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Faculty Distribution In Higher Education

22 **By John E. Fleming**

The systematic discrimination against Blacks, and their exclusion from playing key roles in higher education have resulted in severe under-representation of Blacks on faculties of American colleges and universities. Without some form of positive change, Blacks will remain under-represented in all fields and in all types of higher educational institutions. Affirmative action is one means of rectifying past and present injustices.

Blacks have always understood and have been particularly conscious of the central role education plays in American society. Colleges and universities do more than provide employment opportunities; they are responsible for educating and socializing the future generation of American youth. Blacks have understood that to exclude them from the educational process results in their exclusion from the larger society.

Whites have understood well the value of education as a mechanism of control and repression. Even if Blacks achieved parity in undergraduate, graduate and professional schools, equity in higher education cannot be achieved until Blacks have achieved parity in faculty employment. The historical experience of Blacks as a group suggests that parity is a long way from coming.

The deliberate exclusion of Blacks has been a consistent characteristic of the history of higher education. A century ago, the leading exponents of greater access to education after the Civil War were the newly emancipated slaves. With minor exception, the very educational systems the freedmen helped to establish eventually segregated them and reduced per pupil expenditures for Blacks to levels where they were barely able to sustain even the segregated system. Higher education was almost totally segregated.

Some Blacks gained admission to a few colleges and universities during Reconstruction, but when higher education was available at all, it was through a net-

work of institutions founded jointly by white missionaries and philanthropists with the freedmen. Only one Black professor taught at a predominantly white institution in the South. He was Richard Greener who held a chair in metaphysics and logic at the University of South Carolina from 1873 to 1876. Greener taught Latin, Greek, International Law and U. S. Constitutional History.

While Blacks depended entirely upon their own system of higher education, these institutions seldom offered graduate and professional education. Blacks were almost entirely dependent upon white institutions in the North for advanced degrees.

DuBois' Experience

One of the most outstanding American scholars, theoreticians and social activists was W.E.B. DuBois. After establishing an outstanding undergraduate academic record at Fisk University, DeBois was admitted to Harvard in 1888 as a junior. He received a second Bachelor of Arts in 1890, cum laude, and earned the Ph.D. from Harvard in 1895. His dissertation was the first book published in the Harvard Historical Series. Although he studied at the best universities in America and Europe, not one white institution offered him a faculty position.

After serving on the faculty of Wilberforce University in Ohio, he was invited by the University of Pennsylvania to do a study on the Black residents of Philadelphia. In commenting on this experience, he wrote:

I was offered a salary of \$800 for a period limited to one year. I was given no real academic standing, no office at the University, no official recognition of any kind; my name was eventually omitted from the catalogue; I had no contact with students, and very little with members of the faculty, even in my department. [Logan, p. 44]

If this was the experience of DuBois who held impeccable credentials, one can imagine the experience of other lesser known Black scholars of the period.

Few Blacks actually expected to teach in predominantly white academic institutions. Blacks who studied for advanced degrees usually returned to Black institutions to teach. Because of policies of racial exclusion, it was difficult for most Blacks to gain admission to universities in the North. Instead of institutions of higher education providing the enlightened leadership the society as a whole needed, academia became part of the problem in offering pseudo-scientific evidence to prove that Blacks were genetically inferior.

Over the years, Black people continued to make slow but steady progress in the area of education. As early as 1876, Edward Bouchet became the first to receive a Ph.D. from an American institution. Bouchet received a doctorate in physics from Yale where he was elected *Phi Beta Kappa*. Over the next half century, from 1876 to 1929, only 51 doctorates were conferred on Blacks, approximately one per year. Between 1926 and 1942, a total of 38,765 doctorates were awarded by American universities, but Blacks received only 335 or substantially less than 1 percent. The number of Black Ph.Ds were so few that one scholar was able to identify them and write biographical sketches of each.

In spite of the 1954 *Brown* decision and the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s, institutions of higher education neither hired Blacks as faculty nor did they make efforts to increase the supply of potential Black faculty members. As late as 1969, the Ford Foundation found that less than one percent of all American earned doctorates were held by Blacks. The Foundation suggested that the number was not likely to increase in the near future because at the close of 1967-68 academic year, less than one percent of all Ph.D. candidates were Black.

Although 85.4 percent of Black doctorates were employed in colleges and universities, the vast majority were in predominantly Black institutions. By 1960, there were 5,910 Blacks employed

in colleges and universities as faculty members; again most were with predominantly Black institutions. This represented slightly more than 3 percent of the total number of college and university teachers. During the academic year 1968-69, the percentage of Black faculty members dropped from slightly more than 3 percent to 2.2 percent of faculty members nationwide. This was all the more startling when one realizes that the 1960s witnessed a rapid acceleration in the growth of higher education as children born during the 1940s reached college age.

Although there was some expansion in the recruitment of Black undergraduate students, it was evident the predominantly white institutions had not recruited Blacks in large numbers to graduate and professional schools. The response to pressure of the civil rights movement in the 60s had little impact on institutions' hiring practices.

By the early 1970s, the percentage of Black faculty members had not reached the 1960 level of 3 percent. What this suggests is the failure of colleges to put forth a good faith effort in training Black graduate students and recruiting and hiring Black faculty members during the '60s when the academic market rapidly expanded to accommodate increased student enrollment.

From the perspective of Black Americans, the impact of affirmative action on faculty employment has been minimal. Since 1972, the federal government has required its academic contractors to implement affirmative action hiring procedures. Yet, eight years later, the goal of equity is far from achievement.

Prior to 1975, employment progress for Blacks and other groups was measured in a haphazard fashion. In 1975, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission initiated the first national survey of employment patterns in institutions of higher education (EEO-6 Survey). This biannual survey provides the most comprehensive

data on the progress of affirmative action programs to date.

The first survey revealed no dramatic change in the employment patterns of the higher education community. Of the 1,351,438 employees in institutions of higher education, Blacks accounted for 164,096 or 12.1 percent. Black males were 5.1 percent of the total and Black females 7.1 percent.

At first glance, it appears that Blacks in 1975 participated in academia roughly at the same rate as their percentage in the total population. It would also appear that Black women were exceeding the rate of advancement of Black men. Yet, a closer examination of employment distribution suggests that serious equity problems exist.

Faculty Representation

Excluding faculty for the moment, Blacks held 144,522 or 16 percent of the non-faculty positions nationwide. They were 7 percent (6,801) of all employees in the executive/administrative category, nearly 12 percent of all clerical staff and more than 34 percent of the service/maintenance workers. The median salary was lower for Blacks than whites in all employment categories. Only in the non-faculty professional and clerical categories did the median salary for Black males exceed the median salary for white males.

A detailed examination of Black faculty representation gives an even dismal picture. In 1975, there was a total faculty count of 446,034 but Blacks were only 19,574 or 4.4 percent of faculty representation. While that figure is 1.4 percent higher than in 1960, it also represents Black faculty at the 106 historically Black colleges, the elimination of which would decrease by nearly 40 percent the number of Black faculty employed in predominantly white institutions. If Black faculty were distributed evenly across all institutions, no institution would have more than 3.3 Blacks.

The median salary for 11-to-12 month faculty positions is \$19,155; Black males were paid on the average 4 percent less, while Black females were paid 19 percent less. For 9-to-10 month contracts, Black males received 5 percent and Black females 17 percent less than the average faculty salaries. These discrepancies in pay scales can largely be attributed to the fact that Blacks, especially females, are mainly at entry level positions. Blacks were only 2.2 of faculty at the rank of professor; 1.7 percent were Black males and only .5 of one percent were females. The percentages increase in direct proportion to a decrease in rank from a low of 2.2 percent at the professor level to 8.9 percent at the lecturer level. Sixty one percent of Black faculty (11,867) were in the lower ranks of instructor and assistant professor. While nationally there were only 19 percent of the faculty members at the instructor level, 31 percent of Blacks were at the rank of instructor.

Fifty-two percent of the nation's faculty had tenure in 1975, while only 36 percent of Black faculty held tenured slots. Of the 233,498 tenured faculty positions, Blacks held only 3.0 percent. The largest percentage of Black faculty members were non-tenured but on the tenure track. Twenty-five percent of Black faculty were not on tenure track while the national average was 19 percent.

Between 1975 and 1977, there were 73,609 new appointments for all categories of employment. The total number of Blacks increased by 9,512 to raise the overall Black representation to 12.2 percent. This is due largely to increased Black female representation. While the total number of Black males increased, their percentage of total employment decreased from 5.1 to 5.0 percent. In fact the percentage of Black males in all categories decreased with the exception of 9-10 month contract faculty where there was a 1/10 of a percent increase and a 4/10 of a percentage increase in the skilled crafts category.

The 1977 survey reveals that the total number of Black faculty increased by only 341 persons. During the same period, the total faculty employment rose by 9,886. While Blacks were 3.5 of all new hires, this rate of increase was not nearly high enough to alter their percentage of total faculty members which remained at 4.4.

There are 43,067 persons employed in the 106 historically Black colleges and universities as reported by EEOC from its 1975 survey. Blacks comprise 67.4 percent and whites 29.1 percent of the total number of employees. Of the 13,770 faculty members, Blacks are 7,590 or 55.1 percent; the number for whites is 5,487 or 39.8 percent.

Over a 15 year period, the total number of faculty members at Black institutions more than doubled. Black institutions are approximately three percent of all institutions of higher education, yet they employ 39 percent of all Black faculty. Forty-one percent of all Black faculty members at Black colleges are tenured. Blacks are 50 percent of all faculty at the rank of professor 45.5 percent at the associate rank and 53.6 percent at the assistant rank.

The median salary for all faculty on 9-10 month contract was \$13,325; for whites it was \$14,114 and \$12,827 for Blacks. In a review of salary by race and sex, white men had the highest median salary (\$14,602) and Black women the lowest (\$11,957). The same pattern holds true for the 11-12 month contract faculty, but the gaps widen significantly. For example, the salary of white males is \$17,500 or 35 percent higher than Black females. The data suggest that salary inequities also exist at predominantly Black colleges, especially for women. While there has not been a wholesale raid on the Black faculties of these institutions by predominantly white institutions, the number and percentage of Black faculty have steadily declined.

Data on the distribution of Blacks by fields are incomplete. Of the 30,850 doctorates awarded in 1978, Black Ameri-

cans received 1,029 or 3 percent. Over 56 percent of new Black doctorate recipients in 1978 received their degree in education, 5 percent in the physical sciences, less than 1 percent in engineering, 7 percent in the life sciences, 19 percent in the social sciences and 8 percent in the arts and humanities.

Although Blacks and whites were registered in doctorate programs for roughly the same time period, the median time lapse between the B.A. and Ph.D was nearly 3½ years longer for Blacks than for whites.

An examination of Black representation by field of employment reveals continued underrepresentation in all areas. Although 56 of all new Ph.Ds awarded to Blacks are in the field of education, Blacks constitute only 8 percent of new doctorates in education. Blacks received 1 percent of all doctorates in engineering/physical sciences, 2 percent in arts and humanities and 3 percent in the social sciences.

Demographic Trends

The future demand for faculty in general will be determined largely by demographic trends. The 1980s will witness a decrease in the number of traditional students available for college enrollment. The National Center for Education Statistics projects that college enrollment will peak at 11,690,000 students in 1981 and decline gradually by 1988. If current employment practices hold steady, there will be a decline in demand for new faculty as enrollments shrink.

As noted earlier, a major problem is the undersupply of Blacks on faculties in all areas. Students generally respond to the law of supply and demand, but because of the length of time it takes to complete a terminal degree, there will be a continued increase in the number of faculty members overall in spite of a drop in demand. The number of doctorates awarded will increase through the mid-1980s. A drop is not likely until the latter part of the dec-

ade. The problem for affirmative action programs is how to increase the number of Black doctorates when there is a drop in the overall demand for faculty.

Supply is determined by the number of Blacks enrolled in graduate school. In 1972, Blacks were 5.1 percent of all graduate students, but were largely in masters degree programs. In 1978, Blacks received only 3.0 percent of all new doctorates awarded. It takes Blacks more than 12 years to complete a doctorate, because they cannot afford to remain in school full-time while it takes whites 8.5 years. Even under the best of circumstances, and assuming that affirmative action is effectively implemented, the projected number of doctorates awarded to Blacks per year will move from 1,029 in 1978 to 1,505 in 1990. Hence, the percentage of Black faculty will not exceed 6 percent by 1990.

Because of a non-expanding academic market and an excess supply of labor, the affirmative action goals are unlikely to be achieved. First, market conditions allow employers to satisfy demand and even to become more selective. Hence, such conditions permit wider scope for discrimination. Since a large percent of qualified Blacks will be new Ph.Ds. and with an excess supply of white doctorates, it will be easy to exclude Blacks since the selection process in academia remains subjective. Such conditions allow employers to increase qualifications to unnecessarily high levels.

White males will remain in decision-making positions through the remainder of this century and possibly well into the 21st century. With slack labor markets, they can continue racist practices under the guise of a meritocracy.

Other policy alternatives to increase the demand for faculty include changing the faculty/student ratio, but this seems unlikely as support for higher education seems to be in decline. Academia could also attract older and non-traditional students. Of course, in very tight market conditions, where large numbers of individ-

uals are qualified, we cannot exclude the use of temporary quotas to ensure access for all groups.

There are public policy alternatives that apply to minorities and women that can influence current projections for academia as well as influence affirmative action goals in other areas. First, it must be understood that the present underutilization of Blacks in higher education is a direct result of policies of exclusion. To begin to rectify past and present injustices, there must be a vigorous enforcement of existing civil rights laws and executive orders.

There is a need to increase Black participation in graduate education, and on faculties of colleges and universities. There is a need to increase Black persistence in high school and to improve graduation rates from college. Information about employment opportunities in fields where Blacks were formerly excluded needs to be made available to students. Special minority admission programs should be increased along with support services. Greater financial assistance should be provided in the forms of scholarships and grants as opposed to loans.

While there is strong justification for hiring Black faculty to teach in Black studies programs, Black assistant deans to counsel students and affirmative action officers to implement affirmative action plans, we have reached a stage where we must look beyond race and sex classified positions. It is time to see Blacks who will fill positions of deans, directors, vice presidents and even presidents—positions that may or may not have race related responsibilities.

There is likely to be a continued decline in the proportion of Black faculty teaching at predominantly Black institutions. As the demand for faculty in general declines, there will probably be increased competition for jobs at predominantly Black colleges. Affirmative action officers at these institutions will play a larger role as whites raise allegations of reverse discrimination.

The future of affirmative action is unclear as is academia's commitment to make it work. The fact that an institution may dislike federal intervention which prohibits it from conducting business as usual does in no way alter the institution's obligations. There must be no additional retrenchment from the goals of equal opportunity. □

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