

Panel Discussion/Paper Presentation

**African American Faculty Women on Predominately
White Campuses: How Race and Gender Shape and
Influence Academic Opportunities for Success**

TOPIC AREA: Higher Education (race and gender)
KEYWORDS: African American, faculty, women,
mentoring, and tenure

Hawaii International Conference on Education
Honolulu, Hawaii

January 6-12, 2003

(Please schedule our session for Jan 7, 8 or 9th. Thank you!)

Lead Presenter:

Sheila T. Gregory, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
Clark Atlanta University
Dept. of Educational Leadership
School of Education
223 James P. Brawley Dr., SW
201 Clement Hall
Atlanta, GA. 30314
drsgregory@aol.com
Phone: 404-880-6642
Fax: 404-880-8564

Co-Presenter:

Linda C. Tillman, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
Wayne State University
Dept. of Educational Leadership
and Policy Studies
393 Education Building
Detroit, MI 48202
ltillman@wayne.edu
Phone: 313-577-5139
Fax: 313-577-1693

African American Faculty Women on Predominately White Campuses: How Race and Gender Shape and Influence Academic Opportunities for Success

By Drs. Sheila T. Gregory and Linda C. Tillman

INTRODUCTION

Black women have participated in American higher education for over a century. Despite formidable professional and personal barriers, they have made significant advances. Many have reaped the benefits of their contributions. This article discusses the history and status of Black¹ faculty women, describing strategies they have used to overcome internal and external challenges. It addresses critical issues such as managing career and family, establishing support systems, and negotiating tenure and promotion. It also offers suggestions for restructuring their career development to help them develop strategic professional and personal skills that can ensure their survival and achievement in the academy.

The history of Black women in the United States can best be described as a struggle for survival and identity coupled with the need and desire to protect and support the family. Black women today have emerged from what Hudson-Weems (1989) terms a tripartite or threefold shroud of oppression consisting of racism, classism, and sexism. Notwithstanding these barriers, which typically have been coupled with limited resources and low socioeconomic status, Black women as a whole have shown great resilience, and many have achieved great strides.

The African proverb, "She who learns must also teach," echoes the importance that historically has been attached to the efforts of Black women faculty to share their knowledge with others regardless of any opposition or challenges they may have faced. Although Black women faculty outnumber other women of color in institutions of higher education in the United States, accounted for only 6.43% of all full-time faculty among the ranks of assistant, associate, and full professors in 1996, barely up from 6.23% in 1986 (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2000). Roughly half these women are employed in the nation's Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), and most of the remainder teach in community colleges. Only 1% of Black faculty women teach full-time in four-year majority institutions across the country (American Council on Education [ACE], 1993). The decade from 1981 to 1991 saw this group losing ground in their efforts to gain tenure on college and university campuses, dropping from 58% to 56% of those achieving this goal (ACE, 1993). Traditionally, over half of all Black women doctorate recipients choose academic employment, but the numbers are declining. Today, fewer Black women doctoral recipients nationwide are choosing academic employment, and many of those who do enter the academy eventually leave to pursue careers in business, industry, and the professions (Gregory, 1999). Teevan, Pepper, and Pellizzari (1992) have argued that many faculty women leave academe because of family responsibilities; they further contend that those who remain often produce less publications. In an earlier study by Gregory (1999) and a study by White (1999), confirm that Black women too often reject positions in higher education because of family and community responsibilities.

Despite these reservations and reversals, Black women have a rich tradition of employment in U.S. education at all levels. Many have sought careers in the teaching profession because of a desire to make a difference in the lives of others. Compelling evidence suggests that Black faculty women can have a profound impact on the lives and perceptions of students. Numerous studies by Black scholars such as Blackwell (1983), Brown (1988), and Gardiner, Enomoto, and Grogan

(2000) have cited lack of mentoring as one major reason why colleges and universities have had difficulty recruiting and retaining Black students. Their work has shown that many Black students perceive the absence of Black faculty members as paralleling their current low status and future outlook on campus. Blackwell (1983) found that the number of Black faculty members at a college or university is the most important predictor of enrollment and retention rates for first-year Black students and of the total number of Black student graduates. DeFour and Hirsch (1990) have argued that the mere presence of Black faculty members on a campus provides evidence to minority students that they too can complete their education and become competent and successful professionals. Other research has pointed to the need for Black scholars to write about their experiences and to substantiate evidence that helps challenge the numerous stereotypes that negatively depict Black women and other minority members of the professorate.

The purpose of this paper is to examine the plight of Black faculty women in PWIs, including their history and status in the professoriate, factors influencing professional achievement and development, barriers to promotion and tenure, establishing mentoring and other support systems, and rethinking tenure and promotion focusing on the effects of race, gender and identity of over 400 African American faculty women. The authors will discuss the experiences of African American faculty women focusing on multiple role-sets and other factors to determine influences on professional achievement and development, barriers to advancement, chosen career paths, and mentoring. Both authors will discuss how race, gender, and identity shape and influence the professional and personal experiences of African American faculty women.

HISTORY AND STATUS OF BLACK WOMEN IN THE PROFESSORATE

Between 1980 and 1993, the number of Black women who earned doctoral degrees increased 33.5% while their numbers in the faculty population nearly mirrored the gain, increasing 33.3% (Aquirre, 2000). In 1992, among all African American faculty members, women totaled nearly 54%, a figure far surpassing that of other racial and ethnic groups. Among White, Hispanic, and Asian/Pacific Islander American faculty members, women comprised 39%, 35%, and 31%, respectively (NCES, 2000). During the 1995-96 academic year, minority professors represented 10% of the U.S. professorate (Schneider, 1997). Of this 10%, Black women accounted for 19% of collegiate faculty members at the rank of full professor, 27% at the associate professor rank, 33% at the assistant professor rank, and 37% of those who were classified as instructors, lecturers, and other instructional staff. Contreras (1998) has argued that this selective clustering of minority faculty members at the lower echelons of teaching fosters a type of "academic apartheid" by segmenting their participation in the academic culture (p. 147). While a handful of Black faculty women have successfully obtained tenure, most are still found in the traditional fields of education, arts and humanities, social work and the professions.

Although more Black women have gained greater access to faculty positions in U.S. institutions of higher learning over the past 20 years, their status has not been elevated substantially. Black women are still most likely to be concentrated among the lowest ranks of the professorate, primarily in non-tenured positions within the traditional disciplines of education, the social sciences, and the professions. They are generally promoted at a slower rate, receive the lowest salaries, and teach only part-time. On the administrative side, Wilson (1995) reported that of 453 female presidents at U.S. colleges and universities, only 72 (16%) were women of color; of those, 5.5% were African American women (Touchton, 1995). However, nearly half the Black female top executives presided over historically Black colleges and universities, and most were in charge of small schools with enrollments of under 3,000 students (Touchton, 1991).

As Valian (1998) has made clear, collegiate faculty men and women may start off at approximately the same salary, but they do not progress at the same rate. According to West (1995), upon obtaining faculty positions, women typically are paid lower salaries than men of the same rank. For example, West noted that in 1982, female full professors were earning 89.5% of the salaries earned by male full professors. By 1995, this group of faculty women was earning only 88.5% of their male counterparts' salaries. In the same study, West found that the percentage of women in full-time, tenured teaching positions remained unchanged, representing 46% in both 1975 and 1992. Overall, Bellas (1997) has maintained that the salary gap between women and men in higher education has not narrowed. Furthermore, women and minority faculty are consistently paid less than White males at every faculty rank (Toutkoushian, 1998).

FACTORS INFLUENCING PROFESSIONAL ACHIEVEMENT & DEVELOPMENT

Black faculty women historically have juggled family, work, and community responsibilities—disproportionately assuming what Merton (1957) defined as "role-sets," or those "complement[s] of role-relationships in which persons are involved by virtue of occupying a particular social status" (p. 110). As Moses (1989) attested, however, doing so often came at a high price. Beyond their nonprofessional roles, which may have included those of wife and mother, Black women professors typically held an array of academic roles. Not only were they teachers but often also trusted colleagues, sought-after advisors, involved committee members, and forceful community advocates. Merton (1957) pointed out that conflicts and strain may arise from managing multiple role-sets and integrating the expectations of others. He argued that African American professional women present special cases because they customarily hold two ascribed statuses: gender and ethnicity.

The literature offers conflicting evidence on how role strain affects academic women. For example, Amatea and Fong (1991) found that the number of roles a woman plays is negatively related to the degree of role strain she experiences. Indeed, Cooke and Rousseau's (1984) study revealed that women who served in multiple roles reported better physical and psychological health than did those women who reported less role participation. That study further showed that women who reported higher levels of personal control and social support, in tandem with greater numbers of roles, reported lower levels of role strain. Similarly, Cole and Zuckerman (1984) found a positive relationship between marriage, motherhood, and research productivity for men and women scientists. Cole and Zuckerman contended that married women in the sciences published more than their single counterparts, and that those women scientists who were mothers published more than women scientists who were childless. Furthermore, they argued that the publication rates for women scientists did not decline following childbirth, nor did the rates decline during the years in which those women were raising their children. Cole and Zuckerman concluded that although marriage and children may place considerable responsibility on women scholars, substantial numbers of married women with children and academic careers produced more research, while successfully managing both career and family obligations. The determinants of success for the women in their study appeared to be the number and compatibility of obligations. Additionally, they found that 100% of the women scientist scholars who were married mothers reported that they relied on some sort of household assistance to maintain family and work.

Hensel's (1990) research supported the work of Cole and Zuckerman (1984), concluding that although marriage and motherhood presented numerous concerns with regard to the research and career paths of academic women, the two factors did not affect the rates of publication for these women. Successful academic women appeared to engage in what Cole and Zuckerman termed "status-set management" strategies to maintain research (p. 168). Cole and Zuckerman concluded that a more significant positive relationship existed between the rate of publication and research

practices and environments, while a smaller correlation could be found between marriage and motherhood.

By contrast, other research suggests that family obligations such as caring for a child may explain the greater length of time it takes for women faculty to be promoted (Long, McGinnis, & Allison, 1993). Cole and Cole (1973) and Bayer and Astin (1975) found a negative correlation between having young children and academic rank for women. However, in a 1981 study Ahern and Scott contended that the presence of children, combined with fluctuations in the job participation rates of academic women, did not account for gender differences in rank. In support of that contention, Seeborg (1990) maintained that in the case of academic scholars, children tended to reduce research productivity. Glowinkowski and Cooper (1987) concluded that the pressures, challenges, and consequences of marriage and motherhood were greater for women in the academy than for their male counterparts because women were still considered primarily responsible for the family. Hensel (1991) found that few successful faculty women were married with children, yet most successful faculty men maintained both marriage and family.

More recent studies have reported that tenure probationary periods often begin as faculty women enter the prime of their childbearing years. This would suggest that women may be promoted less often due to the constraints of tenure, or as Finkel, Olswang, and She (1994) maintained, "Although some women have been able to balance careers and families, many women have had to leave academia or settle for positions on the periphery" (p. 260). Finkel et al. concluded that institutions of higher education should consider offering deferrals for tenure to all faculty members who become parents. Such deferrals, they asserted, would give faculty members reasonable time to achieve tenure: "Women should not be denied the opportunity to progress in academia because they have decided to have a family while pursuing their careers" (p. 268). Furthermore, Hensel (1990) has suggested that some women who are not as successful in managing both family and career may feel pressured to leave the academy indefinitely after the birth of a child.

Research findings regarding the ability of women faculty to simultaneously manage the demands of marriage, motherhood, and career appear to be conflicting, particularly for those women academics who both teach and conduct research. For example, Felmler (1980) argues that individual constraints, such as marital status, can affect a woman's job mobility. Furthermore, being married Felmler contends limits the rate of job changes for women because having a husband decreases a woman's flexibility. Married women, she argues, must often coordinate work choices with their husbands, making geographical moves required by job transfers or advancement opportunities very difficult. Reoccurring discrimination against married women may also negatively impact them. Studies have suggested that employers sometimes hesitate before hiring a married woman because they expect the commitment to her family to take priority over her career.

In contrast, Amatea and Fong (1991) found that the number of roles a woman played was negatively related with role strain. In fact, women who served in multiple roles reported better physical and psychological health than those women who reported fewer role participation (Cooke & Rousseau, 1984; Crosby, 1982; Thoits, 1983; Verbrugge, 1983). Furthermore, women who reported higher levels of personal control and social support in tandem with greater numbers of roles, reported lower levels of role strain. Academic women who were successful were often:

... able to make arrangements that had been workable for themselves and their families, and they had achieved a high level of professional success. Yet the success had been based on their own individual abilities to cope,

adapt, and arrange their lives, and on at least some measure of cooperation from those around them, including husbands, department heads, advisors, and children. (Simeone, 1987, p. 133)

Studies on professional women, academic women, and Black professional women suggest that marriage can often limit career mobility. Also, the combination of marriage and career may produce conflicting role strains which, if left unmediated by personal control or social support, can influence the decisions of Black faculty women to leave their academic positions for alternative employment.

BARRIERS TO PROMOTION AND TENURE

To become tenured at most doctorate-granting, four-year colleges and universities in the United States, particularly at research institutions, faculty members are required to consistently conduct quality research and publish in scholarly journals-usually majority, refereed journals. Many minority faculty members whose work has been published in journals that focus on minority issues have reported that their majority peers sometimes fail to recognize the quality of their research, and focus instead on where they published (Gregory, 1999; Tillman, 2001, 2002). Other studies indicate that research by minority faculty members on minority populations-a common focus of many minority academics' research-is rarely considered relevant within their fields or deemed significant contributions to the academy, and therefore is not widely recognized as scholarly work (Epps, 1989; Wilson, 1987; Tillman, 2001). For Black faculty women, this can create a complex challenge because many tend to focus their research in the very areas where they teach and provide community service (Gregory, 1999).

Black women traditionally have gravitated toward and remained in the field of education because of the discipline's potential for challenging current paradigms and providing leadership for young, developing scholars. However, according to McCombs (1989), the challenge for black women in the academy is "to enter and remain within the university and perform all responsibilities without losing integrity" (p. 141). As McCombs further noted, "The central problems of isolation, alienation, promotion, and tenure play an important role in determining who will remain" (p. 141).

Women and minority faculty members often regard the academy as a place that principally fosters the needs and interests of their White male counterparts (Gregory, 1999; Hughes, 1998; Ware, 2000). The outcome of their exclusion from the mainstream of academic activity has negative results by contextually entrapping women and minorities into roles in which they are perceived, and sometimes perceive themselves, as tokens, curiosities, or anomalies in the academic workplace (Delgado, 1991; Yoder, 1985). According to Moore (1982), faculty women are especially perceived as curiosities because their role in higher education was long limited primarily to subservient roles such as teaching home economics and physical education. Faculty members of color, on the other hand, are also viewed differentially and often expected to be model academic citizens who are the exception to other minorities (Delgado, 1991). Regarding the participation of Black women "and the struggle that ensued between academia and themselves," McCombs (1989) contended that it is one of "necessity, not choice.... Black women who decided to enter the university did so with the understanding that it would be a new experience, but it would also be a challenge to their traditions" (p. 137).

One possible barrier to tenure for many Black faculty women is the extraordinary time demands placed on them due to their relatively small numbers (Gregory, 1999; Hughes, 1998; Ware,

2000). For example, Merton (1957) posited that the demands of a particular role often stand in complete contradiction to the demands of other roles. One such example is the requirements of tenure. For an academic department to function and serve, someone has to be responsible for teaching undergraduates, advising students, serving on committees, mentoring students, and a host of other duties that are not rewarded by tenure and rarely recognized in promotion decision making. In many instances, that someone is usually a caring and creative person of color or woman faculty member who is committed to quality teaching and sincere service to the campus and community. Unfortunately, the more successful and dedicated such faculty members are involved in these activities, the less likely that they will have substantial publishing records (Hughes, 1998; Ware, 2000), and the more difficult it will be for them to make a case for tenure (Gregory, 1999).

Chamberlain (1991) argued that faculty women often choose to participate in time consuming activities such as mentoring or family matters, which serve to reduce their output of scholarly products and consequently hinder their career progress. Despite the personal setbacks, mentoring is important activity for Black faculty members because it directly influences the number of Black and other minority students attending and graduating from U.S. colleges and universities (Blackwell, 1983; Tillman, 2001, 2002). Indeed, the mentoring of minority students was one of the primary reasons cited by colleges and universities for diversifying their faculty (ACE, 1998; Swoboda, 1990).

A prominent external barrier to academic success for Black women in the academy is the lack of support groups. White faculty men have traditionally benefited from such groups, but they have been all but absent for most women and minorities (Merriam, 1983). Phelps (1995) reported that Black faculty women believed it important to have access to others who could validate their experiences, welcome their input and critique their work. As Harvey and Scott-Jones (1985) have argued:

In the absence of a support group, black faculty members are [often] subjected to the aggravating aspects of the academic milieu without enjoying some of its compensating benefits: contemplation, independence, and social and intellectual stimulation from colleagues sharing the same interests and outlook. (p. 70)

Dodgson (1986) has contended that mentoring has often been a vehicle for upward mobility in the careers of women. Mentors also have been found to nurture a sense of belonging for minorities in the profession (DeFour, 1990). Although much debate has ensued about the impact of mentoring on career success for both faculty and students, many studies confirm that mentoring programs can provide greater access to resources for research, advice, and collegial networks, which can often lead to greater academic productivity (Clark & Corcoran, 1986).

Another external barrier are discriminatory practices against women and minority scholars. Theodore (1971) defined discrimination against women professionals as those instances "when women of equivalent qualifications, experience, and performance do not share equally in the decision making process or receive equal rewards, such as salary, promotions, prestige, professional recognition, and honors" as do their male counterparts (p. 27). In the academic workplace, Black faculty members often encounter prejudice and discrimination that can create major obstacles to their academic success (Frierson, 1990).

Thompson and Dey (1998) have concluded that the greatest sources of stress for Black faculty members were time constraints (lack of personal time, time pressures, and teaching load), promotion concerns (anxieties about the review and promotion process; research and publishing

demands), and subtle discrimination and prejudice in the forms of racism and sexism. As they noted, however, "One of the greatest contributors of stress in two areas where greater stress is experienced-time constraints and overall stress-is being an African American woman" (p. 340). They found that among Black faculty members in general, women tend to experience higher levels of stress than do their male counterparts.

Given that a disproportionately greater number of Black faculty women are single, often with children, their marginality is heightened because affirmations of a two-parent home and family are not readily available to them (Dugger, 1996). Additionally, these women are most likely to be primarily responsible for household chores and therefore experience greater stress related to time constraints at work. Dugger further maintained that Black faculty women, like Black women generally, also experience "constant cultural assaults on their identity" stemming from historical stereotypes (p. 36). They also are most likely to be single and of lower academic rank. Whereas being single serves as a positive predictor of stress and low academic rank serves a negative predictor, having adolescent children was found to contribute positively to Black faculty women's greater levels of stress (Thompson & Dey, 1998).

Establishing Mentoring and Other Support Systems

Numerous studies have indicated that positive interpersonal relationships and support systems are important factors for a successful career. Findings show that many successful Black women rely on household support (Cole & Zuckerman, 1984), are involved in professional networks and associations (Merriam, 1983), have extended support networks (McAdoo, 1980), and attend church on a regular basis (Taylor, 1978). In an academic setting, supportive networks and hospitable academic environments are particularly important for Black faculty women, who often seek meaningful inclusion in various types of professional, social, and religious networks. These networks provide a source of support, strength, and encouragement that enables them to persevere in often stressful and competitive academic environments. Notwithstanding, the lack of a critical mass of Black and women faculty peers in academia and the reports of cultural, social, and intellectual isolation among Black faculty women suggest that Black women in the professorate may be particularly susceptible to conflicts within their multiple role sets.

Support systems in the lives of Black faculty women have been found to be important because of these women's needs for guidance, strength, and encouragement to help them negotiate academic settings that are often unfriendly and isolating. Such support systems have become even more significant for Black faculty women who are attempting to juggle the demands of marriage, family, and career simultaneously. Such women most often rely upon the support of their spouses, parents, friends, relatives, minority and non-minority mentors, children, and Black professional associations. Married Black faculty women most often reported a spouse and children as the greatest sources of support, whereas their single peers reported parents and friends as being the most supportive (Gregory, 1999).

There is a scarcity of literature which addresses mentoring for African American faculty. Research on mentoring African Americans is usually grouped in the category of "women and minorities" (Johnsrud, 1993; McCormick, 1997). One frequently mentioned explanation for this approach is that researchers often view the problems that women face with regard to mentoring as similar to, and in some cases, even more extreme than for African Americans (Johnsrud, 1993). But while both women and other minorities may have similar problems finding mentors and establishing successful mentoring relationships, the extreme underrepresentation of African Americans in the academy makes mentoring even more problematic for this group. Once institutions have recruited African American faculty, they are responsible for maximizing their

chances of success (Cartledge, Gardner & Tillman, 1995). The lack of success for some African American faculty can, to some extent, be attributed to professional and social isolation and lack of scholarly productivity. The opportunities to be selected as protégés may be limited for African Americans since they are likely to be in departments and colleges where there are few, if any other faculty who share the same research, personal, and cultural backgrounds. Because scholarly productivity is often tied to mentor relationships with senior faculty, it is important that majority faculty be encouraged to mentor and interact with minority faculty, and to recognize and value different cultural backgrounds as well as scholarship which may be viewed as non-traditional. Mentors who are willing to spend formal and informal time with African American faculty and who are willing to help them become familiar with all of the components of the professoriate can be a factor in the success of African American faculty.

An increasing number of universities have implemented mentoring programs specifically designed to address the career and personal needs of those groups which are traditionally under represented in the faculty ranks. Boice (1992) found that minority faculty who were engaged in formal mentoring programs benefitted from the opportunity to analyze their accomplishments and to clarify the university's expectations for new faculty. But Welch (1997) has cautioned that while universities are implementing formal mentoring models and programs to assist under represented faculty such as African Americans, cross-race/cross-gender mentoring relationships for African Americans are rarely successful. Welch added that given this reality, planners should investigate what factors should be considered in developing comprehensive mentoring models that will be effective with under represented groups--models which prepare faculty members to operate within the university setting while recognizing the individuality of faculty members' cultural backgrounds.

Formal or assigned mentoring arrangements offer an alternative approach to informal faculty-to-faculty mentoring. The initiation of the relationship is an important distinction between formal and informal mentoring (Chao, G. T., Walz, P.D., & Gardner, 1992). In formal mentoring programs, senior faculty mentors and protégés--usually untenured junior faculty--are purposely paired and participate in activities which are managed, structured and formally recognized by the institution.

The process of socializing new faculty members to their roles and to the norms of the academy often occurs for males, and given the demographics of faculty representation in higher education, particularly White males. The traditional nature of the mentoring process suggests that faculty members either consciously or unconsciously mentor those persons who are like themselves (Hill, Bahnuik, and Dobos, 1989). Mentors will most likely choose protégés who share the same ethnic, religious, academic and/or social backgrounds. This process of choosing protégés may not be particularly applicable to African Americans since they are likely to be in departments and colleges where there are few, if any other faculty members who share their ethnic, religious, academic and/or social backgrounds.

Mentors provide both career and psychosocial functions to protégés in traditional faculty-to-faculty mentoring relationships (Holland, 1998; Jacobi, 1991; Noe, 1988). Ideally, the greater number of career and psychosocial functions that are provided by the mentor, the more beneficial the relationship will be to the protégé. Noe (1988) describes a number of related mentor functions. Career functions prepare the protégé for career advancement and include protection (protection from assignment to time demanding committees so that the junior faculty member's time is devoted to activities that are explicitly tied to developing strategies for achieving competence in research, teaching and service); coaching (providing direction not only on how to ask research questions but what are the most important questions to ask, inspiring self-confidence

and encouragement, providing frank but confidential feedback, and sharing ideas); and sponsorship (nominating the protégé for desirable projects, positions, and promotion, assuring that needed resources and career enhancing opportunities are available, and assigning projects that increase the protégé's exposure and visibility to influential colleagues with similar research interests). Psychosocial functions enhance the protégé's sense of competence, identity, and work-role effectiveness and include role modeling (serving as an appropriate role model regarding attitudes, values, and behaviors); acceptance and confirmation (conveying unconditional positive regard for the protégé), and counseling (encouraging the protégé to talk openly about anxieties and concerns, and giving the protégé support that facilitates socialization and helps in coping with job stress and work demands of the new faculty role). Thus, the faculty mentor may perform a variety of functions which range from socializing the protégé to the organizational culture to providing emotional support.

Same-race match may be the strongest predictor of success in a mentoring relationship, and most mentoring relationships tend to be same-race rather than cross-race relationships (Kalbfleisch and Davies, 1991; McCormick, 1997; Thomas, 1990). Kalbfleisch and Davies (1991), in their study of African American professionals, found that African Americans and Whites usually selected mentors of their own race. In higher education, African Americans may experience difficulty finding mentors who are accepting of their cultural differences and the nature of their scholarship. Research has also shown that non-minority mentors were less likely to be as accepting, trusting and supportive with minority protégés than with non-minority protégés (McCormick, 1997; Welch, 1997). With or without mentors, women have less successful academic careers than men. (Creamer, 1995; McCormick, 1997). According to Egan (1994), mentoring is important for women, and most women who have been successful in higher education have had at least one mentor--usually a male. But cross-gender mentoring relationships can be affected by the organizational culture--the values, norms and attitudes that shape the organization. Noe (1988) identified six potential barriers in cross-gender relationships: (1) lack of access to information networks; (2) tokenism; (3) stereotypes and attributions; (4) socialization practices; (5) norms regarding cross-gender relationships; and (6) reliance on ineffective power bases. Tillman, (1998, 2001, 2002), in her study of the mentoring experiences of African American faculty in predominantly White institutions, identified five dimensions of the mentoring. Tillman used the role of race as a lens to conduct the research. Using race as a lens served to reveal the special nature of mentoring experiences of African American faculty and the importance of effective mentoring for the professional development of such faculty, especially in predominantly White institutions.

African American faculty are often caught in a 'revolving door' syndrome (Blackwell, 1988) where they are kept for five or six years, evaluated negatively for tenure, and are required to leave the institution. Since African Americans continue to be under represented in these institutions, mentoring as a strategy to increase the numbers of African Americans who are promoted and tenured and retained within the institution should be considered. Moreover, the dynamics of mentoring relationships in predominantly White research institutions need to be studied within that context and made explicit. Thus, institutions must do more than just recruit African American faculty--they are also responsible for maximizing their chances for success.

While the institutional commitment to, and general guidelines for, providing mentoring experiences for African American faculty should be articulated at the executive level, the planning and implementation of a mentoring initiative should be implemented at the departmental level. Whether institutionally mandated (formal) or institutionally encouraged (informal), mentoring initiatives should include clearly stated purposes and goals with a focus on the professional growth and development of the untenured faculty member given the expectations

of the department, planned activities that socialize the new, untenured faculty member to the department as well as the institution, and scheduled meetings to assess the protégé's progress in the areas of teaching, research and service. Department chairpersons should also consider whether the assignment of the mentor will be a voluntary one, how the mentor and the protégé will be introduced, and what alternatives are available to the protégé and the mentor if the mentoring relationship is unsuccessful. In addition, compensating mentors for additional duties associated with mentoring the protégé must be addressed--that is, should mentors be given monetary compensation or release time. Once hired, African American faculty should be encouraged to participate in planned experiences that will facilitate mentoring relationships with senior faculty members.

Mentoring Implications for Practice

In addition to the issues noted, department heads and planners must also give careful consideration to the following points with regard to mentoring African American faculty. While these issues may also be applicable to untenured faculty in general, they are particularly important for untenured African American women faculty. First, consideration must be given to how the mentor-protégé pairs will be formed. New, untenured African American women faculty should be paired with mentors who are willing to serve as mentors, who are willing and committed to their professional growth and development, and who have expertise in guiding untenured faculty to promotion and tenure (through previous experience and/or training). Factors such as personality match, research interests, and personal and cultural interests should be considered. Tillman's (2001) finding that differences in the research interests of mentors and protégés was a factor in the extent to which they collaborated on research and writing projects suggests that institutions should attempt to match protégés with mentors who have similar research interests. In the event that this is not possible, mentors should be encouraged to become familiar with the protégé's research interests and to communicate with the protégé about specific ways they can be of assistance in the areas of research and writing. Since the imperative to research and publish is common to the culture of predominantly White research institutions, this is a critical factor in helping the protégé to be promoted and tenured. Second, mentoring relationships should be monitored and evaluated and planners should determine the most effective approaches to mentoring that will facilitate the long term professional growth and development of African American women faculty. The complexity of mentoring relationships challenge the theory of a series of distinct, identifiable phases and suggests that institutions should implement procedures to determine whether Kram's (1985) model can be applied to mentoring relationships for African Americans. Planners should consider whether the mentoring relationship should proceed informally or should the relationship be conceptualized as a series of phases with identifiable benchmarks that can be used to assess the protégé's progress toward promotion and tenure. Third, planners should develop a list of career and psychosocial functions that are specific to the needs of Black women faculty members. Findings from Tillman's study challenge the traditional model of mentoring where protégés rely on one mentor for career and psychosocial functions. Mentors and protégés in her study placed more importance on career functions than psychosocial functions, and protégés separated the functions that their mentors performed, based on race. These findings suggest that institutions must consider which career and psychosocial functions require more emphasis given the expectations of the department and the needs of the protégé. Ongoing activities and communication designed to assist the protégé in meeting the requirements for promotion and tenure should be the focus of many of the functions.

Finally, an emergent theme in Tillman's (2001) study was that protégés sought out same-race mentors with similar personal and cultural backgrounds and who could provide them support in

copied with feelings of professional and social isolation. Given this finding, planners should identify senior African American scholars in the institution who are willing to serve as mentors and also investigate whether there are any mentor networks/organizations outside of the university that could be helpful to African American protégés. In addition, department heads and planners should investigate reasons why any past cross race, and cross-race/cross-gender mentoring relationships have not been successful. Efforts should be made to address any departmental and/or institutional barriers that may have contributed to the failure of such efforts. While the suggestions articulated here are important components in the development of a mentoring initiative, it is also important that there is a commitment at the university, college, and departmental levels to mentoring untenured African American women faculty. Communication between mentors, protégés and the department heads should be ongoing and department heads should be aware of the protégé's progress as well as any difficulties the protégé may be experiencing. Suggested steps to remedy any difficulties should be proposed and a system of follow-up communication should be established. These recommendations--drawn from the findings of Tillman's study--will not only enhance the quality of mentoring relationships for African American women in predominantly research White institutions, but will benefit the institution as well.

Mentoring is important for all junior faculty members, but may be especially important for African American women faculty members in predominantly White research institutions. Institutions should consider implementing mentoring initiatives which are either 'institutionally mandated' or 'institutionally encouraged' and that include planned experiences that will not only facilitate the growth and development of African American women faculty, but that facilitate their emotional, cultural, and social adjustment to institutions in which they often face alienation and isolation. Once these opportunities are provided, African American women faculty should be encouraged to participate in planned mentoring experiences.

Tillman's (2001) study revealed that having a mentor enhanced Black faculty women's opportunities for promotion and tenure and provided important information needed for professional mobility. Not surprisingly, 100% of the Black faculty women respondents reported having at least one mentor during their academic career, either in an informal or formal relationship. Their mentors spanned the gamut of gender, profession, discipline, and ethnicity. The majority of respondents reported having several mentors, often simultaneously, in disciplines and professions different than their own.

Rethinking Tenure and Promotion

Institutions that maintain tenure systems employ approximately 95% of all full-time faculty members in American higher education (Finkelstein, 1987). Used by nearly 85% of all U.S. colleges and universities (American Association of University Professors [AAUP], 1977), tenure is widely believed to serve as a lifetime guarantee that professors will receive due process within the context of their academic institution, although interpretation of academic freedom and protection vary. In all fairness, however, tenure may actually be a process of exclusion. Indeed, earlier research by Gregory (1999) and my earlier research has shown the tenure system to be one of the major barriers facing Black faculty women once they obtain the doctoral degree.

Many institutions argue against tenure because of the financial obligations it entails, and numerous scholars have suggested workable alternatives such as imposing a post-tenure review process to increase the flexibility of institutions to hold tenured faculty accountable for performance (Finkin, 1996). Boyer (1990) examined the movement from teaching to service to research and assessed the implications of those transitions on the roles of faculty. His conclusion:

"At no time ... has the need been greater for connecting the work of the academy to the social and environmental challenges beyond the campus We need a renewed commitment to service" (p. xii). Boyer provided important guidelines for the possible transformation of the scope of scholarly activities that are considered for tenure and promotion, with a renewed emphasis on faculty members' teaching and service activities. He further argued that the years of greatest productivity for scholars vary significantly by discipline (i.e., mathematicians and physicists were most productive before the age of 35, whereas philosophers and historians tended to be most productive much later in life). Given these differences, he maintained that colleges and universities should consider alternative career options such as "creative contracts" (p. 43), which would allow scholars to define their academic goals over a three- to five-year period. This would not only individualize faculty members' contributions, Boyer claimed, but it would help them maintain their productivity as well as facilitate interminable evaluations of their performance. He proposed that creative contracts could also enhance professional development and entice faculty members to remain in the academy by giving them equal say in how their roles and responsibilities were defined. Given that most Black women and other minority faculty members often participate in greater numbers of service activities and prefer teaching to research, Boyer's guidelines deserve further examination.

Gregory's (1999) study reported that the primary factor most associated with Black faculty women who chose to remain in the academy was tenure status. Given that securing tenure at a four-year institution was most significant in these women's decisions to remain, institutions should revisit the policies and practices surrounding tenure to ensure that requirements are equitably decided and policies are clear, appropriate, realistic, and fairly weighed. Colleges and universities can begin by providing reward structures that encourage Black faculty women's success, offer them adequate support systems to help reduce their isolation, and help ensure that they have the necessary tools required to succeed. Additionally, the research environment of the academy would need to be restructured to help minimize the number of undue burdens placed on many Black faculty women that tend to distract them from scholarly activities.

In light of findings that Black faculty women value the security of tenure more than salary (Gregory, 1999), the opportunities for retention would appear to be greater when institutions offer more opportunities for faculty development, research and grant assistance, travel money for conferences, and a concerted effort to shelter faculty from responsibilities not rewarded by tenure. The prevailing custom at U.S. colleges and universities toward individual salary negotiations has been shown to place women at a disadvantage. This is particularly so for those women who had not been mentored as graduate students or instructed on negotiation rituals and courtship customs that are common in hiring practices in the academy. As Tierney and Bensimon (1996) have shown, women often receive lower starting salaries than those of their male peers because they do not know what to ask or how to negotiate for greater salaries.

CONCLUSION

Historically, education has served as a vehicle for many Blacks to escape poverty and prepare their future generations for leadership in the community and society. Black women teachers served as role models and mentors for the young. They also played a special role in the lives of other Black women and students of color. Higher education in the United States today is at a critical juncture. Fewer African American women are choosing academic careers, and a large number of those who do are not being retained, promoted, or tenured. Black faculty women are achieving tenure at a much slower rate than ever before, leaving them professionally vulnerable. The barrier to Black faculty women's retention and advancement that is cited most often in the

research is the extraordinary time demands placed upon them because of their relatively small numbers. This group of faculty members also has overwhelmingly reported the absence of institutional support systems as a hindering factor. In light of evidence directly linking the mere presence of Black faculty women on academic campuses to the numbers of minority students who matriculate there and to minority student enrollment and graduation, the dwindling numbers of these professional women are especially tragic.

If those of us in the academy are truly committed to the principles of democracy and diversity, and if we are serious about increasing the numbers of Black women doctorates who pursue academic careers, we must begin addressing this issue at the undergraduate level. We need to expand and support programs that provide real educational opportunities for students of all races, classes, and genders and demonstrate to these students, through example, the benefits of pursuing an academic career. The presence of such programs is critical to the expansion of educational opportunities in U.S. society (Bowen, Bok, & Schulman, 1998).

If we are to significantly improve the status of Black faculty women, we must begin addressing that issue at the departmental level. As reflected in the disparate numbers, salaries, and ranks of minority and women faculty members vis-a-vis their White male colleagues, many academic departments around the country still fail to provide adequate support to their minority and women members. However, departments can provide critical support in numerous, cost-efficient ways. Several examples include encouraging service activities with system-wide visibility and compensation for service overload; integrating ethnic- and gender-related materials into the curriculum and pedagogy; accepting differences in teaching styles, curriculum, and research foci; and encouraging collaborative projects by providing resources and funding (Gregory, 1999). Given that greater value is placed on publication, institutions could provide minority and women faculty members with rewards, encourage them to discuss articles in progress with other faculty members and vice-versa, and support cross-fertilization to avoid isolated research projects (Swoboda, 1990).

In a 1996 article on race relations, Rabbi Stephen Fuchs quoted the following work of an anonymous poet:

It's easy to sit in the sunshine
And talk to the man in the shade
It's easy to sit in a well-made boat
And tell others just where to wade
It's easy to tell the toiler
How best to carry his pack
But you'll never know the weight of the load
Until the pack is on your back. (p. 60)

This poem is especially relevant to the present discussion because the future of the academy depends in large measure on its ability to nurture the academic talent of all its faculty, particularly those Black faculty women whose numbers are steadily decreasing. It is imperative that the academy takes full advantage of any and all opportunities to widen the pipeline of doctorates for women and persons of color to gain entry into the faculty ranks. Equally important is the need for continued development of sound research on the experiences of Black faculty women to help address the challenges and benefits of having Black faculty women among the professorate.

NOTES

¹ The term “Black” is used interchangeably with the term “African American.”

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