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Experiences of Underrepresented Minorities in Doctoral Nursing Programs
at Predominantly White Universities

by

Linda D. Gregory

DISSERTATION

Submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

Nursing

in the

GRADUATE DIVISION

of the

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN FRANCISCO

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by
Linda D. Gregory

DEDICATION

My family directly and my people indirectly have given me the kind of strength that enables me to go anywhere.

—Maya Angelou

I will not concern myself with the criticisms of cliché. Therefore, it is without a doubt to who I dedicate and acknowledge first - for this success and achievement! I shout: *To God be the glory great things he has done...hymn verse, Fanny Crosby ~ 1872* and I recited with great fervor *"if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, move from here to there, and it will move; and **nothing will be impossible for you**" [Matthew 17:20, Luke 17:6].*

My roots in California have a humble beginning. I migrated to Oakland CA from Detroit MI in 1978 with two kids in tow traveling by way of Greyhound bus with \$60.00 travel money and \$100.00 to settle in upon arrival. My mom packed us a bag of fried chicken, wonder bread, hard-boil eggs, dill pickles, pound cake, comic books and candy for the boys, and Lysol Spray to sanitize the lavatory. You may be curious as to why this is important – well- this mode of travel and these types of food packed in either a shoe box or brown paper bag was typical for Blacks as we moved across the country. It was my intent to protect my sons and reach for a better life. This is a window into the socio-cultural intersections that framed my experiences as an African American woman, daughter, sister and single parent with African American sons.

My pursuit of a doctoral degree has truly been a journey, but I found strength in the words of great grandmother, who grew up in a family of 5 children and whose dad was a sharecropper, Momma Sallie could not read or write well, but had what the old folks called, mother wit, the ability to make sense out of complex situations. And to Momma Sallie, an education would *hep you git* somewhere! And so with snuff in her lower lip or chewing tobacco in her cheek, she would often say, *"gurl, you caint get to the top of the mountain without bumps to latch onto to hep pull yoll self-up! Or as she would tap on her head would say, whatcha learnt they caint take from yah!"* And her words and sayings shaped education as a value for me and my family and became my mantra which I passed on to my sons, Stephen Lee and Terrance Burke Gregory; as we studied every weekend either at St. Mary's College in Moraga, CA or Samuel Merritt College of Nursing (which is now Samuel Merritt University) in Oakland, CA. So, Mommy Sallie was an early inspiration, a great lady who was a master seamstress, cook, maker of hats (millinery), crocheter, creator of herbal concoctions for healing, and she delivered babies in the back woods of a small city in Alabama! Today, folks would say, she has #BlackGirlMagic.

My parents Esther Lee and John Burke Johnson were both scholars and high school graduates. My dad had dreams of becoming a doctor and briefly attended Wayne State University as a Pre-med student. I have a vivid memory of my mom arriving early to pick him up from work at a Susie – Q restaurant and I could see him through a big window wearing a pointed hat while mopping the floor; later when we got home he would study at the kitchen table. More children came along so he eventually had to abandon his dreams of becoming a doctor and enrolled a business certificate program at the University of Wisconsin and upon completion

worked as a financial consultant for the United States Steele Workers Credit Union. He played golf in the summer and wore seer sucker suits with a white shirt and tie and to me he was the most handsome man ever! He called our mom his black rose for her beauty. Esther Lee had more courage than most and her expectations were that we behaved and performed well in school – learning all that we could. She pursued a certificate in catering – started a desert business. In addition, she completed a Ward Clerk program. As a Ward Clerk (Unit Assistant) she worked at Jennings Memorial Hospital during a time when nurses smoked at the desk. As a unit assistant she was the only Black employee who did not work as a janitor/housekeeper or in the kitchen. Esther Lee was and to this day remains my role model; brains, brawn, and beauty. My parents and their friends were social activist, members of the NAACP and active in the Civil Rights Movement. This socio-political environment is yet another shared experience which provided meaning to my world view and influenced my self-identity. So, I dedicate this successful journey to my parents for being an early example of the call - to stand-up and make a difference in your community and when things do not always work out the way you planned, make another plan.

My beautiful Aunt Georgia Lee Carr-Williamson! My dad’s baby sister and my dearest auntie! I dedicate this dissertation to you. You were so supportive and forever encouraging; always with a kind reminder of “you can and must do better Linda” When you were acknowledged by Ford Motor Company for your seamstress skills and pattern redesign - which was implemented for the Ford Escort, our family was so very proud! You purchased my Cass Tech High School class ring and would send Stevie and Terry cash packages when they were in college; this is for you! And your annual summer visits to Cali will always be remembered. This dissertation is for you!

I am grateful for the love from my brothers, John Burke and Eric Lee Johnson, generously gave me but unfortunately were swept away by a socially engineered Detroit drug scene designed purposefully to negatively impact to African American community. Gone too soon. So, with this achievement I intend to make a difference in my community and to work with others to address and legitimize Black Lives!

I am honored to have a loving sister, Jameela Latif-Williams to which this is dedicated. She has been with me through this entire RN, MSN, and now doctoral journey. She has listened to my countless stories of frustrations; of being the only Black in the classroom and in the boardroom, very few faculty of color, being talked over, looked over, and when I worked in the ICU, being asked by African American patients, if I were a real RN, simply because they had not seen African American RNs in the ICU before. She is my inspiration. As an entrepreneur in Oakland CA for greater than 20 years, as the owner of Esther’s Garden, she has received many acknowledgements for her positive footprint in the community – such as providing summer internships for high school students and was invited by the Oakland Port Authority to open one of Oakland International Airport first kiosk. After a life-threatening illness, she enrolled in Mills College and during her recuperative phase she successfully completed a Bachelors of Arts Degree in Economics (she has our dads’ math gene), and was the recipient of Mills distinguished Pearl M. Pin Award for her outstanding contributions to the student body and campus. And Ronald Lee Williams, I thank you. You will always be my pinhead Ron Lee who loved his angel, my sister, too much; gone too soon! So, I dedicate this accomplishment to Jameela for being an example for me and encouraging me to keep it moving – “go back in your office and write”!

This accomplishment and my life's journey is a living example for my grandchildren, Kane Hassan, Truly Gregory, Enzi, Zora, and Assata Gregory that with hard work, faith, self-confidence, tenacity, curiosity, support and the intent to stay focus! and if and when plans go astray make another plan and that their dreams are possible! So, because of you and for you I dedicate to you this work and my achievement. Carry the dream forward!

To my son, Stephen L. Gregory, graduate of Howard University I dedicate this journey to you. Stephen challenges me to do more – you can do this mom! He is always there with love, kind words, and thoughtful insight. He makes me laugh and insists that I take time to take care of my health; “mom you have to eat better and exercise daily” he even bought me a pair of walking shoes for encouragement! He has always been athletic if not football, it was Lacrosse or it was tennis. So, with my first pay check as an RN I purchased a Prince tennis racket. He is a gifted and brilliant man with the gift of gab! And the father of Truly Sojourner and Kane. Stephen has a successful business Urban Lens and is a curator of arts and installs art productions in the Washington DC – Maryland area. Last year he hosted the successful Machina Arts Festival in Oakland CA. He is my spiritual consult which I have relied upon so often during this journey. I frequently say, Help meh Holy ghost or Father I stretch my hand to thee for no other Help I know. I know and appreciate Jesus!

To my son, Terrance B. Gregory, graduate of the University of District of Columbia, I dedicate this journey to you as well. Terrance is my rock of Gibraltar! He is a purveyor and speaker of truth and asserts social justice for people of color. He brings music and laughter into my life. As a high school student he loved music. In fact, with my first pay check as an RN I purchased him a boom box; a straight-up and away musicologist, always! Terrance is so loving. As a Certified Nutrition Counselor, he too insists that I curb or refrain from eating offal's and other Detroit – Alabama delicacies and to exercise more. Terrance takes the lead as our financial consultant and advises and administers our family investment portfolio. And I must say with much enthusiasm, Terrance is chef extraordinaire, his Charleston's Low County frogman's sea food dish will make you want too holla and as folks say – slap some body! Now, speaking of Charleston, along came my daughter Wanda Renee Pittman-Gregory. Terrance and Wanda are the parents of Enzi, Zora, and Assata. Wanda, Wanda, Wanda, I loved her as soon as I met her! Terrance's swagger was strutting the lyrics of Maze's song “Southern Girl!” She has beauty, brains and words... and she is a graduate from The Catholic University of America has a Master's of Arts Degree in Special Education and is making a difference as the Director of Special Education, at DCs Capital City Public Charter School. She is so calm and always knows just how to encourage me. She never fails to amaze me – The gurl speaks fluent Gullah! And everyone and anyone that knows me, I am all about our authentic voice! Mother Africa and our diaspora! She is my computer genius. Whenever, she and Terrance visit I greet them with “none of these work” or I call Wanda... and she and Terrance echo – Lynn you have to turn your computer off or close some of the programs you have open... She has been so nurturing. So, Terrance and Wanda, I dedicate this successful journey to the both of you.

Dear Aisha, this is dedicated to you as well. You are the mother of Kane and Truly. Your culinary and handywoman, can fix anything skills, lover of all things warm and cold blooded and will bring them. You always find a rainbow in every cloud. Thanks for your encouragement and love.

Now to my bestest friend, partner in crime, sister, confidant, fellow back in the day party goer, first person I befriended in Oakland CA, Kaye Washington, Esquire. Kaye and I had many things in common, we were both from Detroit, single parent of sons, and loved to play bid whist. At the time Kaye was in her first year at UC Hasting's Law School and later transferred to the distinguished UC Berkeley School of Law (Boalt Hall) has always been a cheerleader and challenged me to stretch. She set the pace! She literally typed my application for admission to Samuel Merritt Hospital School of Nursing and when I was accepted, I told her I wasn't sure – I had to provide for my children, pay rent, buy food, etc. So, in a loving voice and in the tone of her early corporate trial lawyer voice she said “Linda, you are already poor, you might as well be poor on your way to getting somewhere! What a powerful message of empowerment! And the rest is history! I love me some Kaye, she has always been there for me and my family and we raised our boys together. So, Kate I dedicate this journey to you, my good-better-best, never let it rest until your good is your better and your better is your best FRIEND!

Schola and Anthony Lagony my dearest and best friends, I am Jajja to their beautiful daughter, Breana Yosefina Oloya. I remember meeting Schola early in our program. I believe out of 25 doctoral students 5 were African Americans. We were so thrilled and comforted to see each other. Schola and I immediately became friends. We commuted and studied together. The library became our very best friend; we would be there some days until 10pm. Tommy and Schola are family, and family is a comfort – family is family. When you need something or perhaps you don't even realize you have a need or you don't want to burden by asking; they have always been there for me; when my sister faced a life-threatening illness, when Ron Lee passed, holidays, days we turned into holidays, or just because we show love. Tommy has a beautiful infectious smile and anytime I had the look or asked the question why I am doing this I already have my Masters, he would smile and say “mom, you can do this”. When Schola opened the Matovu Qualifying Exam Bootcamp - for me to prepare and advance to candidacy - he and Bre Bre were there. I was invited to attend their wedding and to participate in the ceremony, which was held in Uganda, the Pearl of Africa. What an honor – the bonds of family are not always by blood line but by love; we are connected as family. I had the time of my life. So, Schola, Tommy and BreBre I dedicate this journey to you.

There are many others whom I have not specifically named but you have been a part of this incredible journey. Many cousins, nephews, friends, uncles, aunts, my Godmother, please know that you each have contributed to my success and this is dedicated to you. You each have encouraged me are a part of me and I love you. I stand on the shoulders of my family and ancestors – To God be the Glory!

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In my mind, I see a line. And over that line, I see green fields and lovely flowers and beautiful white women with their arms stretched out to me, over that line. But I can't seem to get there no how. I can't seem to get over that line.

—Sojourner Truth

Foremost, I wish to thank the participants of this study for their generosity, willingness, sense of urgency and reported sentiments and their description of telling their story as being cathartic. Through your stories I saw and heard my own experiences. I sincerely hope I have captured and presented your authentic voice. And trust that others will be inspired by your perseverance, resilience, and grit and that our nursing community will hear and consider your doctoral experiences and perceptions as evidentiary change for new models and frameworks to create sustainability of diversity in the nursing workforce and academia.

I cannot thank my dissertation committee enough! Dr. Waters, you guided me through to success in Master's Administration program and as my dissertation chair, you have been phenomenal a mentor, advisor, cheerleader! Your encouragement was awesome! You always know just what to say. During a period of my doctoral experience, the whirlwind of life stepped in...and you realized that some family comes first and its importance... You believed in me and I am so very very grateful! You were my beacon of hope, light, and serenity. Dr. Lyndon, you supported me and your interest in my professional development was amazing. I have learned so much from you. My participation in the revision of the diversity module for faculty and the opportunity to co-facilitate the workshop was a great experience. Our conversations regarding intersectionality and its importance as a framework in which to meaningfully examine social concerns was informative and inspirational. And then to develop an Intersectionality Seminar and offer me a research residency, I felt honored. Thanks so much for being you! Dr. McLemore, when we first met in Dr. Kools class, over time, I concluded that you were a genius. And not only are you a genius you are a social justice advocate extraordinaire, you use your voice, position and knowledge to advocate for women's health and to raise awareness regarding issues unique to women of color. I thank you for your mentorship, assistance with using social media as a recruitment tool, believing in me and for representing! For being one of a few and speaking up! And as my grandchildren say "Stay Woke"! Your leadership is an example for me. Thanks so much!

ABSTRACT

The representation of racial and ethnic minorities in the nursing workforce is disproportionately low in comparison with their representation in the general population in the United States. Despite diversity initiatives, the slight increase in enrollment of under-represented minority (URM) students in graduate schools of nursing at predominantly White universities (PWU) has not resulted in a significantly more diverse nursing workforce. The purpose of the study was threefold: (a) to describe the pre-admission personal backgrounds and pre-entry decision-making processes of URM students in doctoral nursing programs at PWUs, (b) to describe the processes of academic socialization and progression experienced by URM students in doctoral nursing programs at PWUs, and (c) to describe the availability of and access to institutional resources from the perspectives of URM students in doctoral nursing programs at PWUs. It is hoped that the findings of this study may in turn help to elucidate the facilitators and barriers that contribute to admission, retention, attrition, and graduation of URM students in order to design better, targeted diversity initiatives in nursing education. In the long-term, the education of a more diverse pool of nurses may lead to a more diverse nursing workforce, which will benefit an ever-increasing diverse society in which health disparities, inequities, and inequalities still exist.

The study design was constructivist grounded theory. Participants were recruited using social media, flyers, and snowball sampling. Recruitment yielded 20 participants, who self-identified as an URM, spoke English, and attended a public or private PWU with a PhD in nursing program. Semi-structured interviews were audio-taped and transcribed. Iterative, simultaneous data collection and analysis used the ATLAS ti data management software program. Findings indicate that multiple factors, positive and negative, influenced URM PhD nursing students' experiences at PWUs. Four overarching themes emerged: *preadmission history and preparedness*, *becoming a scholar*, *support and resources* and the *journey toward graduation and beyond*. Subcategories included *multiple support systems*; *racial, ethnic and cultural influences*; *decision-making processes*; and *academic environment and resources*. Addressing these multifactorial factors may broaden academic nursing's understanding of how to foster successful degree attainment with a significantly diverse professoriate and clinical workforce.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

Nursing, like other professions, is confronted with the challenges of ethnic and racial representation of the workforce in proportion to the ethnic and racial representation of the U.S. population. In 2014, non-Hispanic Whites represented 62.2% of the U.S. population; however, by 2060 the proportion of this group is projected to be 44% (Colby & Ortman, 2015). By 2044, the United States will become a majority-minority country. Although the non-Hispanic White population will remain the largest group, no group will be a majority proportion of the total U.S. population. Although underrepresented minority (URM) populations are becoming increasingly the majority demographic, the nursing workforce remains primarily White and female. Persons from URM populations comprise 37.8% of the U.S. population, but represented only 27.5% of employed registered nurses, hereafter referred to as nurses, in 2016 (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2017). According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, in 2016, 11.9% of nurses identified as African American, 9.0% as Asian and 6.6% as Latino. No data were reported for nurses who identify as American Indian/Alaska Native or Pacific Islander. Comparatively, in 2015, 13.3% of the U.S. population were African Americans, 17.6% were Latinos, 5.6% were Asians and 1.2% were American Indians/Alaska Natives (United States Census Bureau, 2015).

The increased demand in healthcare services in the US is primarily the result of an aging and more diverse population; yet, disparities exist in health service delivery to racial and ethnic minority populations (Braveman et al., 2011) and there is disproportionate diversity in the health professions workforce (Grumbach & Mendoza, 2008; Institute of Medicine, 2004, 2016). Nursing is the largest sector of the healthcare system, yet it is 90% female and 72.5% non-Hispanic White (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2017). By 2024, there will be a shortage of 1.1

million nurses, 16% more than the total job market for nurses in 2014 (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2016). The potential pool of URM populations is an untapped resource and opportunity to minimize the projected imbalance in nursing's supply and demand as well as to diversify all sectors of the nursing workforce: education, research, practice, and leadership and administration.

In 2014, there were 134 Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree nursing programs, hereafter referred to as doctoral (American Association of Colleges of Nursing, 2014); of which two were at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (Historically Black Colleges and Universities, 2015). In 2015, among doctoral nursing programs, 69.1% of the students were non-Hispanic Whites, 16.2% were African Americans, 6.4% were Asians/Pacific Islanders, 5.6% were Latinos and 1.2% were American Indians/Alaska Natives (American Association of Colleges of Nursing, 2016). The lack of racial and ethnic diversity in nursing programs, particularly at predominantly White universities (PWU), is of concern and is presumed to be a reason for difficulty in recruiting and retaining URM students at PWUs; which in turn impacts diversification of the nursing workforce at all levels in all sectors of nursing (American Association of Colleges of Nursing, 2016; Institute of Medicine, 2016; Powell Kennedy, Fisher, Fontaine, & Martin-Holland, 2008).

In one study, African American nursing students perceived PWUs to be reflections of the norms and culture of the White, middle class and the expectation was for URM students to socially integrate to this norm if they want to be accepted and valued socially and academically (Love, 2010). Thus, the PWU environment may present social, academic and professional challenges for URM students. Although the literature is less sparse regarding the experiences of

URM undergraduate nursing students at PWUs (Graham, Phillips, Newman, & Atz, 2016), the literature is limited regarding the experiences of URM doctoral nursing students at PWUs.

Purpose of the Study

The threefold purpose of the dissertation study was to explore the (a) personal background and pre-entry decision-making, (b) academic progression and professional socialization, and (c) availability of and access to institutional resources from the perspective of URM students enrolled in doctoral nursing programs at PWUs. The specific aim was to understand more fully the facilitators and barriers that contribute to admission, retention, attrition and graduation of URM students in order to design broader, yet targeted diversity initiatives in nursing education at the doctoral level. In the long-term, the availability of a more diverse pool of doctoral-educated nurses may lead to a more diverse nursing academy to teach the next generations of nurses, which may yield a more diverse nursing workforce at all levels in all sectors of nursing. Eventually, these efforts will benefit an ever-increasing diverse society in which health disparities, inequities and inequalities still exist.

Definition of Terms

Underrepresented Minority

Underrepresented minority, PWU and socialization were defined as they relate to the specific purposes of this dissertation. Underrepresented minority refers to racial and ethnic populations that are underrepresented in the nursing workforce relative to their proportions in the U.S. population and include African Americans, Latinos and American Indians/Alaska Natives. For the purpose of this dissertation, Asian Americans, Pacific Islanders and self-identification as an URM were included in the URM definition since these populations represent a numerical minority in nursing (American Association of Colleges of Nursing, 2016).

Predominantly White University

Predominantly White universities, also referred to as historical White institutions, are institutions of higher education in which the non-Hispanic White population represents 50% or greater of the student enrollment (Okahana, Feaster, & Allum, 2016).

Socialization

Socialization refers to a dynamic, socially situated and developmental process, which as a student includes expectations of preparing and assuming a future scholarly role as well as participating in scholarly activities; it is the process through which students learn to adopt the values, skills, attitudes, norms and knowledge needed in order to succeed academically (Weidman & Stein, 2003).

Organization of the Dissertation Chapters

The dissertation is divided into five chapters: (1) introduction, (2) literature review and theory, (3) methodology, (4) results, and (5) discussion. Following this introductory chapter is Chapter 2, which is a description of the literature related to academic socialization in graduate-level education with a particular focus on students in doctoral nursing programs. In addition, intersectionality and symbolic interactionism theories are discussed to provide context for the study. Chapter 3 is a description of the methodology used to conduct the constructivist grounded theory study. Presented in Chapter 4 are the findings of the study, which revolve around four themes: (a) valuing education, (b) challenges to becoming a scholar, (c) support and resources, and (d) transitions: preparation for graduation and beyond. Chapter 5 consists of a discussion of the findings, conclusions, limitations, implications for nursing education, and recommendations for further research. Following Chapter 5 are the list of references and appendices that include

the interview guide, demographic form and approval letter from the UCSF Institutional Review Board to conduct the study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORY

This chapter presents a review of the literature related to personal, professional, and institutional factors that may influence the academic socialization of URM students in graduate programs, with a focus on doctoral nursing programs in PWUs. The chapter ends with a discussion of symbolic interactionism and intersectionality theory, which provided context for the study.

Academic Socialization: A Review of the Literature

Of all the factors that affect students' scholastic outcomes, one of the most consequential is the socialization that students undergo on matriculating into a program of academic endeavor. According to Weidman and Stein (2003), "[s]ocialization is the process through which an individual learns to adopt the values, skills, attitudes, norms, and knowledge needed to belong to a given society, group, or organization" (p. 642). Indeed, despite several decades of diversity efforts and initiatives, URM students at PWUs today continue to face unique and inordinate challenges in academic socialization. Such challenges, documented in research conducted primarily during 1900s and 2000s, include perceived feelings of marginalization and isolation, racialization of interactions in the academic community, and an ongoing constant need to prove one's academic capability in the face of stereotypic assumption of academic inferiority (Cole, 2007; Fischer, 2007; Jones, Castellanos, & Cole, 2002).

In one study, African American doctoral students at PWUs were found to experience a high level of *stereotype threat*—the risk of confirming as a self-characteristic a negative stereotype about one's social group (Taylor & Antony, 2000). Online education does not appear to minimize URM students' experiences with perceived racial and ethnic biases. African American students have reported online racial discrimination related to the denigration or

exclusion of an individual or group on the basis of race through the use of text, images, and graphic representation. This discrimination resulted in higher stress and negative perceptions of the university compared to their non-Hispanic White counterparts (Tynes, Rose, & Markoe, 2013).

Research findings suggest that in order to achieve academic success and socialization in a PWU setting, URM students may need to redefine their sense of belonging, connectedness, or cohesion. For example, Hispanic students who lived on campus and did not speak Spanish at home (a) had better academic progression and socialization and (b) were less likely to perceive that the campus environment was hostile than were those who lived at home and spoke Spanish at home (Hurtado & Ponjuan, 2005; Maestas, Vaquera, & Zehr, 2007). The researchers concluded that living on campus and not speaking Spanish at home helped Hispanic students sever familial, cultural and other social ties in order to assimilate successfully; however, such severance to cultural ties could lead to minority stress.

Underrepresented minority students in PWUs have reported stress above and beyond the general stressors of being a student. This stress, called *minority stress*, refers to the consequences of experiencing stereotype threats, microaggressions, and denigrations because of a person's being a member of a negatively stigmatized group on a frequent basis (Brown & Dancy, 2010). Entering a new, unfamiliar academic institution can be a daunting experience. For matriculating URM students, institutional factors, such as perceived positive campus climate, could mediate the association between minority stress and the URM students' academic socialization and success, professional development and physical, psychological and emotional well-being (Griffin & Muniz, 2015). The term *campus climate* refers collectively to (a) the attitudes and behaviors of faculty, staff, and administrators; (b) the curricula; (c) administrative policies and procedures;

and (d) the campus environment. Thus, campus climate represents both a racial and an academic climate that can undermine academic socialization and success (Fischer, 2007).

In comparison with White students, URM students have reported higher rates of perceived personal harassment, racism, hostility, negative campus environment, and lack of institutional leadership (Rankin & Reason, 2005). Predominantly White universities have embedded structural and ideological mechanisms that promote the values, cultural norms, beliefs and behaviors of the dominant White culture, such as racial or ethnic mascots or other physical symbols, that foster a non-inclusive campus climate that may be emotionally harmful to URM students (Gusa, 2010). This type of non-inclusive climate can lead to increased minority stress experienced by URM students and can interfere with college adjustment, integration into the university community and academic success (Wei, Ku, & Liao, 2011).

In one study, African American and Asian American graduate students perceived that they were not taken seriously by the faculty, although it was unclear whether the perceptions of the faculty were related to race–ethnicity (Reid & Radhakrishnan, 2003). In another study, increased campus engagement that included availability of academic support programs was a stronger predictor than ethnicity for perceived positive experiences and higher analytical capabilities among Hispanic students (Hurtado & Ponjuan, 2005). Among Hispanic students, institution-wide financial support and commitment to diversity in recruitment and in the curricula facilitated their academic socialization (Gonzalez, 2006).

“Wise-schooling” strategies, which are designed to reduce the threat of negative racial stereotyping, can increase a sense of belonging, academic socialization, program satisfaction and commitment to degree completion (Taylor & Anthony, 2000; Cole, 2008). Wise-schooling strategies include supportive faculty-student relationships, constructive criticism, positive

classroom interactions among students and faculty, inclusiveness in the learning milieu such as cultural diversity in assigned readings, faculty mentorship about preparation for an academic and research career, and matched research and ethnic–racial concordance where a student’s choice of advisor is based not only on research interest, but also on having a similar ethnic and racial background.

African American undergraduate and graduate students at PWUs who participated in a summer research mentoring program reported positive mentoring experiences, decreased isolation, smoother transition to graduate education and increased networking opportunities, regardless of racial concordance; however, participants with non-White mentors expressed higher levels of inspiration and engagement (Davis, 2007). In a study of Hispanic students in science, technology, engineering and mathematics majors, higher cultural congruity was associated with better academic performance, although attending diversity events was negatively associated with academic performance (Cole & Espinoza, 2008).

In another study of Hispanic students, strategies that contributed to their sense of belonging, commitment to degree completion and intellectual and social development were faculty who were interested in their academic progress and student interactions (Maestas et al., 2007). Engagement in structured professional affiliations also may be an important wise-schooling strategy for promoting the graduate students’ academic and professional socialization. In a study of mostly African American doctoral students, those who were more actively involved in professional organizations, particularly on the advice of faculty, had higher perceived professional socialization (Gardner & Barnes, 2007). Furthermore, they viewed involvement in professional organizations as deliberate and crucial to their professional development and career advancement. Participants were motivated to be involved in professional organizations for the

purposes of networking for job acquisition, professional development and desire to translate acquired knowledge and skills into practice.

A critical aspect of understanding the experiences of URMs in graduate education at PWUs is the evaluation of individual factors that may impact their preparedness and interpretation of academic socialization and the academic environment. Individual factors that have been associated with academic socialization are career aspiration, cognitive values orientation, academic self-efficacy, academic self-regulation, social support and sociodemographic characteristics. African American and Hispanic students were found to be more likely to apply to a doctoral program in business if they reported less job satisfaction, decreased financial concerns, higher self-desirability to engage in critical thinking and problem-solving, higher interest and intention to apply to graduate school, and greater maternal encouragement (Stewart, Williamson, & King, 2008).

In a study of mostly African American and Hispanic medical students in a bridge program, several personal factors contributed to their academic success and socialization: strong work ethic, self-regulation, persistence, goal-driven, drive to succeed, competitive spirit, passion and being a role model and leader (Manusov et al., 2011). Other contributing factors of academic success and socialization were religion, proof of membership worthiness, and supportive programs, such as a bridge program that consisted of mentors and role models who facilitated the development of students' career identity. A strong, prior academic preparation was found to be associated with academic success and socialization, self-confidence and academic ability among Hispanic doctoral students at PWUs; whereas, under-preparedness for graduate education, social isolation, undesired cultural assimilation, lack of school-life balance and racism were negative influential factors for these Hispanics (Gonzalez, 2006).

Conclusions

Underrepresented minority students frequently encounter multiple barriers that often reinforce and potentiate each other. These barriers include feelings of isolation, being underprepared for the rigors of graduate education, and the relative absence of diverse faculty as role models and URM students as peers. Diversity in the classroom and work environment facilitate and promote exchange of diverse ideas and perspectives, which could lead to transformative relationships, research and practice that impact the quality and health outcomes of diverse populations. The studies in the sparse and dated literature illustrate the complexities that URM graduate students encounter while attending PWUs, including individual and institutional factors. Strategies to promote academic success, doctoral degree attainment and professional socialization for URM students in nursing programs at PWUs are critical to the nursing professoriate as well as to the larger nursing workforce and pipeline.

While increasing recruitment of URM students to doctoral programs in nursing at PWUs is crucial, it is essential also to address multiple issues related to retention, attrition, academic success and personal and institutional factors that may act as barriers or facilitators to adjustment and transition to the new role of becoming a scholar. There is a need for a broader and deeper understanding of URM doctoral nursing students' pre-admission history, academic progression and professional socialization during matriculation, and availability of and access to institutional resources at PWUs.

Theoretical Underpinnings

Theory provides the researcher a lens through which phenomena can be viewed in order to design, explain, forecast, and promote understanding of phenomena and their relationships (Meleis, 2017; Walker & Avant, 2013). That being the case, for this study, intersectionality and

symbolic interactionism (SI) theories were used to provide the contextual underpinnings for exploring the personal background and pre-entry decision-making, academic progression and professional socialization, and availability of and access to institutional resources from the perspectives of URM students enrolled in doctoral nursing programs at PWUs.

The multifaceted, socioecological, and sociocultural contexts of these theoretical underpinnings permitted me, as researcher, to explore and interpret URM doctoral nursing students' individual experiences within the context of their surrounding milieu. Both theories are micro-level theoretical perspectives grounded in individuals' sociological experiences. However, intersectionality provides a framework in which the researcher is able to discover relationships between multiple self-identities and the intersecting, macro–mezzo–micro structural systems in PWUs. Consequently, qualitative research that is informed by intersectionality theory can yield results that lead to a more profound and comprehensive understanding of the complexities of the study participants' experiences and thereby illuminate the influences of social inequalities on perceptions and identity.

The term *symbolic interactionism* was coined by Blumer, an American sociologist, who believed that people create social reality through individual and shared interactions in relation to their environment in order to form meaning (White, Klein, & Martin, 2015). The three main premises of SI—meaning, language, and thought—help to formulate an individual's socialization in the larger community; for example, the academic socialization of URM doctoral nursing students in the larger community of the PWU campus. The first premise, regarding *meaning* proposes that “humans act toward things on the basis of the meanings they ascribe to those things.” The second premise, regarding *language*, proposes that “the meaning of such things is derived from, or arises out of, the social interaction that one has with others and the society.” The

third premise, regarding *thought*, proposes that “these meanings are handled in, and modified through, an interpretative process used by the person in dealing with the things he/she encounters” (Blumer, 1969, p. 2). Consequently, what an individual defines as real has real consequences (LaRossa & Reitzes, 1993). These three premises facilitated the researcher’s understanding of how participants (URM doctoral nursing students) interpreted (perceived) and developed meaning for the symbols and interactions in their PWU environments.

SI has been criticized because its focus is limited to the individual at the micro-level and because the theory does not address the complexities of the multiple self-identities—such as the self-identities shaped by the many experiences encountered by the URM doctoral students. Therefore, in this study, intersectionality theory is coupled with SI as a second, complementary theory—specifically to provide the sensitizing concepts of race, gender, culture heritage, class, and other structural processes that intersect on the micro, mezzo, and macro levels and to facilitate exploration of how each element may impact the individual. SI theory underpins grounded theory methodology, which was used to inform the study’s design, in order to facilitate exploration of the social processes and social interactions of URM students with others in PWU settings (Bryant & Charmaz, 2012; Charmaz, 2006).

Given that the study’s participants would be from underrepresented racial and ethnic backgrounds and would be primarily females, the theory of intersectionality was applied to complement SI theory in order to understand how multiple, simultaneous, non-hierarchical and non-linear social characteristics (i.e., race–ethnicity, gender, age, etc.) intersect to shape URM doctoral nursing students’ perspectives about academic socialization and progression based on their sociocultural norms, values, mores, attitudes and behaviors.

The initial conception of the intersectionality perspective occurred during the 1960s and 1970s by the Combahee River Collective Black feminists in response to the exclusionary and homogenous representation of women's rights held by non-Hispanic White feminists (Bowleg, 2012). Intersectionality theory takes into consideration the overlap and intersection of multiple social identities, such as ethnicity, race, gender, sexual orientation and poverty, that can influence an individual's experiences, which is presumed to reflect the multiple interlocking patterns of privilege and oppression at the macro, social and structural levels (e.g., racism, sexism, ageism; Bowleg, 2012). The term intersectionality was coined by Crenshaw in 1989 and is rooted in critical race theory, which focuses on the socially constructed nature of race (Crenshaw, 1991).

Within the intersectionality paradigm, participants are placed at the center of analysis and interpretation, which should focus on consciousness awareness to effect change, resist oppression and domination and create resilience so that they will feel less alienated, marginalized and misunderstood (Collins, 2000). According to Collins, a study underpinned by the intersectionality paradigm helps to create and validate participants' ways of knowing that are different from others by placing their knowledge in its proper context for better explanation; but at the same time, disputing the notion that they are a homogenous group.

The overarching impact of multiple intersections are unique to the life experiences of URM doctoral nursing students, particularly women. These intersecting experiences may affect non-Hispanic White women; however, any forms of similarity may be countered by the benefits of White privilege. The application of intersectionality theory is informative in that the researcher is able to consider historical as well as current events as they have occurred in society in the analysis and interpretation of the study's findings; for example, examining the meaning of

access or lack of access to higher education institutions as a pathway to social equality and economic mobility. As complementary theories, SI and intersectionality broaden the lens of understanding URM doctoral nursing students' experiences. SI theory helps the researcher to make sense of participants' meanings of their world through their interactions with self, other humans and their environment; and, intersectionality theory helps the researcher to focus on how intersecting factors of participants' multiple social identities, such as race, gender, and class, shape their doctoral education experiences and perceptions.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Chapter 3 is a description of the methodology used in the present study's investigation of the experiences of URM students at PWUs. The chapter is organized into the following sections: study design, sampling, setting and recruitment, data collection tools, data collection procedures, data analysis, methodological rigor, and ethical considerations.

Study Design

This qualitative study employed a descriptive, cross-sectional constructivist grounded theory design to explore the experiences of URM students in doctoral nursing programs at PWUs. As discussed in Chapter 2, grounded theory provides methodological guidelines for systematically identifying, linking, and establishing relationships among categories derived from data analysis in order to construct a theory to understand phenomena or issues of importance in peoples' lives (Mills, Bonner, & Francis, 2006). Several versions of grounded theory have evolved over time, and each transmutation has been debated regarding its adherence to classic glaserian or straussian grounded theory methodological principles (Mills et al., 2006).

Constructivism is a distinct branch of grounded theory that acknowledges the social context and situatedness of participants and values the co-constructions of reality between the participant and researcher (Bryant & Charmaz, 2012; Charmaz, 2006). The researcher, however, ensures that participants' experiences and voices are presented authentically and are foremost to the researcher's voice. This approach facilitates the researcher's delving in depth into the phenomenon without isolating the phenomenon from social context or situated reality; this situatedness enables the researcher to gain an intimate knowledge of the events and experiences of participants and inductively evaluate reasoning. According to Charmaz, acknowledgement of the researcher's role in data analysis and interpretation is achieved through reflexivity, which

enables self-scrutiny and viewing oneself as other. Reflexivity can be achieved by being aware of the researcher's positionality.

Acknowledging researcher positionality reminds the researcher of her potential effects on the research process, particularly when conducting research that involves diverse populations and cultures; it is where one stands in relation to the other (Bourke, 2014). It is the space in which objectivism and subjectivism meet. According to Bourke, positionality offers transparency and frames the researcher's perspective necessary to demonstrate integrity to the authenticity of participants' voices in the analysis of the results. As an African American researcher, I recognized the relativity of my positionality as an URM doctoral student in the doctoral program at a PWU and the co-construction of my shared, collective experiences in this role that occurred during data collection, analysis, and interpretation. My goal during the process was to represent the authentic voices and meaningful recommendations as described by the participants. I acknowledged my intent to invoke a sense of social justice and accountability of nursing academe to address recruitment, retention, attrition and graduation rates of URM doctoral students, an inclusive curriculum, and a diverse faculty and clinical workforce. This researcher's position is related to relationality, a grounded theory approach which enhances the rigor of the study and illustrates the emphasis of connectedness between the researcher and participants, rigor of a study (Hall & Callery, 2001).

Sampling, Setting, and Recruitment

The present study was approved by the University of California, San Francisco Institutional Review Board (see Appendix A). Study inclusion criteria were current enrollment in a PhD in nursing program at a public or private PWU in the United States, age 18 years or older, ability to speak and understand English, and self-identification as an URM or meeting the

traditional definition of URM, defined in Chapter I: African Americans, Latinos and American Indians/Alaska Natives. The traditional definition of URM was designed to correct the vestiges of historical, systemic legalized racial discrimination practices in the United States; however, the traditional definition does not capture other populations who self-identify as URMs and have experienced marginalization because of race–ethnicity, for example, Asian Americans, Pacific Islanders, and Southeast Indians.

Flyers with study details and contact information were posted on community bulletin boards and on designated student bulletin boards in schools of nursing and were also distributed at nursing conferences. The flyer was also emailed to deans at nursing schools with doctoral programs and to student affairs departments of nursing schools. In addition, information about the study was posted on social media sites such as Twitter, Facebook, and listservs of free professional newspapers and newsletters. Snowball sampling, a non-probability sampling technique, was also used to recruit participants by encouraging participants to recommend the study to acquaintances who might meet study eligibility criteria.

Recruitment efforts resulted in a sample of 25 respondents, of whom 80% (N = 20) met study eligibility criteria and consented to participate in the study. Of the five study participants who declined to participate in the study, three declined because of time constraints, and two declined because of personal reasons. The participants were attending universities across the United States and were in various stages of academic programs, ranging from second year to advancement to candidacy.

Data Collection Tools

The study's primary data collection tools were a semi-structured interview guide, an audio recorder, and a participant demographic form.

Interview Guide

The interview guide, along with an audio-recorder, was used to conduct participant interviews. The interview guide consisted of open-ended, semi-structured questions, was based on a review of the literature of academic socialization presented in Chapter 2 and was designed to address the study purposes in order to elicit thick and rich descriptive content from URM doctoral students in doctoral programs at PWUs (see Appendix B). Thick descriptions provide researchers with a window into participants' experiences through their cultural context and lens and to meanings associated with those events and actions (Charmaz, 2006). The interview guide included prompt/probing questions. Consistent with qualitative methods (Bryant & Charmaz, 2012), questions were slightly modified in an iterative manner based on content raised during data collection and also themes, categories, and concepts that emerged during data analysis.

Participant Demographic Form

To provide a profile of participants, information about standard demographic characteristics was collected regarding race, ethnicity, age, gender, year in PhD program, focus of dissertation research, academic status, grade point average, academic progression, and first generation student status. This form was completed by the researcher prior to the start of the interview (see Appendix C).

Data Collection Procedures

When potential participants contacted the researcher, they were screened with regard to the study's eligibility criteria. If a person met the study inclusion criteria, an arrangement was made to meet at a mutually agreed-upon time and at a location that was quiet, safe, private, and convenient. At this meeting, the informed consent form, which included information about the study and rights as a research participant, was provided and reviewed with each participant.

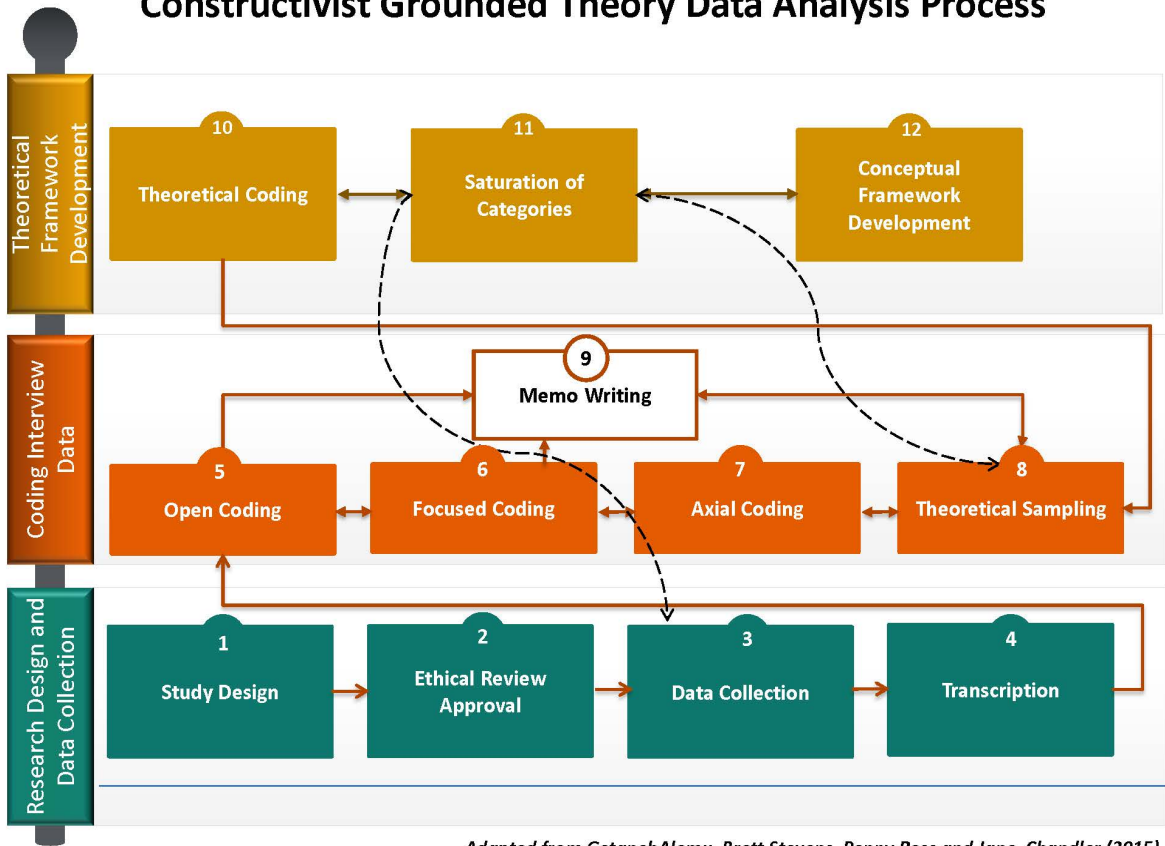
Participant questions were answered. Each participant signed two copies of the informed consent form; one of which he or she received a copy. Following the consent procedure, a one-on-one interview was conducted using the semi-structured interview guide, which asked for information about the participant's personal and family background, prior academic preparation and experiences, factors that influenced the decision to apply to the doctoral program, experiences matriculating as an URM doctoral student in nursing at a PWU, institutional resources, and other decisions, experiences, and perceptions (see Appendix B).

During the interview, my role as researcher was that of a facilitator. As discussed previously, I was aware of research positionality. I used silence and examples to stimulate participant recall of events in a focused and conversational manner with the opportunity for follow-up. I actively listened and used affirmation to assure participants that I was interested in their experiences. Interviews were audio recorded to ensure accuracy and to capture verbatim the participants account of their experiences. The average interview time ranged from 60 to 90 minutes. Upon completion of the interview, each participant received a \$25 gift card as remuneration for his or her time.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was iterative with constant comparison and occurred concurrently with data collection (see Figure 1). Data analysis occurred until theoretical saturation was reached; "saturation" is described as the point in the qualitative analysis process when data have been analyzed until no new data appear to contribute to the categories identified or form new categories so that the theoretical concepts are well-developed (Bryant & Charmaz, 2012; Charmaz, 2006).

Constructivist Grounded Theory Data Analysis Process



Adapted from Getaneh Alemu, Brett Stevens, Penny Ross and Jane Chandler (2015)

Figure 1. Constructivist grounded theory data analysis process.

Audio-recordings of participants' interviews were transcribed to a word processing software and imported into ATLAS.ti 7.5 qualitative software management program. Data analysis was conducted using the following techniques: open, focused and axial coding, memoing, and diagraming (Bryant & Charmaz, 2012; Charmaz, 2006). Open coding involved reading participant narratives line-by-line and using descriptive words and short phrases to cluster codes and assign meaning to participants' reality. After this initial coding, focused coding was used to categorize and make analytical sense of the data; next, axial coding was conducted for the purpose of making logical connections between categories and subcategories to derive overarching themes. Between the data collection and analysis processes, I used reflexive and analytical memos for self-reflection and to annotate my thoughts about the meaning of the data

and participants' reality (Bryant & Charmaz, 2012; Charmaz, 2006). In addition, I visually represented the organization of my analysis by diagramming the linkages among categories and subcategories to four overarching themes: *valuing education*, *challenges to becoming a scholar*, *support and resources*, and *transitions: preparation for graduation and beyond*.

Methodological Rigor

Methodological rigor, that is, credibility, fittingness or transferability, and auditability or confirmability, for qualitative research was adhered to in this grounded theory study (Bryant & Charmaz, 2012; Charmaz, 2006). Credibility of the data was established by sharing excerpts of participants' narratives and discussing the researcher's analysis and interpretation of the data with a peer group of qualitative researchers and the dissertation committee members. The discussions helped the researcher to identify new information and other ways to analyze and interpret the data. To ensure data integrity, audio recordings of participants' interviews were transcribed verbatim by a professional transcriptionist and then validated by the researcher, who listened to random segments of the audio recordings. Illustrations of key findings are documented in the participants' words in Chapter 4. In addition to adhering to the aforementioned key principles of methodological rigor for qualitative research, source triangulation was achieved by recruiting participants from public and private PWUs.

Ethical Considerations

This study was reviewed, approved, and granted an expedited review by the University of California, San Francisco Institutional Review Board (see Appendix A). An expedited review was granted because the study posed minimal risk to participants. Participants were advised that participation in the study was voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study at any time without prejudice, penalty, or loss of benefits. Participants were explained that their participation

in the study conferred no direct benefits; however, the study results could lead to innovative strategies that would facilitate and enhance the academic socialization and progression of URM students in doctoral nursing programs at PWUs.

Each participant was encouraged to report any emotional distress or time constraints; if necessary, the interview would cease to allow the participant to regain composure, or the interview would be rescheduled. In addition, each participant was advised that procedures and steps would be implemented to secure their confidentiality; such as data were accessible only to researcher; personal identifiers were removed; and data were protected, encrypted, and secured and would only be reported in aggregate form for reports and publications. Each participant was assigned a study identification number that was not linked to any personal identifiers.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Presented in the chapter are the findings of the study, which used a constructivist grounded theory design to explore the personal background and pre-entry decision-making, academic progression and professional socialization, and availability of and access to support and resources from the perspective of URM students enrolled in doctoral programs in nursing at PWUs. The chapter is organized around four overarching themes that emerged from participants' interviews: (a) valuing education, (b) challenges to becoming a scholar, (c) support and resources, and (d) transitions: preparation for graduation and beyond.

Participants

The sample was comprised of 20 participants and were from eight states. Ages ranged from 31 to 64 years. A majority of participants were African American, female, 30 to 39 years, employed full-time, attended a public university, first-generation college students, and were not fully funded for their doctoral education (see Table 1). Topics of research interests varied and included the use of illicit drugs and HIV in men of color, an examination of symptom clusters in oncology patients, to perceptions of heart health in African Americans. Current mean GPA was 3.83 ranging from 3.40 to 4.0. No one was on academic probation and participants were at various phases of their academic program.

Table 1

Sociodemographic Profile

Characteristic	<i>n</i>	%
Population		
Black/African American	11	55.0
Asian/Pacific Islander	4	20.0
Hispanic/Latino	1	5.0
American Indian/Native Alaskan	1	5.0
Other	3	15.0
Gender		
Female	16	80.0
Male	4	20.0
Age (M = 40.5 years)		
30-39 years	10	50.0
40-49 years	6	30.0
50-59 years	1	5.0
60-70 years	3	15.0
Employment		
Full-time	13	65.0
Part-time	7	25.0
Type of University		
Public	20	100.0
Private	0	0.0
Doctoral Education Fully Funded		
No	17	85.0
Yes	3	15.0

Note. *N* = 20.

Valuing Education

Valuing education was one of the four overarching themes (see Figure 2). Within the theme, *valuing education*, participants reported three central factors that impacted their value and understanding of education, which influenced their decision to apply to the doctoral program. The categories of the *valuing education* theme were family norms, professional interactions, and seeking confirmation about ‘will I fit.’

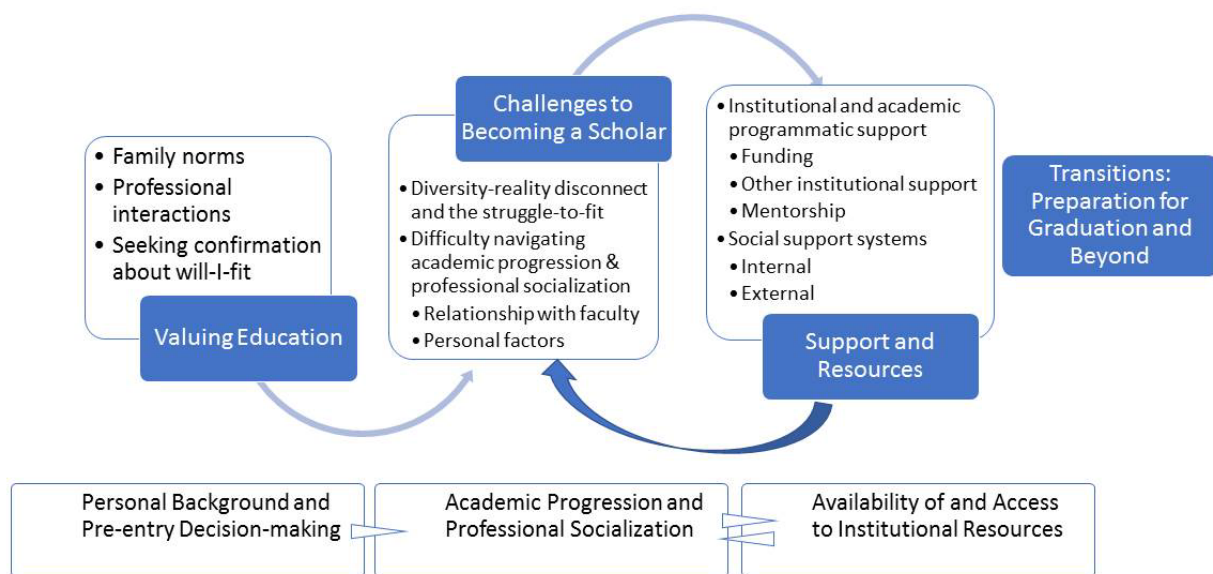


Figure 2. Visual representation of the four overarching themes and categories of the experiences of underrepresented minority students in doctoral nursing programs at predominantly White universities.

Family Norms

The family norms category describes the significant influence and role of family in shaping participants’ lives, perspectives and behaviors about valuing education. Family functions to socialize its members to the broader context of society and facilitates social interactions, based on mutual acceptance of shared meanings, values, norms, customs, cultures, identities, beliefs, ideologies, expectations, etc. (Powell, Bolzendahl, Geist, & Steelman, 2012; White, Klein, &

Martin, 2015). Valuing education was a family norm for a majority of participants. For all of the participants, a college education was not only an expectation to be achieved, but it was also an expectation to be achieved beyond the undergraduate level. As illustrated in the quotes below, participants' families viewed education as an opportunity for upward mobility and a means to economic advancement and stability.

You know what? I did not know that people didn't go to college until I went to college. Well no, until – it was the last year of high school when I found out people weren't getting accepted and that they had no other plans. And so people weren't going to go to college. [P5]

My family values education. My dad inspired me to go to school. He was like “you need to be more than what I am.” So, he inspired me and my sister to go to school. So, she has a master's [degree] and then I got my bachelor's and now in the PhD program. [P3]

It wasn't so much a love of learning, but it was a ticket to a good paying job, as well as, if you could get a civil service job. That was better (laugh). [P13]

So, all of his money that he made in working went back home and he put every single child through college just by him working. So, from my mom's side and from what I always heard growing up it was. I mean essentially this is how you get out. This is how you make yourself better is through education...I have a good support system, even though my family is educated, nobody has done a PhD. They don't know what in the world I'm doing (laughs)... what a PhD is exactly, [but it is valued]. [P8]

There's always what can you do you for your application? What can you do for your resume? Take as many AP classes as you can. Take as many honors classes. What's wrong with these parents who let their kids get a B? That kind of--lots of comparisons. [P5]

For a few participants, although family members valued education, their family members had a predetermined career pathway of what type of education they believed was appropriate for these participants. The pressure for some participants to conform to family educational standards were evident in the following participants' quotes.

I first said I wanted to be a physician because that was what we were supposed to want to be. That's a very high status position...I was scared to tell my parents I don't want to be a doctor anymore...Careers as a medical doctor, pharmacist are expected [from parents]. [P9]

It wasn't kind of like, I'm really proud of you, because you used to say something about wanting me to be a doctor instead of a nurse. I almost felt that it was a shameful for me [to be a nurse] with [my parent]. [P2]

[This] community is about education so that is a really strong theme...they always want you to become a doctor. So, there is lots of pressure behind education. So overall the culture is education-based. [P14]

Given that participants were currently enrolled in doctoral nursing programs, family members' advice and pressure to take a different, more perceived prestigious career path appeared not to be as influential as the family norm of valuing education in participants' decision to return to school.

Professional Interactions

Professional interactions also impacted participants' value of education and the decision to apply to the doctoral program. Similar to the context of family, the context of work also has a unique organizational culture that included shared norms, values, beliefs and attitudes that may or may not foster certain behaviors, such as having a sense of belonging, collegiality, academic achievement, career advancement, among other shared expectations. Some participants, as demonstrated in the quote below, were inspired by professional interactions to pursue a PhD degree in order to expand their knowledge, increase competency and gain the respect of colleagues.

From that point was when I realized I loved being in an educator role in an academic setting. And that's when I realized along with an interest in research and understanding and learning more I said, Well, that fits with a PhD...When I float back into my clinical world particularly with the physicians that know--most people know that I'm working on my doctorate. My interactions have changed with the physicians in how they approach me and how I can talk to them, so that's also something that's different. I don't know if that's because I'm a doctoral student or if it's just because my own thinking has changed. [P8]

On the contrary, other participants shared professional interactions that were discouraging and minimized the value of advanced education, particularly once matriculating in the doctoral program, because it reduced leisure time with colleagues. Representative quotes are below.

In my life because my work friends don't get what I'm doing and they don't understand why I can't hang out with them...And they are like, "you know, I don't understand any of this PhD program. It's just a paper." And I'm like, I have an exam in June. And then I go, oh my God, that's June. You could spend two hours – and they're kind of right. But they were really angry...like hurtful angry. And they had just had it with me because I had just left that party really sad like tearful like almost now because it's just kind of like, oh, they're not getting it. [P5]

I've seen a decrease of my support system in my life because my work friends don't get what I'm doing and they don't understand why I can't hang out with them. [P6]

Seeking Confirmation About Will-I-Fit

Participants' cultural background and the diversity and inclusiveness of the academic environment were central to their decision about where to pursue doctoral education. Culture has been described as the "learned, shared, and transmitted values, beliefs, norms, and lifeways of a specific individual or group that guides their thinking, actions, decisions, and patterned ways of living" (Leininger, 2001, p. 95). Participants were concerned about the degree to which they would have to acculturate or assimilate or be rejected or misunderstood because of being racially and ethnically different, particularly at a PWU. How one perceives himself or herself or how others perceive him or her culturally can shape an individual's values, attitudes, behaviors and self-worth. Concerns about 'will I fit' were evident particularly for participants who were immigrants from non-traditional URM groups, and thus, are considered White in the US; even though they do not feel connected to the dominant non-Hispanic White American culture. These participants reported experiencing implicit bias and being keenly aware of personal triggers that raised awareness about being different. In the quote below, a participant described how 'White love' as a cultural norm influenced perspective of self, value and behavior.

I actually just found out recently there are Asian scholars who look at “White love” because of the time that the US occupied their country. Yes, as a kind of experience of colonization by Americans and occupation...so that's been just a part of my identity where, you know, it's one of those, Oh, White people are so great at following rules, or the way my mom has raised me to dress. We kind of joked about it at school and conferences, friends and I, about we need to decolonize how we dress because we try to dress up like we're, you know, like White business people is kind of what I view it as (laughs). And so, How should I dress? So, to even just have my parents talk about White people, it's either American is the same as White people; interchangeable language. [P9]

During the decision-making process to choose a university and academic nursing program, many participants investigated the potential new academic environment through internet sources, such as university websites. Participants examined campus commitment to diversity and their diversity policies, faculty profiles, photos on the website, mission and vision statements, and curricula. Equally as important to most participants was the student body's diversity. Participants used this information to determine their potential fit into the potential new academic environment. Ultimately, this assessment guided participants' decision about whether to apply to a particular institution. The following passage is an exemplary quote of most participants' decision-making process.

I did my homework. Before applying to PhD programs, the prior year I had researched about 40 different PhD programs in my area. Now I live in New York City and I commute to Massachusetts, so that's sort of a testament to me finding a program that I felt would be a good match. And a program that was also minority-friendly I have to add. So I spent a year researching 40 different programs. I narrowed it down to 19 that I was interested in and then finally I narrowed it down to applying to three programs. And part of that process involved speaking to students currently in these programs and speaking to recent graduates. And I wanted to – especially hear, if at all possible, from minority students or even male students because males, in and of themselves, are also a minority within nursing. So given that sort of investigation that I did I'm really thrilled I did that because I don't think I would be content anywhere else”. [P15]

In summary, the *valuing education* theme encompassed the influences of family norm, professional interactions and seeking confirmation about ‘will I fit’ on participants' decision to apply or not to apply to a doctoral program. If the decision was made to advance one's education, then to which nursing PhD program in which university to apply was the subsequent

decision. The final decision was based primarily on an academic environment that purported to be conducive to diversity and inclusiveness as evident in published online documents, policies, mission and vision statements, and photos of students and faculty.

Challenges to Becoming a Scholar

Within the theme, *challenges to becoming a scholar*, participants described experiences that either enhanced or hindered academic progression and professional socialization while enrolled in a nursing doctoral program at a PWU. The categories of the *challenges to becoming a scholar* theme were diversity-reality disconnect and the struggle-to-fit, and difficulty navigating academic progression and professional socialization.

Diversity-Reality Disconnect and the Struggle-to-Fit

Once admitted to the doctoral program, many participants reported that the realization of the lack of diversity came swiftly. Many participants experienced micro-aggressions, defined by Sue (2010) as brief, but frequent occurrences, either direct or subtle, of unintentional statements, actions, or incidents of discrimination directed toward members of any socially marginalized groups that reinforces stereotypes. Participants said there was a disconnect between the institution's online and other marketing and public relations messaging (i.e., diversity statements and visual images on the website) and the reality of diversity once they were matriculating as a student. The quotes below represent participants' experiences of post-enrollment awakening about campus diversity and inclusiveness.

We give a lot of lip service to diversity and wanting diversity, but I don't think they are doing such a great job of welcoming in and ushering that process...But I think the part that's missing here is I just don't think they care here. Like I said, they'll put a diversity banner up. [P2]

It seems like they're really trying to diversify but it doesn't look like they are diversified...from time to time they...send an email or memo to try and get more diverse population but in my opinion it doesn't look like the population on the [website], like when you look at the numbers or students who are on campus, you don't see much

diversity. So I don't think...as far as students and faculty...I mean I feel that it is a White university in my opinion. [P14]

I did not see a lot of the doctoral faculty...invest their time voluntarily into a conversation [about diversity]. I think those [faculty] were the culprits, much like I think there's no policing of those culprits from any kind of chair or dean in this school. When you have that kind of toxic behavior in your environment it is no place to go for students when they experience that...I feel like because I have so much anger built up around the nonsense that I've experienced here [as an URM student]. So, I'm really beside myself here. And I say I want to get away and I sincerely mean that. That's why I won't work here either. They've asked me to work here a couple of times. I would never be involved in this. This would kill my spirit to be here as a faculty. It would just kill me. This has almost killed me as a human being. [P2]

Another post-enrollment concern consistently raised by participants was the relative absence of a culturally-diverse curriculum and reading materials. Moreover, the physical environment lacked culturally different artwork. Participants described their institutions' environments as Eurocentric, which was contradictory to the institution's external messaging, visual images, and mission and vision statements which strongly represented the value of a broad definition of diversity and an inclusive environment.

I question that there should be some of that [multiculturalism] in the curriculum or perhaps in other folks' work who would present that stuff to us in those first fundamental two years. I think the other thing we're missing in our curriculum here at the doctoral level is curriculum around LGBT health research because we're putting people out in the career who are researchers or those of us that will go on to other settings, and some people are coming in with nurse practitioners that are dealing with those populations. I would think that this university here would be at the top of the game in terms of education for all getting some exposure experience, a lecture, some dedicated time to all of us around areas...and in regards to classes regarding the philosophy of caring and philosophers, it was just old White men and women, other people had cultures long before the Europeans. [P2]

Other participants had somewhat positive experiences with campus diversity and inclusiveness, as illustrated in the quote below.

The campus climate is good. I feel that there are parts of campus that are inclusive and there are other places that you go, like I go to the library sometimes and I walk in. It's like people look at me like, "What are you doing here?" (laughs) Yeah. So, that's weird sometimes. I don't deal with it much because we do have more students of color now. So,

that's more to do with school. We've had more in the college of nursing. Yeah. So, it's better. It's different. It's better. Yeah. [P4]

Some participants learned to code-switch, described in the quote below, in order to fit into the PWU academic environment.

I feel like you do have to act White, change how you talk, change your stance. But I do like to say code switch because I can switch in and out depending upon the crowd that I'm in. I may not care a thing about this conversation, but because I'm amongst White nurse scientists or even scientists because mine is a combination of people, I've got to talk that talk that may be meaningless to me, but I've got to engage it. [P11]

Many participants described experiencing cultural shock, that is, the consequence of stress resulting from interactions with a new culture, which resulted in feelings of not belonging due to loss of their social and cultural normative cues and mores (Oberg, 1960). In the quote below, an Asian American participant described the struggle-to-fit and gave advice about how to fit within the perceived cultural norms of a PWU.

I think for a new student to overcome some of the issues I did, I would just, I guess, maybe advise them to just be more assertive. I wish I was more assertive when I had started, but by nature, I think I'm more of a soft-spoken person, but I think it's cultural and sometimes I think that gets misunderstood as not having confidence. I do have confidence. It's just that I am not bragging about my accomplishments and I think I'm more humble about it, so it gets misconstrued as no confidence. And that's just the way I was brought up in my [culture]. I'm Asian...I think, I guess [it's a] cultural thing. [P9]

In the above participant's Asian American culture, having confidence is not related to who is the most vocal about one's accomplishments. Humility, self-effacement and being soft-spoken are paragons of virtues and illustrates self-confidence, self-assuredness and intelligence in many Asian cultures (Wei, Ku, & Liao, 2011). A majority of participants viewed braggadocio as unacceptable, unrefined behavior in their culture; yet, it was often rewarded in the PWU environment and was seen by many faculty members as an indicator of intelligence, confidence, assertiveness and scholarliness.

International students also described experiencing the diversity-reality disconnect and the struggle-to-fit phenomena. One international student compared academic experiences in the home country to academic experiences in the PWU environment, in particular the classroom environment and student-student and student-faculty interactions. This particular participant viewed a student speaking before being acknowledged by a faculty member as “shocking and rude;” this behavior would be a violation of classroom etiquette and standard cultural norm and expectation in the home country. Furthermore, the behavior was even more disquieting because faculty members encouraged, expected and accepted that students would speak up in class without faculty initiation or invitation. The participant further explained,

We were allowed to speak up when teachers call our name [in the home country]. So, it was very unusual for me to participate in discussion, very shocking people would just say things so rapidly and I thought that like I do the same thing in [my country], people would consider it rude because some student start to say something before another student is finished. I thought that was rude but if I wait too long I lose my chance (laugh). [P10]

Although a few PWUs facilitated diversity and inclusiveness, participants, for the most part, did not feel a sense of inclusivity and value for diversity, which enhanced feelings of isolation, invisibility and loss of self-identity. These feelings often negatively affected their academic progression and professional socialization. In order to achieve socialization, a person must feel a sense of belonging or personal involvement in order to be an integral part of that system or environment (Hagerty, Lynch-Sauer, Patusky, Bouwsema, & Collier, 1992). The quote below is representative of many participants who did not feel a fit or sense of belonging in the PWU milieu.

So, it felt like, I am not really connected here to anyone, especially on the floor that I'm on. You don't see any African-Americans. And it's like, Okay. Come on now. This is long enough. I've been here six years. Come on. And so, I had this sense of feeling like a visitor. I'm doing the work, but I'm still a visitor. [P11]

Many participants received a sense of belonging from outside of the university and questioned their decision to attend a PWU: “Who am I?” “Where do I belong?” and “How do I demonstrate competency?” were questions asked by participants. A representative quote is below.

Yeah, sense of community. You could say that. It's the Black nurses group on campus and they were very, very welcoming and they just seemed to have a good group of students. But also the alumni that would come to their meetings and faculty members as well and I thought that was really interesting because I hadn't experienced that as an undergrad. It seemed to be kind of family oriented, like a really tightknit group. [P1]

Often, the academic environment felt hostile, non-inclusive and reductive to a majority of participants. For example, a participant described being introduced to others as “the Black male, doctoral student” instead of by his name. He perceived that this type of reductive introduction often led the people to whom he was being introduced to express both amazement and disbelief that he was in the doctoral program. For participants who reported such reductive experiences, they felt marginalized, disinherited and rejected for trying to attain an achievement that was viewed as not suited for “somebody like me: an African American male.” Other participants felt that the way to have a sense of belonging was to make an effort to fit-in, to recoil, even if it goes against your values and beliefs and results in a loss of autonomy and a feeling of powerlessness. One participant said,

I told them at year three I was beaten into submission...That's the phrase. I will never forget I said that...We don't hear much from you anymore. No, I have been beaten into submission. I will speak softly and talk only when asked to speak. And that's what I've done. I pulled out of all that involvement of these committees and things that I really cared about around diversity and wanting to support that effort...I just pulled out of all that and said, You know what? I'm just going to do an inward focus. [P2]

Difficulty Navigating Academic Progression and Professional Socialization

The academic environment can either facilitate or hinder students' engagement, learning experiences and academic progression and professional socialization. It should be structured to best prepare students not only academically, but also for their future professional life by

contributing to their professional socialization, described as “the process through which an individual learns to adopt the values, skills, attitudes, norms, and knowledge needed to belong to a given society, group, or organization” (Weidman & Stein, 2003, p. 642). Participants described navigation as the process of developing a clear, achievable plan with a timeline in order to navigate a route toward achieving goals and reaching successful outcomes.

Participants, however, found navigating the academic environment as unnecessarily difficult, cumbersome and circuitous, fraught with barriers, mutual misunderstandings and complications related to interactions at the micro level between URM students and their counterparts or the faculty that seemed to be conscious and unconscious and at the macro level between URM students and perceived institutional and structural biases. Demystifying the PhD process during a well-designed student orientation was identified as another way to minimize the difficulty of navigating the academic environment. For example, participants wanted more information beyond the curriculum about other types of courses, seminars, workshops, activities, tutoring, etc. that are available to students, but more importantly, how to access these additional academic resources. Persad, Showler, Ryan, Schmitt, and Nye (2017) found that students who felt a connection with the university during orientation were more likely to fit in and want to stay enrolled at the university, particularly URM students. A major navigational factor was the faculty-student relationship, which was not always clear.

Relationship with faculty. Participants reported that faculty often were not role models nor willing to invest time in their academic progression and professional socialization, which should be evolved over time and co-constructed between advisor and student about receiving constructive feedback, fitting-in and developing and gaining a sense of membership (Curtin, Malley, & Stewart, 2016; Meijers & Lengelle, 2012). The quotes below is representative of how

a majority of participants felt about navigating academic progression and professional socialization with the faculty.

Tell me if I'm way off tangent somewhere because I feel like I'm out in the fields, but I've asked her, how should I align my career? Given what I've done so far in the program, what gaps do I need to fill in to best align myself for a particular type of career? Where do you see me going if you see me going anywhere? And she basically told me, "I have no idea what you're going to do when you finish the program" ...And that was her way of saying, I'm not responsible for what happens to you when you're done with the program. And to me, that was like you're not invested in me at all. There's nothing that you stand to personally gain, emotionally gain, career-wise gain from my success, and that's drastically different from the mentor in my [previous] school...Am I actually learning what I need to learn in order to be an expert in my area of interest? I don't know if it's a cultural thing. [In my other] school, the [faculty] don't mind supporting your success...[they] volunteered their time to help me. [P3]

Another participant said,

What I'm learning from my advisor is how to make sure I don't advise other people this way. I think the role of the advisor should be if the advisor does not have an active research going on and the student is doing their own research, then just continue to mentor them and guide them in the way that they have experienced to be the best way so the student remains on the right track. If there is something that the advisor sees that you're doing is completely wrong then don't just, okay, go back and redo that even though it's a learning experience, but give them an idea or a sense of what you're looking for, which has been successful in the past. Don't lead the student out there to go out and figure it out on their own when you know in your mind you know what you want it to look like because there's too much of this back and forth...Let's really perfect this so you understand it. And then let's focus on this part next. And then when you create tables, I want you to create the tables this way. Not...that's not how you do tables. Let's talk about how you display data. Here's a template. This is what I like to use. This is the way I see it. [P11]

Even when faculty members were trying to be supportive, students did not perceive their actions as supportive. Participants viewed the faculty role as an inherent hierarchical sphere of influence, control and power over the student. While reciprocity in the student-advisor relationship was viewed by participants as essential, many participants said the relationship often felt overly imbalanced and based on fear, intimidation, repercussion and judgment. One participant described that while appreciative of the advisor's ability to secure funding to support doctoral education, the participant felt "owned" by the advisor. In the quote below, the participant

described the experiences of being the teaching assistant for the advisor, who often, likely unknowingly, created anxiety for the student because of the advisor's demand that the student be available at all times.

I didn't feel as though I could say no to things that were coming up...because this professor went to bat for me...got the funding that I needed to even be in the program. I [felt] anytime they asked me to do anything [when I was] a TA, in the middle of the night, early in the morning, and you had to respond right away. If you didn't, I don't even know what the punishment would have been, but it seemed as though that would have been the worst thing you could do and it would've been negligent and you wouldn't have been participating in the way that you were supposed to be participating. [P3]

A majority of participants expressed a desire and need for assistance with academic progression and professional socialization from the faculty. When such guidance was provided by the faculty, participants reported being appreciative; these positive faculty-student interactions enhanced their academic learning and progression and professional integration, competency, maturity and identity, ability to network, and sense of belonging, self-worth and dignity. Many participants understood what it was like to be a faculty member, particularly the scrutiny, since they were in a faculty role concurrent with being a doctoral student. One participant said,

I mean, I have students I've mentored who like my input in steering them where to go with their project. I have students who after they have graduated come back to visit. I have gained some really good relationships with faculty. I see the [the faculty member] through my work...we get along really, really well. I mean, we're going to do an educational cruise...we're going to room together. [P4]

The advisor-student relationship seemed awkward at times for some participants because the faculty member wanted the student to treat him or her as a peer by referring to the faculty member by his or her first name. Unfortunately, faculty member's attempts to minimize the power dynamic between student and faculty yielded undesired outcomes as described by the following participant.

One thing I think is interesting, faculty really pride themselves on they think they're addressing power by saying, 'Oh, most of them call me by my first name.' And for me even now end of my second year, I struggle with that because if I do that, when I do I feel like I'm being disrespectful because that's kind of a core part of my code of how I've been raised to speak to faculty. [P16]

Although the intent of this effort was to promote openness and contribute to fostering a collegial relationship, it created a conflict with the values of many participants. Promoting an environment implicit of casualness and informal communication contradicted with the cultural customs and mores of many participants, whose cultural expectation of communication was grounded in politeness and formality. Thus, greeting individuals in esteemed professional positions or with high social status, such as faculty, was a cultural expectation and demonstrated respect for many participants. Consequently, faculty's casualness and informality posed a challenge for many participants.

Other participants expressed the need for more URM faculty at PWUs. These participants felt that an URM faculty member may understand better their academic journey and what is needed for professional socialization. For a majority of participants, academic progression and professional socialization often were shaped, modeled and influenced by non-URM faculty members. In the quote below, a participant described realizing for the first time the importance of having a diverse faculty; it was through an interaction with an URM student in the participant's role as a faculty member in a PWU.

I distinctly remember a moment when I was teaching and one of the students happened to be a student of color. She knew I was mixed ethnicity...I remember her saying, "You know? It's really nice to see somebody that looks like me that I can come to." And I had not really thought about it honestly until I was teaching myself of how much that maybe has impacted maybe not me directly because I feel like I've been able to navigate the system knowing where I stand in my world and in the world. I can navigate that system, but it really wasn't until...I had forgotten about this until right now that there was a student that had mentioned that. And that made me think--I now stand for something different to others. That it can be done, that they could do it too. Just like I was saying, it's nice as a PhD student to see somebody who has walked right in front of you (laughs) because knowing that the people who have complete this ahead of me tend to be

that majority in nursing; White female nurses. And I haven't seen a whole lot. Until recently the people that are walking kind of close to my path, Oh, okay. Cool, yeah. We're coming up. This is good! [P8]

Another participant said,

Yes. They [the faculty] were pretty much all Caucasian--some male, some female, mostly female [at this PWU] the majority of my professors are Caucasian females. So, I always felt like I never really had anyone to identify with and I still feel that way. I don't know. I feel like I don't have a role model. [P1]

As illustrated in the aforementioned quotes, the presence and access to a diverse faculty seem to be important factors to academic progression and professional socialization of URM students matriculating in PWUs. Participants believed that having a diverse faculty would send a message that the institution is committed to diversity and inclusiveness. As role models, faculty members are instrumental to students' academic and professional socialization for the acquisition and mastery of skills, values, attitudes and behaviors, language and vocabulary of nursing science. Thus, faculty should create opportunities by which students are able to model these attributes; thereby, potentially contributing to their professional socialization that may lead to a pathway to the professoriate, which is sorely racially and ethnically underrepresented.

Personal factors. Personal factors also made it challenging for URM doctoral students to navigate academic progression and professional socialization in PWUs. Participants addressed the importance of school-life balance, managing multiple roles, demands and priorities as a way toward achieving successful academic and professional socialization. They also acknowledged being underprepared for doctoral education because URM students are often targeted and intentionally directed into less rigorous classes in high school and undergraduate programs, despite an aptitude and interest in more rigorous courses. This discouragement has been described in the literature as the systematic tracking or ability-grouping of URM students to a less challenging academic pathway (Coleman & Kerbo, 2006). This happened to one participant,

who described in the quote below how the experience had a long-lasting negative impact on her self-confidence for learning.

That at was a pretty profound experience for me as a young person. Academically, my school was a tracking system...My brother and I were always placed in the lower track and stuff...didn't want to enroll in a class which seemed to target URM students. [P12]

Many participants acknowledged that their predoctoral preparation may not have been par excellence, and thus, tutoring may be needed; however, if tutoring is needed, they did not want it to be viewed as a deficit by the faculty. Some participants reported feeling insecure about their baseline knowledge and education prior to entering the doctoral program. One participant said,

I think the important criticisms that I took were, one, my research foundation was really weak. I totally agree. And I know why that is. I had a really bad research foundation. Secondly, I didn't know how to write. And I took a class, a course on scientific writing...and it still didn't help. So those things are criticisms I would take well. But this kind of idea...I felt different, do I belong here? These are important skills as a researcher. And everybody finally said you know it's just a process, you'll get there...And then you start hearing [from other classmates], my grandfather graduated from there [elite college where the classmate also graduated]...and you're like, oh [expletive] maybe that's why it's not an even playing field. These people had years of academic background behind them. They have like White middle-class, white-collar people. I'm not that. That's probably why – that's maybe why some of these things are a little different for us. [P6]

Today's graduate student population is considered non-traditional in that students are generally 30 years and older, from URM groups, of lower socioeconomic status, married or single with children, have dependent aging parents, need more financial aid, and are likely underprepared for the rigor of graduate education (Brus, 2006). Although, many graduate students are confronted by some or all of the aforementioned issues, the challenges may have a disproportionate and a greater negative impact on URM graduate students, as demonstrated by the following participant's quote:

I felt kind of discouraged because I had a lot of things [papers] that had revisions and I think we were trying to get me to qualify, and I think I have other things going on in my life, like my landlord was giving me issues...my mom had some complications from her surgery. It was just a number of things that kept going on last year where I thought I was going to end up marrying someone [to ease my burden] ...and I'm just like, Wow. Some

of my [non-URM] classmates are just lucky. They have other supports set up, financial supports, like they're married. Their husbands are paying their rent or cooking for them. And I just felt like I was doing this all by myself, and how can I keep moving on? It was just. I felt very frustrated it was just pretty complicated...So, I'm like, what is going on, life? It was not a fun quarter or a quarter and a half ago where it was just like, why am I doing this? I keep TA-ing. I need to advance. I just kind of felt lonely because my classmates were also like, why haven't you advanced? [P7]

Another participant described, in the quote below, the process used for juggling multiple demands in order to meet expectations of the doctoral program, which was not necessarily healthy and involved being stretched too thin and infringed on quality time for self and family.

It's not been balanced. I've been consistently stretched pretty thin, but there's not really a lot that I can do about that because I chose to be in the program. I also TA'd a class where the emails were around the clock, in the middle of the night, early in the morning, and you had to respond right away...I've lost a baby, So, as stressful as it has been to juggle all of these different responsibilities...remains to be a struggle because I'm unable to completely focus on any one thing at a time...I've been in the program now for four years and I've had two vacations in the whole entire time and this includes every winter break, spring break. I haven't actually had a break. So, the two vacations that I've had, one was my honeymoon. (laughs) And we drove up the coast and I spent the entire time writing the user manual for one of the professors that I was working with, writing the user manual for one of her research projects. So, literally, on the road trip, I'm typing in the car. We're stopping so that two to three hours out of each day, I could sit and focus and get some work done, and so it wasn't very much of a vacation. And then the second vacation that I just took was for my baby moon [I'm pregnant]. (laughs) [P3]

The participant further explained, in the quote below, that despite family and health challenges, the doctoral program provided opportunities for scholarly development and professional socialization.

I'm choosing to finish the program and this is what's being offered to me. My ability to do research and network and really be present consistently was definitely a struggle and remains so...and so it's just a matter of just making it work. So, as stressful as it has been to juggle all of these different responsibilities, I've also learned a tremendous amount and I have a lot to put on my CV and opportunities for publication have come to me because of that. So, I don't really regret it. [P3]

Other participants agreed with the above participant and realized they had to reorganize their lives and living expectations by implementing organizational and time management strategies,

readjusting finances and spending, and by finding employment within the academic environment in order to ensure academic progression in the doctoral program.

Really good time management and then sometimes you feel almost like a hermit...it's work, faculty work and then student work. So, it's just really good time management. In the beginning, we were able to get some of the faculty time for scholarship time...So, I'm actually teaching more now than I was when I first started my program...It's stressful. There's a lot of stress with it, because you're torn between students and faculty because you want to give the students the best learning experience that you can, and in my program, I teach courses that are evidence-based. So, it takes away from your dissertation time. You have to find time to work on the dissertation, and so for me, it's doing something, even if it's as little as 15 minutes, to two to three to four hours every day. [P4]

Being stretched pretty thin just sort of feels like (laughs). I have class on Monday. Tuesday, I'm seeing patients. Wednesday, I'm doing data collection for another professor, making [\$\$\$] an hour, which isn't (laughs) that much money, and I have to drive [a distance] and back, which takes the whole day. Thursday, I have class again. Friday, I'm seeing patients, and I still haven't done any homework. I still have papers to write. I also have to write up what I did for the research residency and now the weekend is here and I've spent the whole time in the library trying to catch up. So, that's what it feels like, and so it's pretty much been an around the clock thing without work-life balance...I try and limit my work time to one to two days a week. Only working that small amount is really not enough to help support my family, so this has been a continual financial struggle the whole time I've been in the program, and so what I've had to do is take on research positions and then also TA positions to help to sort of makeup for some of the loss of income from being in the program. [P3]

Academic progression and professional socialization seemed to have come at a cost to the physical, emotional and psychological health for a few participants, who were trying to maintain student-work life balance by juggling multiple responsibilities while being accountable to their academic progression. According to the American College Health Association (2016), stress is the leading health impediment to academic success, particularly among URM graduate students. In the quotes below, participants explained the negative impact of multiple life demands and the high pressure and expectations of the doctoral program on their health.

I went to [work] nights and that was horrific trying to survive and trying to work. I couldn't barely even take care of my own health much less my schoolwork. So that was really very difficult. I became very depressed and it was very challenging. [P6]

I'm too busy to even go talk to a psychologist for my own mental wellbeing...this year [6th year] is the first year I could say that I sought outside psychologists. I think I had probably for that [dissertation] paper, I probably had about 10 revisions... So, that's why I realize I need to go see a psychologist to help me get through and [complete] process. [P11]

Highly intense efforts to manage multiple projects may represent a nontraditional student's attempt to increase their visibility and demonstrate worthiness to faculty in a competitive PWU environment (Brus, 2006). According to Brus, in these competitive, often inflexible, PWU environments, embraced is an unspoken culture of omnipresence in which demonstration of scholarly commitment is measured by working greater than 40 hours a week as a teaching and/or research assistant to the faculty; which in turn magnifies the student-faculty power dynamic and transforms the student to employee. Being able to balance successfully one's academic, work and personal lives is universally a challenge for all students; however, unlike their White counterparts, URM students are uniquely challenged because these difficulties are filtered through an intersectional matrix of multiple layers and self-identities.

Support and Resources

Within the theme, *support and resources*, participants, as URM students in doctoral programs in nursing at PWUs, described their unique challenges to the availability of and accessibility to institutional and academic programmatic support, such as mentoring and other educational supports, and financial aid and other funding supports that promote academic success. In addition, participants described the availability of and accessibility to personal, peer and familial social support. The categories of the *support and resources* theme were institutional and academic programmatic support and social support systems.

Institutional and Academic Programmatic Support

As academic institutions, PWUs have a unique opportunity to transform not only diversity in higher education, but also to transform diversity in the workforce and society. Taking

diversity into consideration for academic programmatic support and resources benefits all students because it requires non-traditional, creative and innovative thinking about how to meet the needs of students across the diversity spectrum: socioeconomic, gender, disability, military, religion, race/ethnicity, etc. Academic support includes all individuals whose primary responsibility is to support the academic program of students and should include both instructional pedagogical services as well as supportive resources that facilitate students' efforts to progress academically with minimal resistance and stigmatization (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Institute for Statistics, 2011). Support could include financial aid, internships, physical and mental health services, mentorship, leadership, professional socialization opportunities, safe spaces to convene and communicate, academic support, among other support and resources. Among the available institutional and academic programmatic support, funding was the most salient assistance needed by all participants, who said they could live without having access to the other types of academic programmatic and institutional support if adequate funding were available and accessible.

Funding. Evidence suggests that financial constraint is a major issue for graduate students, and working as few as one to 12 hours per week may become a barrier to academic achievement (Hassouneh, Lutz, Beckett, Junkins, & Horton, 2014). In today's current academic environment, a number of federally funded grants and scholarships are being replaced by loans. Unfortunately, this contributes to the already financial challenges of many URM graduate students. Many participants accepted the reality that in order to achieve their educational goal, they had to take on loan debts; but, with the goal of completing doctoral education with as little debt as possible. In the quotes below, participants described the availability of and accessibility to various types of funding streams and how they found out about funding sources.

Yeah. I'm full-time faculty...working does hinder my academic progress... We have a newsletter [about financial aid] that comes out specific to the program [about once a week] ...emails about scholarships and things like that, as well as emails to find out what's available through the university... Yeah, and then our faculty also email us and say, "Hey, this scholarship's available. I think you should apply." ...I got a university scholarship this past year and then when I first started in my program, I was funded for three years. And I'm in my fifth year. [P4]

I work full-time and have a teaching loan...My funding is through two streams. The major stream is funding that I receive from the university in terms of accepting a teaching assistantship. So I'm required to work as a TA while enrolled in the program. I work 10 hours a week as a TA and I'm paid for those hours, subsequently, my tuition is waived. The second stream is from a federally funded fellowship that I received--a scholarship from the [professional organization] earmarked for minority nurses to complete either their masters or their doctoral degrees [with a targeted area of focus]. [P17]

Other participants relied on previous knowledge of institutional and academic programmatic support obtained during undergraduate education to help them obtain funding for graduate school.

I actually work per diem. I received two different scholarships for school. One was a four-year scholarship...a fellowship and the second one was the Dissertation Year Fellowship. Then I also got a number of different outside scholarships...It was easily attainable, but I'm probably not the average person either because I received a lot of scholarships as an undergrad. I have a lot of experience looking for and applying for scholarships. So, my graduate program was well funded. [P1]

Some participants said there was a lack of transparency, inconsistent or poorly disseminated information about available and accessible funding resources.

My acceptance letter was vague regarding financial support, however, I was advised that I would receive full funding for my PhD...so I relocated and entering my third year learned that I did not have funding and would have to apply for money. Guess, they were trying to meet the diversity reporting numbers...Bait and switch...I was not given any resources, I had to hit the pavement, system does not support students. [P2]

Initially, it [fellowship] was given to me as part of my admission when I was a first-year. And then at the end of my first year they changed the requirements. So, then it was a matter of if I choose to continue to receive this funding then I need to meet these requirements...I had to be creative in obtaining funding...combining two sources of funding next year between the scholarship and the fellowship. So, I'm hoping to roll the scholarship over, you know, to that fourth year as well, do you know what I mean, because it comes back to me and then I can apply for it next year. So, hopefully that'll be it (laughs). [P8]

For some participants, they thought being awarded a fellowship was held in high regard and associated with scholarly achievement, only to have this accomplishment invalidated and devaluated by faculty.

I was introduced as the recipient of a fellowship award and the only minority in the department...and yes [with a smile] I was the only Black student in my department that was on that fellowship...and was told I had to be extraordinary yea that's what she told me 'You have to be extraordinary.' So, what do you do with that, you are not automatically awarded a fellowship? [P3]

Despite having financial support, a majority of participants still needed to work in order to live even after adjusting downward their standard of living; and, working often contributed to lengthening the completion time to degree attainment.

I went part-time [to school] and it was fine. I had to stay a little bit longer [because of lack of funding] ...If you don't come from a double income household, \$15.00 an hour for 13 hours as a TA versus what you will be making as a clinician or whatever you're doing, that's a huge cut, [especially] if you have a house or rent. [P10]

That [working] means that I end up doing five or six different things at one time compared to some of the other members of my cohort who also have full funding, but their stipend is \$2,000 to \$3,000 a month and they're [non-URM students] able to manage that's maybe two-thirds of what you need to be able to live here. So, they're able to maybe have a very small part-time job somewhere else, maintaining their clinical practice or maybe they have partners, and so that's just enough money for them to get by on, whereas I've had to work in multiple different arenas, stringing together multiple jobs to make ends meet at home. [P3]

I work per diem...when you're doing the coursework I feel like it interrupts that chunk of time that you need to, you know, get the work done, get the reading done, and write your papers. But now that I'm moving in to that next phase after my coursework, I feel like it's more going to work interrupts my thought process. I feel like I have to use different parts of my brain when I'm at work and using that clinically versus what I'm doing as a doctoral student and how my thinking is growing and changing, and they don't mesh very well a lot of the time. [P8]

Other institutional support. When participants were asked to describe the role and contribution of other institutional support and resources that enhanced academic progression and socialization, their responses varied. As the participant below described, mental health services, an important resource that was previously available at the university, was reduced because of

budget constraints; which negatively impacted staffing and hours of operations, and thus, limited students' access to these resources.

I was feeling stressed out...I had to move, my hours changed at work and you know of course there was school. So, I reached out to Student Health Services but couldn't get an appointment... it wasn't really urgent, I really tried. [P6]

MHS [mental health services] is very important and needed service for students...There are resources available, but I don't think that the people who run these resources are able to handle the number of students who might need to utilize them. The capacity just isn't there anymore...it may take weeks for an appointment...And it's actually really sad I think. And so people I would imagine probably have to look off campus and look for their own resources because the ones available on campus just isn't really meeting the needs of the students anymore. [P1]

So, there are like the Counseling and Psychology Services Department. Not just like therapy or psychiatric type counseling, but they offer a lot of workgroups and courses specifically for underrepresented populations or people who are dealing with certain types of issues in their doctoral programs. And a lot of these programs while they are probably helpful I guess, sometimes, the waiting list is really long to get involved or there just isn't any more room available. So, I don't really know what people do in those situations except wait to see if they can get into a group or whatever [P3]

The above quotes indicate the importance of students' access to mental health services. Students had to find other ways to cope with stress. As expressed in the quote below, one participant addressed her stress by enrolling in a weekly mindfulness class designed for first generation students.

It was just getting started – the first gen thing. She was so cool. She would do like Zen meditation workshops; she would do great workshops. or something like that. She was a lovely woman and she was doing the gen studies. But if I was on campus I would go but now that I'm not even associated with any classwork or coursework on campus I don't bother. [P6].

Stress-related academic concerns could be a barrier to academic progress. An unprecedented number of college students experience psychological distress according to the American College Health Association (2016) and mental health risks have been shown to be greater for female students (who represent the majority of doctoral nursing students) and URMs compared to their counterparts (University of California Office of the President, 2006).

A number of participants emphasized the availability of multiple institutional resources, such as librarian support and workshops and seminars offered to support advancement to candidacy, structuring and writing a dissertation, and expectations of a teaching assistant.

I followed that route and I took the core curriculum. Plus, I took a lot of extra classes to help me understand more... dissertation boot camp during a break.... The librarians offer themselves to students with teaching writing, things like that, and then they'll buy books and all that. So, there's that and there's the writing center, and then if you're a TA [teaching assistant], there's the Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence.... We do have a program now for women. We have the Women's Resource Center, but the program just started to try to get more women...minority women. [P4]

The librarians offer themselves to students with teaching, writing, things like that, and then they'll suggest books and all that...I just tell her, 'go in there and keep your motivation up and develop a thick skin because professors will say things and do things with your papers and you will feel bad.' You just keep going and I'm here. [P4]

Some participants had mixed success with institutional-sponsored support and resources. In the quote below, a participant described her experience of accessing editorial assistance and student health resources.

I've used editors, so that's been successful. I can't remember her name offhand. But she's just super. She really was inviting. I tried to use some of the student health – the first year I tried to use some of the health services. There were like workshops on relationships and – I got something from them but I felt like the two people who led the program, they were both White, male and female couple, I didn't feel like they – I felt like I was a little bit of a weirdo in their eyes because of my age and my situation in life and that I was even asking the questions maybe, that I was curious about or concerned about. [P6]

Other participants expressed that universities were often challenged to provide non-cisgender and non-heterosexual students with a sense of support and belonging and that the establishment of gender-identity and other affinity-related groups may serve as a bridge to the wider university community. A participant explained,

I participated in the LGBT [lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender] group. I had a chronic health [condition]. I went to all the groups when I first got here because that's how I got through...I had my cohort, which was great, but I was trying to get a bigger university connection and university picture, and I did because I got adopted by a bunch of guys from School of Pharmacy.....One of the guys is still my best friend to this day. And that was interesting because there are not a lot of guys in nursing. And the guys in nursing, I

think there were three of us. And then one dropped out, so I think there are just two of us left. You know, he's a different kind of guy. So, it's just me I feel like in terms of guys. And that's okay too. I've been the only guy before in my career, a lot of my career in my positions, or the only Black man. It's fine. It's all good, but yeah, as long as people are cool and respectful. I don't disrespect anybody, so I just expect that there's the same courtesy. [P2]

As demonstrated in the aforementioned quotes, lack of access to institutional support and resources has been shown to put URM students in PWUs at risk of attrition and thus institutions should provide safety nets to support URM students in order to facilitate transition through the phases of doctoral education (Okahana, Allum, Felder, & Tull, 2016).

Mentorship. Mentorship is a key academic programmatic support. In spite of a lack conceptual clarity, the impact of mentoring on students' academic success has been well established (Eller, Lev, & Feurer, 2013; Thomas – Squance, Goldstone, Martinez, Flowers, 2011). Davidson and Foster - Johnson (2001) identified two integral functions of mentoring have been recognized: psychosocial (role modeling, counseling, friendship, caring, and confirmation) and instrumental-career (sponsorship, network-introductions, and coaching). The successful integration of these functions is believed to result in mentoring that is deliberate, includes guidance, feedback and advocacy, goes beyond the mechanics of the basic engagement and involves a deep and caring relationship. The results should be a reciprocal trusting and respectful relationship which develops over time and facilitates academic progress, career identity and social integration.

Every participant described either being assigned a mentor or having an advisor who was also dually a mentor. While every participant had an assigned mentor, some participants reported a disconnect with his or her mentor and had to rely on someone outside of the department to serve as a mentor. In general, participants felt that faculty advisors were accomplished and experienced in their area of expertise and were assumed to have the characteristics of a mentor;

unfortunately, not all faculty advisors proved to be mentors. Participants' experiences with mentors ranged from feeling mentored and supported to feeling bullied and powerless. The following participant described the mentor's guidance as instrumental in his leadership development.

I wanted to do my Men in Nursing thing. She told me how to navigate that; how to navigate the institution and get the resources that I needed to do what I needed to do and she was incredibly supportive of the process and my vision, kind of like I had gotten back home in my other graduate and undergraduate school. It was that kind of person who was in a position to get it, as I call it, get me and then support me in doing what I need to do. You don't have to do it for me. I'm capable of doing it on my own. All I need is a little bit of encouragement or backup or a resource to ask questions if I have questions; she left the university – It's the essence of the person who was doing the job that was critical to that effort of mentoring. [P2]

Another participant described the student-faculty mentor relationship as caring, personal and based upon mutual expectations.

Having my faculty advisor know that those are some things that are my goals and to be able to not just support me in my coursework, but just developing me and mentoring me as a novice nurse researcher, but also as a student in a doctoral program, if that makes any sense, makes a difference, I can do this. [P8]

The above quotes highlight the importance of mentorship to professional and research development, feeling empowered, and having a sense of individual recognition. One participant said "there is no cookie cutter way to get through a PhD program." Each participant's experience was different. The participant further stated, "people aren't successful because they're being forced to try to complete a program in the way that they're told to instead of in the way that seems most appropriate for them [P1]."

Unfortunately, some participants described the student-faculty mentor relationship as detrimental to learning, academic progression and physical and psychological wellbeing. In the quote below, a participant described feeling trapped and unsafe in the student-faculty mentor relationship.

Multiple people in my cohort have changed advisors and changed mentors. I haven't done that at all. So, I've basically been suffering with these mentors in the School of Nursing for four years and I have not switched. I have not said, 'I don't want to work with you anymore because this is just too painful for me. I'm tired of leaving your office crying,' whatever it is. This process of evaluation seems so arbitrary. A colleague introduced me to my current mentor in the School of Medicine where people don't mind supporting your success. And that was bizarre. It was bizarre for people to volunteer their time to help me. He has consistently re-established my sense of safety, which is very interesting and with every other mentor that I've had or every other person that was supposed to be in that position, (laughs) all the other bosses, I sort of lost my sense of safety because it's not possible for any person, really, to do all of the different things that I've been asked to do well, like 100%. A ball is going to get dropped here and there because there's only so many hours in the day and I'm not perfect and I'm relatively organized, but most of the time pretty disorganized. (laughs) So, there's my personality that comes to the table as well. So, it's not possible for me to be perfect. So, yeah, but— It's been invaluable. I can't even describe it. It's been completely invaluable. Even when I make a mistake [P3].

A few participants had unexpected, informal mentoring experiences, wherein racial/ethnic concordance was relevant, meaningful and inspirational. A participant described such an experience in the quote below.

Something that keeps coming back to me as nurse in at the Asian Pacific Institute. The medical officer there sat me down because he's also Asian and he said, you know, 'good luck' because I was leaving and I said I really need to focus on my quals. I said, well, this is kind of my dream job (they were at that point hiring). And I said I would totally have stayed, and maybe I should. This is what my master's program taught me to do. This is where I want to kind of be. This is my dream job. And he's like, you know what? It's important for you to get your PhD because there is very little representation at that level. And I was like, really? Because here I am seeing that the doctor was Asian. And he said, well, I don't know many Asians that are nursing trained PhDs. I see a lot of Asians that are RN bedside nurses. A few master's level but I can't – maybe one or two. And he's like, you really should just push yourself through it. And he meant it. That's really one of the only real conversations we've ever had and that's always kind of stuck with me. I can't turn back now. [P8]

Peer-to-peer mentoring was equally important and offered the benefits of shared experiences, encouragement and guidance.

Social Support Systems

Social support systems, when positive, can be critical to mitigating challenges to becoming a scholar by enhancing academic progression and professional socialization and buffering the negative effects of stressors that can lead to imbalances in physical and mental wellbeing. Social support has been described as the extent to which a person's social needs are met by interactions with others at an individual and/or group level (Jairam & Kahl, 2012). Types of social support include affection, sympathy, respect and admiration from others, advice, and assistance. Social support systems to one's network can be internal as with family, friends and close academic peers and work colleagues, or external as with professional and civic/community organizations and institutional supports.

Internal social support systems. Represented by exemplary quotes presented below, a majority of participants discussed the significance of the interconnectedness with their personal social support networks toward achieving academic success, balancing responsibilities and maintaining physical, emotional and psychosocial wellbeing. People included in participants' personal social support networks were family, including siblings, children, parents and extended family members, friends and close academic peers and work colleagues.

I feel inspired and I have squad of people--this support group. My support group is just some family members, like my mom and my dad. My really, really, really close friends—one of my former students turned into my best friend...I have supporters, cheer leaders. I have another friend—we think along the same lines...She's one of my good friends. She's one in my support system, part of my support system. [P7]

I'm going to say family...I don't think I've mentioned this enough, my mother. My mother has also been a great source of support. She's cooked me meals. She sometimes has gone with me to campus when I've been too tired to drive. She has been a great person in terms of clerical organization and putting things together for me. So again, ensuring that my family is proud because I've made this investment in my own human capital. But they've been very supportive as well. [P15]

And it has helped sustain me these last three years because I get that people are proud. They're encouraging. They're supportive. They want to help the effort. There's so much love and support behind me, pushing me forward, propelling me through the rest of this that I just I have to do the work. [P2]

Some participants described, in the quotes below, support for education as a cultural expectation and value, but the support was mixed, both positive and negative.

You know, education is valued, and you're going to find a lot of support within your culture and when I think – but you are also going to find a lot of negativity within your culture...So you take that support and you find the support elsewhere. Another support system. [P5]

Well, I wasn't encouraged or discouraged. [P1]

It wasn't kind of like, "I'm really proud of you," because she used to say something about wanting me to be a doctor instead of a nurse. I almost felt like it was a shameful thing for me with her. She would go back and forth, toggle back and forth about this being proud/not being proud. It was just weird. So, it's interesting that now I'm doing the PhD in nursing, now that I'm going to be a doctor, now my family is coming back or trying to come back around me...And my family has not been one of those through the years to say, Oh, we're so proud of you. Great going...So you develop other support networks. [P2]

Through mutual empathy and shared experiences, close academic peers and close work colleagues were other sources of internal social support during the doctoral program. As illustrated in the following quotes, participants indicated peers in their cohort were sounding boards who validated each other's experiences.

This [being in this PhD program] has almost killed me as a human being. And if I was younger, like I said, if I didn't have a cohort with some Black folks in it, if I was the only one, I don't think I would have survived...Overall, my cohort that I'm a part of. I'm so grateful for...they get the journey. We're in it together. [P2]

I had a small cohort and I developed, with a few members of my cohort, a very sort of deep bond that allowed me the comfort level of sort of expressing that stress and anxiety that we were experiencing. And they validated it for me. Because there was a certain point where I felt I didn't verbalize it to any of my professors and advisors but I felt, my goodness, I didn't anticipate all this. And am I really suited for all this? For all this that I signed up for. But I fortunately again had the professor that I was TAing for, working as a teaching assistant for, she was also a graduate of my PhD program so she also validated

it for me, validated everything I was experiencing along with my peers. So that was very comforting. [P17]

My faculty [colleagues] that I work with. They're supportive, and then this other faculty person that I've worked with for a long time. The dean has also been a really good support...I almost died a few years ago, and I tell you, the group just rallied around me, they took my kids grocery shopping. They checked on them every day. I had meals for months. I didn't have to cook for months. I had people stay with me while I was in the hospital and stuff like that. I mean, they just like—it was like having family here. [P4]

As previously discussed, social support systems were important to participants during the beginning of the doctoral program, but became more crucial after advancing to candidacy when interactions with cohort peers, other classmates and faculty lessened. Participants reported the learning environment post-candidacy was often unstructured and solitary. Despite being exhilarated about advancement to candidacy, this academic phase was isolating and self-reliance and self-motivation were key characteristics needed to write the dissertation. In the following quote, a participant described how feeling isolated could derail a student's academic progress, but a supportive social support network made the difference between continuing versus quitting the doctoral program.

I have one really good friend who rescued me in year two going into year three. I thought I was going to quit...and there were these two amazing Black women in the library (laughs). [They] asked me to join them, I was so isolated. I didn't even realize how isolated I was. I'm going to cry because I'm on pregnancy hormones. (laughs) But I just went and I sat in there with them and they were working. And I was like if they're doing it, I can do it too. So, that was of huge support. (cries) That was a huge support. I wouldn't have made it. I think I would have dropped out because I was just doing really well. I was getting straight A's, but the emotional burden was just way more than I anticipated coming into the program and yeah. [P3]

Although social support was viewed by a few participants as negative among peers in the doctoral cohort, for the most part that was the exception rather than the rule, as one participant described in the quote below.

We're not doing any of that what I would call probably shaming or that degrading conversation or you're better than me. We're not competitive with each other. We all

have our different areas. I don't know. It's just a wonderful collegiate relationship that I am so grateful for. [P2]

External social support systems. Participants' external social support systems were comprised of professional and civic/community organizations. Many participants joined and became active in local chapters of national nursing organizations. The benefits of membership afforded participants networking opportunities with other professionals beyond the university setting. In addition, professional and civic/community organizations served as channels of recruitment for the dissertation study and provided a sense of belonging to a support system that understood "who I am." The participant further explained,

I've made some more contacts. Thank God! because I actually found over there some folks, professional Black folks. Not necessarily researchers, but enough community-based organizations of folks who look like me and sound like me and get the value of this work to partner with...I get all kinds of wonderful Black folks there for my research [recruitment of participants] ...I joined Black Nurses [Association]. They got it, which was awesome. That's another wonderful find because that was around a group of folks who look like me and they're nurses. That was also another addition because my cohort we had all kind of done our individual thing even though we're still connected. But once a month I get a good dose of all those Black folks, which is awesome. [P2]

Other participants made similar comments about belonging to affinity-related professional and civic/community organizations for self-affirmation and altruistic purposes; however, not all students were aware of these organizations, which some participants believed should have been included in student orientation. Representative quotes are below.

I want to give back to my community so I belong to several faith-based organizations, the African American Health Care Disparities Committee and the Health Studies Advisory Council of the Department of Health [which have given to me]. [P4]

I've just kind of been sitting back and just watch, that kind of thing, students not knowing. I joined the Black Nurses Association and I met people. But, I think having them [ethnic/racial professional organizations] be a part of orientation so that [URM students] know who the faces are. You get the information to reach out [to these organizations]. [This] would have been helpful. [P10]

When participants could not locate affinity-type organizations, they joined other organizations that could provide interest-specific professional opportunities, as described by the following participant.

I can't find affinity professional organizations but I belong to several organizations related to my area of clinical practice. I feel supported and [have found] opportunities of professional development. [P8]

As demonstrated in the above participant's quote, there is a body of literature that documents the importance of racial, ethnic and language concordance for URM's academic success (National Advisory Council on Nurse Education and Practice, 2013). Racial/ethnic concordance in higher education occurs when the race/ethnicity of the student matches the race/ethnicity of the faculty member and discordance occurs when race/ethnicity do not match. Given that racial/ethnic student-faculty disparities persist, cultural humility may be an alternative option and of greater value to acknowledge and address institutionalized implicit and explicit biases, promote openness to cultural awareness, and redress power imbalances (Martin-Holland, 2007). Cultural humility is the "ability to maintain an interpersonal stance that is other-oriented (or open to the other) in relation to aspects of cultural identity that are most important to the [person]" (Hook, Davis, Owen, Worthington & Utsey, 2013 p. 2)

Another type of external social support system identified by participants was an institutional diversity officer, which has been shown to be instrumental in reducing URM students' premature departure from a program without degree completion (Okahana, Feaster, & Allum, 2016). Participants believed that diversity initiatives and policies, in the form of a designated position, should be a permanent line item in the institution's operating budget. This person would also provide a safe space where students who identify as members of marginalized groups would have a place to gather and communicate shared experiences (Fischer, 2007; Griffin & Muniz, 2015). The following participant described the importance of having someone

responsible for “diversity and all things diverse” to provide support to URM students and signal to all stakeholders the institution’s commitment to diversity.

They just hired a Dean of Diversity...So, I think they’re starting to make better efforts now. Academic-wise, I feel like there’s a lot of us who are on the edge...I think there’s something with the program that is not working because some students [non-URM] finish in four years. A lot of us [URM students] don’t. So, I’m not exactly sure what it is...maybe, I’ll ask her about her vision and plan [for diversity]. [P7]

Transitions: Preparation for Graduation and Beyond

The final overarching theme was *transitions: preparation for graduation and beyond*.

Doctoral education is “designed to prepare a student to become a scholar: that is, to discover, integrate, and apply knowledge, as well as to communicate and disseminate it” (Council of Graduate Schools, 2005, p. 1). Transitioning is a process and transition is an event or nonevent that typically results in change (Schlossberg, 1984). For doctoral students, transitioning involves accomplishing certain benchmarks, such as completing coursework, passing the qualifying examination, advancing to candidacy, and defending the dissertation. A majority of the participants expected graduation year was 2017 and 2018 and a majority of them reported not being well-informed about career options outside of academia. The results were mixed about whether participants believed they were prepared as an academician and scientist as they near graduation.

I swing between being really happy and feeling confident to oh, my God! I will have to get a job as faculty; sometimes, I don’t feel ready to leave the nest! [P15]

You know teaching is expected but the emphasis at my university is research, in fact, we don’t even have classes with curriculum focused on education or teaching we are instructed to take classes through a consortium, so no, I do not feel fully prepared [for an academic position]. [P8]

Yeah. I’ll be finishing up end of July. And I am thrilled, I have a clinical faculty position so I can devote time on mentoring students [instead of devoting time to research] [P4]

Other participants were proactive about their career path as a researcher, even if it meant receiving support outside of nursing, as illustrated in the quote below.

[A physician said,] ‘I want you to put your poster on this poster symposium.’ I needed to seek mentoring outside of my department to meet certain expectations....This is a physician from the medicine model, the scientist model, and she’s like, ‘I want you to put this together and do a poster.’ I’ve never done a poster. I had to put together a PowerPoint. I had never had to do that to explain the data that I had collected and the research that I was doing on my patient -- the clinical research that I was doing. (laughs) I did not know how to do clinical research and so she was basically helping me along the way, figure out how to do this and then allowed me to take full credit for my work. And so I got to present on a symposium. I was able to get the School of Nursing honored with several awards, ironic. [P3]

A few participants, although a majority were not, were advised about and wanted to complete a postdoctoral fellowship to gain additional research experience and increase marketability to facilitate gainful employment as a faculty member. A postdoctoral fellowship, however, was not feasible for many participants because of financial and family obligations.

I am not thinking about a post-doc my family wants me done! Besides, I have a faculty position. [P12]

I’m not moving for a program and besides I’m taking care of my parents. [P13]

A handful of participants eagerly embraced the idea of a postdoctoral fellowship and were able to relocate.

I am not going to jeopardize my ability to be faculty at a top-tier research focused university. I have reached out to one of my former professors for any possibilities and I’ve relocated before, it’s just me and my PhD is my baby. [P15]

When participants were asked to describe and reflect upon whether their doctoral trajectory has been successful, they often paused and then attributed their successful academic transition to many tangible and intangible factors, such as internal strength, tenacity, personal values, flexibility, problem-solving and coping strategies, spirituality and religion, self-regulation among other factors. The three words most often mentioned by participants were

“perseverance,” “resilience,” and “grit.” Participants described that they were successful without regard to discouragement, opposition or previous failures (perseverance) because of their passion and sense of purpose (grit), which sustained them despite obstacles (resilience). This psychological armor enhanced participants’ doctoral program journey. Others noted that doctoral education put them at risk for self-doubt and racism, but that institutional support and resources served as protective factors.

I won't say sexism, but I'll just talk about racism because that was the most prevalent for me. That racism is an insidious thing and though you may not see it, that the students of color are feeling it. And some may say something about it. A lot of us won't say anything about it. It's understanding...Struggles are around our self-confidence, how we've been treated, often has left us feeling that we can't do it and we are a real value. I go inward, I have a goal – PhD, I will not be swayed....The institutional support provided for emotional and writing is helpful as well. [P10]

Data analysis revealed an unexpected finding: ageism. The researcher’s interview guide did not seek to explore ageism; however, age discrimination was a salient category. Ageism is the stereotyping and discrimination of individuals based upon their age (Letvak, 2002). The term, ageism, was introduced in 1968 by the National Institute on Aging as a type of discrimination and a form of bigotry against individuals based upon age (MacIntosh, Val Palumbo, & Rambur, 2010). The 1967 Age Discrimination in Employment Act forbids age discrimination against workers who are age 40 or older (U.S. Equal Opportunity Commission, 1986). The average retirement age for nurse faculty is 62.5 years (AACN, 2015). For doctorally-prepared nurse faculty in positions of professor, associate professor and assistant professor, the mean age is 61.6, 57.6 and 51.4 years, respectively. Nurses tend to enter graduate school at a later age compared to other disciplines. The average age of participants was 40.5 years. Four participants were between 54 and 64 years. As illustrated in the quotes below, these participants were concerned about the intersectionality of gender, race/ethnicity and age, and reflected about their career opportunities post-graduation.

Many of us do enter into nursing at a later age. The fact that to I enter into the PhD program at a later age, we are the minority. The ones who are young and that's great. When it comes to what I'm going to do after I'm done, it has a huge impact. If I had finished two years ago it would've made a difference. [P6]

I don't know. In some circles, it [my age] probably could be a facilitator because of the amount of experience I have, and then in some circles, it could be a barrier because people say, 'Look how old she is,' and stuff like that. And I may not get the same opportunities that somebody would get that was younger. So, sometimes, it could go either way. I plan to work for a good 10, 12 years. I know a faculty member and she's got to be close to 80. I know she's like mid-70s. She's just starting to consider retirement. [P15]

Yeah. Yeah, I am. People might not give me their shot because of my age, and I consider myself like to be young now I'm 62. People look at me and they go, 'You're not 62.' (laughs). [P4]

This a new one (laughs) thinking of age, I'm 64. The last time I went to school was 25-30 years ago and stuff, right? When I went to school I didn't have a computer, when I got my master's degree. And so not only have I had to learn the content, I had to learn how to sort of just feel comfortable with this doggone computer and these programs. I used word processing, but not in the way that I've had to, you know, like shortcuts like my colleagues that are much younger than me. They can just you know, like in the computer labs. I mean I still feel like a klutz (laughs) in the computer lab. It doesn't make any difference if it's work-related or it's school-related, you know? I just am not that fast, you know? And I am noticing just a difference in terms of I'm not a quick learner when I say that, but I'm a very deep learner (laughs)...I mean once I have it I have it and can demonstrate that I know the material (laughs)...good thing I already have a faculty position...I'd be worried. [P12]

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

In the final chapter, a summary of study findings, conclusions, limitations, implications for nursing education and recommendations for further research are discussed. In order to understand more fully the facilitators and barriers that contribute to admission, retention attrition and graduation of URM students, the threefold purpose of the dissertation study was to explore the (a) personal background and pre-entry decision-making, (b) academic progression and professional socialization, and (c) availability of and access to institutional resources from the perspective of URM students enrolled in doctoral nursing programs at PWUs.

Summary of the Findings

Findings of the study indicated four overarching themes: (a) valuing education, (b) challenges to becoming a scholar, (c) support and resources, and (d) transitions: preparation for graduation and beyond. A majority of participants described higher education as a family and cultural expectation that was valued as a pathway toward professional upward mobility, status and acceptability by the larger society; which were major incentives to apply to the doctoral program. Consistent with study findings, perceived relevance of education to career interest has been shown to be significantly and positively associated pursuit of higher education (Andrew, McVicar, Zanganeh, & Henderson, 2015). Participants did not make the decision to apply to the doctoral program in isolation; they consulted with family, friends and colleagues, as has been shown in other studies (McCallum, 2016).

Once admitted to the doctoral program, participants were confronted with multiple challenges to becoming a scholar, such as the realization of the lack of institutional diversity, struggling to fit-in, and difficulty navigating academic progression and professional socialization. Factors that interfered with participants' academic progression and professional

socialization were their relationship with faculty and personal factors that included under-preparedness for doctoral education, family obligations and financial needs. In addition, a majority of participants reported frequent experiences with microaggressions, which they described as taxing and demoralizing and strained their academic achievement, social integration and desire to remain in the doctoral program. Persad et al. (2017) found that URM students felt less feel connected to the university, but those who felt connected to the university had greater feelings of fitting in and desired to remain at the university. Any student may decide to exit a program prematurely, however, the literature indicates that students who were underprepared academically and/or URM were more likely to withdraw from the program (Burks & Barrett, 2009; Demaris & Kritsonis, 2008; Heaney & Fisher, 2011; Morrow & Ackermann, 2012).

The student-faculty relationship received mixed ratings from participants. Some participants had positive experiences, some participants had negative experiences and some participants had mixed experiences with the faculty advisor. What was considered as a constructive approach to mentorship by faculty to support URM students' academic success was perceived as stigmatization by some participants. Perhaps, other mentorship strategies need to be considered for providing feedback to first-generation URM students. There is a well-established literature that indicates a good, quality faculty-student mentor relationship is one of many keys to academic success (Eller, Lev, & Feurer, 2014).

A wide range of support and resources are fundamental to creating a healthy learning environment, from academic and administrative policies to a well-qualified, experienced and diverse faculty and staff, mentors, student health, counselors, financial support, among others (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Institute for Statistics, 2011). Financial constraint has been shown to be a major issue for graduate nursing students' academic

success (Hassouneh, Lutz, Beckett, Junkins, & Horton, 2014). Institutional and academic programmatic support and resources identified by participants as helpful were funding, other institutional support such as library resources, mental and physical health services, career guidance and development, editorial assistance, gender-identity and other affinity-related resources, and faculty mentorship. Internal (family and friends) and external (professional and community/civic organizations) social support systems were also influential to participants' academic progression and professional socialization.

In the literature, there is a documented high rate of attrition among PhD students across disciplines with URM students being at a greater risk compared to their White counterparts (Council of Graduate Schools, 2009; Powell & Green, 2007). Dissimilar to the literature, participants in this study did not relay narratives about URM students dropping out of the doctoral program even though many of them thought about quitting because of perceived racism and bias and had feelings of otherness, isolation and not belonging. Hortulanus, Machielse, and Meeuwesen (2006) found that isolation was a major factor for doctoral program attrition. Some of the factors that seemed to have kept attrition to a minimum in this study was support from family, friends, co-workers and peers, along with personal internal strength, perseverance and resilience to succeed. Duckworth et al. (2007) found a positive relationship between academic success and personal characteristics such as perseverance, resiliency and grit among URM students, and as was seen in this study, seemed to have attenuated perceived bias and discrimination within the PWU environment.

When examining the findings through the lens of intersectionality, noted were the multi-faceted challenges, personal and institutional, faced by URM students. Participants negotiated and managed theirs and others' perceptions of themselves. Consistent with the literature (Collins

& Blige, 2016; Jones & Shorter-Gooden, 2004), some participants adjusted their mannerisms, speech and other behaviors by code-switching in order to better assimilate and fit in to the PWU environment, which one participant referred to as “White love.” Participants did what was necessary to progress in the doctoral program whether or not it was consistent with their cultural values, customs and mores. In this study, the process of professional and academic socialization, including mentorship, was reflective of the dominant culture. Although the literature was limited, evidence is beginning to emerge about the intersection and impact of race/ethnicity on the academic socialization of URM doctoral students (Felder, Stevenson, & Gasman, 2014). Researchers, Felder, et al. emphasized the vital importance between the faculty-student relationship to the academic success and socialization of all doctoral students, in particular, African American doctoral students. Specifically, related to the psycho-social aspects of the impact of the racial experience of the African American doctoral students attending a PWU.

Participants were mixed about whether they felt prepared for the transition from student to scholar. They attributed academic success to personal factors, such as perseverance and resilience rather than to faculty, academic programmatic and institutional factors. Finishing the doctoral program was more than about personal accomplishment for participants, it was also about representing the integrity of a person from an URM group, demonstrating that persons from these backgrounds are also capable. The intersectionality perspective takes into account sociohistorical events that have contributed to marginalizing a particular group because they represent the ‘other,’ who typically is associated with negative assumptions and stereotypes, such as poor academic progress (Steele & Aaronson, 1995).

Participants’ inspiration was grounded in the opportunity to give back to the community and pay it forward, to be a role model, to inspire, to reshape academic curriculum and create

innovative, culturally-relevant pedagogy, to instruct from a position of cultural humility, to effect academic policy, and to influence and recommend similar colleagues for doctoral education. The desire for these opportunities was grounded in a few, but not a majority, of participants' perceptions that they were not encouraged, supported, guided or introduced to other researchers at networking events in order to facilitate their professional socialization.

Active engagement and demonstration of professional socialization was described as submitting an abstract, the ability to create and present a scientific poster of their research at a conference, to be invited to moderate a workshop or have opportunity to participate on a panel, at professional conferences. Many of the participants reported that their research-intensive education lacked in-depth preparation for the faculty role (e.g., pedagogy, advisement, curricula development, etc.), which overshadowed excitement about graduation and transitioning from student to scholar and educator. Engagement in structured professional affiliations has been found to be an important aspect of socialization for graduate students. Graduate students who were more actively involved in professional organizations, particularly on the advice of faculty, had higher perceived socialization (Gardner & Barnes, 2007; Helm, Campa, & Moretto, 2012). Even though some participants had teaching assistant opportunities, they felt that these experiences did not mirror the faculty role, such as classroom management, textbook selection, syllabus development, instruction, ethical issues, being a junior faculty, among other responsibilities.

The demographic profile of participants in this study reflected the profile of non-traditional students in the literature (Brus, 2006). A majority of participants were living off campus with families and providing elder care for one or both parents, and thus, they did not participate in or were not connected to campus social activities, which often occurred

inopportune times, such as Monday through Friday during the day. In addition, these factors hindered communications about financial support workshops, writing seminars, etc. In one study, sociodemographic factors hindered the socialization process and degree completion for doctoral students who were female in a predominantly male profession, an URM, older, a parent, or employed (Gardner, 2008). These students described feeling different and not fitting the mold. For instance, students with children cited not being able to participate fully in campus activities due to their schedules and challenging parental duties. Ageism was an unexpected finding and added to the intersectional challenges of gender and race/ethnicity. Although the literature was sparse, Manusov and colleagues (2011) also found that older URM students were concerned about potential age discrimination. Kagan & Melendez-Torres (2015) found that ageism exists within the nursing profession and academy, although it is not discussed or acknowledged in spite of federal protection.

Conclusions

There is a profound gap in the literature about URM doctoral student experiences and perceptions in PWUs, and what is available is dated, compared to the abundance of literature available in the same area that focuses on URM students matriculating in undergraduate programs. This study provides evidence that URM students pursuing a PhD degree in nursing at PWUs continue to face persistent academic challenges and multiple stressors due to personal factors, but more so due to institutional and academic programmatic issues related to lack of diversity. Doctoral education typically requires working closely with an advisor and an identity that is Eurocentric. Even URM students who are successful in terms of graduation may not cement a strong connection that is vital for securing par excellence references or entry into the academic networks in order to obtain a solid position academic position.

A demonstration of commitment to diversity and implementation of a variety of organizational support and resources are needed to mediate low recruitment, high retention and failure to progress. The institutional culture should be one that improves the system, not the individual. Study findings provide guidance about what factors, barriers and facilitators that may or may not be essential to design targeted, evidence-based diversity initiatives in nursing education at the PhD level.

Limitations of the Study

In order to maximize depth and richness, a major limitation of qualitative studies is limited generalization of study findings to other populations. Over half of the sample was African American, female and all of the participants attended public universities, which also affect generalization of the findings. A strength of the study was the setting; eight states are represented. As part of the constructivist grounded theory methodology, the research is part of the study situation and is valued as a contributor to the data collected (Bryant & Charmaz, 2013). However, given that over half of the sample and the researcher were African American, another potential limitation was social desirability and over co-construction between the researcher and participants. This was counteracted by the researcher writing frequently reflective memos to capture her ideas, questions and observations. Moreover, the grounded theory methodology allowed the researcher to examine URM students' experiences and perceptions in context of their social, cultural, historical and political experiences.

Implications for Nursing Education and

Recommendations for Further Research

Although nursing has strategically attempted to create sustainable diversity plans to address workforce supply and demand over the decades, there still exists a gap in diversity.

Several challenges continue to face the nursing academy, practice and leadership because of workforce shortages and lack of diversity. Recommendations to enhance graduate-level education and professional socialization for URM students include culturally-relevant mentorship; career and professional development seminars and workshops; diversity, cultural humility and emotional intelligence modules for students, staff and faculty; and other student as well as student-faculty structured experiences with access to relevant institutional resources. There should be a commitment to teach within a social justice perspective, which proactively encourages understanding opinions from varied perspectives across the diversity spectrum. Diversity goals should be linked to performance evaluation and if applicable with corrective action. Best-practice, evidence-based models need to be tested for efficacy and measured on traditional, standard educational outcomes as well as other outcomes specific to URM students. In order to such an intersectionality approach, mixed-methods studies are needed. In addition, the economic costs associated with URM PhD student attrition rates should be examined systematically, particularly as state and federal funding declines.

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APPENDIX 1

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN FRANCISCO INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL LETTER



University of California
San Francisco

Human Research Protection Program Institutional Review Board (IRB)

Exempt Certification

Principal Investigator

Catherine M Waters

Co-Principal Investigator

Linda D Gregory

Study Title: Understanding the Experiences and Perceptions of Underrepresented Minorities in PhD Nursing Programs at Predominantly White Universities: A Dissertation Proposal

IRB #: 16-19134

Reference #: 160842

Committee of Record: San Francisco General Hospital Panel

Type of Submission: Submission Correction for Initial Review Submission Packet

Certification Date: 03/20/2016

IRB Comments:

This research qualifies as exempt under the following category:(2) Research using educational tests, survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless: (i) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers; and (ii) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, insurability, or reputation.

Modifications: For exempt research only, researchers can make *minor* changes to the study without notifying UCSF IRB. However, significant changes must be submitted to the UCSF IRB. The UCSF IRB website includes [examples of minor vs. significant changes](#). All changes must follow [UCSF guidance](#), and some changes are not allowed in the [consent materials](#).

Study Closeout Report: This study does not have an expiration date. However, you are required to submit a [study closeout report](#) at the completion of the project.

For a list of all [currently approved documents](#), follow these steps: Go to My Studies and open the study – Click on Informed Consent to obtain a list of approved consent documents and Other Study Documents for a list of other approved documents.

San Francisco Veterans Affairs Medical Center (SFVAMC): If the SFVAMC is engaged in this research, you must secure approval of the VA Research & Development Committee in addition to UCSF IRB approval and follow all applicable VA and other federal requirements. The UCSF IRB [website](#) has more information.

APPENDIX 2

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study and to be interviewed. As we discussed during our initial contact, the purpose of this study is to gain a deeper and more holistic understanding of the experiences of URM students attending predominately White universities enrolled in PhD nursing programs.

Sometimes, recall or reflection on one's experiences can be uncomfortable. At any point during the interview, let me know if you don't want to respond to a question, take a break, or decide to terminate the interview. Your participation is voluntary and you may stop the interview any time without prejudice, penalty or loss of benefits to which you are entitled. Every effort will be made to keep information confidential.

The interview is meant to be conversational. I am not here to judge in any way or expect you to say or not say something in particular. I am interested in your experiences and perspectives while in your PhD program. To that end, I may ask you to provide examples to illustrate key points you've made. So, please feel free to include any information which may come to mind, even if it doesn't seem related to the specific question asked.

Do you have any comments or questions before we begin?

[Turn on audio-recorder]

- 1) Share with me a little bit about yourself.
- 2) Share with me how education is valued in your family.
- 3) Describe the factors that influenced your decision to enroll in a nursing PhD program?
 - a. How would you describe your journey?
 - b. Why this program versus another SON?
- 4) How would you compare your undergraduate experiences to that of the PhD?
 - a. How would you describe the faculty and student body demographics
 - b. What would you say about the campus climate
- 5) Describe your classroom experiences in your PhD courses?
- 6) In what type of activities on campus are you involved?
 - a. Why did you choose [or not choose] to be active [or not active] in campus activities?

- 7) How are other cultures represented in the curriculum or discussions in your courses?
- 8) Describe your positive interactions on campus.
- 9) How often if at all do you consider/evaluate your biases?
 - a. Describe activities that facilitate that process for you.
- 10) What steps do you take to meet and engage other students of different races/ethnicities?
- 11) Describe any challenges or concerns you have encountered.
 - a. How did you seek assistance to address your challenges or concerns?
 - b. Describe your support system and who is included in it.
- 12) What support, knowledge, guidelines would be helpful to you in order to promote/advance your academic success?
- 13) Have you ever felt like leaving your program?
 - a. If yes, describe that feeling/experience
 - b. If no, why not?
- 14) Describe for me what makes you persevere in the PhD program.
 - a. What personal attributes do you think a student must have to persevere?
 - b. What institutional attributes do you think are needed?
 - c. Describe some of the support systems available at your SON.
- 15) What advice would you give other URM students who are considering exiting the program before they graduate?
- 16) What strategies could be used to enhance URM students' experiences at PWUs?
- 17) What do you feel are the barriers to the academic success of URM students enrolled in PWUs?
- 18) What do you feel are the facilitators to the academic success of URM students enrolled in PWUs?
- 19) Thank you for your time! Do you have any questions for me or other comments?
 - a. If I have additional questions or would like to validate my understandings of your responses, may I contact you again?

APPENDIX 3

PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHIC FORM

- 1) Please circle your self-identified ethnicity/race.
 - a. Asian/Pacific Islander
 - b. Black/African American, non-Hispanic
 - c. Hispanic/Latino
 - d. Native American/Native Alaskan
 - e. Other. Please specify _____
- 2) Please circle whether you are enrolled in a PhD in Nursing degree program?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
- 3) Please circle whether your university is
 - a. Private
 - b. Public
- 4) Are you fully funded? Yes _____ No _____
- 5) Describe your funding _____
- 6) Are you employed?
 - a. Full time _____ Part-Time
- 7) How many years have you been in the PhD program? _____
- 8) What is the focus of your PhD research? _____

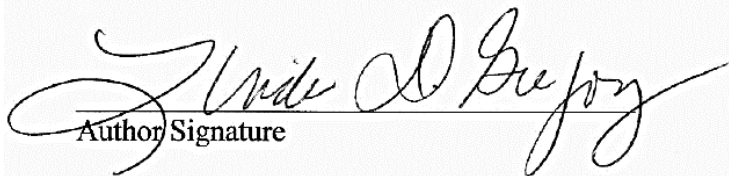
- 9) Please circle whether you are the first to attend college or graduate school in your family?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
- 10) What is your age? _____
- 11) What is your gender? _____
- 12) Please circle whether you are or have been placed on academic probation during your PhD program?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
- 13) What is your current GPA? _____
- 14) Please describe where you are in your academic program? (e.g., coursework, post qualifying exam, dissertation data collection, dissertation data analysis, etc.)

Publishing Agreement

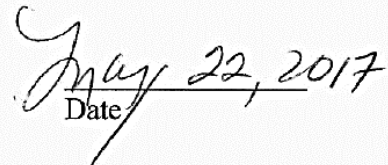
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Date