

Jeremy James

SOC 464

Dr. Marcia Ghidina

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**African American Mentorship in Western NC: My Black is Beautiful and It's
Intellectual**

Introduction

As a freshman I had no true guidance when entering college. Being a first-generation college student, I would often struggle with what classes I should be taking or what major held most of my interest. As I moved from community college into a liberal arts university located in Western North Carolina, I gained a mentor who helped me redefine my college experience. I noticed how there were very few people who looked like me in my internships or even at my school, this made me wonder are others like me getting a similar treatment?

African American's who attend predominantly white institutions (PWI) may struggle with finding mentorship on campus, because of the lack of faculty diversity. This often leads to many Blacks losing interest in classes, not completing requirements and obtaining their degree. PWI's have done a minimal job of assisting students of color adjust to college after getting accepted. Often, they leave black students to find their own peer groups and create their own safe havens on campus. They have done a worse job at ensuring that students of color are able to succeed in their academic career, while obtaining a degree or after. In this research I want to explore if black students on college campuses across Western North Carolina experience a lack of mentorship. Mentorship in

any role, from African American's or towards African Americans throughout college, can help lead to better job opportunities, a better appreciation for their major, a greater chance in continuing higher education, and a sense of belonging on campus. Mentorship provides students with the opportunity to establish lasting connections in the academic world, as well as define what their careers and further education might be like. These academic opportunities help provide a sense of assurance when working towards one's career. These are just a few of the issues African American's at PWI's are facing every semester when they do not receive faculty lead mentorship. Looking at the numbers for Western North Carolina, the U.S. department of Commerce reported in 2010 that Western North Carolina's people of color combined for nearly 12 percent of the region. While white's account for 35 percent of the region. Examining closer, The State of Black Asheville reported that its city is 79 percent white and 13 percent black. While the city's local college, UNC Asheville reports only 3 percent of the students identified as black, while 87 percent identified as white and 10 percent as Asian. I will look to interview African American students across five PWI's in Western North Carolina to gather their thoughts on, if they view lack of mentorship as an issue on their campus, and if they had proper mentorship throughout or during their college experience do they believe they would be in a better position than they are now. The main topic I look to explore is that African American students need mentorship but are not getting it.

Literature Review

Throughout the research I have reviewed microaggressions appear several times as a problem that African American students often go through while attending PWI's. A report done at the University of Southern Mississippi psychology graduate program found that

ethnic minority graduate students reported more negative race related experiences, which became associated with high levels of emotional distress, when compared to their ethnic majority peers (Clark et al. 2012). Ethnic minority students reported lower belongingness as well, lower levels of belongingness were connected through negative race-related experiences. Belongingness and autonomy were significantly associated with self-reported academic engagement for both ethnic minority and majority students (Clark et al. 2012). The National Association of School Psychologist (NASP) did a study from 2004-2005 school year that surveyed students who were the ethnic minority and majority. Only 7.4% of school psychologist identified themselves as belonging to an ethnic minority group. The statistics relate to microaggressions which come in three forms; microinsults, micro-assaults, and micro-invalidations. Microinsults are simple to understand and are race-based statements that are rude and demeaning to a person (e.g., “you’re are so articulate” saying this to a Latinx person). Micro-assaults are more blatant forms of racism that are meant to insult or hurt the intended victim and may be verbal, behavioral, or environmental. Lastly is microinvalidations, which are statements or actions that invalidate or nullify a person’s feelings, experiences, or beliefs based on his or her race (Clark et al. 2012).

Other scholars like Torress, Driscoll, and Burrow (2010) found that students of color mentioned assumptions of criminality, treatment as a second-class citizen, underestimation of personal ability, and cultural or racial isolation as everyday fighting factors. Other studies have found that students often feel unprepared when in graduate school from the lack of mentoring that they received earlier in their academic careers.

There are consequences of experiencing microaggressions, as they often result in a battle of consciousness resulting in feeling out of place. Unfortunately, this feeling is inescapable as an African American in higher education, it becomes a fight against the stereotype and how one lives one's life. This results in living double consciousness within the students of color attending the school. In some articles people mentioned a "fractured self" when being a part of their majors. This feeling was explained as having to switch and navigate between their departments. Torres et al (2010) looked at the effect of microaggressions on African American doctoral students' mental help and found that the active/daily microaggressions faced lead to increased depression symptoms and overall poor mental help. This ongoing mental state only leads to decreased activity and engaging among peers and their program.

Mentoring

Nettles and Millett (2006) chronicled that there is nearly a 50 percent attrition rate in graduate schools across all disciplines in the United States, for minorities this number increases to seventy-percent. Simply put, most disciplines lack people of color and follow high attrition rates during undergrad programs. This numbers begin to matter quickly when looking at graduation rates of graduate school for African Americans. When looking at post-secondary institutions, Tate (2017) explained that White and Asian students completed their programs at similar rates of 62 percent and 63.2 percent, respectively. While Hispanic and Black students graduated at rates of 45.8, and 38 percent, respectively. These statistics represent what a lack of mentorship means for African American and Latinx students.

Cross-Race Mentoring.

David et al. (2017) used quantitative data to compare a group of PhD underrepresented minority and white PhD students for career outcomes. Through the study they found that having access during graduate school to both individual, instrumental mentoring and communal, psychosocial mentoring increased the likelihood of minority scholars. Studies also found that cross-race mentoring was the most successful instrumental mentoring, in terms of outcomes, came from white male dissertation advisors. This is due to a high number of PhD holders being white males.

Faculty diversity is the key to solving the lack of mentorship for minority students in PWI's. Achieving Diversity is easier said than done as there are several obstacles people of color must face to join a staff department, then gain tenure. One can place blame of the lack of diversity among faculty members, and on the universities and how they do not secure spots for people of color. David et al. (2017) explain how after several years' a faculty is often placed on tenure or replaced by contingent faculty. This process disrupts an order that could be established to help solidify and diversify the programs at the university. Whereas, Austin (2002) study showed that graduate students did not receive the mentoring they wanted or deserved. Over a third of students interviewed claimed they did not have faculty members who guided them, out of the five concerns they stressed mentoring was number one and diverse teaching staff was number three. These two authors relate by solving the others question. The reason these students are not happy with faculty members and the guidance they received is because the schools replace the few African American teachers

How Does Mentorship Appear?

Mentorship may appear in five forms or dimensions as Tillman refers to it. Previous research shows the lack of African American faculty is the reason behind a low percentage of blacks receiving degrees higher than a bachelors. Tillman (2001) contributes on the literature of faculty-to-faculty mentoring for African Americans: saying that analysis of assigned mentoring relationships and the concept of the isolation of African American faculty in PWI's can be defined better to create better chances of graduation. Tillman describes five key dimensions as a way to build better mentoring relationships; Mentor-Protégé pairs, phases of the mentor protégé relationship, mentor functions, benefits to the protégé, lastly race and gender in mentoring relationships. Each of these play a key role in helping develop one to becoming a well-equipped mentor and assuring that your mentee can co-exist without you once the relationship is done.

Race and gender are one of the elements Tillman mentioned in her research. Out of the five dimensions, Tillman's findings on race and gender showed the strongest results. Tillman found that same-race matches may be the strongest predictor of success in a mentoring relationship; most mentoring relationships tend to be same-race rather than cross-race relationships. In a study found that most look for mentors who are of similar race to them. Nonminority mentors were less likely to be as accepting, trusting, and supportive with minority proteges than with nonminority proteges. The report also found that women are subject to picking males as their dissertation advisor knowing bias can prevent them from submitting work (Kalbfeish and Davies, 1991; McCormick, 1997; Thomas, 1990).

While some African American's at PWI's can find mentors that might help support them through their college career, others look to brotherhood or sisterhood. This can be

defined as fraternities, sorties, groups of friends, and clubs. Jackson (2012) interviewed several African American students apart of Uplift and Progress (UP), groups that can be found across college campuses in the United States. What was unique about Jackson's research was the description of his ethnography studies. There were moments where Jackson would describe as a group of men who are marginalized and want to express their emotions, violate some of the cultural tenets of manhood, and simply relate to one another in a white-space on campus. As Jackson's studies goes on he discovers that this 'brotherhood' does not allow for one to fail. Within the brotherhood there were rituals that was formed, this allowed for UP members to open to one another so that they may share experiences, goals, what they should aim for, and how to deal with microaggressions.

Research Design

I conducted several interviews at different colleges across the Western region of North Carolina (WNC), to research the experience of African American college students at PWI's, and how well they receive mentorship. My recruitment process for my interviews was to send out a class announcement that would be made by professors as well as send them flyers so that they may be posted around the college. In addition, I wrote out a brief statement about my research to the five schools I selected in western North Carolina, with my attached IRB approval and consent forms. I made sure to contact different department heads at each university and club organizations to help me get in contact with students. I encouraged students from all disciplines to participate as I wanted a diverse range of majors and personal backgrounds. The invitation was specifically for students who were eighteen years and older and African American, as my research is specific about mentorship among Blacks. After my initial letter to the students I used snowballing effect to

reach others that I interviewed. Throughout the interview my role solely was to ask the participant the designed questions, while providing a comfortable and non-bias atmosphere. All my interviews were conducted in a one on one setting either at the Intercultural Center at UNCA or the interviewee's living space. Those at other locations I interviewed at their school either in their dorm or at their apartments. I would start the interview by giving a brief analysis of the questions, what my research was about, and then ask for consent as necessary for the IRB and valid research.

Reoccurring Themes

Some of the themes I will be searching for in my interviews are interactions among black students and their mentors or faculty of color. This can be defined as the belief of seeing others in a major or even going through similar process to you, helps improve the retention rate and encourages students to want to be a part of the university (Gasman, 2016). Other sociology and psychology researchers have been studying student interactions on college campuses, which points that mentorship from those of similar backgrounds, can have a positive effect on not only college students but kids in the K-12 public school system (Clark et al). Brunsam et al (2017) have researched and proven that opposite race and sex mentoring helps both sides increase awareness of the differences and struggles African Americans and people of color often face. These ideas help us realize that inclusion on college campuses is very important when it comes to the African American experience. Through my questions I looked to explore which themes held up to African American's in Western North Carolina. Including, how much their background has made up their decision on choosing a college in WNC, and just how much it reflects their thoughts while currently attending a PWI. I ask this question as a reflection to see if they

think mentoring would be better received at another university. The last bit of my questions examines diversity and inclusion on campus. I was looking to see if any of my interviewee's were involved on campus, I was interested to how brotherhood or sisterhood played a role in WNC and their African American students. Brotherhood and sisterhood being defined as historically black fraternities and sorties.

Most of the themes I'm exploring through my questions I see as issues students of color are currently facing or feel should be asked. My questions relating to race and ethnicity look directly at the staff and faculty which allows for students to give me a summary on their thoughts on what they think should be improved. While my other questions about how their past and genetic make-up create a lens for me to see how their race has played a part in college.

Findings

In order to explore whether African American students on college campuses across Western North Carolina experiencing a lack of mentorship I conducted interviews across five schools in the Western North Carolina area. The schools I selected were UNC Asheville, Western Carolina University, Appalachian State University, Warren Willison College, and Mars Hill University. I chose these colleges because they are the most notable within the area and pull in a high population of students. These five schools roughly have thirty-four thousand students, with Appalachian state having the highest student population at roughly nineteen thousand people. To better define these schools and their ethnic make-up, none of the five colleges have over twenty percent of African American students, or any other ethnic group for that matter. These numbers can be found from each school's website under their yearly demographics report. These five colleges are predominately white institutions.

When asking students during interviews about their respective campus's diversity the answers reflected what I had originally anticipated. There was little to no diversity of African Americans on or off campus. The Appalachian Mountains have a rich history of being a predominately white location the schools in this area match that demographic. A strong percent of students I interviewed, particularly UNC Asheville students, would speak on student diversity. A focus group I interviewed would focus on the theme of diversity and how it looked at their campus. They saw racial diversity on campus mostly through their peers and faculty members, but all agree that it still lacks: "I might have the most diverse major by school statistic on campus... I'm a Health and wellness major. I say that, because all the athletes are in it. They bring the most diversity to this school." Another student added, "It has gotten better, I can say that. When I first got here it wasn't that way, we were very much... I had a lot of white friends, now I have more people around like me. I can look at BSA (Black Student Association) to see more or different Black people. Now [in] different buildings and at parties I see more of us. It's grown as I've become a senior." Another student shares her thought, "I would like to agree with everything that has been said before [by this point a few others had spoken and they all came to the consensus that the school lacks diversity but has grown a little]. But I want to add that this school [has] diverse white people, then a small section of "diverse" black people. But if you look at this as a whole, [then] yes it has gotten better. It's gone from a head nod every three days to a head nod possibly every 30 minutes (everyone chuckles). Also, with the staff [coming in] too, because we've had some influential staff leave, and they have been trying to some degree to bring in replacement staff. That is helping, it makes it a bit easier, because it provides the incoming freshmen with a better adjustment. They're not coming in anymore

saying I want to transfer after the first week, like the past few years have. It's not a lot, but it's enough for the time. We're moving... I guess." Another woman gives the final remark saying, "I agree with that, [in reference to the last girls statement] it's really exciting to see the gradual increase on this campus. But I think it would be better if we had more races on this campus. We have an incredibly low Asian and Latinx population, to the point I never see the few we have around that much."

At Mars Hill a similar theme emerged. They have a very high population of African American students on campus, but the trend cannot be explained. This means a high percentage of students of color attend but see few faculty or staff that resemble them. When asking around the area to find out as to why they have a high population of students and low faculty diversity, the response I was met with was most attended the school for athletics or health and wellness. This does equate for a difference with schools like UNC Asheville not having a football program which generates more spots to be filled than a basketball team. The football program ensures there will be more people on scholarship that are able to attend college and get an education. Leaderman (2012) did a study at over 76 schools and reported that black men make up 2.8 percent of full-time, degree-seeking undergraduate students, but 57.1 percent of football team members and 64.3 percent of male basketball players. The second response I got was that Mars Hill and Madison County have a grant in place that allows for students in the surrounding area to attend college for free if they maintain a certain grade point average. This as a result would increase the population of students attending college since affordability is among the top reasons most do not attend college.

They were not the only people to express the lack of diversity at their campus. Those from Appalachian State and Western Carolina felt a similar way when assessing their school's diversity. They would go into detail not just about the lack of diversity on campus but in their major's lack of diversity among students. One student at Appalachian expressed that during his master's program he would often notice he was one of three students in any of his classes of color. When asked how he felt about being one of three students in his major he responded by saying: "It did not steer me away from school or wanting to be there. It was a conscious decision to be there, at that school [App State]. I knew I would experience and go through certain things that my peers and family possibly would not want experience. That's part of getting the education sometimes, knowing that you might be the only one. Especially if it means being in a situation you do not want to particularly be in."

A student from Western North Carolina felt a similar way about signing up to attend a PWI. One student went into detail during in the interview that he declined to go to a Historically Black College because he did not want a monolithic experience. (Although, through one could argue that attending a predominately white institute and being one of the few people of color at any of the five campuses would be a monolithic experience).

Analyzing a bit more after my research questions, I also searched for how diverse each school's faculty was. According to the yearly demographic's reports, UNC Asheville had the highest percentage of faculty diversity with seven-point three percent of the faculty was African American, Warren Wilson was next with four-point four percent, Mars Hill and Western Carolina tied with two-point four percent, despite Mars Hill having a high African American student population of nineteen-point-seven percent. Appalachian State had the worst faculty

diversity with one-point nine percent African American. When asked the question on faculty diversity students from Appalachian State, much like every other school all told me that having faculty of color would greatly improve their experience. One even mentioned how his graduate school experience could have been better if had a person of color present to help him navigate through the field. One student said, "Yes, faculty of color would make my school experience better. When you can physically see something, and it's in front of you. It lets you know it's away! Sites [seeing people] like that encourage me to keep pushing." While another said, "...There [was] one, no... Yeah, I'd say one class that was taught by a person of color and she was a woman. This is my major and graduate school we're talking about, and I had one person of color, remind you I'm a sociology major."

Across my study, each student surprisingly agreed that having someone of color could be beneficial to their education. Everyone in the study said seeing a professor of color in front of one makes the goal more achievable and not as much of a dream. The goal being completing college and going for your dream career.

When speaking about faculty diversity, people would naturally steer into mentorship and make mention that the lack of faculty diversity on their respective campuses made finding mentors that much harder. Through my interviews, specifically at UNC Asheville I have realized that some majors in the science and natural sciences lack faculty diversity and formal mentorship. Formal mentorship is mentorship received through the faculty at the university. From students' responses they seem to have a hard time receiving help and navigating through their major. This goes for all disciplines but specifically for the sciences, if you do not have faculty lead mentorship, then operating in your discipline will seem impossible. As you will be

uncertain of the classes you will need for your degree, internships to go for, and how to position yourself within your major. Exactly seven out of the eleven people I interviewed were first generation college students. They mentioned that throughout their college experience that navigating through the institution until they received mentorship was difficult. Two students with pseudonyms of Tiffany and Lauren are in the science department had this to share with me during the interviews; Tiffany - "No, the environmental studies is just... (I interrupt and ask about another student.) Yeah! It's just us two... Like, it's in a big room, of like 40-50 kids and it's only three of us total. With not even a professor of color. My mentors are my peer group. [person a] I go to for any advice and environmental wise, she helped me get my internship. Plus, she has helped me form the classes I need to take. Then [person B and C] I go to for social problems, and [person D] is my mentor of how to get through classes and not mess up." Lauren – "It's hard to find that here in the science department. There's only like one black professor. I only have a handful of black people in my department as students that could even help so, no... I have a hard time talking to people about this [Mentorship], because my advisor is white and doesn't understand me. So, when she gives advice it's not really that good, it's just like you should go into this because you're great at it rather than trying to discuss interest with me. I think that it's not always physical either. I've been told that I seem threatening. People think that I will help them fight, but I'm not violent at all, I know I look angry but I'm probably just deep in thought [laughs]."

The most shocking part of studying mentorship was just how infrequently these students were receiving it. Out of my eleven interviews, only one person was receiving faculty advised mentorship. Other forms of mentorship include, brotherhood and sisterhood (HBCU

Greek life), community, and peer groups. All three of these forms were met in my study, but one-on-one faculty involved mentorship was not. Students may be receiving mentorship but not in the form they need it to continue with their career or education. When asked why they do not believe as to why they receive mentorship question went into several fields. Some saw it as their appearance that affects their reason. One student at Mars Hill said; "People judge me off my appearance. From me wearing shorts, a white beater, du-rag, and some J's [Jordan's]... I can go out and you can see it... Professors and whoever look at you different, like "who is this dude, he looks ghetto." I've even had a football coach tell me I can't wear something, which is out of his right. He's not paying for my education. You can't label me as a bad guy and you don't know me. My appearance shouldn't even matter... [Continues on] The female professors are defiantly afraid or intimidated by me. The male professors not as much. But I imagine they are not used to seeing people like me. Before I had a mentor [I could not see] past my four-year degree. I wasn't even thinking about higher education. The thought wasn't on my mind, it had to be bought up through conversations with him as our relationship built. So, I'm thankful for that, for him, because he pushes me to go for more and do more."

Another student from Appalachian State spoke on his experience being a part of a brotherhood. He would mention how much of an impact this has made on his life as he would not have finished school if it were not for his Kappa brothers; "When I became a member of my fraternity, there were older people who helped show me the way. They helped me get too and through college. That was one of the beauties I noticed, they weren't just trying to get me to college and show me the finish line but help me become fully functional human in society. I wasn't able to make that connection with a fraternity until I got to college. They would help

push me and tell me I had the potential to finish. Even with my masters this was important more pivotal. They still hit me up now just saying when you are going for that Ph.D. I do not think the average white professor would be able to do that on this campus or on a PWI. Because you need that since of knowing or belonging to understand what it is like to be black in this system.”

The most surprising results came from inquiry about their experiences in Western North Carolina, how they believed their appearance affects them, and microaggressions. The last was the most shocking, despite living in a ‘post-racist’ society. Each of the categories became more disheartening as I moved along with this study do to the stories, I would hear about outright racism that I would hear about even on my campus. Most of the interviews suggested that they moved to Western North Carolina upon getting into their respective universities. The trend that occurred was that each student would tell me a little about their personal life and how their day was spent. From here they would move into telling stories about growing up and the age the first realized their race. My question would then shift to asking about experiences here, and they often laughed and said back, “What free time?” Speaking to the students about this issue brought to my attention most students of color are having to balance work, school, and a personal life that is very much ignored so that they may maintain a position at their predominately white institute.

Respondents spoke about their appearance and how it has related to their experience growing up and now living in Western North Carolina. Three students Tiffany, Bradley and Jacob spoke on their past and how this relates to their current college experience; Jacob said, “When I was younger, I used to want straight hair because everyone around me had it. Now, in college

and being one of the few black people I'm happy to stand out. It's more of an empowering thing, whether it be skin color, hair, or style I know I'm different. Me personally, I don't think I intimidate them [Faculty]. But one of the basketball players who are like six foot ten and might speak a little different probably go through that problem. I would hope the professor wouldn't be intimidated by them or how they look, but I'm sure they face it." Bradley – "Yes, everyday! Just with the identity of being a male of color, I have gone through time periods where I know I can't dress to "black" I have to dress white. But once I got to college, I questioned what the hell does that mean. But I understood the concept of having to dress and perform a certain way because I'm already 3 steps behind on that process [hinting at his racial identity being a hinder]. So, I come in and make up on those 3 steps by my appearance, with my communication skills and what I can bring to the table" Tiffany – "I mostly judge my appearance by what people define as black. So, they think I'm a white girl or act like one, I'm just bubbly. There are other adjectives to use to describe me by. I also get judged by what I wear or how I look, or that I like to hike. I get judged for being a vegetarian. I had someone ask if I like fried chicken or Kool aid, he then ended the statement by saying, "Damn, I'm blacker than you!" Like, wait no! you're not! I used to have a nickname at work back at home and they would call me Oreos. Maybe I intimidate them, I don't really know. My current ecology teacher he has been the most okay with talking to me. Other than that, I feel like I go through the motions with teachers, I have to walk up to them."

Through these comparisons of appearance and their experience it seems that most of the students do not know exactly where they stand in the eyes of their peers and professors. The idea that most students encounter these issues while attending predominately white

institutions comes as no surprise to me as a black man and may be why so many decide to not finish school. Having to face one's identity and then explain it every day to people around you become draining, it is not up to the students to help their peers of non-color understand their culture. Many students I interviewed faced constant microaggressions and racism while trying to achieve their degree. Bradly who attends UNCA gave a heartfelt story about an encounter in the library that steps behind the simple microaggression typically experienced on college campuses, he explained; "I do not know if I pay that much attention to... now Macroaggressions (joking to mean racism) I put my energy into. I had one incident that made me realize, I'm really out here in this black body (laughing). About two years ago, I was coming back to campus from winter break. I was going to the library to do some work. When I sat down, I noticed this white guy beside me looking at me angrily. He started saying stuff under his breath, then he got louder and started saying "step outside." Then progressed to "you want to fight," as I got more worried, I texted my mom and girlfriend in case something happened. I was still confused, but he kept directing his words at me the entire time. He eventually started reaching for his bag, so I left my stuff and took the longest way to the front desk. The guy at the front was very helpful, as the racist guy started to leave the library, he eyed me the entire time. When I walked back to my area, he had spit all over my stuff. It was really uncalled for, he left his cup and we smelled it but there was no sign of alcohol. So, it was just a racist action. That's when I realized I'm in this body for life..."

Jacob's story is only one of the many I have collected about experiences, appearance, and microaggressions on college campuses in Western North Carolina. Findings show me that

much more needs to be done when examining. These issues that students are going through can easily be prevented, but often go ignored at universities.

Maya Angelou once compared displacement (her race) to be the rust on the razor that threatens the throat. The lack of faculty diversity and faculty advised mentorship is the rust that is threatening African American students. Their displacement is like what Bradley was trying to get at in his point above. Choosing to be at a non-Historically Black College is deciding to not have a monolithic experience, but because of the lack of diversity the sacrifice is displacement into a culture that is sometimes unable to understand the needs of people like myself when attending a university. As for the future I would love to continue this research in other areas around America and look at HBCU's and how they handle mentorship.

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Appendix A

“African American Mentorship in Western NC: My Black is Beautiful and It’s Intellectual

Interview Guide

Jeremy M. James

Department of Sociology

UNC-Asheville

Informed Consent: Thank you for volunteering to participate in the undergraduate research project exploring African American mentorship in Western North Carolina. I am interested in learning what you think on the topic and have to say on your experience with mentorship while attending a PWI as an African American student. You were selected as a participant due to the qualifications I have listed on the recruitment letter. I ask that you please read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study. By participating in this study, you will be agreeing to a focus group interview that will last approximately 45 minutes to one hour. Interview content will include discussions about race particularly as it relates to mentorship in the college system. Unless you express an interest in updates on the project, you will not be contacted after the interview. Do you have any questions about the project? Having been informed about the nature of the interview and study, are you willing to participate?

Yes ___ If yes, would you like to receive a copy of the final report?

No ___ If no, thank you for considering being interviewed.

Interview Questions

1. What year are you?
 - a. What's your major?
 - b. How old are you?
2. Are you from N.C?
 - a. If so what city
 - b. If not, where from
 - c. What drew you to this school?
3. What has your experience been like living in Western NC for (however long)? What are the activities you enjoy doing in your free time?
4. At what age did you start to realize your racial identity?
 - a. Has it ever deterred you away from college, if so why?
 - b. How often do you notice it on campus?
 - c. More importantly how often is it brought up by others?
5. How diverse would you say your school is?
6. That being asked, how diverse is your major?
 - a. Do you get to learn about people who look like yourself as much as you'd like?
 - b. When you do learn about those in your discipline who are like you, how often is it something positive/negative?
7. Have you witnessed or heard microaggressions or other racialized language on campus?
 - a. If yes what happened?

- i. How did that make you feel?
 - b. If no, do you think your school does a good job on calling out offenses?
 - 8. Do you think your campus includes you and your identity in making your campus a safe space?
 - a. If so what are they doing
 - b. If not, what could they do better?
 - 9. Is there a place of support (Safe/Black Space) for students of color on your campus?
 - a. If yes, what is it?
 - i. How do they help?
 - b. Do you think, or does the support space benefit the students of color?
 - c. If not, would you want one? Do you think it's important to have for P.O.C.
 - 10. Do you have a mentor/role model?
 - a. Could you tell me a little about your mentor?
 - b. If no, why do you think you don't have a mentor?
 - c. Do you think mentorship matters in college?
 - 11. Does your school encourage you to seek out a mentor/ peer group within your major?
 - 12. Do you think having peer mentorship is important?
 - a. Why/why not?
 - 13. Do you think people judge you on your appearance, meaning on campus or off?
 - a. Yes, how do they judge you?
 - i. How does that make you feel?
 - ii. How do they respond to you physically?

14. Do you think who you are, rather what you are and have been through intimidates professors (possible mentors) from trying to connect or interact with you?
15. Do you think having a mentor/role model would help encourage you to continue for a higher degree in your discipline?
16. Are you apart of any multicultural clubs or etc.?
17. Have you ever experienced microaggressions while being on campus or in the classroom?
 - a. If so, can you tell me about it?
18. Would faculty of color, specifically ones who look like you make your experience better?