culture perspective during the search process. Search firms can partner with various known affinity groups within higher education organizations to conduct research about the search experience as it has been experienced by non-dominant group members. Such research would increase the knowledge and understanding of the search experience from candidates who might have run into dominant cultural barriers.

As Moody's (2012) research concluded, institutions of higher education should create formalized training for search-committee chairs and search-committee members about how to construct a search process that is hierarchy attenuating and looks to minimize the dominant culture impacts. Formalized training should include a curriculum

that is based in the theory to practice pedagogy in an effort to immerse participants in a lived experience where dominant-culture perspectives are explored and analyzed.

Conclusion

Self-identification or being out as lesbian or gay continues to hold a stigma in the workplace and beyond (Hewlett & Sumberg, 2011; Slobodzian, 2006; Snyder, 2006;). Lesbian and gay individuals who are out expect to face some type of discrimination in the workplace due to their sexual orientation (Embrick et al., 2007). Researchers have concluded that there is little research on lesbian and executives because there are limited number of lesbian and gays in executive leadership positions with no out, lesbians and gays in executive positions for Fortune 500 companies (Coon, 2001; Fassinger et al., 2010; Snyder, 2006).

There are 4,495 degree-granting institutions of higher education in the U.S. (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2013). A majority of those degree-granting institutions are led by White, married men over the age of 50 with earned doctorates (American Council on Education, 2012; Eckel & Hartley, 2011; Kim & Cook, 2013). Pathways to the position of the president have been created and implemented by the American Council on Education and the American Association of State Colleges and Universities in an effort to attract women and individuals of color to college presidencies (Hamilton, 2004); however, the call for diversification has not included lesbians and gays (American Council on Education, 2012; Bridges et al., 2008; Eckel & Hartley, 2011; White & Eckel, 2008). Individuals who enter the presidential search with characteristics and an identity outside the dominant culture of the institution may find the search process challenging (Bornstein, 2003; Dowall, 2007; Moody, 2011).

A group of out, college and university presidents was created in 2010 with the intent to serve as role models for the lesbian and gay community and advocate for out, lesbian and gay professionals who are looking to seek higher administrative offices within higher education (Chicago Tribune, 2010; Inside Higher Education, 2010; LGBTQpresidents.org, 2012; Masterson, 2011;). The 42 members of the group include past and currently sitting college and university presidents who have successfully traversed the search process (LGBTQpresidents.org, 2012). The membership list of the American Council on Education's LGBTQ presidents group confirms that lesbians and gays lead less than 1% of 4,495 degree-granting institutions (LGBTQpresidents.org, 2012).

The purpose of this study to examine the lived experience of how out, White gay men have successfully navigated the presidential search process. The research questions include:

1. How does an out, White gay male's past experience shape his approach to the presidential search process?
2. How does out an out, White gay male presidential search candidate learn about the presidential search experience?
3. What are the perceptions of the presidential search process from an out, White gay candidate during the presidential search process?
4. How does a successful out, White gay male presidential candidate make a decision on institutional fit?

Three theoretical perspectives framed the study. Social dominance theory provides and illustrates how hierarchies are established and create dominant and

subordinate groups through complex interactions that look to sustain the privilege, power, and prestige of the dominant culture (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). Queer theory explores how hierarchies, especially institutions such as the church and the government, have created labels and categories to the further subordination of individuals who ascribe to the binary of perspectives of male and female, masculine and feminine, heterosexual and non-heterosexual (Abes & Kasch, 2007; Butler, 1990, 2004; Foucault, 1978, 1985, 1986;; Kirsh, 2000; Sullivan, 2003; Warner, 1991). Co-cultural theory examines how language and interactions with dominant group members work to further isolate subordinated individuals (Orbe, 1998a, 1998b). Members of the non-dominant culture must strategize on how to communicate. Communication styles of the non-dominant group members must focus on the preferred outcome of the interaction and the communication approach in an effort to fully contextualize their experience to members of the dominant culture; this strategy process encompasses nine different styles (Orbe, 1998a, 1998b).

A topical analysis of the relevant literature was conducted and included the following areas: (a) historical analysis of attitudes toward lesbians and gays in the late 20th and early 21st century; (b) framing perspectives about lesbians and gays; (c) estimated population of lesbians and gays in the United States; (d) workplace issues for lesbians and gays; (e) college environment for lesbians and gays; (f) the role of the college president; and (g) the search process for a college president.

The literature provided evidence that heterosexuals have historically held negative opinions about lesbians and gay, and those negative attitudes are changing among women and individuals (Brewer, 2003; Brumbaugh et al., 2008; Davies, 2004; Herek & Glunt, 1993; Kite & Whitley 1996; LaMar & Kite, 1998; Rowatt et al., 2006). However,

heterosexual men, Blacks, Christians and older individuals still hold especially negative attitudes towards lesbians and gays (Brewer, 2003; Brumbaugh et al., 2008; Davies, 2004; Herek & Glunt, 1993; Kite & Whitley 1996; LaMar & Kite, 1998; Rowatt et al., 2006)

Americans are of two minds as it relates to lesbian and gay rights—those who support the civil liberties of lesbians and gays and those who believe that lesbians and gays are immoral (Brumbaugh et al., 2008; Davies, 2004; Herek, 2000; Loftus, 2001; Smith, 2011; Whitley & Ægisdóttir, 2000; Wilkinson & Roys, 2005). Estimating the population of the lesbian and gay population in the U.S. is fraught with complexities, and there is currently no true number that researchers can agree upon. Without having a true sense of the numbers of the lesbian and gay populations, current institutional policies and practices may be difficult to change, because the larger population might not understand the larger impact of the current practices (Black et al., 2000; Cooke & Rapino, 2007; Gates, 2011; Herek et al., 2010; Pruitt, 2002).

Hewlett and Sumberg's (2011) research study revealed that almost half of lesbian and gay employees are not open about their sexual orientation at work, and over half of those surveyed believe their careers have been stalled by their sexual orientation. In concert with national opinions on homosexuals, Hewlett and Sumberg's (2011) research found that nearly one-third of heterosexual women, and more than half of heterosexual men, prefer that lesbian and gay employees keep their personal lives out of the workplace. Lyons, Brenner, & Fassinger's (2005) found that lesbian and gay employees' perceptions of the workplace environment have an impact on their productivity, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and career choice. Out, gay men and lesbians

earn up to 23 to 30% percent less than heterosexual employees (Black et al., 2000; Fassinger, 2008)

While more than 80% percent of lesbian and gay faculty and staff are open about their sexual orientation, over one-third of faculty and staff have considered leaving their current institution due to their perception that it is an unfriendly environment (Rankin et al., 2010). One-fourth of lesbian and gay faculty and staff have reported being harassed on campus by students and colleagues because of their sexual orientation (Rankin et al., 2010). Current literature around lesbians focuses on lesbian and gay student development, and new research should include the experience of college and university faculty and staff, especially administrators (Renn, 2010).

The role of the president includes, but is not limited to being a: role model; chief administrative officer; communicator; chief town-gown relationship coordinator; fundraiser; keeper of traditions; negotiator of alumni, parents, and legislatures; and guardian of student learning and development. The president must be versatile with his or her approach. Perhaps the largest challenge of the president is in understanding that he or she is leading within a shared governance culture where listening and communication are paramount (Weill, 2009). Bornstein (2003) defined legitimacy as “the accumulation of trust [that] cannot be mandated or purchased, it must be earned” (p. 19). The five factors include: individual, institutional, environmental, technical, and moral. The individual factor refers to the characteristics that make up the individual’s background, career path, identity characteristics, and how he or she fits with the institution (Bornstein, 2003).

Rooted in the “exclusionary practices of America’s past” (p. 5), dominant group members who serve on search committees may not fully understand that their dominant group status may create a defensiveness stance toward presidential candidates who have characteristics that are outside of the dominant culture of the institution (Kaye, 2006). Individuals who are under-represented in the dominant culture, whether they identify as lesbian or gay, an individual of color, or a woman, are assumed to be incompetent until proven otherwise (Bornstein, 2003; Moody, 2011).

This study utilizes a qualitative phenomenological approach. For this study, the criteria for the study includes the following: the participant must have been out during the presidential search process; the participant is a current sitting college president; and the participant is the president of U.S.-based degree-granting institution of higher education. A purposeful sample of 16 was drawn from the LGBTQ Presidents’ Organization’s list, and the study took place on a national level. A letter of invitation via email was sent to all 16 proposed participants who met the criteria of the study. Of the 16 participants who were invited to participate, 10 individuals responded in the affirmative. Of the 10 participants who agreed to be part of the study, five interviews were conducted in person and included participants located in the Midwest and in the Northeast. Of the five interviews that were conducted via telephone, two participants were located in the West, and one was located in the Northwest, according to the location criterion for telephone interviews. The remaining two participants who were interviewed via the telephone were located in the Midwest and Northeast; both had replied with scheduling constraints and met the second criterion laid out for proposed telephone interviews

Semi-structured interviews questions were created from the literature and created the theoretical framework of the study. The questions were vetted by two separate panels of experts to ensure validity (Cresswell, 2007; Kvale & Brickman, 2009). An HT Recorder for the iPad was utilized during the interviews to capture the participants' responses verbatim. A third-party transcriber was employed to transcribe the digital recordings into Microsoft Word documents. All recordings and documents related to the study are locked on the researcher's personal laptop. The data from the interviews were analyzed via a five-stage process that included compiling data, disassembling data, reassembling data, interpreting data, and concluding (Yin, 2011). With the coding, originally 69 codes were found and later reduced to 10 themes with 25 sub-themes. After examining the data, there were five findings and all were in line with the theoretical framework of the study.

Finding I: Most gay men have a non-traditional career pathway to the presidency. The career path of the participants played a significant role in their pathway to the presidency. When examined beyond the role held before the role of the president, it was revealed that a majority of the participants had roles that may be considered non-traditional. Only a third of the participants had a career path in the faculty ranks to dean, provost, and then to the presidency. Tenure also played a critical role in the career path trajectory. More than half of the participants earned tenure as result of being appointed to an administrative role during their time in higher education.

More than two-thirds of the participants found that previous roles within higher education helped them to come to the realization that they wanted to become presidents. The roles of dean, vice president, CEO, and provost played a critical role in exposing the

participants to broader institutional needs and goals. Two participants emerged from outside of academia had career experiences that uniquely prepared them for the role of president at their respective institutions.

Finding II: Mentoring and networking plays a significant role for gay men in the pursuit of career as a college president. The participants in this study spoke about the importance of being mentored. Participants spoke about relying on mentors to discuss the search process and how to navigate the search process. The mentors were individuals who had knowledge of the search process and provided insight on how the search process might unfold. Participants also spoke about their need to network with other colleagues in the hopes learning about the experience through the sharing of stories from past experiences. Three of the candidates attended formalized training institutes where the curriculum was founded in the presidential search process and experience, but the institutes did not provide curriculum on what the search process would be like for a member of the non-dominant culture. A small number of participants spoke about learning about the process from reading industry-based publications.

Finding III: While gay men are resilient in overcoming the dominant heteronormative culture impacts, dominant culture beliefs continue to play a significant role in the search process. By coming out, participants acknowledged that they were not members of the dominant culture and had to learn the art of navigating a heteronormative environment as a non-dominant group member. Several participants spoke about not being out at some time in their past positions because it might have an impact on opportunities for advancement and participated in behavior asymmetry. Participants shared stories about seminal events that had occurred over the course of their

career where members of the dominant culture had an adverse response to their being out, or they spoke about witnessing how other lesbians and gay men were treated by dominant group members and reinforced the beliefs of the dominant culture by aggregated individual discrimination.

A few participants spoke about having a sense of caution or complexity when entering into job searches; perhaps a complexity that would not exist if the participant were a member of the dominant culture. Several participants spoke about their ability to bridge with members of other non-dominant groups by speaking to their experience as living as a gay man in a heteronormative dominant culture. Participants spoke about the responsibility of being out as an issue of integrity, because it directly spoke to their character and the obligation they had to other lesbian and gay members of the community.

Participants spoke about participating in hierarchy-enhancing behaviors and beliefs by internalizing the message that they had limited opportunities, and they looked for positions in hierarchy-attenuating locations and did not seek opportunities in the South or rural locations, and they bought into the legitimized myths in the belief that the dominant culture would not be open to non-heterosexuals. With the current changing national environment for lesbians and gays over the last few years, there has been an increase in the number of lesbian and gay presidential appointments. Participants affirmed the dominant-culture beliefs and indicated that the current sitting presidents are only at small or boutique-like institutions; gay presidents have access to leadership positions, but they have only limited access to high-profile institutions in higher education.

The search processes encountered by the participants were established and run from a heteronormative dominant culture context and involved dealing with aggregated institutional discrimination. Participants spoke about having to come out to individuals who were guiding or participating in a heteronormative-embedded process that was established from a heteronormative context. Participants spoke to the heteronormative reactions of search-firm consultants in their search process and that search-firm consultants were not prepared to deal with the issues of non-dominant candidates. While some participants learned about the search process from formal presidential preparation seminars, most learned about the search process from mentors and colleagues; however, little to no information was available to the participants on how to navigate the process as an out, gay male, affirming that the dominant group creates a process embedded in a heteronormative context. Through a performative action, the presence or understanding that there was a partner reaffirmed the non-dominant identity of the candidate within a heteronormative environment. Candidates who were single during the search process found it difficult to affirm their sexual identity to the dominant culture.

Finding IV: Gay men believe that being out during the search process speaks to their integrity and character. Integrity was directly related to the perception of the participants' character. Participants utilized non-assertive-accommodation communication styles to make sure that the dominant group members running the search and making a decision on the hiring would have a clear sense of who was going to lead the organization if they were appointed to the presidential role. Participants would engage in direct conversations or assertive-accommodation communication with the

board members about ensuring that they, the board members, understood the potential implications of hiring a member from the non-dominant culture.

Participants believed that it was their responsibility and obligation to be open about their sexual identity during the search process and that it had a direct impact on the lesbian and gay members of the institution; being open about their sexual identity during the search process was about being a role model for students and other members of the community.

Finding V: Gay men strategically utilize two communication approaches when communicating with the dominant culture in an effort to assess if the heteronormative environment will be affirming. Participants engaged in non-assertive-accommodation styles when they would communicate their non-dominant identity to the dominant culture. Participants had conversations with the search-firm consultants when they first inquired about the potential to enter the search. The conversations with the search-firm consultant would first be to inquire about the position and institution and then move to a direct conversation about the heteronormative environment of the institution. Participants listened to how the consultant would respond in an effort to gain an understanding of the comfort level of the consultant and to gain an understanding of the institutions' environment. In short, the non-dominant culture member would listen to the responses of the members from the dominant culture to gain an understanding of how they would describe the dominant culture environment of the institution or client. Non-assertive-accommodation was used during the interviews, and participants would find strategic moments to speak directly or indirectly to their sexual identity. Participants would strategically use masculine pronouns to describe their

partner status and visually watch the interviewers, mostly members of the dominant culture, to see how they would respond to the information that was just shared, and they were very aware of the individuals in the room and their reactions to the information.

In the final stages of the hiring process, participants entered into direct conversations and utilized assertive-accommodation communication styles with the board about their non-heterosexual status. The participants explained that their direct conversations were a means of explaining to the dominant culture members of their potential implications of hiring a non-dominant group member as a leader for the organization. During these direct conversations, participants were listening and looking for any emerging issues of discomfort from members of the dominant group.

Finding VI: In deciding on institutional fit, gay men seek to synergize their skill set and values with that of the hiring institution. All of the participants explained that a large part of institutional fit was determined on whether the skill set of the participant matched the needs of the institution at that time. In defining skill set, participants explained that it was an accumulation of professional experiences that one brought with them to the role of the president at that time. The mission and values of the institution matching to the participants' values was also a critical factor in institutional fit; these would be indicators of a more hierarchy-attenuating process. Issues around access and social justice provided participants with insights into not just the institutions' statements but also into the institutions' actions related to non-dominant group members.

While not directly stated as a direct relation to institutional fit, both the treatment of the participant as a candidate and the institutions' location had an impact. The treatment of the participant and their partner provided insight as to how the

heteronormative dominant culture reacts to members of the non-dominant culture through the performative act of coming out as a same-sex couple. The location of the institution played a critical role on institutional fit. Participants spoke about finding an institution in a location that was more affirming to work and live; participants sought out locations that were more hierarchy-attenuating to members of the non-dominant group.

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Appendix A

Sample Introduction Letter to Potential Interview Participants

December 2013

Dear President _____:

My name is Bil Leipold. I am a senior administrator at Rutgers University in New Jersey. I am also a doctoral candidate in the Ed.D. in Executive Leadership program in the Ralph C. Wilson Jr. School of Education at St. John Fisher College. As part of the research requirements for the doctoral degree, I am conducting a qualitative research study under the direction of my dissertation chair Dr. Claudia Edwards [REDACTED].

My dissertation research is focused on understanding how White out gay men have successfully navigated the college and university presidential search process. In my dissertation, I have proposed using a phenomenological approach that will capture the “lived experience” of the research participants. The research will consist of voice-recorded semi-structured interviews with sitting White out gay male college or university presidents who were out during the search process.

I received your contact information from a request that I sent to the co-chairs of the LGBTQ Presidents’ Organization. Your input as a current White out gay male college or university president is highly valued and needed, and I would very much appreciate your potential participation. A critical criterion for the study is that you had to be out during the presidential search process. Your participation and the information shared with me during the process will be treated with the utmost confidentiality. Your name and your institution will be coded appropriately to ensure anonymity. All recordings and work completed will be saved to locked personal computer

I am kindly asking for sixty-minutes of your time. If you voluntarily agree to participate, I will work with you or your designee to schedule a date and time to come to your office to conduct a sixty-minute interview. If you would like to meet at a place other than your office, we can work together to find the appropriate meeting space. If you should freely choose to participate, you will be asked to complete an Informed Consent document, and I can email that document to you before our scheduled meeting. Your participation in this study is voluntary and you may choose to end your participation at any time. I am hoping to hear from you within 10 business days of the response. If I do not hear from you within the timeframe above, I will reach out to you with another request via email.

I would be happy to speak with you to about the study and your potential participation. If you are interested in participating, please contact me at [REDACTED] or at [REDACTED]

Thank you in advance for your interest in participating in this study. I look to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,
Bil Leipold
Doctoral Candidate, Ralph C. Wilson Jr. School of Education, St. John Fisher College

Appendix B

Informed Consent Form Semi-Structured Interview

Title of Study: Navigating Straight Waters: The Lived Experience of How White Out Gay Males Navigated the College Presidential Search Process.

Name of Researcher: Bil Leipold, Ed.D. Candidate, Ralph C. Wilson Jr. School of Education at St. John Fisher College

Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Claudia Edwards, St. John Fisher College

Purpose of Study: The purpose of this study is to examine the lived experience of how White out gay males navigated the college or university presidential search process. To date, little research has been conducted on how under-represented groups have traversed the college presidential search process. Research is very scant on how out lesbians and gays have experienced the search process for executive positions, especially the presidential college search process. The lessons learned from this study can be shared with emerging lesbian and gay leaders who aspire to become academic leaders within higher education. Furthermore, lessons learned can be shared with those members of the higher education community who construct and implement search processes.

Study Procedures: You will be interviewed for a minimum of sixty minutes about how you navigated the presidential search process as a White out gay male. The interview will be recorded via two hand recorders and transcribed. Observation notes will also be taken during the interview.

Participation: You were selected as a potential participant for the research study because you were out during the college/university presidential search process. Participation in this research study is voluntary and you may choose to end your participation at any time. At any time during the research study process if you feel your rights have been violated or abused, you may contact the Chair of the project or the IRB committee of St. John Fisher College.

Risks/Discomforts: This research is not designed to help you personally, but your participation may help professional organizations, college administrators, and members of college/university governing boards in understanding how LGBTQ candidates may experience the college/university search process.

Benefits: There are no direct benefits for participation. However, it is hoped that through your participation, researchers will learn how out gay male presidential candidates successfully navigated the higher education presidential search process.

Confidentiality: All participants being interviewed will be coded as to protect their identity and their institution's identity. All observation notes will also be coded. Consent forms, which contain personal information, will be kept separate from any coded materials. Only the researcher will be able to link the research materials to an informed consent form. A third party will be transcribing all interviews and will need sign a confidentiality agreement before any work should begin. All recordings and transcriptions will be uploaded to a locked and password protected laptop. All transcripts, observation notes, and interview materials will be stored in locked file cabinet in the researcher's office. There will be no personally identifiable information disseminated.

Compensation: Participants will not be compensated for the purposes of participating in this study.

Questions about the Research: If you have questions regarding this study, you may contact one of the investigators:

Dr. Claudia Edwards

[REDACTED]

Bil Leipold

[REDACTED]

Questions about your Rights as Research Participants: If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant or wish to report a research-related injury, please contact the following office:

[REDACTED]

Institutional Review Board Office
St. John Fisher College, 3690 East Avenue, Rochester, NY 14618

[REDACTED]

585.385.5262

Statement of Age and Consent: Your signature indicates that:
You are at least 18 years of age;
The research study has been explained to you;
Your questions have been fully answered;
You freely and voluntarily choose to participate in this research project.

Name of participant (please print):

Signature of participant: _____

Date: _____

Appendix C

Draft of Semi-Structured Interview Questions

Research Question #1: How does a White out gay male's past experiences shape their approach to the presidential search process?

1. Tell me about your institution and the work you are currently doing.
2. Tell me when you identified yourself as an out gay professional and how did it impact your professional journey?
3. How would you describe your career path within higher education?
 - a. Please explain the positions that you have held within higher education before becoming a president including what degrees you have earned.
 - b. What made you want to become a college or university president?
4. Describe to me how you made the decision to enter into the college presidential search process?
5. Where you out in your past positions before embarking on the presidential search process?

Research Question #2: How do White out gay male presidential search candidates learn about the search process?

6. How did you go about learning about the college presidential search process?
 - a. What, if any, institutes did you attend to aid you with your understanding of the college presidential search process?
 - b. If you attended an institute, how did the institute address the search process for candidates that may be diverse and outside the dominant culture of an institution?

Research Question #3: What were the perceptions of the presidential search process from a White out gay male candidate during the presidential search process?

7. From your perception, how out do you believe you were during the search process?
 - a. Please explain.
 - b. How did you go about making the decision to be out during the search process?
 - c. To what degree did being out during the search process influence your choice of what positions to apply to?
8. What issues did you anticipate with being out during the search process?
 - a. From your experience, what, if any, issues did you encounter during the search process that you might attribute to being an out gay male?
 - b. How did you go about working with search firms as an out gay male during the search process?
 - c. What guidance did search firms provide to you as an out gay male during the search process?
9. To what degree did your sexual orientation/ sexual identity shape your approach to the presidential search process?
 - a. What mentors did you have during the search process? How did they provide counsel on participating in a search as an out gay male?
10. From your perception, do you believe your search experience was different than that of a heterosexual candidate?
 - a. If yes, please explain.
 - b. If no, please explain.

11. Was being openly gay during the search an asset, a deterrent or a neutral in the search process?
- If yes, please explain.
 - If no, please explain.

Research Question #4: How does a successful White out gay male presidential candidate make a decision on institutional fit?

12. To what degree did you need to address any concerns or issues related to your sexual orientation/ sexual identity during campus visits?
- How would you describe the experiences that you had on campuses with search committee members during the campus visits?
 - To what degree was your partner or spouse involved with the search process. Please explain.
 - What, if any, issues did various institutional constituents raise during your on campus visit?
 - How or in what manner did the constituents raise these issues?
13. How long have you been in your current position?
14. How long are you looking to stay in your current position?
15. In looking for positions and institutions, were there any specific institutional characteristics that you thought were critical for you to be a successful candidate?
16. How did you go about making a final decision on institutional fit?
17. How would you describe your institution's climate around lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender issues?

a. What measures do you attribute your assessment of the environment?

18. If you had the chance to do it all over again, what might you want to change? For what reason(s)?

19. We have reached the end. But before we end, this is your chance to provide me with anything that you think I should know about this research topic or provide me with any other information that you believe I should know.

Appendix D

Initial Coding of Data

1. Tenured faculty position before becoming president
2. Provost position before president
3. May have been provost, but many had no traditional non-faculty pathways
4. Vice president before president
5. Came from outside of higher education before president
6. Number of presidential positions held during career
7. Number of years in the role of president including current position
8. More LGBT college presidents not included in this group
9. Would never search in the South
10. Wanted to stay in the West
11. Looked for a position in an urban area
12. Wanted to live and work in an affirming place
13. Working in more liberal area was critical to search
14. Had to have access to cultural activities
15. Had to have access to diversity in surrounding area
16. Searched for a position in my home state so I could make a change
17. Gradually came out when I was in a former position
18. Did not come out until later in my career and moving to a different coast
19. I have been out since graduate school or before
20. I was out in all of my past professional positions
21. Research focuses on LGBT issues and is on the resume
22. Involvement in community events that centers around LGBT issues and is on my resume
23. Have had political involvement with the HIV/AIDS crisis and other LGBT political events during their graduate and early careers
24. Becoming a college president was a lifelong dream
25. Wanted to become president as a result of my working in other roles throughout my career
26. Wanted to become a president after working closely with other presidents
27. I did attend institutes, but they were not very helpful
28. Institutes did not talk about being a candidate from a subordinated identity
29. I learned more about the search process from a mentor
30. I learned about the search process from others
31. I learned about the search process from being a member of search committees
32. Search was conducted by a search firm
33. Search was conducted by the institution
34. Search was conducted by search firm, but the board members asked me to apply
35. Search firms do not work for you they work for the school

36. Presidential searches are rather political
37. Search firms lean a little to the right
38. Search firms work for the schools and not the candidates
39. Horrible experience with a search firm a consultant outed me right before the interview
40. Search firms provide signs when asked if my being gay was a problem; it's about the communication
41. Search firms are getting better with this issue, but they could be better
42. I used a mentor to speak with about the search process
43. My mentor expressed concern from me, especially since I was searching as an out gay man
44. Being out could be seen as deterrent
45. Being out was a positive, especially being a White educated man
46. I was in the interim position and then a search was conducted
47. Changing national political environment for lesbian, gay and transgendered people
48. Partnered vs. Single
49. Partner was included in the search process and was invited to campus
50. Partner was included in the announcement of the appointment of the president
51. When you are partnered you do not have to remind people you are gay
52. Communicating during the search and interview process about being gay
53. Communicating directly with the board about what it means to hire a gay leader
54. Being out during the search and talking with board was about having integrity
55. Lesbian and gay board members reaching out to communicate
56. Belief that search experience would have been different if candidate was heterosexual
57. Belief that the search experience would have been different if I was heterosexual; this is about skill set
58. Was asked by a person on campus if partner and I could dance well
59. Belief that there was not much between their experience and that of a heterosexual candidate
60. Negative stories from past search experiences related to their sexual orientation
61. Positive stories from past search experiences related to their sexual orientation
62. Access to education was an important of the organization's mission
63. Skill Set has to match the needs for the organization
64. The institution is committed to social justice
65. Housing is off campus
66. Housing is on campus
67. Belief that campus environment for LGBT is good or excellent
68. Overall awareness of the Whiteness and Male privilege
69. Perception from participants' stories that they are change agents

Appendix E

Permission from Author to Use the Co-Cultural Communication Graphic

from: **Mark Orbe** [REDACTED]

to: Bil Leipold [REDACTED]

date: Thu, Mar 20, 2014 at 8:42 AM

subject: Re: Request to use table

Morning, Bil. You have my permission to using the co-cultural graphic described below.

Good luck with your dissertation!

mark

From: "Bil Leipold" [REDACTED]

To: "mark orbe" [REDACTED]

Cc: "bil leipold" [REDACTED]

Sent: Wednesday, March 19, 2014 2:11:23 PM

Subject: Request to use table

Dr. Orbe:

Good afternoon. My name is Bil Leipold and I am a doctoral student in the Ed.D. program at the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr School at St. John Fisher College. I am doing my degree on how out, White gay men navigate the college presidential search process.

I have chosen to use co-cultural theory as one on my theoretical frameworks. I have just completed a draft of Chapter 4 and on way to diving into chapter 5. As I have reviewed all of the chapters, I found that is much easier for readers to understand some of the theories and findings when using a graphic. As such, I would like to request to use the following graphic that you developed that provides a visual overview of your theory. Below is the graphic that I have found in your 1998a,b publications.

Co-Cultural Theory Overview

	Separation	Accommodation	Assimilation
Nonassertive	Avoiding Maintaining Interpersonal Barriers	Increasing Visibility Dispelling Stereotypes	Emphasizing Commonalities Developing Positive Face Averting Controversy
Assertive	Communicating Self Intragroup Networking Exemplifying Strengths Embracing Stereotypes	Communicating Self Intragroup Networking Utilizing Liaisons Educating Others	Extensive Preparation Overcompensating Manipulating Stereotypes Bargaining
Aggressive	Attacking Sabotaging Others	Confronting Gaining Advantage	Dissociating Mirroring Strategic Distancing Ridiculing Self

(Orbe, 1998a, b)

I would be happy to have a discussion with you about the request. I look forward to hearing back from you soon.

Thanks

Bil
