

EXAMINING CPE'S DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION POLICY AND ITS  
IMPACT ON HR DIRECTORS TO RECRUIT AND HIRE FACULTY OF COLOR AT  
ASSOCIATE-LEVEL COLLEGES IN THE COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY

BY

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Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of  
Eastern Kentucky University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

**DOCTORATE OF EDUCATION**

2021

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## Introduction

A deliberate commitment and targeted effort to recruit and hire faculty of color must be intentional by college administrators and diversity, equity, and inclusion departments to increase this underrepresented demographic (Ponjuan, Gasman, Hirshman, & Esters, 2011). Recruiting strategies and allocated budgets to support efforts in this area to meet inclusive hiring goals continue to be a critical issue facing today's colleges and universities (Whittaker, Montgomery, & Martinez Acosta, 2015). State initiatives, institutional recruitment strategies, and overall societal changes force colleges and universities to cogitate differently about recruiting and hiring faculty of color. However, the diminished percentages of this underrepresented group have not supported these institutional initiatives over the years.

Nationally, higher education institutions have not recruited or hired faculty of color at a level reflecting the overall population in the U.S. (Bunzel, 1990; Glazer, 2003). Historical research demonstrates that recruiting and hiring faculty of color is critical to retaining minority and non-minority students. Faculty of color serve as positive role models, respected mentors, and support resources to many students of color (Isaac & Boyer, 2007; Jayakumar, Howard, Allen, & Han, 2009). Nevertheless, faculty of color are excluded in the academy of American higher education (Jaschik, 2017; Johnson, 2016). In an article entitled, *On the value of diversity in university admissions*, the Association of American Colleges and Universities (1997) asserted that students gained significantly from learning, which occurs in a multicultural environment.

We speak first and foremost as educators. We believe that our students benefit significantly from education that takes place within a diverse setting. In the course of their university education, our students encounter and learn from others who have backgrounds and characteristics very different from their own. As we seek to prepare students for life in the twenty-first century, the educational value of such encounters will become more critical, not less, than in the past.

A very substantial portion of our curriculum is enhanced by the discourse made possible by our students' heterogeneous backgrounds. Equally, a significant part of education in our institutions takes place outside the classroom, in extracurricular activities where students learn how to work together, as well as to compete, how to exercise leadership, as well to build consensus.

If our institutional capacity to bring together a genuinely diverse group of students is removed—or severely reduced—then the quality and texture of the education we provide will be significantly diminished. (Association of American Colleges & Universities, On the Importance of Diversity in University Admissions, *The New York Times*, April 24, 1997, p. A27)

Bollinger (2007), who wrote and spoke extensively on the value of racial, socio-economic, and cultural diversity in higher education, surmised that higher educational institutions in the U.S. needed to continue to keep pace with the shifting demographics of

student populations to remain relevant (pp. 26-29). Bollinger inferred faculty of color must play a critical role in framing the classroom discussion, and any lecture hall that does not have significant representation from members of different races produces an impoverished discussion. In a prospectus delivered to the University of Maryland at College Park administrators, students of color made known the lack of professors who look like them hindered their college experience because they sometimes had difficulty finding mentors and connecting with their White teachers (Wells, 2016, para. 4).

Additionally, the U.S. continues to face ongoing challenges with diversity and representation among higher education faculty members despite renewed diversity, equity, and inclusion policies. Overall, faculty representation relative to the nation's demographics falls short for gender and ethnoracial backgrounds. Faculty include professors, associate professors, assistant professors, instructors, and lecturers. The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2016) reported only 5% of the 1.5 million full-time faculty at degree-granting institutions were people of color. Black males, black females, and Latinx males each accounted for 2% of full-time professors. By contrast, 4% were black females among full-time assistant professors, while black males accounted for 3%. Individuals with two or more races each made up 1% or less of the total number of full-time assistant professors.

According to a U.S. Department of Education (2018) report, 55% of full-time professors are white males. The same report indicated ethnoracial faculty diversity steadily increased since 1993 (from 3% to 5% for Latinx/Latinx faculty and from 4% to 6% for Black/African American faculty). Ethnoracial is a term that captures both ethnic

and racial groups such as Latinx, North Africans, and Arabs, who count as White in the U.S. census reports. However, their daily experiences are not those of White Americans (IGI Global, 2020). The most substantial gains for faculty diversity have occurred in non-tenured positions such as adjunct professors, which is problematic considering there are no specific programs currently in place to promote URM adjunct professors to full-time, tenured faculty positions.

### **Statement of the Problem**

A problem still exists in recruiting and hiring faculty of color at associate-level colleges in the Commonwealth of Kentucky. The need for public community colleges to intensify their recruiting and hiring strategies of this demographic is evident. However, current data and trends do not reflect the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE) Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) policy established from 2016-2021. According to Integrated Postsecondary Education Data Systems (IPEDS), 1,596 total faculty and staff work in the Kentucky Community and Technical College System. Only 4% are Black/African American, 0.04% are American Indian/Native Alaskan, 0.05% were Latinx, 0.01% Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and 0.9% were two or more races (2019). The CPE defines underrepresented minorities as American Indian/Native Alaskan, Black/African American, Latinx/Hispanic, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander heritage, or self-identified as two or more races.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of the phenomenological study is to examine the CPE's DEI policy and its impact on HR directors' ability to recruit and hire faculty of color at associate-

level colleges in the Commonwealth of Kentucky. Phenomenological research is a design of inquiry that describes individuals' lived experiences about a phenomenon defined by the participants (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 13). Douglas (2006), maintained that college communities must promote diversity and support an inclusive culture rather than an exclusive culture and support social integration rather than isolation. Although increasing faculty of color at associate-level colleges in Kentucky is part of the CPE's diversity, equity, and inclusion initiative, policy and procedures to recruit and hire faculty of color at the community college level are not intentional or strategically implemented.

### **Background of the study**

More important than just data, recruiting and hiring faculty of color is at the root of associate-level colleges' future success (Kayes & Singley, 2010). Significant issues such as student retention and graduation rates vastly improve when associate-level colleges hire faculty of color. According to Lovell, Alexander, and Kirkpatrick (2002), many significant educational issues facing community colleges revolve around diversifying faculty. The academicians further stated that faculty of color add value and credibility to student recruitment efforts if hired on a full-time basis. Professors of color also act as recruitment beacons for other professors to consider positions at associate-level colleges. Thus, recruiting faculty of color becomes more critical than ever.

Heilig, Flores, Souza, Barry, and Monroy (2019) queried their study if increased discussions of diversity and faculty recruiting programs created a more diverse professoriate. The researchers found that colleges still do not attain substantial growth in racial diversity among faculty members.

While diversity, equity, and inclusion are often widely promoted in the higher education discourse, there is much more institutional action necessary to improve the ethnoracial and gender demographics of the faculty in U.S. colleges and universities' intellectual communities to impact educational practices and outcomes positively. (Heilig et al., *Latinx Journal of Law and Poverty*, Considering the ethnoracial and gender diversity of faculty in the United States, 2, 1-31, 2019).

### **The Kentucky Plan**

Before 1954, Kentucky practiced a de jure segregated system of higher education. The U.S. Office of Civil Rights (OCR) mandated Kentucky to develop a desegregation plan that would bring the state into compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Initially known as the *Kentucky Plan*, the desegregation plan was revised several times from 1982 to 1995 before being titled the *Strategic Plan for Kentucky Higher Education* (CPE, 1999). The plan idea implemented strategies and increased minority hiring by requiring the state's colleges and universities to increase the number and proportion of African American faculty and staff to mirror individual colleges' local population levels. It provided equal opportunities, promoted economic development, and enhanced the quality of life for Kentuckians (CPE, 1999). In 2007, the CPE became the governing body of higher education in Kentucky and revised the plan again in 2010.

### **CPE's DEI Policy**

Its board of directors adopted the 2010-2015 CPE Policy and Framework for Institution Diversity Plan. Under this policy, CPE provided a broad definition of diversity. Institutions were required to create plans that addressed, at a minimum, four

areas: student body diversity that mirrors the diversity of Kentucky or the institution's service area; closing achievement gaps; workforce diversity; and campus climate (CPE, 2016, pp. 2-5). CPE adopted the current *Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policy (DEI)* in 2016-2017 to address the inequities in its *Policy and Framework for Institution Diversity Plan* by focusing on three areas: opportunity, success, and impact.

### **Opportunity**

Opportunity focuses on minimum admission standards and ACT standardized test scores to ensure African American and Latinx students have the opportunity to attend college. Each associate-level college aims to increase URM student retention and graduation rates through targeted recruiting and retention strategies. URM enrollment at Kentucky Community and Technical College System colleges was 11,746 in 2016-2017. It decreased to 11,485 in 2017-2018. In 2018-2019, it was 12,329 and rose to its highest level of 13,126 in 2019-2020. In 2020-2021, it dropped to 12,371 due to the COVID-19 pandemic (CPE Progress Report, 2019).

### **Success**

Success involves retention strategies and graduation rates of African American and Latinx students. Data reveals three-year graduation rates for URM students at KCTCS colleges rose to an average of 21.76% from 2016-2021. In 2016-2017, they were 17.2%; in 2017-2018 and 2018-2019, they were 22%. In 2019-2020, they reached their highest percentage total of 24.3%. During 2020-2021 the rate decreased to 22.5% due to the COVID-19 pandemic. (CPE Progress Report, 2019).

KCTCS awarded 16,818 associate degrees and credentials to URM students from the 2016-2020 academic years. The number of degrees and credentials rose each year during this time frame. In 2016-2017, there were 3,705 students, in 2017-2019, it rose from 4,067 to 4,367, to 4,679 in 2019-2021 (CPE, 2021).

### **Impact**

Impact focuses on tenured and non-tenured URM and examines campus climate, inclusiveness, and cultural competency at each institution. Each KCTCS college reports its URM faculty and staff numbers to the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) yearly. According to IPEDS (2020), from 2016-2020 academic semesters, 1,596 total faculty members work in KCTCS colleges. Only 4% are African American, 0.04% American Indian/Native Alaskan, 0.05% Latinx, 0.01% Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and 0.9% are two or more races. The CPE defines underrepresented minorities as American Indian/Native Alaskan, Black/African American, Latinx/Latinx, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander heritage, or self-identified as two or more races. The data indicates the percentage of faculty of color has not changed since CPE DEI policy implementation in 2016.

The CPE analyzes data from associate-level colleges each year to determine if the college is progressing toward its annual DEI mandates. CPE will review the 2016-2021 DEI policy at the end of the 2020-2021 academic year and decide to extend, amend, or revise it. Despite the efforts to increase faculty and staff of color throughout Kentucky, diversifying the academy remains statistically low. Fifty-two years after the

*Kentucky Plan*, the state still lags in recruiting and hiring faculty and staff of color at associate-level colleges.

### **Kentucky Community and Technical College System**

KCTCS is a statewide community and technical college created after the Kentucky Postsecondary Education Improvement Act of 1997. It comprises 16 associate-level colleges with over 70 campuses strategically located throughout the Commonwealth of Kentucky in both rural and urban areas. Each college has a DEI department comprised of a director, faculty, and staff responsible for ensuring that each college is culturally competent. Each college also must increase underrepresented student enrollment and foster a culturally inclusive campus. KCTCS colleges send yearly reports to CPE, informing them of their progress on DEI initiatives to ensure they are approaching mandated increases. Each college must also submit a yearly report on what strategies they are implementing to meet DEI goals systematically. CPE uses specific criteria to determine if each college is sufficiently meeting the percentage mandates.

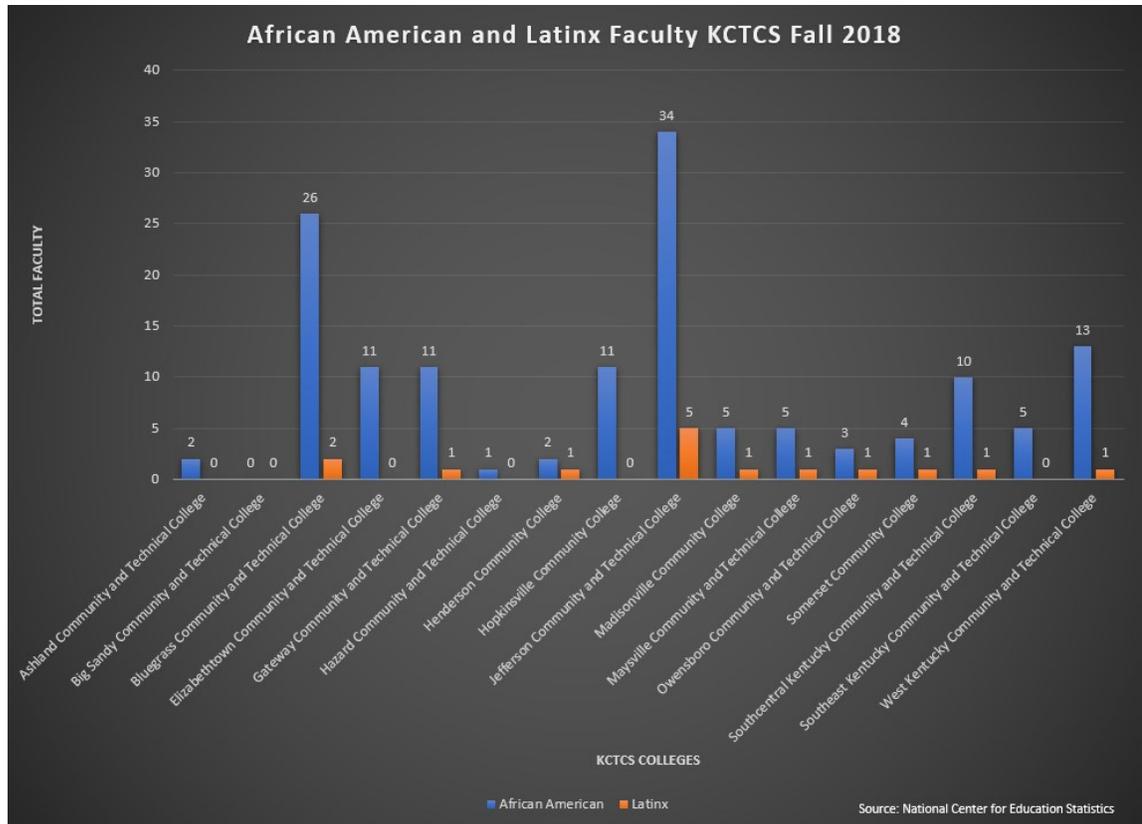
### **KCTCS Colleges Faculty Mandates**

Increasing the number of faculty of color must become intentional and strategic if KCTCS colleges expect to meet their diversity goals as mandated by the CPE from 2016-2021. CPE's plan for increasing African American and Latinx faculty and staff does not mandate increases for each college, instead of increased percentages overall for the KCTCS system. Each college uses this guideline as a basis for its diversity goals each year. This metric includes a portion of instructional, full-time, and tenure track faculty from underrepresented minority communities. CPE defines faculty of color as American

Indian/Native Alaskan, Black/African American, Latinx, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander heritage, or self-identified as two or more races (*CPE Metrics Guide*, 2016-2021). According to the *CPE Progress Report* (2019), from 2013 to 2017, full-time African American and Latinx faculty increased slightly from 5.6% to 6%. In 2018-2019, the percent of faculty and staff of color remained at 6%, far below CPE's 9.3% mandated target rate for the entire system midway toward policy inception (pp. 22-25).

KCTCS colleges do not have a policy systemwide to increase URM faculty and staff percentages, preferring to rely on CPE's impact policy area to grow this demographic. Each college is required to report monthly to CPE its URM faculty numbers. However, colleges are not mandated to show how, or if, they are recruiting and hiring faculty of color metrics because there are no pronounced percentages to increase faculty of color. Table 1 below represents African American and Latinx faculty at KCTCS colleges during the 2018-2019 academic year.

Table 1



### CPE DEI Student Mandates

The CPE DEI Plan for 2016-2021 mandates enrollment increases of African American and Latinx students within the KCTCS system (CPE, 2016). The plan does not institute criteria on how each college must meet these enrollment increases, leaving each institution to develop and implement its strategies. The policy states if colleges do not attract, recruit, retain and graduate students to the level expected from year to year, their state monies will be cut and given to colleges within the system with higher retention and graduation rates.

Two counties in the Commonwealth of Kentucky with the most significant urban population of minorities are Jefferson and Fayette. Each boasts the highest enrollment totals of African American and Latinx students in KCTCS colleges. In 2016-2017, JCTC had 19.18% African American and 7% Latinx students. Of the 11,908 total students enrolled at JCTC that academic year, students of color comprised 4,737. Bluegrass Community and Technical College had 11.2% African American and 4% Latinx students. Of the 9,943 students enrolled at BCTC in 2016-2017, 2,847 were students of color (KCTCS Fact Book, 2016). Table 2 below shows the faculty to student ratios for African American faculty to African American student ratios at KCTCS colleges.

Table 2

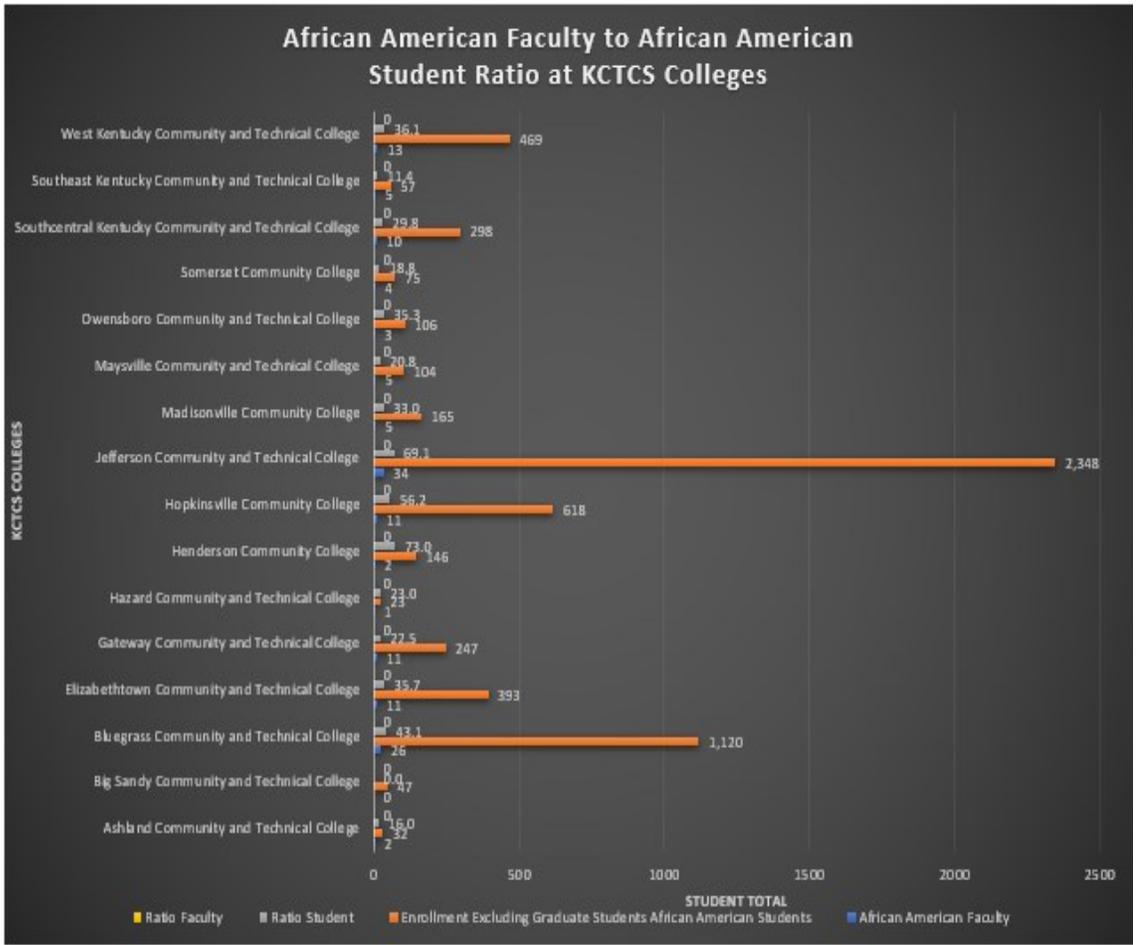
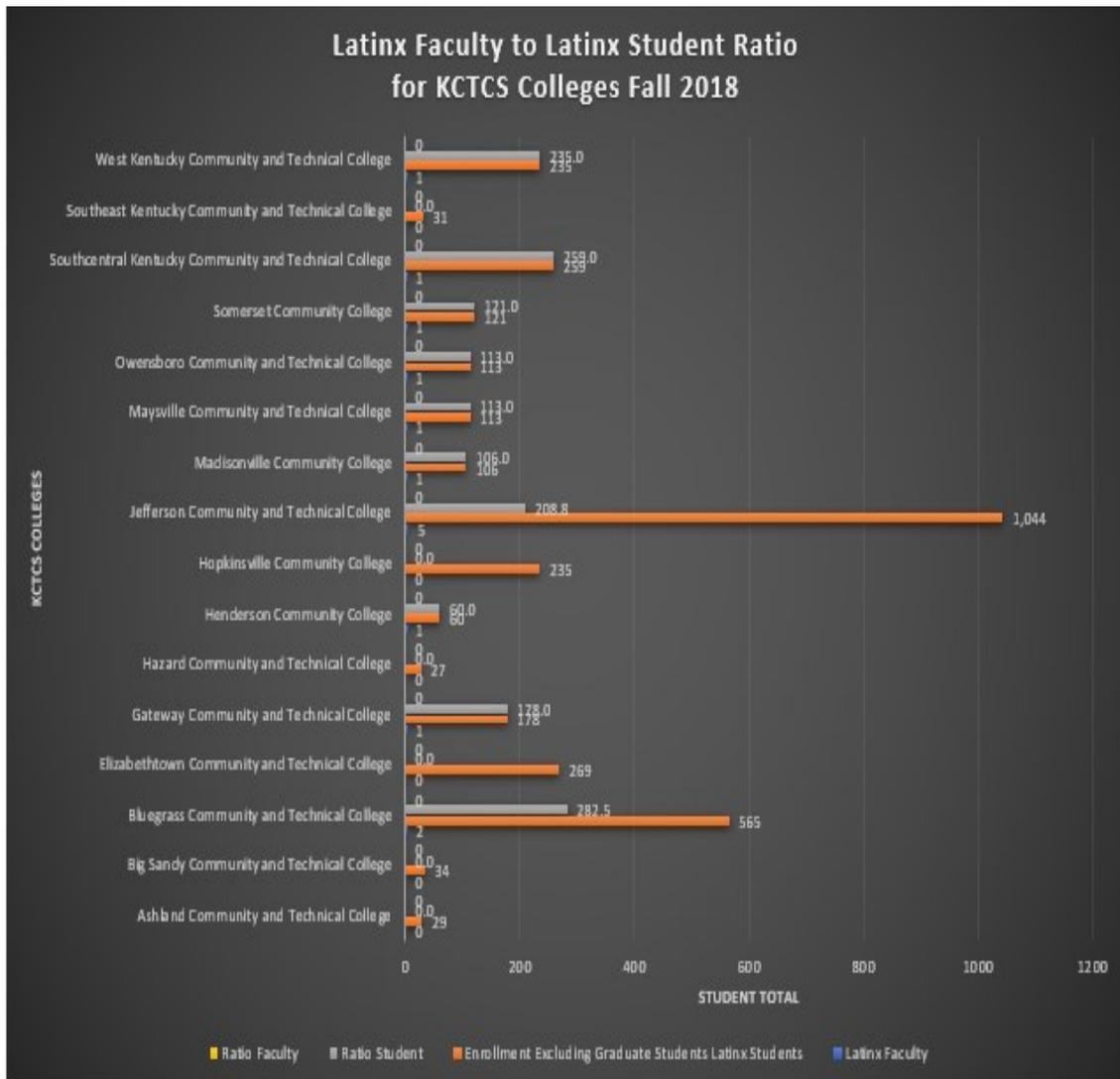


Table 3 below shows the faculty to student ratios for Latinx faculty to Latinx student ratios at KCTCS colleges.

Table 3



### Theoretical/Conceptual Framework

Phenomenological research investigated the impact state mandates have on HR directors' recruiting and hiring faculty of color at associate-level colleges in the Commonwealth of Kentucky. A phenomenological study is a design of inquiry that describes individuals' lived experiences about a phenomenon expressed by the participants (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 13). An intrusive examination with a Critical Race Theory (CRT) lens explores CPE mandates to enhance faculty of color at each

associate-level college. Critical race theory involves empowering people to transcend constraints placed on them by race, class, and gender (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 62).

The CRT has been applied in two fundamental studies to understand systemic racism in the faculty hiring process at associate-level colleges, messages communicated by an institution (Fujii, 2014), and decision-making processes (Fujimoto, 2012). Matsuda, Lawrence, Delgado, and Crenshaw (1993) argued further that “CRT challenges ahistoricism by stressing the need to understand racism within its social, economic, and historical context” (p. 8). Tate (1997), posits that scholars working within the CRT emphasized “experiential knowledge of people of color and questioned common assumptions about meritocracy and neutrality as a camouflage for the interests of dominant groups” (p. 235). Administrative leaders will use this study to develop future policy, practices, and initiatives that will create pathways for faculty of color to gain entry to associate-level college environments that traditionally lack diversity.

### **Research Questions**

The Council on Postsecondary Education’s diversity, equity, and inclusion policy directly impacts associate-level colleges’ effectiveness in recruiting and hiring faculty of color across the Commonwealth of Kentucky. Two central questions will guide this phenomenological study after the researcher wondered aloud about the impact CPE’s diversity, equity, and inclusion mandates have on recruiting and hiring this underrepresented population. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), central questions aim to explore a broad, complex set of factors underlying the primary phenomenon and to provide a specific, varied perspective for each participant (p. 133).

**RQ1:** What impact do CPE's diversity, equity, and inclusion policy have on recruiting and hiring faculty of color at associate-level colleges in the Commonwealth of Kentucky?

**RQ2:** What significant challenges do CPE's diversity, equity, and inclusion policy create for HR directors to recruit and hire faculty of color in the Commonwealth of Kentucky?

### **Research Design/Methodology**

The phenomenological study focuses on interviews with HR directors at associate-level colleges in Kentucky's Commonwealth. A purposeful sampling of participants to understand the CPE's DEI policy and significant challenges facing community colleges throughout the state. A purposeful sampling includes finding and selecting individuals or groups of individuals who are exceptionally knowledgeable or familiar with a phenomenon of interest (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Current CPE quantitative data guides the literature on this demographic and measures the effectiveness state mandates have on recruiting and hiring faculty of color to meet state mandates. Analyzing data will involve five sequential steps, from specific to general, with multiple levels of analysis. The study consists of organizing, preparing, reading, and coding data, generating themes representing the data's description (Creswell, pp. 193-195).

### **Chapter Summary**

This chapter focused on the purpose, methodology, and background of the phenomenological study related to examining CPE DEI policy and their impact on recruiting and hiring faculty of color through human resource directors' lived experiences at associate-level colleges. Theoretical framework and research questions illuminate

further the inequities of this demographic. Chapter two analyzes the literature from the vast dynamic of recruiting and hiring faculty of color entail.

### **Definition of Terms**

*Council on Postsecondary Education*: a state organization charged with overseeing educational reform efforts identified in the Kentucky Postsecondary Education Improvement Act of 1997 (Council on Postsecondary Education, 2011).

*Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS)*: statewide system comprised of 16 community and technical colleges with over 70 campuses located throughout Kentucky in rural and urban areas.

*Hechinger Report*: non-profit, independent news organization focused on inequality in education.

*National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)*: primary federal entity for collecting and analyzing data related to education in the U.S. and other nations.

*Kentucky Plan*: a desegregation plan created to address the finding that Kentucky violated Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act by not eliminating a de jure racially dual public higher education system.

*Urban areas*: includes metropolitan areas of 50,000 or more residents or micropolitan areas of 10,000-49,000 residents.

*Underrepresented Minority (URM)*: African Americans (Blacks), Latinxs, Latinos, Asian/Pacific Islanders (Hawaiians), or Native Americans who have historically comprised a minority of the population.

*Race*: a class or kind of people unified by shared interests, habits, or characteristics.

*Recruiting*: actively attracting prospective employees to job opportunities by advertising positions at job fairs, online job boards, and social media outlets or participating in professional and community networking events.

*Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, and Plan*: affirmative action plan

*Diversity Peer Teams*: composed of diversity, equity, and inclusion directors across the KCTCS system responsible for ensuring KCTCS is a culturally competent organization.

*Phenomenological research*: a design of inquiry that describes individuals' lived experiences about a phenomenon defined by the participants.

*Critical Race Theory (CRT)*: theory involves empowering people to transcend constraints placed on them by race, class, and gender.

*Integrated Postsecondary Educational Statistics (IPEDS)*: a database that collects data on associate-level and four-year institutions.

*Associate-level colleges*: two-year public community colleges.

*Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS)*: A model of behavior with six different stages denial, defense, minimization, acceptance, adaptation, and integration.

*National Science Foundation Survey of Earned Doctorates (NSFS)*: annual census of all individuals receiving a research doctorate from an accredited U.S. institution in a

given academic year. Results assess the characteristics of the doctoral population and trends in doctoral education and degrees.

*Ethnoracial*: Captures ethnic and racial groups such as Latinx, North Africans, and Arabs counted as White in the U.S. census, but their daily experiences are not White Americans.

## Chapter II: Review of Literature

This chapter includes reviewing literature and studies about recruiting and hiring faculty of color at public associate-level colleges. Literature and education relevant to this study's research questions will be explored through data analysis to add to the pipeline of faculty of color representing this higher education segment and the practices that impede the recruiting and hiring of underrepresented faculty at community colleges. This analysis will also reveal the importance of hiring faculty of color and why this group remains valuable to students of color. According to The Condition of Education 2012 report, 18 million students enrolled in higher education institutions; over 40% of them attend public or private not-for-profit two-year institutions.

Concurrently, the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC; 2012) reported that 16% of all community college students are Latinx, 14% are Black/African American, and 6% are Asian-Pacific Islanders. Seven years later, Latinx students increased nine percentage points to 25%, while Black/African American students have slightly decreased to 13%. Asian/Pacific Islanders have remained stagnant at 6%, while 1% are Native American, and 3% are of two or more races. These numbers give an initial glimpse of the diversity that exists on the community college campus. Such a diverse student population calls for a faculty that teaches courses and their contents and relates to their students' needs, experiences, and cultures. Bowers (2002) stated a plethora of research indicates a significant need for faculty of color at associate-level colleges, especially as the number of students of color enrolling at these institutions keeps growing.

During his speech on the importance of hiring, mentoring, and retaining a diverse faculty, E. Thomas Sullivan, Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost at the University of Minnesota, acknowledged the value of including diverse faculty to support and prepare students for global experiences both inside and outside of the classroom (Sullivan, 2004). Ponjuan et al. (2011), surmised that American higher education's future success depends on university leaders and senior faculty members showing a solid commitment to improving faculty members' racial and ethnic diversity.

### **Importance of faculty of color**

Students of color often seek a high level of contact with professors of color, viewing them as role models and proof that success in higher education is possible (Banks, 1984). These faculty members can often connect with students of color in deep and meaningful ways based on shared experiences in higher education. According to Pascarella and Terenzini (2005), historical research has repeatedly shown that faculty of color plays a critical role in promoting students' transition to college and influencing their career goals and educational outcomes. White students benefit from the inclusion of faculty of color, comparable to students of color. Furthermore, as students become more conscious of faculty of color involvement, they will be better prepared to traverse an increasingly multi-ethnic America outside of higher education.

When learning environments produce high levels of student interaction and contribute to welcoming and supportive campus culture, positive learning outcomes, personal growth, and degree achievement are likely to be achieved, leading to culturally proficient campuses (Museus & Jayakumar, p. 168, 2011. Faculty diversification

facilitates differences in experiences and approaches to providing a better learning environment (Smith, 1989). Hurtado (2001) suggested that institutions with a higher proportion of faculty of color are more likely to adopt a broader range of pedagogical techniques. June (2015) noted how faculty of color in the academy reported being acutely aware of the importance of serving as role models, perhaps spurring students of color interest in joining the professorate (P. 25).

### **Student benefits and faculty of color**

The impact of faculty of color divides into student benefits and institutional benefits. Faculty diversity appears to have several positive effects on students. Among the most important, faculty of color create a comfortable environment and provide support and mentoring for students of color (Cole & Barber, 2003; Smith, 1989). Students of color look to faculty whom they believe will be able to understand them. Faculty of color can better understand their particular problems and motivate them to excel (Cole & Barber, 2003). Academic performance and career aspirations are enhanced when students of color have minority faculty who serve as role models (Cole & Barber, 2003; Hurtado, Milem, Clayton-Pedersen, & Allen, 1999; Smith, 1989)

### **Importance and faculty of color**

From an organizational point of view, faculty diversity has many benefits. A racially diverse faculty demonstrates its commitment to variety (Smith, 1989; Hurtado et al., 1999). In an increasingly diverse culture, the signs of dedication to equality are critical. Students have come to expect that minorities in the workforce are approximately

proportionate to the number of students from these minority groups (Cole & Barber, 2003).

### **Diverse perspectives and faculty of color**

Faculty provide diverse perspectives in the classroom (Smith, 1989), yet few studies have found empirical evidence to support this claim (Antonio, 2002). Faculty of color bring a wide range of teaching strategies and introduce new perspectives in the classroom in ways that enhance student learning (Cole & Barber, 2003; Hurtado, 2001; Smith, 1989). Fairweather (1996) suggested that underrepresented groups are somewhat more committed to teaching among junior faculty than Whites. The same does not hold for senior faculty. The relationship between race/ethnicity and pedagogy is mixed. Antonio (2002) found that faculty of color held more holistic goals for undergraduates than White faculty. These objectives include, but are not limited to, helping students develop their values, moral character, and self-understanding. However, the same study did not find any pedagogical differences between White faculty and faculty of color.

### **Recruiting Faculty of Color**

Assensoh (2003) profoundly stated that the recruitment of culturally and ethnically diverse faculty members is essential if the academy remains significant and continues to grow. Throughout the years, associate-level colleges have employed more significant faculty of color than the national average of their four-year counterparts (Bowers, 2002). Both public and private associate-level colleges possess higher rate percentages of African American and Latinx faculty than public and private four-year

colleges (NCES, 2016). Latinx faculty comprises 5% and 7% of public and private two-year institutions. Black faculty are 8% and 13%, respectively. According to the most recent United States Census Bureau population data (2018), the percentage of race in America is 18.3% Latinx, 13.4% African American, 5.9% Asian, 2.7% two or more races, 1.3% American Indian and Alaska Native, and 0.2% Native Hawaiian.

Nationally, African American faculty comprise 7% and Latinx faculty, 4% of the professorate. However, there are lower percentages of Asian-Pacific Islander faculty at community colleges than the national and four-year institutions' averages (NCES, 2016). The rate of Asian-Pacific faculty for all institutions in the United States is 6%; for public four-year institutions, it is 8% and 6% for private four-year institutions. For public and private two-year institutions, the percentage of Asian/Pacific Islanders is 3% and 4%, respectively. Despite any slight advantage at these associate-level colleges, there is much room for improvement at these institutions.

National Center for Education Statistics (2017), from fall 2013, fall 2015, and fall 2016, showed little to no faculty of color progress. In 2013, 5.4% were African American, 4.1% Latinx, 9.1% Asian/Pacific Islander, 0.4% American Indian/Alaska Native, and .6% two or more races. In 2015, 5.4% were African American, 4.4% Latinx, 9.5% Asian/Pacific Islander, 0.4% American Indian/Alaska Native, and .8% two or more races. In 2016, 5.4% African American, 4.5% Latinx, 9.5% Asian/Pacific Islander, .4% American Indian/Alaska Native, and .8% two or more races. From 2011-2016 each underrepresented minority group increased or maintained their faculty of color representation percentage, yet African Americans remained to stagnate at 5.4%.

Higher education scholars have argued for years; there is an inadequate pipeline of qualified undergraduate students of color seeking graduate education (Ponjuan et al., 2011). In the same vein, other researchers argue that there are not enough doctoral students of color trying to join the professoriate to recruit and hire. Although concerns about the pipeline of students of color seem legitimate, this rationale should not serve as an excuse for failure to act. The question remains how does the academy attract more people of color?

According to a National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics Survey (NCSES), the total number of faculty of color candidates who earned doctoral degrees in the 2008 cohort increased by almost 20% compared to the 1998 group (2019). The survey further revealed that approximately 7,000 URM doctoral students graduated in Life Sciences, Physical Sciences, Social Sciences, Engineering, Health, Humanities, and other areas in 2008. From 1995 to 2008, the number of doctorates awarded to Latinxs increased by 154%, followed by African Americans (110%), Asians (106%), and Native Americans (31%).

The NCSES survey (2019) noted from 2009 to 2017, 179,331 faculty of color candidates earned doctoral degrees. Asians accounted for almost 68% of the obtained degrees, followed by Latinx at nearly 15%, Black/African American at 12%, two or more races 5%, and American Indian/Alaska Native .6%. In 2017 alone, 22,040 underrepresented minorities earned their doctorate degrees. These increases demonstrate that more students of color are completing doctoral degrees, refuting the argument based

on the common assumption that a minimal pool of faculty of color candidates is available in the pipeline.

### **Barriers to recruiting faculty of color**

Turner, Gonzalez, and Wood's (2008), immersive review of the literature of faculty of color spanning more than 20 years found that for institutions to recruit and diversify faculty successfully, it must be a systematic, multilevel process. The multilevel process includes educating faculty and staff on the challenges that faculty of color face, partnering and collaborating with communities of color or organizations that support the needs of faculty of color, and minimizing "salary inequities between majority and minority faculties" (Turner et al., p. 151). In the absence of such systematic and decisive action in favor of hiring faculty of color, this demographic's recruitment process remains at best tenuous.

Faculty of color at associate-level colleges viewed their profession as "uninviting, unaccommodating, and unappealing" (Trower & Chait, 2002, p. 34). For this reason, many otherwise qualified candidates abandon graduate school entirely, others exit midstream, and still others — doctoral degree earned — opt-out of alternative career choices. Turner, Myers, and Creswell (1999) identified six barriers to the recruitment and retention of faculty of color: isolation and lack of mentoring; occupational stress; devaluation of "minority" research in the academy; the "token hire" misconception; racial and ethnic bias in recruiting and hiring; and racial and ethnic bias of tenure and promotion policy (pp. 30-32). Two barriers — "tokenism" and implicit bias in recruiting

and hiring faculty of color – permeate associate-level college candidate pools more than the other obstacles combined.

### **Tokenism and faculty of color**

Faculty of color report that White colleagues expect them to be less qualified or less likely to make significant contributions to the research field (Bronstein, 1993; Padilla & Chavez, 1995). Many have noticed a prevalent mindset of complacency — a perception that having one person of color in a division is appropriate. This tokenism attitude contributes to the isolation of being the only minority in a department. Kulis and Miller (1988) encouraged the recognition and removal of tokenism in its multiple forms, while the tentacles of tokenism, such as committee overload, social alienation, and marginality, should be tracked and rectified (p. 32).

In his 1966 speech at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. addressed the issue of tokenism within a higher education context that still rings true in today's academia 50 years later.

We must remember that the university was developed with White males in mind as students, and people of color have only recently in our history been admitted to some universities. Tokenism has sufficed to appease the masses and prevent national revolt from people of color. If we are to have a truly integrated society, it will never develop through tokenism. (King, M. L. Jr. Dr., Speech at Southern Methodist University, March 17, 1966).

### **Implicit bias and faculty of color**

Most organizations refuse to challenge the usual way in which they pursue the goal of diversifying their faculty and, as a result, lose out on chances to recruit diverse candidates (Bilimoria & Buch, 2010). Effective hiring goes beyond just composing and uploading a job description. Smith, Turner, Osei-Kofi, and Richards (2004) maintained that colleges and universities must recruit if they want to achieve diversity. Too often, departments and search committees assume that they can simply place a job advertisement and wait to see which applicants emerge. Time and again, the literature suggests that passivity will result in neither a diverse pool of applicants nor a diverse hire. Moody (2004) and Smith et al. (2004) understand that effective recruitment of historically underrepresented faculty only happens when institutions employ a multidimensional faculty diversification strategy.

According to Ponterotto (1990), non-aggressive hiring strategies contribute more to the underrepresentation of faculty of color than high departure rates. Necessary qualifications should be defined carefully, and central questions asked: Does excellence in the professoriate include being able to relate to, mentor, and be a role model for students of color? Or would this just be a nice extra in a candidate? Which candidate is better? A good teacher with 75 articles published in academic journals which has no interest in mentoring students of color or an excellent teacher with 20 articles published with an exemplary reputation for mentoring students of color and attracting them to the campus? In this example, an important question is what constitutes qualified candidates? (p. 71). The more profound challenge for institutions is aggressively recruiting faculty of color to their campuses (Smith et al., 2004).

## **Institutional commitment and faculty of color**

Provosts, deans, heads of departments, and chairs of the search committee represent their school or department's interests and the entire academic community (Williams & Wade-Golden, 2013). Support of the administration is vital to reaching out to diverse candidates. Such assistance includes providing resources like funding for travel to conferences that facilitate exposure to more diverse candidates, sponsoring presentations by faculty members who have led candidate searches, and provide class buyouts for those leading the effort to diversify the candidate pool. Class buyouts are when the universities enable faculty members to teach an equivalent number of classes in exchange for relevant university research.

Financial resources demand a commitment from the institution's top authorities, from the board of trustees to the deans' level (Romero, 2017). Astin (1993) provided support for the impact such an institutional commitment has on student learning. Emphasis on institutional diversity, demonstrated by the representation of minorities among students and faculty, is strongly related to developing cultural awareness among students. The focus on diversity has significant indirect effects on student satisfaction with student life and overall college experience.

Ponjuan et al. (2011), understood a commitment to diversity and attracting outstanding and diverse faculty, staff, and students are essential to colleges that want to build a vibrant and diverse college community. According to Clayton-Pederson, Parker, Smith, Moreno, and Teraguchi (2007), institutions must invest in recruitment and retention activities to diversify faculty successfully. Even richly diverse institutions are

struggling to retain their minority faculty and staff. The academicians further stated that recruitment does not guarantee retention. Any faculty diversification effort that does not address mentorship, improving the institutional culture, or attending to dual-career needs may fuel a “revolving door” concerning new minority hires.

A study by the Association of American Colleges and Universities, Moreno, Smith, Clayton-Pederson, Parker, and Teraguchi (2006), examined the efforts made to enhance faculty of color at 27 institutions. The study spanned five years and found that the faculty of color's turnover rate was higher than among the majority White faculty. Despite relative success in hiring underrepresented faculty of color, turnover plays a critical role in contributing to the lack of substantial advancement for faculty of color. The study further pointed one out of every two faculty of color hires constituted a replacement for a previous minority hire who had left the institution.

Williams and Wade-Golden (2013) attributed one reason for this high turnover rate to an atmosphere that sometimes gives rise to a sense of isolation and failure, while at the same time creating confusion about how to meet job responsibilities and how to make professional advancement. These factors impose unreasonable burdens on faculty from racially and ethnically underrepresented groups (Williams & Wade-Golden, p. 6). In developing their strategic diversity agendas, colleges and universities must partner with academic deans and department heads to recruit diverse faculty and retrain and promote them.

## **Hiring Faculty of Color**

Increasing the numbers of faculty of color in higher education and, mainly, associate-level colleges is not a new concern (Turner, González, & Wood, 2008). However, it is more urgent than ever. The distance between hiring for diversity and attaining a diverse faculty is monumental (Flannigan, Jones, & Moore, 2004; Fujii, 2014; Smith et al., 2004; Turner, 2002). Springer and Westerhaus (2006), pointed out that longstanding research shows that a diverse faculty and student body leads to significant education benefits for all students. However, when hired, faculty of color become maladjusted to the community college environment, perceive it as hostile and eventually depart (Kayes & Singley, 2010).

Associate-level colleges in the U.S. are under pressure to take advantage of the faculty's impending retirement to considerably increase the faculty of color in the professoriate. Community college faculty are White, aging, and are ready to retire. There is an opportunity to drastically increase the numbers of faculty of color (Green & Ciez-Volz, 2010; Nevarez & Wood, 2010; Twombly, 2005; Twombly & Townsend, 2008). There is a more significant percentage of faculty between the ages of 45 and 64, with the lowest faculty age 65 or older than any other higher education segment (McCormack, 2008).

Data suggest that community college faculty and administrators tend to retire at or near the legal retirement age of 65. Hiring faculty of color to replace this segment of faculty could be worth three million dollars, and employment could span 30 or more years to community colleges if the institutions hire intentionality (Flannigan et al., 2004;

Green & Ciez-Volz, 2010). In short, the pursuit of faculty diversity goals must be more than an unfunded mandate.

### **Barriers and hiring faculty of color**

While affirmative action programs have been part of colleges and universities for many years, progress in employing faculty of color has been depressing (Cohen & Brawer, 2008, p. 457). Both researchers somberly reflected that faculty hiring practices show little sign of change. Cultural bias and color-blind ideology are significant obstacles to hiring diverse faculty (Kayes, 2002; Turner et al., 2008).

Fujii (2014), surmised that identifying the obstacles and analyzing and addressing policy and power structures that support privilege and facilitate racism are barriers to increasing faculty of color. Fujii further stated that any resistance to diversity and ethnicity, and race on community college campuses is significant.

Many people claim color blindness and believe such a claim means all are the “same.” However, to deny one’s ethnic/racial identity discounts the unique experiences a faculty member of color brings to the classroom. Ethnic/racial diversity should be considered because ethnicity and race matter and influence the school (Fujii, 2014, p. 913).

### **Racial microaggressions and faculty of color**

Racial microaggressions are subtle and often unintentional comments or behaviors that affect search committees because they hurt people of color due to their racial identity (Solórzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000; Sue et al., 2007). Sue et al. identified the theme of the meritocracy myth. Statements such as 'I believe the most qualified person should get a job'[and] 'Everyone can succeed in this society if they work hard enough' (p.

276) convey the White person's attitude that people of color are given extra unfair benefits because of their race [and] people of color are lazy and incompetent and need to work harder. These examples, among other racial microaggressions identified are relevant to the hiring process.

Cook and Sanchez (2019), summarized the findings of four faculty of color who acknowledged that being a URM ensures that you act as the “diverse” face of the organization, are moved to the front of the group photo, and are supposed to be present at every publicly recognizable event. The researchers explained further when they stated that the implicit function of having to serve an organization overshadows the autonomy to be viewed as a person in one’s own right, not to mention placing excessive pressure on the individual to be a “model” member for their minority group.

The crushing disempowerment brought on by microaggressions comes not as much from their slippery meanings as from their sheer volume and omnipresence in our culture. They are like micro-dosages of poison that, if taken daily, will slowly and stealthily result in certain death. Microaggressions are most potent (i.e., most harmful) when experienced regularly, repeatedly, and from multiple sources—and are notoriously difficult to “prove” as problematic to individuals not used to being on the receiving end of subtly and playfully racist and sexist commentary. (Cook & Sanchez, p. 173, 2019).

### **Search committees and faculty of color**

The search committee process is primarily subjective, with some guiding legal policy and procedures. A search committee needs diversity within it and select members who will feel free to share opinions (Romero, 2017). One of the most challenging aspects

of the hiring process is that search committees are rarely or minimally trained (Flannigan et al., 2004). Fujii (2014) stated that researchers must examine, investigate, and challenge search committee processes and practices.

Bias in hiring practices is prevalent and requires more considerable attention (Bendick & Nunes, 2012; Kayes, 2002; Lee, Thau, & Pillutla, 2015; Lippert-Rasmussen, 2012). Lippert-Rasmussen further posited that “intentional discrimination frequently results in employers hiring applicants who are less qualified than those who are most qualified” (p. 55). However, training on cultural bias has been identified by several researchers as necessary to mitigate the role of bias in the decision-making process (Fujii, 2014; Jeffcoat & Piland, 2012; Kayes, 2002; Lee et al., 2015; Moore, 2008; Turner, 2002).

### **Concept of “Fit” and faculty of color**

The fit concept describes and rationalizes the alignment of skills, abilities, knowledge, and values that a candidate possesses and what the institution desires in the candidate (Flannigan et al., 2004; Murray, 2003). Kayes (2002) used the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) and argued that because White educators are ‘minimizers,’ the ‘fit’ requirement has become a significant covert barrier to diverse hiring” (p. 66). The DMIS consists of six different stages, including denial, defense, minimization, acceptance, adaptation, and integration (Cushner, McClelland, & Safford, 2012). Each step describes a cognitive structure that communicates through attitudes and behaviors. Minimizers refer to the level of intercultural sensitivity, where minimizers prefer to emphasize ethnocentric similarities instead of differences (Kayes, 2002, p. 66).

Lee et al. (2015), also identified the concept of fit and suggested that “decision-makers exhibit a preference for candidates that belong to the same social group” (p. 806). According to Kayes (2002), whether it is conscious or unconscious bias, the hiring decision is impaired. A predominantly White search committee will continue to reproduce itself because of the prejudice they hold. The misconception that members of the search committees, under their academic degrees, achievements, and reputations, do not taint the search and hiring process with this kind of bias is a significant reason why there has been little progress in the recruitment of faculty of color in predominantly White institutions (p. 66).

Romero (2017), recommended several options to search committees to avoid bias if they are serious about hiring faculty of color. Search committees must be proactive in their outreach for applicants from underrepresented groups. Search committees should be required to attend department training on how to best search, attract, and retain diverse faculty via workshops to avoid bias (Romero, pp. 2-3). Search committees need to find out what is important to candidates through the telephone screening or interview process and highlight it. Search committees need to remember candidates deciding to work at the institution and often live with their families in that community. Search committees should make candidates aware of their salaries in universities’ locations and neighboring counties (Romero, p. 5).

Diverse candidates should meet with the top diversity officer on campus after ensuring they meet candidates’ needs. Safeguarding that various candidates can work and live in a community that is not yet highly diverse can be challenging. Colleges should

also participate in those non-profit organizations that specialize in providing opportunities for minorities in academia. Examples include the Black Doctoral Network ([www.blackphdnetwork.com](http://www.blackphdnetwork.com)), the American Association of Blacks in Higher Education ([www.aabhe.education](http://www.aabhe.education)), Association of Black Women in Education ([www.aabwe.org](http://www.aabwe.org)), and *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education* ([www.jbhe.com](http://www.jbhe.com)).

### **Hiring Strategies**

Romero (2017) suggested several strategies that universities can use to enhance the recruiting of staff, such as recognizing and adhering to the diverse requirements of colleges; dual-career employment through collaborations with business and local organizations; cluster hiring; supporting study committees with professional development and training; discovering new hiring streams; and developing relationships (Romero, pp.1-4). Romero further clarified that the implicit role of having to serve an entity overshadows the freedom as a citizen in one's own right, not to mention the undue pressure on the individual to be a model member of their minority group.

### **Visiting or exchange programs**

Romero (2017), viewed the concept of visiting or exchange programs as an honorary title awarded to people who hold academic (including research) positions at other institutions or different professional jobs and invited by an academic department. Implementation by contacting historically Black colleges and universities and other minority-serving institutions. Predominantly White universities can identify terminal degree candidates representing diversity who could join the institution while completing

their terminal degree, and if successful, be considered for a faculty position by inviting them to apply for current faculty positions.

### **Centralized funding**

Romero (2017), advocated for centralized funding initiatives to increase diversity on college and university campuses. A competitive beginning salary, start-up incentives (e.g., provision of labs, equipment, teaching assistant), and “bridge” funding to hire a diverse candidate in anticipation of a faculty member’s retirement, and then use centralized financing to “bridge” funding until that retirement. Various faculty financing research projects, seed grants for diversity curriculum development to assist faculty in developing a new course or revising an existing class, and an internal grant program to provide financial support to departments for new hires must also be made available.

### **Cluster hiring**

Cluster hiring or hiring multiple scholars into one or more departments based on shared, interdisciplinary research interests is growing in popularity. It is a way to advance faculty diversity or other aspects of the college or university mission, such as teaching or community engagement. Existing literature supports the role of cluster hiring in institutional excellence. According to Romero (2017), there are two forms of cluster hiring for people of color. The first is hiring more than one diverse person simultaneously, minimizing feelings of isolationism and overload. The second is hiring a group of people at all levels that are well versed in more than one area and can float between disciplines. The advantage is creating a cohort of flexible and dynamic

minority scholars well suited to the new challenges facing them in an ever-changing environment.

A study titled *Faculty cluster hiring for diversity and institutional climate* (2015) tested this theory and determined that cluster hiring is a powerful way to build both institutional excellence and faculty diversity when done the correct way. The Coalition administered the study for Urban Serving Universities, the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities, and Association of American Medical Colleges, which partnered as Urban Universities for Health. The researchers interviewed administrators and faculty members with experience in cluster hiring at ten geographically diverse public research institutions.

### **Chapter Summary**

Literature in this chapter focused on recruiting and hiring faculty of color and the negative impact on students of color at associate-level colleges. The concept of recruiting and hiring faculty of color has been around for more than 50 years, yet the same barriers exist. Tokenism, “Fit,” implicit bias, and microaggression continue to plague the academy when research shows universities and colleges are better when such barriers do not exist and when diverse faculty is present and involved. Literature reveals an institutional commitment to faculty of color must be addressed for higher education institutions to remain relevant in the 21st century. Faculty of color remains an essential piece of the higher educational puzzle, uniquely when universities and colleges leverage their funding to recruit and retain students of color. Academicians agree that recruiting and hiring faculty of color is the lynchpin to ensuring a vibrant, thriving, and diverse community of

students, faculty, and staff. Hiring faculty of color must be done department by department to make a difference in the academy.

Research throughout this section reveals it does not matter how many students of color universities or colleges recruit for their diversity numbers; if underrepresented students do not see someone who looks like them, has the same background as them in the classroom, their chances of graduating drops significantly as they have no one to identify with on campus. More than 200,000 doctoral degrees were awarded to students of color last year, according to the National Science Foundation (2019). Higher education institutions need to understand that a diverse, qualified underrepresented pool of candidates is in the pipeline to be recruited and hired at the same level as Whites. Chapter 3 focuses on the Design/Methodology the researcher uses to conduct the phenomenological study.

### Chapter III: Design/Methodology

This chapter presents the design and methodology, a brief overview of the study's purpose, and the research questions. According to CPE's *2016-2021 Performance Metrics Technical Guide (2018)*, the Commonwealth of Kentucky has a history of negligible diversification in higher education institutions. While the state worked to increase faculty of color over the years, it mainly focused on African Americans, not other minority groups. Despite more than 50 years of diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts, faculty of color continue to lag behind other ethnic groups in associate-level colleges, exacerbating the need to examine CPE state mandates relating to recruiting and hiring faculty of color. Furthermore, an understanding of why KCTCS HR directors continue to face significant challenges to expand this professoriate demographic.

#### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the phenomenological study is to examine the impact of CPE's diversity, equity, and inclusion policy and its impact on KCTCS HR directors to recruit and hire faculty of color and the significant challenges they face in meeting those mandates at associate-level colleges in the Commonwealth of Kentucky. Moustakas (1994), defined phenomenology as the descriptive study of how things appear to consciousness, often identifying the essential structures that characterize the world's experience.

Creswell and Creswell (2018), further clarified phenomenological research as a design of inquiry that describes individuals' lived experiences about a phenomenon described by the participants. Although increasing the number of faculty of color at

associate-level colleges in the state is an intentional and strategic initiative for each community college, individual KCTCS policy, and procedures to recruit and hire faculty of color are scarce.

### **Research Questions**

The research questions stem from the researcher voicing aloud if there were any policies or procedures at each of the associate-level colleges to effectively recruit and hire faculty of color to meet CPE diversity, equity, and inclusion policy mandates. The researcher also seeks answers on state mandates' impact and the significant challenges facing HR directors in implementing those policies and procedures to recruit and hire this underrepresented group. These two questions permeate throughout the study.

**RQ1:** What impact do CPE's diversity, equity, and inclusion policy have on recruiting and hiring faculty of color at associate-level colleges in the Commonwealth of Kentucky?

**RQ2:** What significant challenges do CPE's diversity, equity, and inclusion policy create for HR directors to recruit and hire faculty of color in the Commonwealth of Kentucky?

### **Principles of Qualitative Research**

Qualitative research allows the researcher to ask participants questions while collecting and analyzing rich data (Creswell, 2018). Qualitative research allows the researcher to examine research participants' attitudes and behaviors (Creswell, 2018). Qualitative research explores phenomena in depth while gaining insight from the research participant (Patton, 2002). Qualitative research has more flexibility in its use of instruments and allows for more semi-structured and informal methods than quantitative research (Creswell, 2018).

The majority of qualitative research's analytical objectives describe variation, describe relationships, explain individual experiences, and clarify group norms (Creswell, 2018). Much of the study design for qualitative research can be adjusted based on what is learned prior. These characteristics supported the selection of a qualitative methodology for this study.

### **Phenomenological Study or Phenomenology**

Empirical phenomenological research is one of the human sciences approaches that aim to capture, describe, and understand humans' experiences (Moustakas 1994; Aspers, 2004). Levering (2006), suggests that phenomenology allows a researcher to examine the experience while deserting personal bias. Phenomenological studies aim to find an understanding of a given phenomenon. The concept focuses on providing a thorough description of the phenomenon from those who experienced it. Bednall (2006), describes phenomenological research via two criteria: 1) The human experience can be assessed through the detailed experience of participants, and 2) Establishing the truth.

Moustakas (1994), suggested that phenomenological studies seek to describe the lived experiences rather than analyze them and rely primarily on inductive reasoning. The researcher creates patterns out of the data based on the respondent's experience and is very interpretive because of events or occurrences. Bednall (2006), asserted phenomenological work seeks to recognize what is unchanging concerning the phenomenon explored, and Armstrong (2010), suggested that phenomenological research allows for reviewed processes repeatedly and for significant meaning found in research.

Armstrong also advocated phenomenological work contributes to the foundational development of new theories. As for disadvantages, Armstrong advised that gathering data can be a labor-intensive process, and the interpretation of the data can make for a complicated process.

### **Research Design**

The phenomenological study's research design used quantitative and qualitative data from interviews with five KCTCS HR directors in different parts of Kentucky. Data consisted of interviews focused on research questions above relating to the implementation and effectiveness of CPE's diversity, equity, and inclusion policy mandates and HR directors' lived experiences trying to meet these demands. Martusewicz and Reynolds (1994), explained the primary focus of critical education theories is on transforming oppressive social and economic structures through education (p. 10). Bogdan and Biklan (1992), theorized phenomenological modes of inquiry attempt to understand the meaning of events and interactions with ordinary people in particular situations. Creswell and Creswell (2016), stated that qualitative research is an approach for exploring and understanding individuals' or groups' meaning ascribed to a social or human problem.

The study included four phases spanning five months during the Fall 2020 semester. The first phase identified and purposefully selected five KCTCS HR directors working around Kentucky to interview for the study. The second phase consisted of emailing those HR directors selected by the researcher and explaining the study's purpose, the selection process, the type of data to be collected, and how their identity is

protected. The third phase involved interviewing those purposefully selected HR directors. The fourth phase analyzed and coded the data for themes relating to the interviews. Each phase effectively investigated the impact of CPE's diversity, equity, and inclusion mandates on recruiting and hiring faculty of color and the challenges HR directors face in meeting these initiatives at associated-level colleges.

### **Research Methodology**

The section focuses on the phenomenological research methodology, which demonstrated the need to use a constructive qualitative approach in the study. The study relied primarily on interviews with five HR directors at associate-level colleges in Kentucky's Commonwealth. Gubrium and Holstein (2003), noted researchers conduct naturalistic or discovery-oriented inquiries to create study-specific questions for their interviews instead of utilizing pre-established questionnaires or survey instruments. The researcher also used IPEDS and CPE data management systems to examine current quantitative data on faculty of color populations in KCTCS from Fall 2015 to Spring 2020. Aggregated data included a race, gender, and ethnicity of instructional staff, full-time/tenure track faculty employed at associate-level colleges. The researcher used this data to further advance the literature on recruiting and hiring underrepresented minorities at associate-level colleges.

### **Role of the Researcher**

The researcher played the role of a researcher and a learner as well. In this process, the researcher was responsible for data collection, data analysis, and findings. In the researcher's role, the researcher had the opportunity to learn more about CPE's

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policy and the significant challenges KCTCS HR directors face in recruiting and hiring faculty of color to meet the policy. As Lichtman (2010) stated, the researcher serves the conduit's role in the research process because he or she gathers the information and attempts to make meaning from it. Merriam (2009) describes qualitative researchers as interested in finding meaning in people's worlds and understanding their experiences.

As an African American male, working as an assistant professor in KCTCS for six years, there was interest in delving deeper into why there were not more people who looked like me teaching in the KCTCS system. I heard excuses ranging from a diminished number of URM students attending college to a scarcity of persons in the professorial pipeline to a lack of faculty of color to teach in rural parts of the state throughout the years. Although these concerns have some legitimacy, I firmly believed they should not serve as an excuse for the KCTCS systems office to forgo efforts to increase faculty of color.

### **Selection of Participants**

Each of the five participants works in KCTCS colleges throughout Kentucky. A purposeful sampling of HR directors gained diverse perspectives on state mandates and their theories on significant challenges facing associate-level colleges to increase faculty of color. A purposeful sampling also requires finding and selecting individuals or groups of exceptionally knowledgeable or familiar with a phenomenon of interest (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). HR directors in KCTCS colleges are proficient in each aspect of CPE's diversity, equity, and inclusion policy. Purposefully selecting participants enabled

the researcher to understand the problem and research questions presented in the study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 185).

### **Research Instrumentation**

This section dissects the instrumentation the researcher used to conduct the study. Interviewing and field observations and document analysis are fundamental ways qualitative researchers generate and collect data for their research studies (Gubrium & Holstein, 2003; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2008; Rubin & Rubin, 2006; Seidman, 2006). Study-specific sets of questions were open-ended to provide opportunities for participants to add their insider experiences with little or no limitations imposed by more closed-ended questions (Chenail, 2011, p. 255).

### **Audiovisual**

The researcher recorded each face-to-face interview with five KCTCS HR directors via Microsoft Teams online software. The researcher then listened to each HR director interview in its entirety four times each. The researcher marked the recordings for themes and concepts through the self-coding process to ensure proper context and exact quotations from the participants. Extracted recordings are on USB drives. The USB drives are in a lockbox in the researcher's home office, where no one has access but the researcher.

### **Fieldnotes**

The researcher used field notes to recall and record the behaviors, activities, events, and other setting features and produce meaning and an understanding of the culture, social situation, or phenomenon being studied (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, pp.

186-187). The researcher used five legal pads to make observations about each participants' tone and emotions. Identifying and organizing field notes by pseudo names ensured the participants' confidentiality and eliminated any potential risk factors associated with the study since the researcher and participants currently work in KCTCS colleges.

### **Data Collection**

Before the study began, the researcher applied and received Eastern Kentucky University (EKU) Institutional Review Board (IRB) and the Kentucky Community and Technical College System Human Subjects Review Board (HSRB) approval to conduct the study. The researcher sent selected participants via an initial recruitment email to introduce the project. It included the projects' title and purpose, the researcher's name, role, institution, and contact information. Once participants confirmed their participation in the study, the researcher scheduled interviews based on the HR directors' availability. The researcher then called each participant to confirm their participation in the study.

All information obtained during this study is private. The researcher protects HR directors' privacy by withholding their names and other personal information from all persons not connected to this study. In this case, the researcher uses pseudo names, participants 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5. The raw data will be retained for three years, and all records relating to this research will be retained for three years after completion of the research. All records are accessible for inspection and copying by authorized representatives of the

Institutional Review Board at reasonable times and in a reasonable manner. Information is stored most securely for three years as required by federal law.

Although this study's information is private, the data's security can only be promised within the university's boundaries and researcher or faculty advisor.

Confidentiality will be broken if the information obtained reveals that participants intend to harm themselves or another person.

### **Data Analysis**

The researcher analyzed the data into five sequential steps in segmenting, dissecting, and linking it back together. The researcher analyzed, organized, and prepared data by transcribing interviews, viewing field notes, cataloging visual material, and arranging data for different types (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 191). All data, including field notes, were read to reflect on the information's overall meaning. The researcher began the self-coding data by bracketing text into segments and writing words representing categories in the margins (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 193). The researcher generated codes and themes by using the winnowing process, which focuses on relevant data and disregards other parts of the information to aggregate the data into five to seven categories based on participant responses (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 192). The final step in the process advanced the phenomenological study's description and themes (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 195) reflected in Chapter 4.

### **Delimitations**

This study's scope was limited to that of HR directors who work in KCTCS colleges. To obtain rich responses from participants, the HR directors must have at least

two years of experience in their role. The researcher used semi-structured, open-ended questions repeated for all research participants to help manage the data collected, although differential follow-up probes were asked as needed. The researcher chose not to include the participants' specific age, geographic work location, college population size, or any other identifiers that could help distinguish participant names and statements based on these factors.

### **Limitations**

Creswell (2003), acknowledges several general limitations to qualitative research. Qualitative research provides indirect information from the perspective of the participants. It is also research that takes place in an assigned setting rather than naturally in a field setting. The researchers' presence could lend bias to the response of the research participants. Lastly, people are not equally articulate and perceptive doing interviews.

One limitation of this study is that it only uses five of the 16 HR directors working in KCTCS; the study's impact could be limited. The researcher purposefully selected HR directors from different Kentucky regions to ensure recruiting and hiring faculty of color are statewide and not region-specific. This step was necessary since KCTCS colleges differ in location, size, county population, enrollment, and ethnicities.

A second limitation is in the researcher himself. The researcher began his career with KCTCS 12 years ago. The researcher was an academic advisor, then an adjunct faculty member, now an assistant professor. The researcher lives the

experience of a faculty member of color daily. The researcher has intimate knowledge of how diversity, equity, and inclusion policy affect this demographic, leading to potential bias. The researcher limited bias throughout the study by ensuring prior experiences did not surface.

The final limitation was the behavior of the research participants in the study. The researcher had no control over how open the participants were in their responses to the study. Their level of comfort and willingness to share intimate details about their mentorship experience was entirely up to them, although the researcher made efforts to enhance their comfort level to be open.

### **Chapter Summary**

This section systematically breaks down the researcher's intent to examine the impact of CPE's diversity, equity, and inclusion policy and its impact on KCTCS HR directors to recruit and hire faculty of color and the significant challenges they face in meeting those mandates at associate-level colleges in the Commonwealth of Kentucky. As background, with Kentucky's history, questions abound whether CPE mandates significantly impact recruiting and hiring this demographic since DEI policy inception in 2016 need to be explored. The research questions, design and methodology, instrumentation, identification of participants, instrumentation, data collection, and analysis and data collection allowed the researcher to take a candid view of this continued phenomenon affecting HR directors. All aspects of the study serve to spur policy and procedural changes to effectively increase faculty of color at associate-level colleges in Kentucky.

Following the ethical guidelines of research, informed consent was obtained from the research participants before interviews began. The confidentiality of the participants was maintained throughout the entire process. After completing the process, the materials used were kept in a secure locked cabinet under the researcher's ownership. Data collection was performed by performing one-on-one interviews in person with the participants. In-depth interviews provided rich, detailed information on the research participants' lived experiences. Chapter 4 presents the results of the phenomenological study through the lived experiences of HR directors.

## Chapter IV: Results

This chapter presents the participants' results relevant to this research study, including the number of participants, the location, frequency, and data collection methods for each data collection instrument. It also describes how data were collected and any unusual circumstances encountered in collecting data. The researcher examined CPE's DEI policy and its impact on recruiting and hiring faculty of color at associate-level colleges through a lens of Critical Race Theory (CRT). CRT involves empowering people to transcend constraints placed on them by race, class, and gender (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 62). Kayes (2010), stated that higher education institutions are more cognizant of the need for a diverse faculty to reflect the ever-changing demographics in the United States.

The phenomenological study's results validated and affirmed that CPE's DEI policy mandates significantly impact recruiting and hiring faculty of color at associate-level colleges. The study uncovered that HR directors need significant help from the KCTCS office to help meet the CPE percentage mandates to recruit and hire faculty of color. The five participants agree that colleges will continue not to achieve their mandated goals without an intentional focus and targeted systemwide policy to help each college hire more faculty of color.

### **Research Questions**

The central research questions explored throughout these interviews were:

- 1) What impact do CPE's diversity, equity, and inclusion policy have on recruiting and hiring faculty of color at associate-level colleges in the Commonwealth of Kentucky?

2) What significant challenges do CPE's diversity, equity, and inclusion policy create for HR directors to recruit and hire faculty of color in the Commonwealth of Kentucky?

### **Research Setting**

Data for this study were collected using semi-structured face-to-face interviews and open-ended questions with five HR directors to provide opportunities for each person to add their insider experiences with little or no limitations imposed by more closed-ended questions. I interviewed each participant from my home office face-to-face and one-on-one as agreed using Microsoft Teams software. The participants were either at home or work during the interview. Each interview took one hour to complete.

The semi-structured interview protocol kept each participant engaged during the interview and freely sharing their experiences and views on the phenomenon without any interruptions. There were no personal or organizational conditions that influenced the participants or their experience at the time of the study, which could have influenced the interpretation of this research study's results.

### **Demographics**

The criteria for each participant are as follows: (a) minimum of two years of experience, (b) currently employed at the institution, and (c) holds the position of HR director. The participants possess leadership authority and oversee institutional personnel directly involving faculty. The study's in-depth semi-structured, open-ended questions explored the lived experience of HR directors' influence on recruiting and hiring diverse faculty.

The five HR directors who participated in the study are women and range in age from 25 to 60. Each participant currently works in KCTCS colleges for an average of 12 years. Participants were knowledgeable and competent with a realistic understanding of CPE DEI policy and procedures. Each participant enthusiastically participated and provided clear, concise, and in-depth answers to all questions forthrightly.

### **Emergent Themes**

Five women from the KCTCS HR departments participated in this phenomenological research study in December 2020. The interviews targeted CPE's DEI policy from 2016-2021 and its impact on HR directors recruiting and hiring faculty of color to meet those mandates. Data were collected and analyzed from structured interview questions (see Appendix B). The themes were derived from the transcription of the research participant's lived experiences. All interview responses were examined using the winnowing process, which focuses on relevant data and disregards other parts of the information to aggregate the data into five to seven categories based on participant responses (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 192). The study revealed HR directors are working hard to achieve DEI goals, but there is a systemwide failure to implement consistent policy and procedures to expand faculty of color at associate-level colleges in Kentucky.

Four major themes emerged from the interview data. The themes were 1) CPE's DEI percentage mandates are unrealistic given the population totals in which these colleges serve,

2) there is a lack of funding from KCTCS to recruit and hire faculty of color to the same level of students, 3) KCTCS office needs to hire a person to help recruit and hire and hire faculty of color at both urban and rural colleges, and 4) KCTCS office personnel needs to change their traditional ways of thinking when it comes to DEI issues.

### **Theme 1: Unrealistic CPE DEI Mandates**

All participants agreed that each KCTCS college wants to increase faculty and staff of color, but many colleges do not have the population numbers to meet those percentage mandates. P1 noted, “The CPE mandates that every college should have the same percentage of student-faculty ratios that reflect inclusiveness is outrageous given the population numbers of a particular college.” P2 noted how the college did a deep dive recently to see what they need to do independently of KCTCS to recruit and hire more of this demographic. While she understandably could not focus on DEI initiatives when she initially took the job because of other aspects of the college that needed her immediate attention, she offered a potential solution, but is realistic to the problem, “I do believe we need to educate people on a younger level on how to become professors. Getting people back here or the older generation to go back to school to get the necessary degrees to teach is difficult.”

P3 provided a more realistic response that resonated loudly with the researcher. “The only reason some colleges attempt to recruit and hire faculty and staff of color is that CPE mandates it. Each year, the percentage goal increases at my college, and percentages are not met, nor is it attainable. If we have not met mandates from three years ago, no way will we meet increased percentages today.”

Participant 4 posited a sober reminder.

“CPE only measures faculty impact and not staff. Staff is just as important as faculty. I still do not know why they do not count the Asian population. If colleges do not do it (meet CPE mandates), then they do not get to have any new programs.”

She also referred to Kentucky’s performance-based funding model created in 2017 by then Kentucky Governor Matt Bevin. The model allocates funding to colleges and universities in Kentucky that meet performance goals on 11 essential standards (*CPE Progress Report*, 2019). Colleges and universities must compete for those monies by meeting these standards geared primarily toward retaining and graduating students. Simply put, each university and KCTCS college must retain and graduate students to receive funding from the state. P5 understands CPE percentage mandates are necessary to ensure colleges are committed to inclusiveness, but the metrics CPE uses should be more aligned with the overall population that mirrors its geographical location based on geographical location perceptions. “CPE mandates are important for accountability purposes, but they need to take into consideration the percentage and location at each college. Recruitment has changed but with not much hiring success.”

## **Theme 2: Lack of KCTCS Funding to Recruit and Hire Faculty of Color**

Colleges do not have funds to specifically recruit and hire diverse faculty and rely more on adjunct faculty to teach classes to supplement the number of offered classes. The most significant gains of faculty of color are in part-time faculty positions. P1 agreed: “From 2016-2020, colleges have had fewer budgets, fewer appropriations, and no raises. Colleges cannot do any niche recruiting because there is no money to

hire companies to recruit diverse candidates. The most impact has been with adjunct faculty. We are all fighting for the same people.” P2 echoed P1’s response and understands funding has been cut at the state and KCTCS level over the last several years, negating HR directors’ ideas to recruit and hire more minorities: “Those ideas cost money to implement, which the systems office cannot support. There is no budget and system-level support. We need to change policy and compensation packages. HR directors have ideas but no funding.”

P3 took a much different approach than P1 and P2 and related funding issues to her college, “The college has money to hire technical faculty in the market of higher education. We need to hire faculty to technical industry standards. KCTCS use to pay for colleges to recruit and hire faculty and staff in this area through the Faculty Fellows Program, but this program is no longer available. It is now left up to each college to pay, which many colleges cannot afford. I believe it may have been used to bring in minority faculty to the colleges. I would assume that if a college wanted to participate at some point, the systems office would not mind if it did not require them to pay the salary.”

According to P4, KCTCS needs to step up and provide some incentives to help individual colleges recruit and hire faculty and staff of color: “The systems office should put money behind initiatives to ensure individuals’ jobs. The Fellows concept would help with funding, where we can keep people employed. Budget is a big deterrent. We just cannot afford positions at our college.” Participant 5 college is on the opposite side of the issue. “Our college’s diversity department has a budget that is intentional to meet CPE

demands. We need a more diverse applicant pool in which to use the money. Most of our applicants are from out of state; we get them here but cannot keep them here.”

**Theme 3: KCTCS Needs to hire a diversity officer to help recruit and hire faculty of color**

HR directors agree KCTCS needs to establish a program and hire someone to facilitate recruitment and hiring of faculty of color across the system. The HR directors stated the systems office could no longer expect HR directors to recruit and hire this demographic without help. “The systems office needs to be focused on recruiting and hiring faculty of color and educating people who are in authority to hire. Every area must participate from the top down. They need to organize a program to be more inclusive.” P2 echoed those sentiments: “There is a lull at the systems office. A fresh perspective is needed to change course and focus on recruiting. Generally, money is not the answer. The structure needs to change, and they need to educate their staff on another level of inclusiveness.”

P2 also suggested hiring younger people at the systems office would enable new ideas and initiatives to move KCTCS forward and renew its focus on today’s diversity issues affecting colleges systemwide. P2 believes people who have worked in the systems office cannot make necessary changes moving forward. P3 stated, “Someone is needed to help recruit minority faculty and staff. It needs to be a system office position. However, the person must have a plan that will help all colleges. They (KCTCS) are not always helpful to HR directors.” P4 agreed, “KCTCS needs to put money behind every diversity initiative. The Fellows concept is a viable funding source that can help.”

According to P5, providing incentives may help colleges recruit and hire faculty and staff of color, but she is cautiously optimistic.

“It is hard to accomplish because it alienates groups of people who do not fit this demographic. Incentives have never been done before, and the systems office and legislature would have to approve them, as well as the legislature. I have to be careful about preferences. I feel like we get measured for affirmative action, which contradicts hiring for all people.”

#### **Theme 4: KCTCS Office Must Change Traditional Thought Process**

HR directors emphasized theme four more than any other theme with one constant, unifying message: the system office needs to change its traditional way of addressing diversity issues. P1 asked the question: How can KCTCS expect each college to be more inclusive in recruiting and hiring practices when the people making the systems' decisions are not ethnically diverse? “The problem is that CPE implemented mandates to everybody but the KCTCS systems office. How do you do it at the systems office? It is a big problem. Traditional ways of thinking. The systems office is not a good atmosphere for inclusiveness.”

P2 agreed:

“There are equity issues across the entire system. Good old’ boys clubs still exist at the systems office level. Change policy, change compensation. The system needs to change its antiquated thoughts. Many people have been in their roles too long for anything significant to change.”

P3 suggested a different reason. “The system office is not pushing diversity and helping colleges. The systems office is behind the times. They need to look at diversity issues differently. It is a big problem.” P4 noted how the systems office got rid of pensions and other areas of benefits that prospective faculty have relied on in the past; people do not see it as something they want to do. “They (the systems office) will have to develop something else to entice it because it may not meet many people’s needs. The benefits have been taken away. The colleges need help from the systems office to guide the direction to go and start recruiting and hiring minorities. The systems office is hiring someone to do just that. Hopefully, that will be great.” P5 is hopeful yet cautious the system can help.

“It will be interesting to see what the systems office helps us with. There are some customer service issues with some of our departments at the systems office. We do not get the best quality service as a college. We have had other positions that were supposed to help all 16 colleges, but that is hard to accomplish. We used to get a list from colleges, a consortium of graduate students of color to recruit, sort of a database dump of all diverse applicants, but that does not happen anymore.”

### **Significance of Theme 1**

The significance of theme 1 unveiled the mass challenges research participants face from the onset of CPE DEI policy implementation in 2016. The lived and shared experiences of HR directors through these CPE percentage mandate increases are instrumental in evolving this study. One HR director surmised the only reason some

colleges attempt to recruit and hire faculty and staff of color is because of these CPE mandates, implying those colleges would not be inclined to make this critical area a priority.

HR directors also focused on Kentucky's Performance-Based Funding Model, created in 2017 by then Kentucky Governor Matt Bevin. The model allocates funding to Kentucky colleges or universities based on 11 essential performance standards (CPE Progress Report, 2019). Colleges and universities compete for statewide monies by meeting standards geared primarily toward retaining and graduating students. KCTCS colleges must retain and graduate students to receive funding from the state to implement new programs at their institutions. Recruiting and hiring faculty staff of color plays a critical role in this process because, as research shows, faculty of color aid in individuals' retention process.

### **Significance of Theme 2**

The significance of theme 2 shows colleges do not have funds to recruit and hire diverse faculty. The most significant gains of faculty of color are in the part-time lecturer or adjunct positions, which allows KCTCS colleges to meet the growing demands of classes. However, CPE does not count these positions in its DEI policy initiatives, according to HR directors. Another assertion HR directors make is their ideas to recruit and hire more faculty of color does not gain traction due to state and KCTCS budget cuts. HR directors understand why the KCTCS office chose not to continue supporting the Faculty Fellows Program but want to see it return.

The Fellows Program hired faculty to work as interns in their chosen field, KCTCS paid their salary. Once the internship is over, the intern is re-hired without going through the hiring process. After a year, they are on-boarded as faculty hires again without the formal hiring process. According to the HR directors, this program needs to be re-established because it would create another option for each college to recruit and hire more faculty and staff of color to meet CPE demands.

### **Significance of Theme 3**

The study uncovered the systems office could no longer expect HR directors to recruit and hire this demographic without their help. HR directors do not think the KCTCS office does enough to help colleges meet diversity goals. HR directors concluded a complete program overhaul needs to be initiated by the KCTCS office to address all diversity issues, and not just recruiting and hiring faculty of color.

### **Significance of Theme 4**

Interestingly, each HR director noted how KCTCS personnel needs to change their traditional thought process to create new ways to increase faculty and staff of color at their colleges. The mandates placed on each KCTCS college need to be the same at the KCTCS office. The KCTCS office needs mandates on recruiting and minority hiring practices to mirror those at each college. As P3 surmised, the systems office needs to intensify its inclusive hiring practices because most people who work in the systems office and HR directors are White. P1 further explained that leadership's thought process is outdated when enacting policy and procedures to reflect minorities at the systems

office level. According to HR directors, hiring someone at the systems office level to recruit and hire faculty and staff of color is necessary. A new person is needed at the system office to lead change in this area.

### **Chapter Summary**

Chapter four discussed this phenomenological study's findings from HR directors' experiences and the significant challenges they face meeting CPE's DEI mandates. The chapter also included discussing the demographics, interview findings, data analysis, and emerging themes. The researcher reviewed the responses from the research participants' interviews and created themes. The themes were able to provide the foundation for the research analysis. These four emergent themes allowed the researcher to construct descriptions from the research participants' lived experiences. The findings voiced the lack of impact CPE's DEI policy have on recruiting and hiring faculty of color at associate-level colleges since policy implementation in 2016.

Another important finding is how HR directors do not feel supported by the KCTCS office to meet these DEI mandates. It was in dependability that the research participants provided clear, concise views that HR directors need help to meet these demands in this critical area. Chapter five provides an interpretation of the results as well as implications of the study findings. The chapter closes with limitations, gaps in the literature, and future recommendations for KCTCS colleges to increase faculty of color.

## Chapter V: Conclusions, Discussions, and Recommendations

Chapter five includes a restatement of the research problem, the purpose of the study, and an interpretation of the results. Chapter five will also discuss recent quantitative CPE DEI policy data, the significance of the results, limitations, and recommendations for future research on recruiting and hiring faculty of color at associate-level colleges in Kentucky. The formal and informal experiences of HR directors at associate-level colleges created the foundation of the study and analysis. The study's purpose is to examine CPE's DEI policy and its impact on human resource directors recruiting and hiring faculty of color at associate-level colleges in the Commonwealth of Kentucky. Research shows a problem still exists in recruiting and hiring faculty of color at associate-level colleges despite CPE DEI policy to address the issue.

The study utilizes a phenomenological approach, a design of inquiry that describes individuals' lived experiences about a phenomenon defined by the participants (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 13). The phenomenon is CPE's DEI policy, and the participants are HR directors whose lived experiences provide the basis for the study as they attempt to meet state mandates to recruit and hire more faculty of color. To document research of the participants' lived experiences, five women HR directors who work at KCTCS colleges throughout the state participated in semi-structured interviews. Through this interviewing process, the women shared their experiences and barriers to recruiting and hiring faculty of color. The women also reflected on how their past HR experiences outside higher education added to

their higher education development. The researcher evaluated the research questions while exploring the implications and limitations of the research study.

### **Research Questions**

Two central questions guided this phenomenological study after the researcher wondered aloud about the impact CPE DEI policy mandates have on the HR director's ability to recruit and hire this underrepresented population. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), central questions aim to explore a broad, complex set of factors underlying the primary phenomenon and to provide a specific, varied perspective for each participant (p. 133).

**RQ1:** What impact do CPE's diversity, equity, and inclusion policy have on recruiting and hiring faculty of color at associate-level colleges in the Commonwealth of Kentucky?

**RQ2:** What significant challenges do CPE's diversity, equity, and inclusion policy create for HR directors to recruit and hire faculty of color in the Commonwealth of Kentucky?

### **Interpretations of the Findings**

The qualitative study aimed to investigate five women HR directors charged with increasing faculty of color at associate-level colleges in Kentucky based on the 2016-2021 CPE DEI Policy. The researcher used a phenomenological approach to understand the significant challenges HR directors face to recruit and hire faculty of color under CPE DEI mandates. The study's findings determined that a lack of aid from the KCTCS office contributes to HR directors' inability to meet these demands to increase this vital demographic. The study's findings also support literature relating to recruiting and hiring diverse faculty and provides an intrusive look at the overall CPE DEI policy.

## Discussion of Themes

Four main themes gave voice to the research participant’s experiences while providing light to future research implications., there is no intentional, strategic, systemwide policy to help HR directors increase faculty of color. HR directors must continue to overcome significant challenges to grow this demographic without any help from the systems office. See Table 4 for themes.

Table 4

Theme 1	Theme 2	Theme 3	Theme 4
CPE’s DEI percentage mandates are unrealistic given the population totals in which these colleges serve	There is a lack of funding from KCTCS to recruit and hire faculty of color to the same level of students	The KCTCS office needs to hire a systemwide diversity director to help each institution recruit and hire faculty of color	KCTCS office personnel needs to change their traditional ways of thinking to address CPE DEI mandates

### Theme 1: Unrealistic CPE DEI percentage mandates

The research participants repeatedly stressed that achieving CPE mandates are a futile attempt for colleges. While the HR directors understand the need to increase faculty of color, colleges in rural and urban communities do not increase them. The HR directors also determined CPE does not understand how difficult it is for HR directors to increase faculty of color each year when they have not met their DEI goals from the previous years. HR directors agree that CPE percentage mandates are necessary to ensure colleges are committed to inclusiveness, but the metrics CPE uses should be more aligned with the overall population mirroring each college's geographical location. These impractical

goals are one of the main reasons why the research participants have an imperturbable attitude toward CPE mandates. The lack of foresight from CPE to adjust these percentage mandates leads to angst among the HR directors throughout Kentucky.

### Theme 2: Lack of funding from KCTCS to recruit and hire faculty of color

The research participants faced budget cuts both at the state and KCTCS systems office-level since before policy inception in 2016 under former Kentucky Governor Matt Bevin's administration. According to a National Education Association (NEA), state-by-state budget analysis under Bevin's tenure, Kentucky experienced a 1.9% decline in funding for public colleges and universities (2019). Nearby states like Tennessee and Ohio increased their spending by more than 33%, and Virginia by 26%.

If approved, Kentucky Governor Andy Beshear's proposed education budget gives public post-secondary institutions a 1% spending increase over the next two years (Brammer, 2020). Colleges and universities received \$174,581,000 in state appropriations last year from the Kentucky General Assembly. If the general assembly supports Beshear's 1% increase, there will be an extra \$1,745,810 for KCTCS, divided among the 16 colleges.

Bevin and Beshear played vital roles in shaping the CPE DEI Policy. When Bevin cut funding for four consecutive years, then-Attorney General Beshear sued him over those cuts, setting up a political battle Beshear ultimately won when he became Kentucky governor in 2019. What each KCTCS college decides to do with their share of the

funding will provide critical foresight into the intentionality of their commitment to recruit and hire this demographic.

### Theme 3: KCTCS office needs to hire a systemwide diversity officer

Instead of relying on the simplified method of allowing colleges to recruit African American and Latinx candidates to fill vacant positions, the KCTCS office needs to be creative in this approach. HR directors want the systems office to hire a diversity officer to recruit and hire faculty of color. HR directors understand the difficulty in creating a plan that works across all 16 colleges. However, a systemwide diversity officer would help them meet CPE DEI mandates. The traditional scenario plays the same across the system. The college's HR director posts the job description on its website with verbiage to attract URM candidates. A search committee chairperson is appointed and selects a committee from different backgrounds, ethnicities, and departments. The committee interviews qualified candidates with the HR director present. The committee then makes three recommendations to a president or dean, who interviews and ultimately decides to hire the candidate. This process seems problematic since most institutions do not have training protocols for search committees that hold all the power to advance a candidate on to the next phase. Adopting and funding colleges to adopt new processes such as placing advertisements in diversity-focused magazines and websites will spur this demographic's recruiting process and boost HR directors' morale, which the researcher noted in the study.

### Theme 4: KCTCS office must change traditional ways of addressing diversity issues

The KCTCS HR directors are endeavoring new ideas to recruit and hire this demographic such as hiring URM candidates to teach online classes without being on campus. Participant 1 suggested this idea in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. With many people working from home, hiring URMs full time that lives in another state and includes them as part of the college's percentage increase could help meet the state mandates. Participant 2 theorized that hiring URMs to the pay in the higher education market should be changed to hiring people in the overall job market. All ideas are worth exploring but need the intentional focus from the KCTCS office to achieve the desired percentage increases.

### **Limitations**

The first potential limitation is in the researcher himself. Creswell (2003), acknowledged the researchers' presence could lend bias to the research participants' response if they have intimate knowledge of the study. The researcher has worked at an associate-level college in Kentucky for 12 years. The researcher matriculated through the associate-level ranks from an academic advisor to a lecturer to his current position as an assistant professor. Before the study, the researcher gathered personal anecdotal evidence on why there was a lack of recruiting and hiring faculty of color since the CPE DEI policy implementation in 2016. The researcher's experiences led to conflicting biases, such as KCTCS colleges did not want to recruit and hire minorities to their colleges because the diversity, equity, and inclusion policy did not implement specific percentage mandates to each college. The researcher attempted to

keep his potential bias out of the study, understanding the diverse faculty issues were more significant than one person's experiences.

The second potential limitation is the researcher purposefully selected five of the 16 HR directors from different Kentucky regions to investigate whether recruiting and hiring faculty of color is a statewide or region-specific issue. Only five of the eight directors agreed to participate in the study, limiting the study's scope. Three participants contacted declined to participate, citing an overwhelming workload at their respective colleges. These interviews could have added to the HR directors' diverse perspectives, possibly creating more context to the four themes constructed from the interviews. This step was necessary since KCTCS colleges differ in location, size, county population, enrollment, and ethnicities.

The third potential limitation is the researcher secured interviews from one of the two HR directors from urban community colleges in Kentucky. The researcher sought both HR directors from the two largest cities in Kentucky with the most extensive urban populations to understand their unique challenges compared to rural colleges. The knowledge gleaned from one interview provided a rich viewpoint from an urban college perspective but gaining another perspective would have added to the study.

A final limitation was the behavior of the research participants in the study. The researcher had no control over how open the participants were in their responses to the study. Their level of comfort and willingness to share personal and professional thoughts about their experiences was entirely up to them, although the

researcher made efforts to enhance their comfort level to be open by creating a casual conversation about their time employed with KCTCS.

### **Research Implications**

The phenomenological study revealed four themes to fill a gap in the existing literature on recruiting and hiring faculty of color at associate-level colleges. The following recommendations will help community colleges increase faculty of color percentages to meet CPE mandates. Literature was minimum on recruiting and hiring this demographic specifically at the associate-college level. Most literature viewed this topic from a four-year, predominantly white institution's perspective on how difficult it is to recruit, hire, and retain faculty of color. The emergent themes represent the significant challenges community college HR directors must overcome to recruit and hire URMs successfully.

The findings add validity and significance to why this demographic is vital to associate-level colleges' overall success. This research was essential to address deficiencies in CPE and KCTCS initiatives that mandate each institution recruit and hire more faculty of color. Both entities need a concrete policy to address these inadequacies in their policy. This research will guide community college presidents, administrations, and stakeholders interested in making an intentional commitment to recruiting and hiring minority faculty. Faculty of color make a significant impact on every level of higher education, and this study provided relevant evidence to support this conclusion.

## **Recommendations**

The researchers' field notes collected from the research participants comprise the following recommendations. The first recommendation is the KCTCS office should hire a systemwide diversity officer solely responsible for helping each of the 16 colleges recruit and hire faculty of color. Hiring someone to facilitate this process would help achieve DEI goals. As Participant 1 noted, "we are skeptical that any one person or plan would help all colleges, but it would be a start." HR directors acknowledge it is harder to recruit to rural areas than urban areas. As Participant 2 stated unequivocally, "Black folks do not want to live here." To alleviate this obstacle, the diversity officer should create a strategy that addresses the different dynamics in rural and urban community colleges.

One possible strategy for both populations is to identify student (s) of color at the community college who intend to transfer to a four-year institution and has the potential to be faculty candidate. Once identified, the college should expose the student (s) to a college faculty member's pros and cons. Each college should establish consistent communication with the student (s) after graduating from the community college. Once they earn their bachelor's degree, the associate-level college should bring them back home and hire them as adjunct faculty members in the field in which they received their bachelor's degree. This potential solution would not produce the short-term results desired and mandated by CPE, but it would create a pipeline to recruit and hire faculty of color to these colleges.

While there are no guarantees rural students (s) of color would return home after college, the decision to leave the community is problematic for them. Rural values, as found by Jones (1994), included (a) family, (b) sense of community, (c) common sense is more valuable than intellectual ability, (d) mistrust from outsiders, (e) belief in gender role stereotypes, and (f) religious faith. Dees's study (2006), supported these values for rural students who attended a regional university in Ohio. The study corroborated that some students struggled to balance their rural values with their desire to leave their community.

Another recommendation is each institution offers incentives to recruit and hire faculty of color. Although offering incentives to job applicants has never been done at KCTCS colleges, it would attract a diverse applicant pool. Participant 5 noted, "incentives have never happened; the legislature would have to approve it." Each college is responsible for creating incentives to fit within the legislative agenda's parameters. Incentives would also help HR directors focus resources on recruiting and hiring faculty specifically. Creating incentives at the associate-college level that targets this population would allow administrators and stakeholders to invest in this population's success.

HR directors concluded a complete program overhaul needs to be initiated by the KCTCS office to address all diversity issues, and not just recruiting and hiring faculty of color. A Pathway to Professoriate Action Plan (P2PAP) investigated and

proposed by the researcher creates policy and initiatives to effectively recruit and hire faculty of color across the system (see appendix A).

### **Future Research Recommendations**

The research participants were very open about sharing their wisdom on overcoming the significant challenges of recruiting and hiring faculty of color at the associate-college level. Shared knowledge through stories and personal experiences appeared to be essential for the participants to meet CPE mandates. Evolving the study to include all 16 HR directors, and not only the five participants the researcher purposefully selected, is worth examining.

Additional research should investigate the CPE DEI policy on the same demographic at the eight public universities and colleges in Kentucky. A mixed-methods approach is needed to understand the data and the lived experiences of HR directors recruiting and hiring faculty of color at regional and statewide universities. Both university and associate-level college entities are under the same CPE DEI mandates to recruit and hire faculty of color but at different percentage increase levels. Probing how state and regional universities meet CPE DEI mandates further adds to associate-level HR directors' lived experiences' transferability.

A future researcher should measure how effective the researcher's P2PAP plan, if implemented correctly, is working after two years of implementation. Quantitative and qualitative data will be rich as KCTCS, CPE, and individual colleges generate increased faculty of color numbers based on the plan's strategic initiatives.

## **Conclusion**

This phenomenological study investigated the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education's Diversity, Equity, Inclusion Policy and its impact on recruiting and hiring faculty of color through human resource directors' lived experiences at associate-level colleges from 2016-2021. The literature in the study reveals faculty of color remains an essential piece of the higher education puzzle, uniquely when associate-level colleges leverage their funding to recruit and retain students of color and not to recruit and hire faculty of color. Institutional and system-wide commitment to recruit and hire faculty of color must be addressed for associate-level colleges to remain relevant in the 21st century.

The study shows a lack of intent from the KCTCS office to provide resources to associate-level colleges to recruit and hire faculty of color, not realizing the negative impact on students of color. The lack of accountability in the impact part of the CPE DEI Policy led to the researcher's intent to examine the impact on KCTCS HR directors to recruit and hire faculty of color and the significant challenges they face in meeting those mandates. Questions abound from the researcher whether CPE mandates significantly impact recruiting and hiring this demographic since DEI policy inception in 2016. According to the study, it does not.

The research questions, design and methodology, instrumentation, identification of participants, instrumentation, data collection, and analysis and data collection allowed the researcher to undertake a candid view of this continued phenomenon affecting HR

directors. The researcher intends to spur policy and procedural changes to effectively increase faculty of color at associate-level colleges in Kentucky.

Four main themes emerged from the phenomenological study's findings from HR directors' experiences and the significant challenges they face meeting CPE's DEI mandates. The themes were: CPE DEI percentage mandates are unrealistic given the population totals in which these colleges serve; there is a lack of funding from the KCTCS office to recruit and hire faculty of color to the same level of students; the KCTCS office should be intentional in its focus to help each institution recruit and hire URMs, and the KCTCS office personnel needs to change their traditional ways of thinking to address DEI mandates systemwide. These themes enabled the researcher to construct descriptions from the research participants' lived experiences and provided the research analysis foundation.

The researcher constructed three recommendations for the KCTCS office, its colleges, and HR directors to increase the percentages of recruiting and hiring faculty of color; the KCTCS office should hire a systemwide diversity officer to help each of the 16 colleges to recruit and hire faculty of color. Each institution offers incentives to recruit and hire faculty of color. Although offering incentives to job applicants has never been done at KCTCS colleges, it would attract a diverse applicant pool.

The concept of recruiting and hiring more faculty and staff of color to the state's population levels has continued for 57 years in Kentucky, from *Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964* to the *Kentucky Plan* in 1982 to the *Strategic Plan for Kentucky Higher*

*Education* from 1982 to 1995, to the *Policy and Framework for Institution Diversity Plan* from 2010-2015 to the 2016-2021 Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policy.

In 2007, the CPE became the governing body of higher education in Kentucky. The CPE Board of Directors adopted the *Policy and Framework for Institution Diversity Plan* in 2010 and abandoned it in 2015 because it was not meeting the diverse demographics in the state. Under this policy, CPE provided a broad definition of diversity, and institutions were required to create plans that addressed, at a minimum, four areas: student body diversity that mirrors the diversity of Kentucky or the institution's service area; closing achievement gaps; workforce diversity; and campus climate (CPE, 2015).

That policy was revamped to the current 2016-2021 after data showed it was not creating enough opportunities for URM students, faculty, and staff. The revised DEI policy focuses on three areas of improvement: opportunity, success, and impact. Policy mandates were attached to increase enrollment and graduation rates of URM students each year at associate-level colleges.

The HR directors stated no matter how many students of color, associate-level colleges recruit to CPE DEI metrics; if students of color do not see someone who looks like them, has the same background as them in the classroom, their chances of graduating drops when they have no one to identify with on campus. With policy implementation complete, current data and trends show the DEI policy is not impacting recruiting and hiring faculty of color as intended at associate-level colleges, making it difficult for HR directors to meet state-issued mandates.

The CPE mandates each associate-level college increase its faculty and staff of color percentages from 6% in the first year of policy implementation in 2016 to 9.3% in 2021. Data reveals the percentages of faculty and staff of color increased from 6% to 6.5%, far below the CEP DEI policy goal. The policy evaluates associate-level colleges in Kentucky in three critical areas: opportunity, success, and impact. The CPE policy ensures KCTCS colleges produce culturally competent faculty and staff who prepare students for life and work in diverse societies (CPE, 2016). According to the CPE's *Progress Report* (2019), more URM students attended and graduated from associate-level colleges while increased percentages of faculty of color languished from 2016-2019.

### **Opportunity**

Opportunity focuses on minimum admission standards and ACT standardized test scores to ensure African American and Latinx students have the opportunity to attend college. Each associate-level college aims to increase URM student retention and graduation rates through targeted recruiting and retention strategies. URM enrollment at KCTCS colleges was 11,746 in 2016-2017. It decreased to 11,485 in 2017-2018. In 2018-2019, it was 12,329 and rose to its highest level of 13,126 in 2019-2020. In 2020-2021, it dropped to 12,371 due to the COVID-19 pandemic (CPE Report, 2020).

### **Success**

Success involves retention strategies and graduation rates of African American and Latinx students. Data reveals three-year graduation rates for URM students at KCTCS colleges rose to an average of 21.76% from 2016-2021. In 2016-2017, they were 17.2%;

in 2017-2018 and 2018-2019, they were 22%. In 2019-2020, they reached their highest percentage total of 24.3%. During 2020-2021 the rate decreased to 22.5% due to the COVID-19 pandemic. (CPE Report, 2020).

KCTCS awarded 16,818 associate degrees and credentials to URM students from the 2016-2020 academic years. The number of degrees and credentials rose each year during this time frame. In 2016-2017, there were 3,705 students, in 2017-2019, it rose from 4,067 to 4,367, to 4,679 in 2019-2021 (CPE Report, 2020).

### **Impact**

Impact focuses on tenured and non-tenured URM and examines campus climate, inclusiveness, and cultural competency at each institution. Each KCTCS college reports its URM faculty and staff numbers to the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) yearly. IPEDS data (2020) indicates the percentage of faculty of color percentages has not changed since CPE DEI policy implementation in 2016. One thousand five hundred ninety-six total faculty members worked in KCTCS colleges from fall 2016 to fall 2020. The same percentage of URM faculty remains the same today as it did five years ago. Only 4% are African American, 0.04% American Indian/Native Alaskan, 0.05% Latinx, 0.01% Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and 0.9% are two or more races. The CPE defines underrepresented minorities as American Indian/Native Alaskan, Black/African American, Latinx/Latinx, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander heritage, or self-identified as two or more races.

CPE's DEI policy is less about creating a level playing field for underrepresented minorities and more about creating effective policy improving opportunity, success, and

impact for URMs. CPE's policy provides parameters in those three areas to build effective, comprehensive, diverse, and culturally proficient dynamic college campuses throughout the state. Each associate-level college is responsible for creating policy and processes to ensure success in all three areas.

KCTCS colleges created successful procedures to attract, recruit, retain, and graduate students of color to meet CPE DEI initiatives. However, none of the colleges created meaningful policies and processes to recruit and hire faculty of color to the percentage levels CPE requires. The study's HR directors are attempting to meet the unrealistic goals of the impact part of CPE DEI's policy. Public community colleges must intensify their recruiting and hiring strategies of faculty of color but fail because they need intentional help from the KCTCS office, which the study reveals they are not receiving.

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## APPENDICES

## Appendix A

### Pathway to Professorate Action Plan (P2PAP)

The Pathway 2 Professoriate Action Plan (P2PAP) effectively provides a comprehensive solution for two-year and four-year higher education institutions to expose, recruit and eventually hire students of color into the professorate. According to the *CPE Progress Report* (2019), in 2017-2018, there were 19,109 Bachelor's degrees earned statewide (pp. 24-25). Of that total, 8,006 low-income students (Pell Grant eligible) and 2,447 URM students earned degrees. There were 7,500 graduate and professional degrees awarded to URM students during the 2017-2018 academic year. The CPE's targeted goals for 2020-2021 are 19,696 bachelor's degrees earned from public universities and colleges (*CPE Progress Report*, p. 25). Of that total, 8,775 low-income students and 2,420 URM students are projected to receive degrees. The projected total for graduate and professional degrees earned by URM students is 7,855 during the same time frame (p. 26). The data clearly illustrates students of color are graduating from associate, bachelor, and doctoral degree programs in Kentucky at higher percentages than ever before, creating more opportunities for community colleges and universities to create a professorial pipeline that benefits both institutions. Exposing students of color to the professorate is the crucial component of the P2PAP. The plan allows students (s) of color to assess whether they want to pursue the college faculty ranks and impact future generations of students who look like them. Recruiting students of color via a pathway to the professoriate becomes the focus after exposure.

The P2PAP needs intentionality from higher education stakeholders – CPE, associate-level colleges and four-year university presidents, HR directors, and current

tenured faculty of color and students – to succeed. Each entity must be willing to adopt, support, and fund the plan specific to its institutional needs. The plan provides CPE the opportunity to assess recruiting and hiring practices for faculty of color more consistently at each public higher education institution, enabling the agency to create reasonable percentage mandates based on each associate-level HR directors' recommendations. The plan further strengthens CPE's impact policy area, which the researcher's study reveals is not increasing faculty of color percentages at community colleges.

Associate-level colleges benefit in five ways: 1) it gives each HR director a plan to recruit and eventually hire faculty and staff of color to meet their college's CPE DEI mandates, 2) it expands existing pathway agreements between community colleges and universities, further bridging the educational gap between public two-year and four-year colleges and universities, 3) it allows individual community colleges to expose students of color to the professorate in their geographic region when they first arrive on a college campus, 4) provides community colleges a straightforward way to track those interested students who earn their two-year and four-year degree, and 5) enables associate-level colleges to include the plan in its annual DEI report mandated by CPE.

Public four-year universities benefit in three ways: 1) The plan allows each college to expose, identify, and recruit students of color through workshops initiated by their college. Workshops consist of qualitative and quantitative data touting the significant impact professors of color can make on future generations in that particular

college. The individual college then recruits workshop attendees to gauge their interest in joining the professoriate and chart an individual route for students of color to pursue becoming a professor teaching in their chosen college. Suppose the student(s) of color shows an interest in pursuing the academy once they receive their pathway. In that case, the college will connect the student to the university's DEI department to pair a professor of color with the student, creating a faculty-student mentoring program that meets the universities and CPE DEI initiatives.

The P2PAP becomes an essential element of creating job opportunities once students of color transfer to a four-year university. After receiving their bachelor's degree, the student(s) of color has the opportunity to teach first-year experience courses as an adjunct faculty member at the community college closest to their home through a pathway agreement established between two-year and four-year colleges. The student(s) of color benefit from the teaching experience and decide if they want to pursue the professorate. If the student(s) of color deem it, they move forward in receiving their Master's degree.

Once the student(s) of color completes 18 hours in their Master's-level program, the individual can work full-time as a lecturer at a community college. The student can then progress to an assistant professor once they receive their Master's degree. If they are still interested in pursuing the professoriate, they can begin their journey of earning a doctoral degree to understand that a tenure-track professor position

at the four-year university is within reach. Student(s) of color who do not want to pursue the professorate are exposed to another career choice.

### **P2PAP to KCTCS Implementation**

Implementing the P2PAP may take months, if not years, to execute at both two-year and four-year institutions, but it is worth advancing the initiative. The first step in receiving approval from KCTCS is to encourage peer teams in each of the 16 colleges to support the P2PAP. Peer committees make recommendations to improve the plan. Once the researcher makes those changes, committee members approve the plan and ensure the wording is correct. The second step is for the peer team to submit their changes to the KCTCS leadership and legal affairs departments. Any changes articulated by the leadership team, it is the peer team's responsibility to ensure leadership' recommendations are complete.

The third step is peer teams delivering the proposal to college presidents for final approval. Each college president must decide if the P2PAP will be successful for all stakeholders involved. The KCTCS board of regents must also approve the initiative. If the P2PAP satisfies stakeholders involved, the KCTCS office would inform colleges on a timeline for implementing the P2PAP. Each college would then plan to increase the percentages of faculty of color based on the P2PAP. CPE provides policy oversight of the P2PAP and reviews data to analyze if the action plan is making a significant impact on this part of the DEI policy.

## Appendix B

### Letter to Participants

Dear Human Resource Directors:

My name is Adarrell L. Owsley, and I am a doctoral candidate at Eastern Kentucky University. I am researching the Council on Postsecondary Education's diversity, equity, and inclusion policy mandates and its impact on recruiting and hiring faculty of color at associate-level colleges in the Commonwealth of Kentucky. I am seeking eight human resource directors who would be appropriate for inclusion in this study.

The criteria for each participant are as follows: (a) minimum of two years of experience, (b) currently employed at the institution, and (c) holds the position of human resource director. The participants possess leadership authority and oversee institutional personnel directly involving faculty. The human resource directors asked to participate in this study will go through in-depth interviews with semi-structured, open-ended questions to explore the essence of human resource directors' influence related to recruiting and hiring diverse faculty.

The interview questions will be recorded and transcribed verbatim. The name of the institution and the participants will not be disclosed. The entire procedure should take approximately 30 minutes per participant. Individual interviews will be on Microsoft Teams. The two primary research questions are as follows: What impact are the CPE's diversity, equity, and inclusion policy mandates having on recruiting and hiring faculty of color at associate-level colleges in the Commonwealth of Kentucky? and (2) What significant challenges do the CPE's diversity, equity, and inclusion policy mandates

create for human resource directors to recruit and hire faculty of color at associate-level colleges in the Commonwealth of Kentucky?

I have attached copies of the KCTCS Human Subjects approval letter, Eastern Kentucky University's IRB approval letter, and informed consent form. If you have any questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me via email at [adarrell.owsley@kctcs.edu](mailto:adarrell.owsley@kctcs.edu) or by phone at 859-285-5540.

Thank you in advance for considering my request.

Sincerely,

Adarrell L. Owsley, Ed.D, ABD

## Appendix C

### Interview Questions

WARM-UP QUESTIONS:

1. How many years have you been the director of human resources at your college?
2. What are your current job responsibilities in this position?
3. How do you classify your ethnicity or race?

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS:

1. How do you define diversity, equity, and inclusion?
2. How does your college define diversity, equity, and inclusion?
3. Describe what you have done to influence the college's efforts to diversify faculty?
4. What have you done to recruit and hire diverse faculty?
5. What impact are the CPE's diversity, equity, and inclusion policy mandates having on recruiting and hiring faculty of color at associate-level colleges in the Commonwealth of Kentucky?
6. How have the college's diversity efforts in this area impacted this demographic?
7. What do you see as a vehicle for helping leadership understand the necessity of attaining a diverse faculty?
8. What incentives do colleges offer that undertake new diversity initiatives to recruit and hire faculty of color?
9. What significant challenges do the CPE's diversity, equity, and inclusion policy mandates create for human resource directors to recruit and hire faculty of color at associate-level colleges in the Commonwealth of Kentucky?

10. Concerning your position, would you think on your campus that diversity, equity, and inclusion are shared responsibilities among administrators or under a specific person's purview? Why or why not?
11. What funding is allocated to diversify faculty on your campus?
12. Is this funding part of the base budget for the institution? Why or why not?
13. What is your long-range plan to diversify faculty on your campus?

WRAP UP QUESTIONS (Open-ended for further insight)

1. Are there any further insights about diversity, equity, and inclusion at the leadership level you would like to share?
2. Is there anything that you would like to share about your experiences that others would benefit from knowing?
3. Do you have any questions you would like to ask me?

## Appendix D

### Informed Consent Document for Research Participants

INVESTIGATOR: Adarrell L. Owsley, Educational Leadership/Policy Studies.  
2203 Stannye Drive, Louisville, KY 40222. adarrell\_owsley1@mymail.eku.edu. 859-  
285-5540.

CHAIR: Dr. Charles Hausman, Educational Leadership & Counselor Education.  
Eastern Kentucky University, Combs Building 417. charles.hausman@eku.edu. 859-622-  
8250.

TITLE OF STUDY: Examining the CPE's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policy  
Mandates and its Impact on Recruiting and Hiring Faculty of Color at Associate-Level  
Colleges in the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

PURPOSE OF STUDY: You are being asked to participate in a research study to  
examine the impact of the CPE's diversity, equity, and inclusion policy and its effect on  
recruiting and hiring faculty of color associate-level colleges through the lens of human  
resource directors. Under your position, you have the requisite traits that give you the  
ability to inform and provide critical insight in response to the research questions.

METHODS AND PROCEDURES: The entire procedure should take forty-five  
minutes for the completion of forms and interviews. If you agree to participate in the  
interview, you will first be asked questions about your personal and background  
information, such as your race/ethnicity, education level, and job responsibilities. The  
interview will contain semi-structured, open-ended questions that will encourage you to  
express your perceptions and experiences. You will then be asked to answer several in-

depth questions to explore the challenges human resource directors face in recruiting and hiring faculty of color. The questions allow for examining your lived experiences from your perspective; therefore, results will not be provided to you. A follow-up phone call may occur to review and clarify the areas discussed in the interview. You may ask questions at any time during the study, and you are free to contact my chair or me should you have any questions about the research project.

**RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS:** We expect no risks or discomfort for people in this study. However, you may feel somewhat uneasy answering the questions involved.

**BENEFITS:** The information obtained in this study may not directly benefit you. However, the results may provide higher education administrators a better understanding of the challenges recruiting and hiring faculty of color bring to your everyday work life.

**CONFIDENTIALITY OF RECORDS:** All information obtained during this study is private. We protect people's privacy by withholding their names and other personal information from all persons not connected to this study. Each person will be identified using a pseudo name and not your real name. The raw data shall be retained for three years, and all records relating to this research shall be retained for three years after completion of the research. All records shall be accessible for inspection and copying by authorized representatives of the Institutional Review Board at reasonable times and in a reasonable manner. Information will be stored most securely for three years as required by federal law. Although this study's information is private, the data's security can only be promised within the university's boundaries and researcher or faculty advisor.

Confidentiality will be broken if the information obtained reveals that you intend to harm yourself or another person.

**VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION:** Taking part in this study is entirely voluntary. You may refuse to answer any specific question. Participants may withdraw at any time without penalty or prejudice.

**PARTICIPATION CONSENT:** I have had the purposes and procedures of this study explained to me and have had the opportunity to ask questions. My signature shows my willingness to take part in the study under the conditions stated. This study has been reviewed by the Institutional Review Board of Eastern Kentucky University, which ensures that research projects involving human subjects follow federal regulations.

Any questions or concerns about rights as a research participant should be directed to the Division of Sponsored Programs, Eastern Kentucky University, 521 Lancaster Avenue, Coates CPO 20, Richmond, KY 40475.

Appendix E  
CITI Program Certification



Completion Date 13-Jun-2019  
Expiration Date 12-Jun-2022  
Record ID 31998031

This is to certify that:

**Adarrell Owsley**

Has completed the following Citi Program course:

**Social & Behavioral Research - Basic/Refresher** (Curriculum Group)  
**Social & Behavioral Research - Basic/Refresher** (Course Learner Group)  
**1 - Basic Course** (Stage)

Under requirements set by:

**Eastern Kentucky University**



Verify at [www.citiprogram.org/verify/?w3995a131-9890-4c8a-968b-99511b9d91c0-31998031](http://www.citiprogram.org/verify/?w3995a131-9890-4c8a-968b-99511b9d91c0-31998031)

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Appendix F

KCTCS Human Subjects Review Board Approval



September 29, 2020

Adarrell Owsley  
Gateway Community and Technical College  
790 Thomas More Parkway  
Edgewood, KY 41017

RE: Examining CPE's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policy Mandates and its Impact on Recruiting and Hiring Faculty of Color at Associate-Level Colleges in the Commonwealth of Kentucky

Dear Adarrell,

After careful consideration of your application to the KCTCS Human Subjects Review Board, I have determined that you are eligible for exemption from federal regulations regarding the protection of human subjects based on your research using a procedure that meets the exempt review criteria section 7 (2).

Thank you for your cooperation in meeting the federal requirements for conducting research that utilizes human subjects. We appreciate your notification to this board and we will keep your information on file.

Sincerely,

*Kris Williams*

Kris Williams, Ph.D.  
KCTCS Chancellor

*Pamela M. Duncan*

Pamela M. Duncan  
Associate General Counsel  
Chair, KCTCS Human Subjects Review Board

cc: Alicia Crouch  
Vice Chancellor of Research & Policy Analysis

## Appendix G

### EKU Consent to Participate in a Research Study

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## Consent to Participate in a Research Study

### Examining CPE's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policy Mandates and its Impact on Recruiting and Hiring Faculty of Color at Associate-Level Colleges in the Commonwealth of Kentucky

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#### Key Information

You are being invited to participate in a research study. This document includes important information you should know about the study. Before providing your consent to participate, please read this entire document and ask any questions you have.

##### Do I have to participate?

If you decide to participate in the study, it should be because you really want to volunteer. You will not lose any benefits or rights you would normally have if you choose not to volunteer. You can stop at any time during the study and still keep the benefits and rights you had before volunteering. If you decide to participate, you will be one of about eight people in the study.

##### What is the purpose of the study?

The purpose of the study is to examine the impact of CPE's diversity, equity, and inclusion policies and its impact on recruiting and hiring faculty of color through HR directors' lens at associate-level colleges in the Commonwealth of Kentucky. Phenomenological research is a design of inquiry that describes individuals' lived experiences about a phenomenon defined by the participants (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 13).

Although increasing the number of faculty of color at associate-level colleges in the state is part of CPE's diversity, equity, and inclusion initiative, HR directors face significant challenges in recruiting and hiring this demographic. Douglas (2006) maintained a community that promotes diversity and supports an inclusive culture rather than an exclusive culture and supports social integration rather than isolation. The participants possess leadership authority and oversee institutional personnel directly involving faculty.

##### Where is the study going to take place, and how long will it last?

The entire procedure should take forty-five minutes per participant for the completion of forms and interviews. The interviews will be conducted via Microsoft Teams. You will need to be present during an agreed-upon time and date between yourself and the researcher, sometime during the Fall 2020 semester.

The two primary research questions are as follows: What impact are CPE's diversity, equity, and inclusion policy mandates having on recruiting and hiring faculty of color at associate-level colleges in the Commonwealth of Kentucky?; and (2) What significant challenges do CPE's diversity, equity, and inclusion policy mandates create for human resource directors to recruit and hire faculty of color at associate-level colleges in the Commonwealth of Kentucky?

##### What will I be asked to do?

If you agree to participate in the interview, you will first be asked questions about your personal and background information, such as your race/ethnicity, education level, and job responsibilities. The interview will contain semi-structured, open-ended questions that will encourage you to express your perceptions and experiences. You will then be

asked to answer several in-depth questions to explore the challenges human resource directors face in recruiting and hiring faculty of color. The questions allow for examining your lived experiences from your perspective; therefore, results will not be provided to you. A follow-up phone call may occur to review and clarify the areas discussed in the interview. You may ask questions at any time during the study, and you are free to contact my chair or me should you have any questions about the research project.

**Are there reasons why I should not take part in this study?**

There are no reasons you should not participate in the study unless you do not have the time to do so this semester.

**What are the possible risks and discomforts?**

To the best of our knowledge, the things you will be doing have no more risk of harm or discomfort than you would experience in everyday life. However, you may feel somewhat uneasy answering the questions involved.

**What are the benefits of taking part in this study?**

You are not likely to get any personal benefit from taking part in this study. Your participation is expected to provide benefits to others by providing KCTCS administrators a better understanding of the challenges of recruiting and hiring faculty of color bring to your everyday work life.

**If I do not take part in this study, are there other choices?**

If you do not want to be in the study, there are no other choices except not to take part in the study.

Now that you have some crucial information about the study, please continue reading if you are interested in participating. Other important details about the study are provided below.

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## **Other Important Details**

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**Who is doing the study?**

The person in charge of this study is Adarrell L. Owsley at Eastern Kentucky University.

**What will it cost me to participate?**

There are no costs associated with taking part in this study.

**Will I receive any payment or rewards for taking part in the study?**

You will not receive any payment or reward for taking part in this study.

**Who will see the information I give?**

Your information will be combined with information from other people taking part in the study. When we write up the study to share it with other researchers, we will write about this combined information. You will not be identified in these written materials.

We will make every effort to prevent anyone who is not on the research team from knowing that you gave us information, or what that information is. For example, your name will be kept separate from the information you give, and these two things will be stored in different places under lock and key.

However, there are some circumstances in which we may have to show your information to other people. For example, the law may require us to show your information to a court. Also, we may be required to show information that identifies you for audit purposes.

We will make every effort to safeguard your data, but we cannot guarantee data security obtained via the Internet as with anything online. Third-party applications used in this study may have terms of service and privacy policies outside of the control of Eastern Kentucky University.

**Can my taking part in the study end early?**

If you decide to take part in the study, you still have the right to decide at any time that you no longer want to participate. You will not be treated any differently if you decide to stop taking part in the study.

The individual conducting the study may need to end your participation in the study. The researcher may do this if you are not able to follow the directions they give you, if they find that your being in the study is more risk than benefit to you, or if the University or agency funding the study decides to stop the study early for a variety of reasons.

**What happens if I get hurt or sick during the study?**

If you believe you are hurt or get sick because of something done during the study, you should call Adarrell L. Owsley at 859-285-5540 immediately. You need to understand that Eastern Kentucky University will not pay for any care or treatment cost necessary because you get hurt or sick while taking part in this study. Also, Eastern Kentucky University will not pay for any wages you may lose if this study harms you. These costs will be your responsibility.

Usually, medical costs that result from research-related harm cannot be included as regular medical costs. Therefore, the costs related to your care and treatment because of something that is done during the study will be your responsibility. You should ask your insurer if you have any questions about your insurer's willingness to pay under these circumstances.

We will give you a copy of this consent form to take with you.

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## **Consent**

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KCTCS employees, including Human Resource Directors, do not need to give written consent to participate in a research study because all documents related to the study have been submitted and approved by the KCTCS Human Subjects Review Board (please see letter attached). When you decide to accept this invitation to participate in the study via email, you are giving your consent to participate in the study. Please direct any questions you may have about the study to the principal investigator, Adarrell L. Owsley, assistant professor at Gateway Community and Technical College, at 859-285-5540 or email [adarrell.owsley@kctcs.edu](mailto:adarrell.owsley@kctcs.edu). If you have any questions about your rights as a research volunteer, you can contact the staff in the Division of Sponsored Programs at Eastern Kentucky University at 859-622-3636.