Ethnic and Racial Administrative Diversity:
Understanding Work Life Realities and Experiences
in U. S. Higher Education

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Understanding Work Life Realities and Experiences in Higher Education

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Introduction

• From student, faculty, and staff representation to institutional mission statements, diversity has become an increasingly vital objective in U. S. higher education

• Most postsecondary institutions acknowledge the educational value of diversity in promoting a multiplicity of perspectives in classrooms and across campus

• More importantly, most institutions recognize the social value of diversity in preparing students to live in a pluristic and multicultural democracy
Introduction

- Although most higher and postsecondary institutions have paid increased attention to providing access for people of color, key stakeholders remain concerned about institutional commitment to diversity.

- This concern is largely based on the lack of structural diversity evident on most college and university campuses in the U. S.

- While most institutions have explored and implemented strategies to improve representation among faculty and students of color, less attention has been placed on increasing diversity in the administrative and decision-making ranks.
Rationale

• Consequently, people of color (POC) are a severely underrepresented demographic within the higher education administrative workforce.

• In 2009, POC represented a dismal 16.9% of full-time administrators in higher education, compared with 82.7% for Whites.

• Key empirical studies have also called for action to improve work conditions (silent discrimination), particularly at predominantly White institutions in the U. S.

• Premier U. S. higher education news venues, such as The Chronicles of Higher Education and Diverse: Issues in Higher Education, have also called to question challenges affecting administrators of color.
Accordingly, the underlying purpose of this book project was to provide policymakers, faculty, researchers, and governing board members with information about diversifying the administrative ranks of colleges and university in terms of race and ethnicity.

Major Questions:
- How diverse are the administrative ranks at college and universities?
- What barriers may prevent people of color from entering college and university administration?
- What copies strategies are the most useful for aspiring administrators of color?
- What institutional approaches may yield the most promise in helping college and universities increase ethnic and racial administrative diversity?
Guiding Framework

• **Representative Bureaucracy**
  – Posits that institutions and organizations function better and more efficiently if the characteristics of decision makers accurately reflect those of their constituents.

  – If the ethnic composition of administrators reflect the general public, it is presumed that decisions made by these administrators would be responsive to the desires of the public (Meir & Nigro, 1976).

  – Two forms of Representative Bureaucracy: **Passive Representation** and **Active Representation**:
    • **Passive Representation** - similarities in demographic characteristics between administrators and constituency groups.
    • **Active Representation** - situation wherein administrators work to further the needs of a particular group that may or may not share their same demographic characteristics.
Guiding Framework

• Retention
  – Focused on the omission of administrators of color in the dialog on groups to retain at the institution
  – Explores how the insertion of administrators of color in retention planning might take form

• Three-Tiered Approach to Institutional Diversity
  – Administrators: represent the smallest POC group at PWIs, but involved in policy development and implementation
  – Faculty: attract diverse students and administrators
  – Students: represent the largest POC group at PWIs, and foundation of any measure of racial/ethnic diversity
Method

- **Data Analysis**
  - Integrative Research Review
  - Data Sources
    - 136 studies with administrators of color in higher education as the unit of analysis
    - 38 studies focused on administrators of color in other settings (business, school leadership, and health administration)
    - 48 articles focused on traditional and general leadership topics
  - Original Data Analysis of 2 National Datasets on the Higher Education Workplace
    - NASPA Salary Survey
    - NSOPF
  - Summarized and critiqued the literature on administrators of color in higher and postsecondary education
Status of Diversity

- Racial/Ethnic Diversity and Gender Trends in the Academic Workforce of the United States (U.S.) and United Kingdom (U.K.)
  - **Administrators of color** were **underrepresented** in both the U.S. and U.K.’s academic workforce: (10% and 12.6%, respectively)
  - **Men** were **overrepresented** in academic leadership roles compared to women in the U.S. (63.1% vs. 36.1%) and U.K. (55.5% vs. 44.5%).
  - Women (53.8%) outnumber their male counterpart among the general or support staff population in the U.S. and U.K.
Status of Diversity

• Aging of Academic Leaders in the U.S. and U.K.
  – Average age of academic leaders in the U.S. is 51.7, compared to 43.2 in the U.K.
  – Largest age proportion of people of color (U. S.) in academic leadership positions: 45-55 age range.
    • Generally those that enter academic leadership early, research production suffers, are not full professors yet, take longer become full professor, and usually never get their research momentum back

• Average Income of Full-Time Academic Leaders in the U.S. and U.K.
  – Average income for academic leaders in the U.S. is $67,680.20, compared to the U.K. ($64,216.50)*. [United States dollar conversion rate from Euro]
  – Whites and Asian/Pacific Islanders make as much as $20,000 more than other groups in the U.S.
    • All other racial/ethnic groups had salaries below the average for each administrative area
Status of Diversity

- Racial and Ethnic Disparity in Faculty Academic Ranks in the U.S.
  - The highest proportion of full professors were White (39\%) or Asian/Pacific Islander (31.6\%)
  - Blacks/African Americans (26.8\%) and Asians (26.2\%) occupied the highest proportion of associate professorships
  - Black/African Americans (16.0\%) occupied the highest portion of assistant professorships
  - The highest proportion for Hispanics was “Other ranks/Not applicable (34.2\%)”

**TABLE 5**
Percentage Distribution of Full-Time Academic Leaders by Academic Rank and Race or Ethnicity: Fall 1998

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Full Professor</th>
<th>Associate Professor</th>
<th>Assistant Professor</th>
<th>Instructor or Lecturer</th>
<th>Other Ranks/Not Applicable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Races/Ethnicities</td>
<td>36.8</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>22.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/African American, Non-Hispanic</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>26.8</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>23.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>21.1</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>22.3</td>
<td>34.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Pacific Islander</td>
<td>31.6</td>
<td>26.2</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>31.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian/Alaska Native</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White, Non-Hispanic</td>
<td>39.0</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>21.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Sample too small.
Note: Percentages may not add to 100 because of rounding.
Status of Diversity

• Academic Leaders in the U.S. widely represented across Program Areas
  – All groups varied in their top two categories:
    • Blacks/African Americans (Education and “all other fields”)
    • Hispanics (Education and Humanities)
    • Asians/Pacific Islanders (Engineering and “all other fields”)
    • Whites (Humanities and “all other fields”)
  – Disciplinary background usually impacts the type and scope of administrative opportunities within the U. S. context

• Academic Administrators of color widely represented across Carnegie Classification in U. S.
  – Asians/Pacific Islanders represented the highest demographic at research institutions (52.2%), whereas doctoral institutions had the lowest percentage (8.5%)
  – Blacks/African Americans were better represented at research (30.2%) and liberal arts institutions (30.9%)
  – Hispanics and Whites were predominantly found at research institutions (38.8% and 40.1%) and comprehensive institutions respectively (39.1% and 28.1%)
Status of Diversity

- Gender imbalance in Student Affairs Administration in the U. S.
  - An examination of gender for student affairs administrators of color revealed a reverse gender gap, wherein females outnumbered males for all groups except Whites.
  
  - African American/Black women outnumbered their male counterparts (52.8%) in academic leadership roles in the U. S.
Status of Diversity

• Employment trends in Student Affairs Administration in the U.S.
  – In examining institutional type, Blacks/African Americans (11.7%) and Asians/Pacific Islanders (8.6%) had the highest representation at two-year institutions
  – American Indians/Alaska Natives (56.5%) and Asians/Pacific Islanders (42.9%) were among the highest demographic at four-year institutions
  – Whites (39%) and Hispanics (36.5%) have the highest representation at private institutions while American Indians/Alaska Natives (78.3%) and “others” (76.5%) have the highest representation at public institutions
Status of Diversity

- Location matters for people of color (POC) in administrative positions in U.S. higher education.
  - POC generally work at institutions that have similar groups in the surrounding general population.
    - Blacks/African Americans and Hispanics (32%, respectively): Region III
    - Asians/Pacific Islanders (52%): Region VI
    - American Indians/Alaska Natives (30.4%): Region V
Legal and Conceptual Frameworks

• **Affirmative Action**
  – Closely associated with racial equity
  – Refers to programs and policies that address the effects of prior discriminatory acts through programs and policies designed to promote diversity and equal opportunity for underrepresented groups

• **Disparate Impact Theory**
  – Describes the adverse impact nominally employment practices have on protected classes of citizens
  – If an adverse impact is demonstrated, continuing the employment practice without justification may constitute unlawful discrimination
Legal and Conceptual Frameworks

- **Underutilization Analysis**
  - A method for assessing inequality
  - The basic tenet is a comparison of the representation of individuals from marginalized groups in a particular setting to the representation of the same group in society at large

- **Representative Bureaucracy Theory**
  - Suggests that organizations perform better when leaders and decision makers reflect the characteristics of their constituents

- **The Glass Ceiling**
  - Describes a set of invisible and barriers that prevent underrepresented groups, particularly women and POC, from ascending to positions of power and leadership
Barriers for Administrators of Color

- A myriad of evidence from empirical studies offer insight on the pervasive and complex barriers facing administrators of color.

- For example, double jeopardy, women of color face a distinct set of barriers that are linked both to race and gender.

- These barriers can be divided into three sections: social, organizational and institutional, and internal.
Barriers for Administrators of Color

• **Social Barriers**: include general social attitudes (stereotypes) and prejudices toward POC
  – Implications range from daily doses of racism and invisibility to exclusion from informal networks

• In contrast to the social forces that create barriers for people of color (both in and out of the workplace), specific organizational and institutional barriers can be directly linked to the professional experiences for administrators of color
Barriers for Administrators of Color

- **Institutional and Organizational Barriers**: refers to policies and practices influenced by greater social pressures
  - Implications include segregated networks of professionals and a lack of mentors for POC

- **Internal Barriers**: includes a fear of failure, low self-esteem, role conflict, fear of success, the perceived consequences of career advancement, and lack of an advanced degree
  - Disproportionately affects women who perceive and/or experience challenges to finding work-family life balance
Retention and Advancement Strategies

• The Role of Leadership Programs
  – A growing number of studies demonstrate that most POC who have successfully risen to leadership positions have participated in leadership development programs at some point during their careers

• Mentoring Matters
  – A significant body of research suggests that mentors are the single important factor in the career development of administrators in higher education

• Institutional Support Matters
  – Initiating support groups, mentoring programs, and networking opportunities are important professional development activities for administrators of color in higher education
  – Another is to identify minority doctoral students or existing faculty of color who show potential and provide them with leadership opportunities and experiences
Retention and Advancement Strategies

• Institutional Support Matters
  – The successful recruitment of administrative leaders of color has been linked to institutions that adhere to the principles of **affirmative action** and provide a healthy multicultural environment
  
  – Establish a **code of ethics and standards** in the **employment** process to ensure fairness and equity
  
  – Offer **salaries** to administrators of color that are both **attractive** and **reflective of the actual job duties**
  
  – Ensuring **flexibility in positions of leadership** and **power** is another key retention strategy for institutions interesting in retaining **female administrators of color**
Retention and Advancement Strategies

• ERA Model
  – The engagement, retention, and advancement model for African Americans in the higher education administrative workforce is captured in four phases:
    • Pre-engagement
    • Engagement
    • Advancement
    • Outcomes

Source: Jackson, 2004a.
Conclusion

- Findings from this book project shed light on the underrepresentation of POC in higher education administration, as well as provide vital insight on barriers to their success in upper and senior-levels of leadership.

- Accordingly, this book project confirms the necessity of engagement, retention, and advancement efforts to improve structural diversity in higher education administration.

- Future research is needed to assess the efficacy of university-initiated programs, policies, and initiatives, as well as leadership and mentoring programs for administrators of color.
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ASHE Higher Education Report
Available online. See inside for details.

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