African American students have persevered through unwelcome, hostile, and violent racial climates at their colleges and universities. Racial incidents continue to occur, sometimes with fatal outcomes. This was the case in 2017 for Bowie State University student Richard Collins III, who was stabbed by a University of Maryland student in what is widely considered a racially motivated murder.

The current political climate has left many individuals from marginalized backgrounds feeling unsafe and unwelcome in their collegiate environments. It is vital that we include the voices and experiences of African American students as we create more welcoming campus communities.

Many institutions of higher learning regularly conduct “campus climate” surveys to assess student perceptions and concerns. For my dissertation, I created a campus racial climate measure specifically for African American college students. The goal was to develop a culturally-relevant measure for this population, basing the questions on the experiences of African American college students.

“Institutional support is vital for African American students.

We must include the voices and experiences of African American students in our administrative planning."
**Methods**

I conducted a mixed-methods study to develop the scale, using group interviews to create the items and surveys to validate the measure. Data collection took place from January 2017 to June 2017. The final measure consisted of three subscales: Institutional Factors, Racial Attitudes & Experiences, and Student Interracial Interactions.

### Campus Racial Climate for African Americans Scale

#### Institutional Factors

1. The university has practices in place that support African American students.
2. The university has organizations that support African Americans (clubs, fraternities and sororities, etc.).
3. The university hosts events that promote and celebrate diversity.
4. The university hosts events that promote and celebrate African American culture.
5. There are courses available to me that focus on African American culture and history.
6. The university employs enough African American professors.
7. African Americans are represented in high-ranking positions (faculty, staff, administration).
8. African Americans are recognized for their accomplishments on campus.

#### Racial Experiences and Perceptions

1. People on campus have negative stereotypes toward African American students. (R)
2. People on campus have low expectations of African American students. (R)
3. African American students must go above and beyond to get the same benefits as students of other races/ethnicities. (R)
4. People on campus use racial slurs and commit racist acts against African American students (refusing service, saying the N-word, etc.). (R)
5. I only feel comfortable with other African American students. (R)
6. Students only feel comfortable in their own racial/ethnic groups. (R)

#### Student Interracial Interactions

1. Students from different races and ethnicities attend social events together.
2. Students from different races and ethnicities study together.
3. Students from different races and ethnicities do extracurricular activities together.
What Does This Mean For?

_Student Activists_— Can use this measure to provide evidence that backs their concerns and give them directions for future conversations with university leaders.

_College and University Administrators_— Can use this measure to assess their own racial climates and develop programs and interventions to improve the environment for African American students.


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