Recruitment of African Americans to Teach Agricultural Education: A Systematic Literature Review

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Teacher education recruitment in agriculture, food, and natural resources represents a critical leverage point for diversifying the school-based agricultural education profession. This study reports findings from a systematic literature review to explore the factors impacting the number of African American agricultural educators. Using the replicable procedures outlined by O'Brien and McGuckin (2016), peer-reviewed studies were identified, screened, and coded using predetermined inclusionary and exclusionary criteria to examine recruitment efforts of traditional teacher education programs. Findings were synthesized using Scott and Proffitt's (2021) three-bucket conceptual framework centered around recruitment, support, and retention. Recruitment efforts emphasize family and community engagement, early experiences in high school, and culturally relevant messaging. Support factors included academic, financial, and personal dimensions. To cultivate African American agricultural educators, it is imperative to address students' sense of isolation and marginalization when they do not see representation within the profession. While the review revealed various recruitment strategies, it accentuated the areas needing attention. Recommendations include providing vibrant supports and retention efforts to address socio-historical, socio-cultural, and culturally relevant issues. Future research should empirically measure the impact of the recruitment, support, and retention initiatives identified in the literature.

Introduction/Theoretical Framework

The reasons for pre-service teachers choosing to become educators can be as varied as the individuals found in teacher education programs around the world. When asking African American pre-service students, the responses may include:

- a desire to serve as agents of racial and social mobility (Bell, 2023);
- wanting to add value to their racial and cultural wealth (Bell, 2023; Moore, 2016; Scott & Alexander, 2019; Vincent et al., 2012);
- finding merit in serving as a role model and mentor (Bell, 2023; Cormier, 2020; Goings & Bianco, 2016; Jeter & Melendez, 2022; Johnson, 2020; Moore, 2016; Szecsi & Spillman, 2012);
- viewing themselves as agents to serve students of color by advocating for students and their families with similar backgrounds and challenges (Bell, 2023; Goings & Bianco, 2016; Moore, 2016);
- wanting to work with predominantly Black boys to affect cultural change within and beyond black communities (Cormier, 2020); and,
- having a passion for helping others and a personal interest in agriculture (Vincent et al., 2012).

There can be advantages to same-race/culture student-teacher matches. Bell (2023) reports higher student placement in gifted and talented programs, higher graduation rates, and an increased desire to go to college when students are taught by teachers with the same race/cultural background. Bell (2023) goes on to say the teachers are cultural ambassadors using "racialized and cultural similarities to create classrooms where students feel welcome, comfortable, and familial." Mee et al. (2024) reported how shared cultural experiences build relationships, even

reversing cultural stigma (Scott & Alexander, 2019; Szecsi & Spillman, 2012). Representation matters (Adichie, 2009).

According to the Carver-Thomas' 2018 Learning Policy Institute report, approximately 36% of African American men were teaching across the United States in the 1940s. The number dropped below 10% between 1987 and 2015 (Carver-Thomas, 2018). The education professions' diversification skewed toward white females, with a combined percentage of just under 20% for teachers, male and female, identifying as other than white (Carver-Thomas, 2018). When examining the teacher pipeline in 2024, Carver-Thomas et al. reported a slight increase to 27.6% of educators identifying as other than white.

The agricultural education profession has tracked the workforce as far back as 1965. However, it was not until 1992 that the data were disaggregated by gender and race. In total, only 6.81% (n=610) of teachers identified as other than white (Camp, 1994). Camp's 1994 study acknowledged both gender and race were underreported. Thirty years later, while the designations have shifted to align with current racial identities, the disaggregated data shows a decrease in African American representation and an increase in other underrepresented groups (Smith et al., 2025). Overall, according to the Status of the US Supply and Demand for School-Based Agricultural Education Teachers between 2020 and 2023, diversified racial representation made a marginal increase to 7.4% (n=992) as shown in Table 1 (Smith et al., 2025).

Table 1

Comparison in Reported Race of School-Based Agricultural Education Teachers from 1992 to 2022. (Adapted from Camp, 1994, and Smith et al, 2025)

Race	1992		2022	
Asian	-	-	28	0.2%
Asian/Pacific Islander	39	0.44%	-	-
African American	455	5.08%	211	1.6%
American Indian/Alaska Native	10	0.11%	164	1.2%
Multiple Races	-	-	268	2.0%
Hispanic	106	1.18%	282	2.1%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	-	-	7	0.1%
Other	-	-	32	0.2%
White	8,343	93.19%	11,884	89.6%

Attempting to illuminate the representation deficit further, this study's researchers reviewed school-based agricultural education student enrollment data for 2022-2023 from the Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education Perkins Collaborative Resource Network (2025) website. Table 2 illustrates how student demographics were not reflected by the teachers in their classrooms.

Table 2

Agriculture CTE secondary student enrollment 2022-2023. (Adapted from Office of Career and Adult Education Perkins Collaborative Resource Network, 2025)

Race	*n*	Percentage	Race	*n*	Percentage
Asian	21,049	1.51	Hispanic/Latino	312,410	22.41
African American	99,769	7.16	White	893,091	64.07
American Indian/Alaskan Native	18,637	1.34	Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	5,109	0.37
Multiple Races	43,862	3.15			

Representation in education and in the agricultural industry matters as much today as it did in the 20th century (Bell, 2023; Jeter & Melendez, 2022; Miller & Endo, 1995; Su, 1997; Plachowski, 2019; Snodgrass, 2021; Villegas & Irvine, 2010). As Marian Wright Edelman stated in the film Miss Representation, "If they can't see it, they can't be it," (Newsom, 2011). Goings and Bianco (2016) further stated, it is "paramount that our nation's students have the opportunity to see teachers who look like them." If students do not see themselves represented among the ranks of educators holding up the agriculture industry as a viable career opportunity, no one should be shocked that racially diverse secondary students do not seek higher education, nor employment, in the industry that reports a 27.6% shortage of qualified graduates (Wilson et al, 2025).

Multiple researchers during the previous decades examined the overall shortage of agricultural educators, as well as attempts to recruit the next generation (Calvin & Pense, 2013; Eck & Edwards, 2019; Guffey & Young, 2020; Hur et al., 2023; Marx et al., 2017). Additional studies have examined students' motivations behind choosing to become agricultural educators (Gorter & Swan, 2018; Ingram et al., 2018; Lawver & Torres, 2012; Park & Rudd, 2005; Thieman et al., 2016; Vincent et al, 2012). Beyond teaching, studies examined recruiting underrepresented populations to the larger field of agriculture at post-secondary institutions (Alston et al, 2019; Beyl et al., 2016; Bullock et al, 2021; Esters & Bowen, 2005; Fraze et al, 2011; Jones & Larke, 2001; Spilman-Decell et al., 2025; Wildman & Torres, 2001). While all the researchers in these studies agreed that more efforts need to be made, few proposed or empirically examined actual strategies to increase the number of underrepresented agricultural educators. The dearth in the literature spurred this research effort.

This study was framed by the systematic literature review method, chosen to objectively evaluate past efforts to recruit underrepresented populations to teach secondary school-based agricultural education. According to Petticrew and Roberts (2006), the systematic literature review is an attempt to digest large, overwhelming bodies of information. The method utilizes filtering techniques that shrink the pool of data down to just the items matching specific inclusion criteria and answering specific research questions. This allows for replication, increases validity, and helps minimize bias.

Purpose

As part of a larger research effort, the initial step was to examine currently deployed interventions aimed to increase the number of African American agricultural educators. Utilizing the Systematic Literature Review frame (Petticrew & Roberts, 2006) yielded so few results for agricultural education, it quickly became apparent to the researchers that the search criteria

would have to be expanded. As a result, the research objectives were broadened to examine the factors influencing the recruitment and retention of African American students into all teacher education programs. The following research questions were used as a guide:

- What factors influence the recruitment and retention of African American students into teacher education programs?
- What strategies and programs have been successful in increasing the number of African American teachers in education?

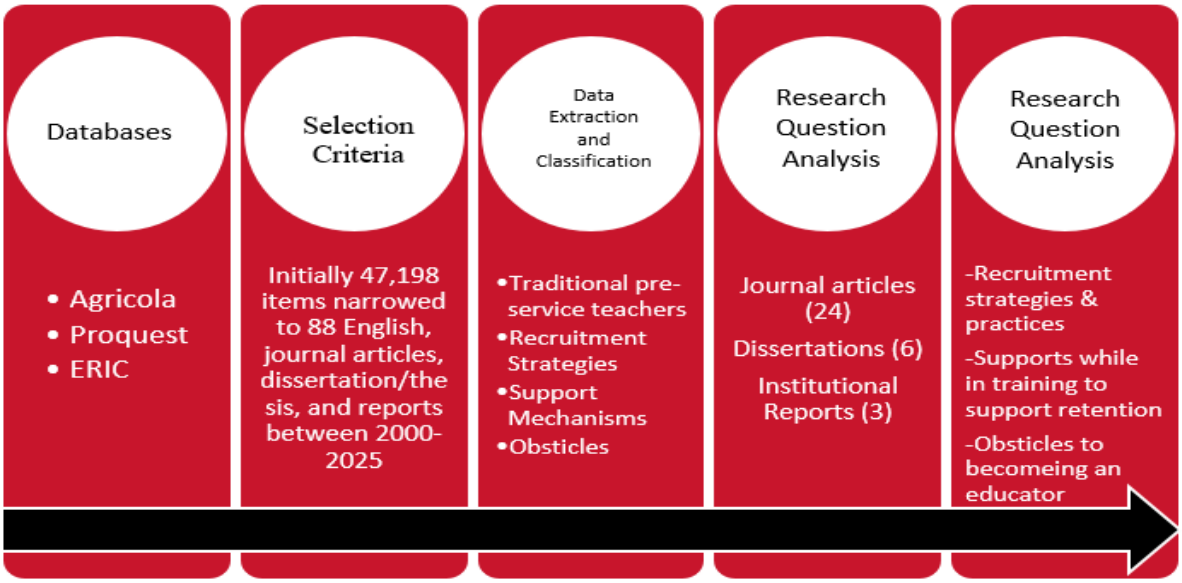
Methods/Procedures

Search Strategy

Borrowing from the greater body of literature surrounding recruiting diverse teachers across the education profession and following a search string outlined by O'Brien and McGuckin (2016), the key search terms consisted of African American or Black or minority or underrepresented; diverse or diversity; agricultural education; agriculture; education; pre-service; teacher training; and teacher recruitment. The researchers accessed three databases: AGRICOLA, ERIC, and ProQuest. The search generated 47,198 items. The parameters were narrowed to English, peer-reviewed journal articles, and reports published in the United States since 2000. The final parameters yielded 88 documents. The researchers further screened the titles and abstracts using exclusionary criteria, removing articles addressing graduate student programs, non-traditional routes to teacher licensure, faculty perception studies, and studies focused on practicing school-based educators. After a final review of the full texts using the inclusion criteria of preservice, recruitment strategies, and support mechanisms while in undergraduate pathways, 33 items were suitable for inclusion in the study.

Figure 1

Illustration of the systematic review process (Adapted from O'Brien & McGuckin, 2016)



Researchers synthesized data from 6 dissertations, 3 institutional reports, and 24 journal articles. The journal articles represented 17 publications as shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Journals Represented and Number of Articles per Journal

Inclusion	1	Multiple Voices	1
Issues in Teacher Education	1	NACTA Journal	1
Journal of African American Males in Education	3	Negro Educational Review	1
Journal of Agricultural Education	4	Remedial and Special Education	1
Journal of College Student Retention	1	Teacher Education Quarterly	2
Journal of Early Childhood Teacher Education	1	The English Forum	1
Journal of Special Education Preparation	1	The Journal of Negro Education	1
Journal on Transforming Professional Practice	1	The Urban Review	2
Multicultural Education	1		

Research Methods

The 33 items were categorized by type of article, research methods, and addressment of recruitment strategies and/or support mechanisms employed during the undergraduate degree program. Table 4 is a summary of those categorizations.

Table 4

Categorization of Included Articles

Author(s)	Year	Type of article	Research methods	Recruitment strategies	Support mechanisms
Bell	2023	Dissertation	qualitative	x	x
Bell & Busey	2021	Journal Article	qualitative	x	x
Bianco et al.	2011	journal Article	mixed		x
Branch	2001	Journal Article	qualitative	x	x
Bryan & Williams	2017	Journal Article	qualitative	x	x
Bullock et al.	2021	Journal Article	qualitative		x
Burnett	2016	Dissertation	qualitative	x	
Carver-Thomas	2018	Report	quantitative	x	x
Carver-Thomas et al.	2024	Report	qualitative	x	x
Clark et al.	2006	Journal Article	mixed	x	
Cormier	2020	Journal Article	qualitative		x
Franklin et al.	2020	Journal Article	qualitative		x
Godwin	2018	Journal Article	literature rev.	x	x
Goings & Bianco	2016	Journal Article	qualitative		x
Graham	2013	Journal Article	mixed	x	
Jeter & Melendez	2022	Journal Article	literature rev.	x	
Johnson	2020	Journal Article	qualitative		x
Madhani et al.	2022	Report	mixed	x	x

Mee et al.	2024	Journal Article	qualitative	x	
Moore	2016	Dissertation	qualitative	x	x
Mosley	2024	Dissertation	qualitative	x	x
Norris et al.	2024	Journal Article	qualitative		x
Oling-Ottoo	2005	Dissertation	qualitative	x	
Richardson et al.	2019	Journal Article	quantitative	x	x
Scott	2018	Journal Article	qualitative	x	x
Scott & Alexander	2019	Journal Article	qualitative	x	x
Scott & Proffitt	2021	Journal Article	qualitative	x	x
Snodgrass	2021	Dissertation	mixed	x	x
Spillman-Decell et al.	2025	Journal Article	qualitative	x	x
Szecsi & Spillman	2012	Journal Article	qualitative	x	x
Villegas & Davis	2007	Journal Article	qualitative	x	x
Vincent et al.	2012	Journal Article	qualitative	x	x
Westbrook & Alston	2007	Journal Article	quantitative	x	x

Results/Findings

From the 33 items, 22 exclusively employed qualitative methodologies, while eight studies were mixed methods. Three articles were literature reviews framed around the barriers to becoming educators. Three studies employed quantitative measures to illuminate barriers and strategies for recruitment.

Of the 22 qualitative designs, 11 employed personal interviews to elicit data. An additional five studies utilized case study methodology. One examined personal narratives. Four studies employed both interview and focus group interactions to gain richer data. It is important to note the majority of the articles broach the subject from a deficit perspective, primarily addressing the barriers to becoming an educator for any person identifying as other than white. Carver-Thomas, lead author of two national reports (2018, 2024), dedicates considerable ink to outlining the obstacles to be overcome before a person of diverse race becomes a licensed educator. A second item of note, none of the studies attempted to empirically gauge the impact of undergraduate recruitment or retention strategies once employed.

Scott and Proffitt (2021) suggested three buckets for recruitment, support, and retention of special education teacher candidates of color. Their proposed conceptual framework was used to organize the findings of this study.

Figure 2
Scott & Proffitt's (2021) buckets for recruitment and retention



Recruitment

Twenty-five items addressed specific strategies for recruiting students to education majors. Findings were grouped by family and community, high school, and teacher education efforts.

Family and community recruitment efforts. Multiple articles highlighted the influence of family members and other important adults in students' career choices (Bell, 2023; Clark et al., 2006; Godwin, 2018; Szecsi & Spillman, 2012; Vincent et al., 2012; Westbrook & Alston, 2007). As such, it is suggested that recruitment efforts, such as campus tours and home recruitment visits, must engage with students' families and their trusted adults (Branch, 2001; Goings & Bianco, 2016; Johnson, 2020; Madhani et al., 2022; Mee et al., 2024; Moore, 2016). Bullock et al. (2021) and Mosley (2024) both suggested that the family and community aspect of agricultural education can be a positive marketing point when encouraging students to consider the profession. Bell's (2023) and Cormier's (2020) study participants stated that recruitment efforts should highlight the education profession's ties to an individual's community-mindedness. Since multiple authors highlighted students' desire to be a role model and influencer within their communities (Bell, 2023; Cormier (2020); Goings & Bianco, 2016; Jeter & Melendez, 2022; Johnson, 2020; Moore, 2016; Szecsi & Spillman, 2012), connecting teaching with fulfilling that desire enhances consideration of the career. Researchers reported family members preaching the narrative that teaching is not a financially viable profession **(**Bianco et al., 2011; Scott & Alexander, 2019; Szecsi & Spillman, 2012; Vincent et al., 2012) and is a less respected career than higher-earning professional athletes, entertainers, and doctors (Bianco et al., 2011; Burnett, 2016; Goings & Bianco, 2016; Szecsi & Spillman, 2012). To combat this barrier, recruitment strategies should focus on promoting the financial and personal benefits of being an educator (Bianco et al., 2011; Scott & Alexander, 2019; Szecsi & Spillman, 2012; Vincent et al., 2012).

High school efforts. While not as prevalent across the literature items included in this study, there were discussions related to connecting with potential future teachers while in high school. Bell (2023), Bianco et al. (2011), and Westbrook and Alston (2007) found that the earlier students become aware of teaching as a viable career option, the more likely they were to consider it for themselves. Additionally, helping high school students understand the opportunities for vertical promotion within the profession, that an entire career doesn't have to be spent in the classroom, the more likely they are to consider teaching (Scott & Alexander, 2019; Szecsi & Spillman, 2012). Bullock et al. (2021), Clark et al. (2006), Godwin (2018), Moore (2016), and Westbrook and Alston (2007) all shared the impact of practicing educators telling high school students they should become a teacher. Their respondents highlighted the positive impact on their career choice when given the chance to try teaching a lesson to real students. To diversify the agricultural educator rank and file, Bullock et al. (2021) stated that agricultural education preservice recruiters should actively seek out non-white, motivated, and involved students who were engaged in high school agriculture.

Teacher Education Efforts. The majority of the identified recruitment strategies focused on efforts employed by teacher education professionals. Bell (2023), Bell and Busey (2021), Johnson (2020), Scott and Proffitt (2021) and Vincent et al. (2012) all recommended embracing students' racialized identity and cross-sectionality. Rather than avoiding talking about the diverse communities students align with, teacher educators need to recognize students lived experiences influence their assignment submissions and teaching efforts. Recognizing the strong connection with family and community, study participants recommended actively recruiting students through their service, church, and community programs where individuals work with children (Scott & Alexander, 2019; Snodgrass, 2021).

The various studies' respondents provided insight into ways teacher education programs can recruit students on their own campuses. Bell (2023) shared how some students "discovered" teaching as their path when deciding to leave another major. Bullock et al. (2021) suggested looking for students who enjoy agriculture at the university who may also like teaching. Branch (2001) and Villegas and Davis (2007) suggested collaboration with the university's minority-studies department to recruit students of color who may be undecided. Six articles suggested greater involvement at secondary-level recruitment events, offering dual enrollment opportunities in beginner education courses, and establishing a greater presence at community colleges with high numbers of underrepresented students (Norris et al., 2024; Spillman-Decell et al., 2025; Oling-Otto, 2005; Villegas & Davis, 2007; Vincent et al., 2012; Westbrook & Alston, 2007).

The retrieved literature suggested financial resources must be allocated toward focused and purposeful efforts to recruit underrepresented students (Franklin et al., 2019; Oling-Otto, 2005; Westbrook & Alston, 2007). It is expensive to create opportunities for faculty to develop relationships with potential students at secondary-level recruitment events (Mosley, 2024; Spillman-Decell et al., 2025; Vincent et al., 2012). Several studies recommended that funds be used to create race-specific marketing materials that address multiple barriers to becoming teachers: the perception that teaching is only for white women, the negative perception of agriculture, and complicated admissions processes (Franklin et al., 2019; Goings & Bianco, 2016). Additionally, funding should work to increase scholarship opportunities, diversify teacher

education program faculty, and promote diversity as an asset rather than liability (Franklin et al., 2019; Goings & Bianco, 2016). The identified recruitment activity with the largest price tag was the creation of a summer program designed to bring underrepresented populations to campus and expose them to the teaching profession (Franklin et al., 2019; Spillman-Decell et al., 2025; Westbrook & Alston, 2007).

Support

Twenty-five articles suggested mechanisms for supporting racially diverse students once they enter the teacher education program. Those supports were grouped by academic, financial, and personal.

Academic supports. A major obstacle for students with diverse identities is passing the Praxis exam required for licensure (Bell & Busey, 2021; Burnett, 2016; Bryan & Williams, 2017; Goings & Bianco, 2016; Moore, 2016; Oling-Otto, 2005; Snodgrass, 2021; Szecsi & Spillman, 2012; Westbrook & Alston, 2007). Graham (2013) recommends targeted support strategies to minimize the negative impact of the high-stakes test: ongoing tutoring, faculty mentorship, test-taking prep sessions, and access to practice testing materials. Adding depth to academic support, study respondents identified the need for their own and faculty engagement in professional development and affinity groups focused on inclusivity and cultural competency (Bullock et al., 2021; Scott & Proffitt, 2021; Szecsi & Spillman, 2012). Pre-service teachers seek the opportunity to discuss racism, classism, and even sexism in teacher education courses, but recognize their predominantly white instructors are ill-equipped (Burnett, 2016). Many also admitted to feeling low self-esteem and imposter syndrome in their teacher education courses because they are often the only person of color in their classes (Bell, 2023; Bullock et al., 2021; Graham, 2013; Jeter & Melendez, 2022; Mee et al, 2024; Moore, 2016).

Financial supports. With historically low performance on ACT exams, scholarships are often out of reach, making the financial burden of obtaining a post-secondary degree nearly unattainable without assuming extensive amounts of debt. When exam fees, required software purchases, and living expenses are factored in, the money barrier becomes insurmountable for many students. Multiple studies cried out for college faculty and staff to help students navigate the financial support landscape, showing students where to seek loan-forgiveness programs, where to apply for state scholarships designed to diversify the teacher workforce, where to seek professional organization scholarships, where to find stipends to cover the cost of the Praxis exam and other licensure fees, and where to find signing bonuses with schools (Bell & Busey, 2021; Bullock et al., 2021; Carver-Thomas, 2018; Carver-Thomas et al., 2024; Clark et al., 2006; Franklin et al., 2019; Jeter & Melendez, 2022; Madhani et al., 2022; Moore, 2016; Norris et al., 2024; Oling-Otto, 2005; Scott, 2018; Scott & Alexander, 2019; Snodgrass, 2021; Spillman-Decell et al., 2025; Szecsi & Spillman, 2012; Westbrook & Alston, 2007).

Personal supports. Several authors pointed toward the need for students to connect with other students and faculty with the same affinities, providing support networks. Burnett's 2016 study highlighted the "La familia" concept, where students rely on their connectedness for help with navigating college and university systems, including teacher preparation. It was also suggested that faculty create cohorts with and between cultural groups in an effort to foster

students who can utilize them throughout their undergraduate experiences (Bell & Busey, 2021; Scott, 2018).

A critical component of every preservice teacher's experience is their teaching internship/residency, making the influence of the mentor teacher instrumental in students' decision to enter the profession. Multiple articles addressed the necessity of ensuring the mentor-mentee relationship supports minoritized students. Bell and Busey (2021) suggested employing purposeful preparation programs for mentor teachers to work with diverse candidates (Bell & Busey, 2021). The program should work to find ways to bridge cultural and ethnic gaps (Bullock et al., 2021), matching mentors and pre-service teachers to mitigate psychological and emotional turmoil (Burnett, 2016). Educator preparation staff should seek partnerships with schools with diverse student bodies for targeted placements (Carver-Thomas et al., 2024) and seek out peers and faculty mentors of the same race/ethnicity as the pre-service teacher (Scott & Alexander, 2019). Burnett (2016) even suggested identifying retired African American administrators to help supervise teacher candidates of color during field experiences.

Retention

The final bucket from Scott and Proffitt's framework (2021) identifies efforts to retain students of color within the teacher education program, in the hopes they will secure their teaching license and then employment in an educational setting. By far, the most reported influence on retention was pre-service educators seeing teachers and educational mentors who look like them at all levels of education (Bell, 2023; Bell & Busey, 2021; Bianco et al., 2011; Bryan & Williams, 2017; Jeter & Melendez, 2022; Johnson, 2020; Mee et al., 2024; Moore, 2016; Mosley, 2024; Oling-Ottoo, 2005; Scott, 2018; Scott & Alexander, 2019; Snodgrass, 2021; Szecsi & Spillman, 2012). The second most reported need was addressing students' sense of isolation and marginalization. Within multiple studies, students shared their frustration with being recognized as 'the one' and the expectation they serve as representative for all; being fearful of speaking out when they experienced microaggressions or overt racism; and, having to suppress their personality and experiences to conform to the white culture of their teacher preparation classrooms (Bell, 2023; Bell & Bussey, 2021; Burnett, 2016; Jeter & Melendez, 2022; Moore, 2016; Oling-Otto, 2005; Scott, 2018; Snodgrass, 2021; Szecsi & Spillman, 2012). Bell (2023, page 124) clarified the situation saying "they have insider/outsider epistemologies…. [They are] constantly navigating inclusion/exclusion…[creating a] chameleon experience." Bell (2023) goes on to report students of color find it necessary to assimilate at predominantly white institutions to fit in throughout the teacher education process. Bullock et al. (2021) reports students also fear discrimination during the hiring process.

Multiple studies identified efforts to include multicultural materials, multicultural history, and culturally relevant pedagogy as a way to foster a sense of belonging and provide an alternative to the white-narrative laced throughout education (Bell, 2023; Bell & Busey, 2021; Branch, 2001; Bryan & Williams, 2017; Burnett, 2016; Goings & Bianco, 2016; Jeter & Melendez, 2022; Mosley, 2024; Oling-Ottoo, 2005; Scott & Alexander, 2019' Snodgrass, 2021; Szecsi & Spillman, 2012). Bell and Busey (2021) offer this as a way to address the "racial grammar" that promotes teaching as a white profession. They also suggest providing socio-historical and socio-cultural context prior to field experiences, rather than leaving students at

mercy of the mentor teacher's influence (Bell & Busey, 2021). Burnett (2016) states that field placements should meet the needs of diverse students and efforts should be made to find ways to support the student when the placement is not supportive of their cultural and ethnic background.

Conclusions/Recommendations/Implications

Viewing the gathered literature through Scott and Proffitt's three bucket lens (2021), it became obvious to the researchers that recruitment, support, and retention of African Americans in educational majors is complex. When examined as a whole, it reveals the challenge of self-examination and the lack of research within the agricultural education community around recruiting diverse populations to the profession.

When examining the assembled list of recruitment strategies, a number of identified efforts could be implemented immediately. Marketing materials can be created to address the perceived barriers of low respect and low salary for agricultural educators while outlining the family aspect of the professional community. The messaging should tout the personal benefits and financial stability of the profession, including extended contracts, retirement and health benefits, and address "the internal value driven by the fun/challenge associated with the profession" (Vincent et al., 2012). The narrative should stress how agricultural educators are role models and change agents within their communities and teaching is not "women's work" (Mee et al., 2024).

While not ignoring the historical gravity of the agriculture industry, messaging should be culturally sensitive and promote African American influences on production agriculture and agricultural education. Images of diverse teachers should be used so potential students see themselves represented. Teacher educators and college recruiters can then share the marketing materials when engaged with minority-studies faculty and students. Additionally, recruitment efforts should be made to personally connect with diverse student populations enrolled at community colleges, building relationships of trust and safety before they arrive for a campus tour (Branch, 2001; Goings & Bianco, 2016; Johnson, 2020; Madhani et al., 2022; Mee et al., 2024; Moore, 2016). When those tours are scheduled, teacher educators need to engage with the trusted adults who come with them, as much as the students during the critical face-to-face meetings. Bullock et al. (2021) challenges preservice recruiters to actively seek out non-white, motivated, and involved students who were engaged in high school agriculture courses. While it may be unfamiliar and uncomfortable for the predominately white profession, Moore (2016) points out that aggressive recruitment efforts are required.

Support and retention efforts will take more time, more resource allocation, and creation of a collation of the willing among white teacher educators and practicing agricultural educators. Financial resources will be required to support stipends to cover the cost of expensive testing fees and to help alleviate the financial burden of semester-long internships and year-long residency programs. Money and time will be required to implement professional development for faculty and classroom mentors focused on providing the tools required to implement socio-historical, socio-cultural, and culturally relevant practices.

Affinity groups exist on most college and university campuses; however, faculty and staff should evaluate the opportunity to gather underrepresented education majors, across all grade level and content preparation programs, to lessen the sense of isolation and marginalization (Bell, 2023; Bell & Bussey, 2021; Burnett, 2016; Jeter & Melendez, 2022; Moore, 2016; Oling-Otto, 2005; Scott, 2018; Snodgrass, 2021; Szecsi & Spillman, 2012). Based on the literature, it is recommended minoritized agricultural education majors connect with an education-focused, racial-affinity group to avoid feeling like "the one" (Burnett, 2016; Moore, 2016). The researchers were unable to find on-line evidence of a professional affinity group for African American agriculture teachers. Outside of creating such a group, early career association with groups such as the Black Teacher Project or the He Is Me Institute could prove beneficial for preservice agricultural educators.

The implication of "if they can't see it, they can't be it" (Goings & Bianco, 2016; Newsom, 2011) will take longer to impact. African American students must graduate and secure classroom employment to swell the ranks beyond the current 7.4% representation (Smith et al., 2025). If it is important for pre-service teachers to see and interact with mentors and supervisors who look like them, and there are not any in the teacher education program, nor among the ranks of the state's agriculture teachers, university faculty will have to be creative with facilitating the desired connections. Practicing African American teachers from other states can be accessed virtually. Invite them to be guest lecturers, to serve on virtual discussion panels, and record interviews. It is even worth exploring the potential for an out-of-state field experience. Securing financial resources to pay for travel could make it possible for pre-service students to visit diverse teachers as part of their agricultural education coursework. Burnett (2016) also recommended engaging retired African American administrators to serve as an additional supervisor during the preservice teachers' residency. This strategy could augment current supports provided by predominantly white teacher education programs.

Based on enrollment from the top 50 producers of minority education degrees, which includes both historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) and predominantly white institutions (PWIs), Richardson et al. (2019) presented the counter-narrative that Black men are interested in education and are showing up at HBCUs, PWIs, in-person and online. They specifically called out the opportunity for forming collaborations between HBCUs and PWIs to share educational programming to increase the diversity of practicing educators. More creative thinking and acting will be required of the universities and faculty to find ways to share joint appointments, utilize online engagement, and seek financial support to pay for the innovations.

Finally, the recommendation for future research hinges on empirically measuring the impact of the implemented strategies identified by the assembled literature. With the abundance of qualitative studies recording the lived experiences and recommending tactics to increase the number of individuals entering the teacher workforce, the time has arrived to implement the literature's recommended strategies and measure their influence on student outcomes.

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