

Investigation of Female Faculty Mentoring at HBCUs

Deborah A. Fortune, PhD, MCHES

Goldie Byrd, PhD

Sharon Cook, PhD

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Background

- Although women have made gains in the academy, they still lag behind men in promotion to full professor rank.
- (*Almanac of Higher Education*, 2009)

	Assistant	Associate	Full
Black Female	6,035	3,745	2,193
Black Male	4,607	4,110	3,646
White Female	57,211	46,292	39,463
White Male	60,407	68,982	108,404
Latino Female	3,064	1,946	1,254
Latino Male	3,265	2,768	2,874
Asian Female	7,253	3,512	2,221
Asian Male	10,037	7,570	10,018
American Indian Female	381	292	184
American Indian Male	298	312	344

Background

- Faculty mentoring programs are designed to help junior faculty develop long and productive careers in the academy.
- It has been shown that faculty who were mentored were more successful in the academy as demonstrated by professional leadership, recipients of grants, and publishing of books and articles than faculty without mentors (Queralt, 1982).
- Faculty who had mentors tended to report greater career and job satisfaction (Queralt, 1982).
- It is believed that mentoring of new faculty provides a smoother transition into professorial.

Background (cont'd)

- A study at the University of Wisconsin revealed that untenured female faculty was resigning, voluntarily, at a greater rate than that of their male counterparts (Thomas, 2005)
- To address this issue, a structured mentoring program was developed for women faculty.
- Limited information exists in the professional literature regarding female faculty mentoring at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs).

Purpose

- The purpose of today's presentation is to discuss the preliminary findings from a study designed to investigate the mentoring experience of female faculty at HBCUs in North Carolina.

Aims of the Study

- To determine the extent to which female faculty at HBCUs received mentoring as a new or junior faculty.
- To assess whether female faculty at HBCUs feel there is a need for mentoring.
- To assess the impact of mentoring on job satisfaction among female faculty at HBCUs.

Methodology

- IRB approval was granted for the study
- Sample:
 - 25 female faculty
- Four focus groups were conducted
- Selected focus group questions
 - How do you define mentoring?
 - Describe the roles of a mentor at an HBCU.
 - What have your mentoring experiences been like?
 - Do you see the need for mentoring for female faculty?
 - Describe the impact of mentoring on your job satisfaction.

Demographics

- Institutional participants
 - North Carolina A & T State University
 - Research, public, co-ed institution
 - North Carolina Central University
 - Comprehensive, public, co-ed institution
 - Bennett College for Women
 - Private, all women institution
 - St. Augustine's University
 - Private, religious-based, co-ed institution

Findings

Table 1. Perceived Definition of Mentoring

Sharing of experiences, stories, & pitfalls to avoid
Providing professional networking
Helping others navigate the system
Guiding a person with direction – “where you may be lacking”
Helping a person along through patience, teaching, and training
Talking with a person regarding personal issues and business ethics

Findings

Table 2. Mentoring Experiences

- 1. Most women had not received formal mentoring**
2. Few women received mentoring from people in other career fields and organizations
3. Few women received mentoring through national, professional organizations
4. Very few women had received mentoring at their academic institutions

Findings

Table 3. Desire/Need for Mentoring

Majority of the female faculty expressed the desire to be mentored.

- Some female faculty sought mentoring by attending conferences, seminars, etc. - with the hope of finding people of interest
- One female faculty asked the chairperson of her department (he replied “you are 40 years old and do not need a mentor”)

Findings

Table 5. Perceived Impact of Mentoring on Job Satisfaction

1. Assist with being promoted from one rank to the next rank
2. Add to job satisfaction
3. Add to success of the institution
3. Prevent job burnout (“keep your passion”)
4. Provide support
5. Assist in lessen worries about job
6. Create a better performance and more productive for the mentee (“If you do no have a mentor, you will not be able to survive”)

Findings

Table 4. General Comments about Mentoring

1. Most of the women thought their male counterparts are mentored more than them
2. Many of the women believed that faculty are territorial, thus, not willing to mentor new or junior faculty
3. Majority of the women expressed that mentoring should be on voluntary basis not assigned

Conclusions

1. Based upon the focus groups, it appears that there is a lack of formal mentoring programs at HBCUs. Mentoring is probably more informal in nature.
2. There is a strong need for formal mentoring programs at HBCUs. Perhaps, targeted mentoring should be provided to female junior faculty to assist them in the promotion and tenure process.
3. There seems to be a perceived association with receiving mentoring and job satisfaction.

Recommendations

- This study provided preliminary findings about female faculty mentoring experience at HBCUs in North Carolina.
- Thus, it is recommended the HBCUs in North Carolina examine their campuses to:
 - Y Determine the extent to which female faculty members are being mentored.
 - Y Determine the desire of female faculty to be assigned a mentor.
 - Y Assess the environment climate for mentoring of female faculty.
 - Y Assess the impact of mentoring on female faculty's success in the academy in terms of promotion, tenure, and senior level administrative positions.

References

- Chronicle of Higher Education (2009). *Almanac of Higher Education: 2009*.
- Thomas, R. (2005). *Exemplary Junior Faculty Mentoring Programs*. Retrieved from Cornell University website.
- Queralt, M. (1982). The role of the mentor in the career development of university faculty. Paper presented at an annual conference of the National Association of Deans, Administrators, and Counselor. April,, Indianapolis, Indiana. ED 216514. 35 PP. MF-01; pc-02.