Oral Defense Announcement
University of Missouri – St. Louis Graduate School

An oral defense of the dissertation for the degree
Doctor of Philosophy in Education with an emphasis in Education Leadership and Policy Studies

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Mentoring: The Factors that Contribute to Persistence to Graduation for African American Males in Predominantly White Institutions in Missouri

Date: November 18, 2022
Time: 2:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Place: Remote

Abstract
Due to the intercession of the United States Supreme Court legislation, the 19th and the 20th centuries were the beginning of access to higher education for African American’s entrance into Predominantly White Institutions (PWI). However, they still face challenges in obtaining post-secondary education. For example, in 2019 – 2020, according to the National Center for Educational Statistics (2021), 13.1% of African Americans graduated with master’s degrees. Additionally, in 2020, 19% of African Americans attained a post-secondary degree in Missouri (Towncharts.com, 2021).

Despite access, the number of African Americans obtaining degrees remains low. And, when the lens is focused on African American males, the numbers are dismal (dhewd.mo.gov/datasatstatum). The purpose of this study was to investigate how mentoring enabled African American males to persist and obtain master’s degrees in PWIs in Missouri. Tinto’s (2012) conceptual framework was used. Tinto emphasizes the importance of higher education institutions being committed, intentional, and structured to establish forms of action that involve faculty, student affairs staff, and others to promote student retention and student persistence. Six African American males participated in the study. They ranged in age from 28 to 63 years old. Four of the participants were married. All but one had a degree in education. Five participants attended a public PWI. Using thematic analysis, three themes emerged: Academic Support Aspects, Relationships, and Mentoring Aspects. Categories identified were Personal, Academic, Professional, and Students. Recommendations for future research include a study of a team of cross-functional faculty, students, administrators, and support staff whose function is to oversee institutional planning and student success at PWIs and conducting a nation-wide study of African American males who obtained master’s degrees who received mentoring.

Defense of Dissertation Committee
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