Engagement, Retention, and Advancement for Administrators of Color in Higher and Postsecondary Education:

A Summary Report

Funded by:
The Institute on Race and Ethnicity
University of Wisconsin System
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Foreword

Many colleges and universities in the United States are dealing with the various challenges associated with achieving administrative diversity at their respective institutions. Surmounting these challenges is imperative since student demographics at American colleges and universities are rapidly growing more diverse. As such, colleges and universities are in need of an equally diverse administrative staff in order to build and maintain an institutional culture and climate at these institutions that is supportive of one aspect of the American dream - a college education. This report is designed to help policymakers, administrators, faculty, and researchers address the engagement, retention, and advancement (ERA) for administrators of color by providing empirical data on the current status for people of color in college and university administration. In this report, we present the results of three studies using national-level data and two special themed issues of academic journals that contribute to an overall effort to provide colleges and universities with data to engage, retain, and advance administrators of color in higher and postsecondary education.

In the coming years, we will report findings of additional research conducted that will serve to refine the emerging model for engaging, retaining, and advancing administrators of color in higher and postsecondary education. We are not only concerned with methods of retention, but are interested in reasons why administrators of color depart their respective institutions. Next year, in order to strengthen the overall usefulness of the ERA model, we will turn our attention to identifying and understanding what factors contribute to administrators of color leaving their institution.

This research was conducted by the Principal Investigator and has been supported by the Institute on Race and Ethnicity located within the University of Wisconsin System. As we continue in this research pursuit, we hope to provide opportunities for meaningful dialogue and discussion on the topic of achieving administrative diversity.

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For more information on the model, please see:

This is to be published as:
Introduction

Although many individual colleges and universities are focusing their efforts toward retention for people of color, key stakeholders remain concerned about institutional commitment to diversity (Cabrera, Nora, Terenzini, Pascarella, & Hagedorn, 1999; Holmes, Ebbers, Robinson, & Mugenda, 2000; Jackson & Rosas, 1999). Indeed, these institutions have focused on retention for people of color, especially with respect to students and faculty (Jackson, 2001). Some institutions concerned about increasing the overall diversity of their campuses have taken a three-pronged approach: students, faculty, and administrators. For example, the Board of Regents for the University of Wisconsin System has committed resources to increase the number of faculty, staff, and administrators of color in addition to students (University of Wisconsin System Plan 2008, 1998). The reporters who monitor higher and postsecondary education have tagged access, retention, and advancement for administrators of color in predominantly White institutions (PWIs) as an area of concern and a hot topic for debate (Bennefield, 1999). Further, research-based responses to these questions of access, retention, and advancement have redirected attention toward considering the retention for administrators of color as a benchmark for institutional commitment to diversity (Davis, 1994; Jackson, 2001).

Higher and postsecondary education literature abounds with recommendations for retaining students and faculty of color; however, little empirical or practice-based knowledge is provided for engaging, retaining, and advancing administrators of color (Jackson & Flowers, 2003). A major challenge for colleges and universities, as it relates to engaging, retaining, and advancing administrators of color, is using past research studies to build a conceptual framework, while at the same time producing useful knowledge for policy implementation. This research problem is significant because in 1999 people of color represented 14.6% of the full-time administrators in higher education, while their White counterparts constituted 85.4% (Harvey, 2002). Toward this end, this project refined such a framework by using data from the National Study of Postsecondary Faculty (NSOPF: 99) and the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) 1999 Salary Survey to develop actionable strategies. The results from these analyses were used to refine the emerging engagement, retention, and advancement model (see page 3). This project represented the initial step toward empirically grounding a model for engaging, retaining, and advancing administrators of color at PWIs in the United States.

References

An Emerging Engagement, Retention, and Advancement Model for Administrators of Color in Higher and Postsecondary Education

Pre-Engagement | Engagement | Advancement | Outcomes
---|---|---|---
Recruitment | Empower Administrator | Professional Release Time | Retention
Orientation Program | Leadership Opportunities | Professional Development Funds | Career Advancement
Incentives Packages | Mentoring | Beyond Diversity Experience |

Commitment to the Principles of Diversity and Affirmative Action

Establish Relationships with the Surrounding People of Color Community

This research project consisted of three empirical studies and two special themed issues of academic research journals (i.e., *NASAP Journal* and *Journal of Negro Education*) to achieve the intended outcomes for the funded project - The Determinants of Intent to Stay for Administrators of Color at Predominantly White Institutions: Toward Refining An Emerging Engagement, Retention, and Advancement Model. Student affairs and academic affairs administration were examined independently.

The three articles included:

1. Engaging, Retaining, and Advancing African Americans in Student Affairs Administration: An Analysis of Employment Status
2. Engaging, Retaining, and Advancing African Americans to Executive-Level Positions: A Descriptive and Trend Analysis of Academic Administrators in Higher and Postsecondary Education
3. (Re) Examining the Conventional Wisdom about Administrative Diversity in Higher Education: An Analysis of Academic Administrative Position Attainment.

The two themed issues were:

1. Diversifying Student Affairs: Engaging, Retaining, and Advancing African Americans in the Field
Empirical Research Studies

Engaging, Retaining, and Advancing African Americans in Student Affairs Administration: An Analysis of Employment Status

As higher and postsecondary education has expanded to become a large enterprise, there has been increased scrutiny of the effect of policies on full access and equal treatment for people of color, more specific to this investigation - African Americans. Decision makers at colleges and universities have developed policies and programs to increase diversity, while making substantial progress with African American students; access into student affairs administration is still limited. Decisions to include African Americans in student affairs administration, particularly in senior-level positions, appear to have far-reaching effects on the experiences of African American students at institutions of higher and postsecondary education. This article calls for a stronger research agenda explicitly focusing on the engagement, retention, and advancement of African Americans in the student affairs profession.

Engaging, Retaining, and Advancing African Americans to Executive Level Positions: A Descriptive and Trend Analysis of Academic Administrators in Higher and Postsecondary Education

The higher and postsecondary education research literature is replete with discussions of affirmative action and diversity initiatives for African Americans at colleges and universities, yet little statistical analyses exist with regard to the gains made by African Americans in executive level administrative positions. Can affirmative action rhetoric of the past 10 years be linked to the engagement, retention, and advancement of African Americans to executive level administrative positions in higher and postsecondary education? Have these efforts served to increase the representation of this group? This study examined two data collection cycles of the National Study of Postsecondary Faculty (1993 and 1999) to perform descriptive and trend analysis of African Americans holding academic administrative positions that traditionally lead to the college presidency. Analyses demonstrate that while African Americans’ representation has decreased overall, some small gains have been made in specific executive level positions and institutional types.

(Re) Examining the Conventional Wisdom about Administrative Diversity in Higher Education: An Analysis of Academic Administrative Position Attainment

Building on earlier work on the engagement, retention, and advancement for administrators of color in higher and education, the author re-examines the “conventional wisdom” that women and people of color are less likely than others to be hired in administrative positions. And if hired, they assume lower-level positions. More specifically, the conventional wisdom with regard to academic administrators using the National Study of Postsecondary Faculty (NSOPF: 99) was examined. Drawing from scholarship on position attainment and administrative diversity, the author uses logistic regression models to explore differences in position attainment by race and gender. Therefore, it was concluded that while the conventional wisdom continues to find compelling empirical support, there has been an increase of both women and people of color in upper-level administrative positions, although the increase for people of color has been smaller.
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### Engaging, Retaining, and Advancing African Americans in Student Affairs Administration: An Analysis of Employment Status

*Jerlando F. L. Jackson, University of Wisconsin-Madison*

### Funding Provided by Historically Black Colleges and Universities for Student Affairs: A Comparison with Counterpart Historically White Colleges and Universities

*John H. Schuh, Iowa State University*

### Investigating the Representation of African American Student Affairs Administrators: A Preliminary Study

*Lamont A. Flowers, University of Florida*

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*Sharon L. Holmes, University of Alabama*

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*Robert D. Reason, Pennsylvania State University*

### The Impact of Title IX on the Group Representation in Athletic Administration: A Trend Analysis of NCAA Institutions

*Joy L. Gaston, Florida State University*

### African American Student Affairs Professionals in Community College Settings: A Commentary for Future Research

*Eboni M. Zamani, Eastern Michigan University*

### Two Administrators, Same Campus, A Single Incident: Conversing About Race and Responsibility - A Commentary for Practice

*Tara C. Scales and M. Christopher Brown II, Pennsylvania State University*

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### Articles for Focused Section

#### Engaging, Retaining, and Advancing African Americans to Executive Level Positions: A Trend Analysis of Academic Administrators in Higher and Postsecondary Education

*Jerlando F. L. Jackson, University of Wisconsin-Madison*

#### An Overview of African American College Presidents: A Game of Two Steps Forward, One Step Backward, and Standing Still

*Sharon L. Holmes, University of Alabama*

#### The Dilemma of Decision-Making in Historically Black Colleges and Universities

*James T. Minor, University of Southern California*
American colleges and universities have been transformed in the past generation from a racially and gendered homogeneous population to a fairly diverse one, although not yet in proportion to the general population (Cohen, 1998). The relationship between student experiences and contact hours with professionals on campus (faculty and administrators) have been a fundamental concept developed in the literature on college student development (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). The experiences for students of color in relation to faculty have been more fully addressed in the literature; therefore, further inquiry into the connection with administrators is needed to provide a holistic experience for these students (Davis, 1994).

An Analysis of Employment Status for African American Student Affairs Administrators

The discussion for the following section was derived from an analysis of the 1999 National Association for Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) Salary Survey. The research division for NASPA surveyed 419 student affairs administrators in 1998, which was deemed representative of their member institutions (Reason, Walker, & Robinson, 2002).

Key Findings

1. African Americans constitute approximately 8.4% of student affairs administrators at American colleges and universities.
2. African American females outnumbered males in student affairs administrative positions, 55.5% and 44.5% respectively.
3. The majority of African Americans in student affairs administrative positions were employed at four-year institutions (88.3%), with the remaining 11.7% at two-year institutions.
4. Public institutions employed 71.4% of African Americans in student affairs administrative positions, while 28.6% were at private institutions.
5. The largest percentage of African Americans in student affairs positions was employed at institutions that enrolled between 10,000 and 19,999 students.
6. The regions that employed the largest percentage of African American student affairs administrators were the southeast and southwest regions of the United States.
7. Director of registration employed the lowest percentage of African Americans.

*references on page 8
Trends in Academic Administration for African Americans in Executive-Level Positions

Rather than focusing on lower to mid-level positions (Ball, 1995; Bower, 1996; Mosley, 1980), this study focused on the representation of African Americans in executive-level administrative positions that traditionally lead to the college presidency (Harvey, 1999; Slater, 1995; Jackson, in press). What follows are the results of the trend analysis derived from the National Study of Postsecondary Faculty (NSOPF). In general, the representation of African Americans in executive-level positions has decreased over these years. While there were overall decreases for African Americans, in some positions the representation has increased. These fluctuations varied substantially by institutional type.

Key Findings
1. The percentage of African Americans holding academic administrative positions decreased approximately 6% between 1993 and 1999.
2. African Americans made advancements in their representation at the department chair’s and provost’s positions.
3. African Americans’ representation decreased in the academic dean’s and vice president’s positions.
4. African Americans held a larger percentage of executive-level positions at two-year colleges than at four-year institutions.
5. The period from 1993 to 1999 revealed a decrease in representation of African Americans in executive level positions at public institutions, and increased at private institutions.
6. The three Carnegie types that employed the largest percentage of African Americans in executive level positions were Liberal Arts II (19.8%), Comprehensive I (7.0%), and Research I (4.3%) institutions.

Key Strategies
1. Individual institutions should place special attention on searches at the dean and vice presidents level to ensure the applicant pool is diverse.
2. Four-year institutions should examine their affirmative action and diversity policies to determine if they contribute to the institution’s intended outcomes.
3. Notwithstanding the limitations of operating under federal constraints, public institutions should continue to seek creative methods to increase diversity within executive-level positions that goes beyond the simple rhetoric of affirmative action.
4. Individual institutions should benchmark diversity initiatives and plans from institutions that have been successful increasing the number of African Americans in executive-level positions, namely Doctoral II and Liberal Arts II institutions.

References
In this study, analyses show that individual and institutional-level characteristics have robust effects on faculty going into administrative positions, although to varying degrees. Data for this study were drawn from the National Study of Postsecondary Faculty (NSOPF: 99).

**Key Findings**
1. Female faculty were less likely than men to take on administrative duties.
2. While women were less likely to be academic administrators, they were more likely to hold upper-level administrative positions.
3. Asian faculty were more likely than Whites to assume administrative positions, while African Americans were less likely to fill academic administrative positions.
4. Of all racial and ethnic groups, Asian faculty were most likely to become academic administrators and assume upper-level administrative positions.

**Key Strategies**
1. Higher education institutions should develop programs and opportunities to help women and people of color build critical forms of human capital (e.g., type of education, professional experiences, and mobility).
2. Search committee members should be sensitized to value different forms of human capital.
3. Women and people of color should be aware that building human capital is important, but doing so in the appropriate environment is more important.
4. Care should be given to the selection of who serves on the search committee and more specifically to who serves as chair.

**References**


Conclusion

The goal of this report was to unpack the complex question of “Under what conditions are administrators of color most likely to remain at their respective predominantly White institution?” Out of necessity we have narrowed our focus to refine the emerging engagement, retention, and advancement model and have not addressed other important factors that contribute to why administrators of color leave their institution. Additionally, on several occasions we have focused on just one racial and ethnic group (i.e., African Americans). The three empirical studies and two special themed issues of academic research journals (i.e., NASAP Journal and Journal of Negro Education) intersect and interact. They are presented as individual works; however, they build on and complement each other.

This report was not intended to answer all the questions or provide all the solutions to the engagement, retention, and advancement for administrators of color. Rather these publications are intended to propose an emerging framework for addressing past and present hiring practices for administrators of color at American colleges and universities. We propose this summary as a roadmap to the kinds of barriers and roadblocks that can be encountered, yet alleviated by strategies that appear to have been successful in improving the engagement, retention, and advancement for administrators of color.

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About the Institute

Background

In the mid-1970s the University of Wisconsin System Board of Regents authorized the creation of the UW Center for the Study of Minorities and the Disadvantaged and the UW System American Ethnic Studies Coordinating Committee. The UW System Institute on Race and Ethnicity, established in 1987 and housed at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, is an amalgamation of these two entities. As a systemwide structure, the Institute is unique in the American academy in that it serves the twenty-six campuses - thirteen four-year and thirteen two-year institutions - that comprise the University of Wisconsin System. The Institute reports to UW System Administration through the Office of Multicultural Affairs.

Purpose

The primary purpose of the Institute is to conduct and encourage a variety of activities designed to enhance conceptual, theoretical, and empirical inquiry into the phenomena of race and ethnicity. Accordingly, it acts to:

- Foster scholarly inquiry and research pertaining to the phenomena of race and ethnicity;
- Organize and sponsor scholarly conferences, colloquia and exchanges which probe the complexity of race and ethnicity both nationally and globally;
- Promote comparative studies on race and ethnicity with a view toward testing existing theories and expanding basic knowledge;
- Encourage curricular development and innovation in the area of race and ethnicity, as well as new pedagogical approaches to teaching in the field;
- Stimulate student and faculty interest and awareness of the theoretical and empirical value of research on race and ethnicity;
- Develop a network of students and scholars who will share expertise on race and ethnicity across the UW System;
- Promote collaborative and interdisciplinary efforts between UW System campuses and departments to enhance research and teaching in racial/ethnic studies; and
- Conduct policy studies which scrutinize the public policymaking process as it pertains to racial and ethnic issues, and disseminate the results to relevant individuals and agencies.
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