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**Racial Representation for Faculty in Higher Education: A Systematic Analysis of Faculty
Retention**

Joo Ning Lim

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Abstract

Diversity and representation for faculty in higher education are crucial to cater to the needs of diverse student populations in the 21st century. A significant factor that contributes to faculty diversity is the retention and recruitment of underrepresented minority faculty members. This study aims to provide valuable insights into the current state of racial representation of faculty in higher education institutions and identify solutions to improve the retention of underrepresented faculty. Specifically, this study investigates faculty retention and welfare by comparing data across five public, research institutions in the Midwest. Findings revealed that the racial representation of faculty within the five chosen institutions reflects trends in national data and showed that Black and Hispanic/Latino faculty members remain the least underrepresented at all levels of tenure within the institutions. The results suggest that higher education institutions are progressing towards an increasingly diverse workforce, but numerous barriers continue to affect the retention and welfare of underrepresented faculty members.

Introduction

Prioritizing and employing inclusive policies and programs are crucial for promoting equity in higher education. Higher education institutions often take pride in diversity and multiculturalism, but gaps between theory and practice continue to present unique challenges for marginalized groups on every measure (Thompson, 2008). While most higher education leaders recognize the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) on campuses and believe in the significance of recruiting and retaining racially diverse faculty, diversity is not reflected in equitable proportions, especially within high-ranking positions (Kelly et al., 2017). Additionally, conversations on diversity in higher education tend to be mainly focused on student populations, while the importance of diversity among staff, faculty, and leadership is overlooked as a result (Espinosa et al., 2019). Despite significant progress in recent decades to improve and diversify faculty representation, various studies report that certain marginalized groups remain underrepresented on college campuses nationwide (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2020; Smith et al., 2012).

Diversity is critical in all environments and brings a multitude of benefits at all levels of education and in the workforce (Espinosa et al., 2019). With diversity in faculty, students gain exposure to diverse perspectives that will “prepare them for effective leadership and citizenship in a diverse democracy” (Kelly et al., 2017, p. 305). Research has shown that diverse institutions are more productive, innovative, and equipped to educate a diverse student body (Espinosa et al., 2019). According to Espinosa et al. (2019), having a diverse faculty body in higher education is imperative in attracting and mentoring diverse student populations by offering a more comprehensive array of methods for inquiry, instruction, and research available within the institution. While students benefit from interactions with their diverse peers, the faculty’s role is

often neglected in terms of students' experiences in and out of the classroom. Diverse faculty also play a role in advocating for cultural equality and equity for diverse populations, creating positive learning environments as a result (Abdul-Raheem, 2016). Essentially, the recruitment and retention of diverse faculty should be a priority for higher education institutions because there is value in learning environments that incorporate and welcome diverse perspectives and knowledge (Kelly et al., 2017).

Knowing that faculty diversity brings a multitude of benefits, faculty in higher education should proportionately reflect the diversity in the student population, but this is not the case for many predominantly White institutions in the United States. In fact, the faculty to student ratio in terms of racial representation is often disproportionate. Racial barriers are still very much present in universities that negatively impact the success of marginalized faculty in academia (Fenelon, 2003; Smith et al., 2012). Moreover, data has shown that faculty from minority racial and ethnic groups remain the least represented in public and private universities despite progress over the years, and Black full-time faculty are least represented in public research institutions (Smith et al., 2012). Such issues point towards the need for research focused on faculty diversity and practices within higher education institutions that seek to promote and improve the hiring and retention of underrepresented faculty.

This study aims to provide context on the current state of racial representation of faculty in the United States by comparing and analyzing data across different public Midwestern research institutions. From the analysis, this study will discuss implications as well as solutions to improve faculty representation. Diversity in faculty encompasses a variety of factors that affect educational access and success, but racial disparities within higher education institutions remain a prevailing factor in many education outcomes (Espinosa et al., 2019). Hence, this thesis

will focus on racial representation of faculty within higher education institutions while also employing an intersectional perspective to identify unique challenges that underrepresented racial groups face. In conversations surrounding racial representation, heightened cultural sensitivity must be applied to distinguish between different races and ethnicities and the systems that encode these classifications. According to Vidal-Ortiz (2017), in academic settings within predominantly White academic institutions, ethnoracial groups become constructed and grouped as minorities regardless of the numbers. Therefore, terms like “majority” and “minority” should be used with caution because they contain complex connotations about power, institutional control, and a sense of ownership and belonging (Vidal-Ortiz, 2017). Furthermore, tokenization and commodification are commonly experienced by underrepresented faculty and some groups end up being invisible and further marginalized when disparities within groups are not acknowledged.

Within this study, the terms “faculty of color” and “minority faculty” will be used interchangeably to refer to demographically marginalized racial groups within the field of academia. This does not intend to discount the diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds of faculty members but instead points towards specific racial and ethnic groups who have been constructed as minorities in White-majority spaces. In addition, this paper minimizes the use of such terms by applying the more appropriate term of “underrepresented minority faculty” and limits the use of these terms unless when applied in a citation. To clarify further, the terms “Underrepresented groups” or “underrepresented faculty,” when used in this study, refers to groups of faculty members from diverse backgrounds who are under-served in higher education relative to their proportion in the general U.S. population. This study focuses on Black and Hispanic/Latino faculty members as two specific underrepresented and marginalized groups within the sampled

institutions. Moreover, it is crucial to note that the term “minority” is often used to describe a myriad of people of color and merges different minority groups together as a result, but “minority” does not correlate to underrepresented groups. While Black and Hispanic/Latino faculty are least represented in terms of the student to faculty ratio (David & Fry, 2019; NCES, 2020), the analysis here will primarily focus on the experiences and composition of Black and Hispanic/Latino faculty members. This study explores the following research questions:

- *What is the overall current state of faculty representation in higher education institutions?*
- *What are some patterns of racial representation for faculty within some conveniently sampled public Midwestern universities?*
- *What are the retention rates for faculty members by race, ethnicity, and gender?*

Subsequently, the perspective of a student is employed in this analysis. Student perspectives are crucial because they have firsthand experience in the classroom and are able to provide a deeper understanding of the student-faculty relationship. There are also unique challenges that a student faces in collecting institutional data as institutions often restrict access to certain types of data on institutional research and equity. Hence, a quantitative approach was chosen for this study. Ideally, this analysis and discussion will lead researchers to the next set of questions and identify feasible solutions and best practices going forward in terms of minority faculty recruitment and retention.

Literature Review

Faculty play a central role in students’ learning experiences and are critical in addressing the primary educational mission of a university. Faculty members design and teach curriculum, impart basic or applied knowledge to students, conduct research that advances the existing

knowledge base, and set guidelines that determine standards for campuses (Park & Denson, 2009). Thus, the experiences of faculty members within an institution contribute to the overall campus climate. The recruitment and retention of marginalized and underrepresented faculty members is salient to the college experiences of underrepresented student populations, and there should be a wide array of studies that account for faculty and student experiences collaboratively. However, in terms of academic literature, a significant portion of research is dedicated to student diversity and student's experiences (Park & Denson, 2009), and there is a lack of research on faculty diversity which is limited to data at the national level across different types of institutions (Fenelon, 2003; NCES, 2020; Smith et al., 2012). Furthermore, there have been few developments in literature related to Black faculty experiences. While bodies of literature often have disaggregated data on diverse student populations, few researchers have taken faculty experiences into consideration, leaving many gaps in research for underrepresented faculty members in higher education institutions (Kelly et al., 2012).

Recent studies within the past several years that survey recruitment of Black faculty found few changes, echoing that faculty from underrepresented racial groups are not being retained at the highest ranks within institutions (Espinosa et al., 2019; Kelly et al., 2012; Thompson, 2008). Additionally, many different approaches have been taken in making comparisons across fields to examine racial and ethnic diversity as well as understanding faculty attitudes towards diversity (Li & Koedel, 2017; Park & Denson, 2008), but various studies display slow improvement for faculty diversity over the years as this is a complex and challenging issue. With this, looking closely at a few comparable institutions and trends of diversity within institutions will provide a different perspective and a comprehensive analysis of Black faculty retention. At the national level, recurring patterns in collected data display the lack

of racial representation in full-time faculty and significant differences between racial and ethnic categories (Espinosa et al., 2019; NCES, 2020). Furthermore, position, tenure status, field/program, and institution type have been proven significant factors that play a role in racial representation (Li & Koedel., 2017; Smith et al., 2012). Reports have found that the percentage of faculty members from marginalized racial groups are higher in two-year, public institutions compared to four-year, private, and more selective institutions (Espinosa et al., 2019; U.S. Department of Education, 2019), suggesting a trend of lower diversity for private institutions with highly selective policies. A study by Smith et al. (2012) carried out a multi-lens examination of the diversity of full-time faculty which assessed diversity through three lenses: within institutional type, within racial, ethnic, and gender groups, and the changes over time in faculty diversity by each of these categories. This study indicated a growth in the number of full-time faculty overall, and found the highest percentage of Black, Hispanic/Latino, and Asian American/Pacific Islander faculty in public, two-year institutions, but the lowest percentage in private, four-year universities when looking within institution types. Smith et al. (2012) also report that public research institutions have the least representation of Black, full-time faculty and the largest gender gap.

Subsequently, when looking at positions of employees, it was reported that tenured faculty are majority White, while Black faculty are least represented among tenured faculty and full-time professors along with Hispanic/Latino faculty members (Espinosa et al., 2019; NCES, 2020; U.S. Department of Education, 2019). Moreover, full-time faculty of color at public four-year institutions were more likely to hold assistant professor positions and are most represented among non-tenure-track and part-time faculty. (Espinosa et al., 2019; Park & Denson, 2009). In terms of retention and recruitment factors, faculty diversity and representation also vary by field

and discipline (Holmes & Menachemi, 2017). For example, Li and Koedel's (2017) report on faculty representation and wage gaps by race, ethnicity, and gender confirmed that Black faculty are further underrepresented in STEM fields, and when analyzing faculty wage gaps, found that "Black and Hispanic faculty have significantly lower annual earnings than White faculty and, to a lesser extent, Asian faculty" (p. 344). Additionally, the Society of Women Engineers reported that female faculty who are tenured and on tenure track are not properly represented at the highest levels of tenure, (i.e., Full Professors) in comparison to their male counterparts, demonstrating the need for inclusive policies that account for converging identities like race and gender. Disparities in the wage gap within fields and positions could be due to the fact that position type is positively related to salary, as the NCES (2020) reported that full ranked professors earn the highest average wages, while lecturers earn the lowest. While the average salary for full-time instructional faculty varied by sex and type of institutions, similar patterns occurred within categories, showing prevalence in the male-female salary gap and salary differences according to position type.

Across different studies, evidence consistently reveals that positions of leadership in institutions remain predominantly White, while women of color are severely underrepresented when looking at a college presidency (Association of American Colleges and Universities [AAC&U], (2019); Espinosa et al., 2019). These studies also show that employees from underrepresented groups were more likely to hold untenured positions (Abdul-Raheem, 2016; Espinosa et al., 2019). Additionally, Freeman et al. (2019) attributed the lack of underrepresented minority faculty representation in college leadership to the shortage of marginalized faculty with the backgrounds or experiences needed for upper-level leadership positions. This is an issue specific to underrepresented groups as Freeman et al., (2019) describes a "glass ceiling effect"

which inhibits them from moving up the occupational hierarchy despite having the same levels of qualifications and productivity as their White colleagues. The lack of mentorship and sponsorship for faculty of color and challenges involved with the tenure process also present barriers for minority faculty in higher education (Abdul-Raheem, 2016; Freeman et al., 2019). Furthermore, aside from reports and statistics by government agencies, several empirical studies focus on the numbers of faculty of color to determine representation. However, such data does not provide much context on the effectiveness of retention or recruitment policies.

While extensive longitudinal studies have provided statistics based on faculty demographics and tend to analyze representation quantitatively, few bodies of research have focused on the retention and welfare of faculty in comparison. This could be attributed to the fact that faculty retention and welfare is highly subjective on an institutional basis, and it is difficult to measure factors related to faculty welfare or satisfaction and overall wellbeing on a large scale. It is imperative to have a gauge of recruitment and retention policies related to tenure, age, salary, and other facets, but more research pertaining to the impacts of such policies and practices on race, gender, and other marginalized identities is necessary. In addition, recruitment and retention efforts should go hand in hand, as research shows that recruitment without retention presents a threat to an institution's environment and undermines DEI values and goals (Kelly et al., 2017). Recruitment efforts are insufficient to address the underrepresentation of minority racial groups in academia and should be done collectively to ensure that marginalized faculty are retained by creating favorable and equitable work environments that truly value diversity and the contributions and accomplishments of all faculty members (Kelly et al., 2017; Thompson, 2008).

There is often a lack of focus on retention, which leads to severe consequences for faculty in underrepresented minority groups. Several studies that analyze race inequities and faculty retention discuss components such as tenure, promotion, academic satisfaction, and other factors. These studies find that myths surrounding faculty of color, usually stemming from racist stereotypes and race-based assumptions present stressors when their credibility, competence, and legitimacy as faculty are undermined (Kelly et al., 2017; Thompson, 2008; Wallace et al., 2012). For example, scholarship reveals that Black faculty are presumed as incompetent by other faculty, administrators, and students compared to their White counterparts, which creates a hostile environment and higher turnover rates for racially underrepresented faculty (Thompson, 2008). Shields (2012) states that “without attentiveness to hiring and retention practices, the proportion of tenure-line women faculty fell drastically below the number available in the national hiring pool” (p. 38).

Even after entering the institution, underrepresented faculty feel compelled to prove their credibility and constantly experience “imposter syndrome,” a term coined by psychologists Clance and Imes (1978) to describe a prevalent phenomenon experienced by high achieving women, who “despite their earned degrees, scholastic honors, high achievement on standardized tests, praise and professional recognition from colleagues and respected authorities...maintain a strong belief that they are not intelligent; in fact they are convinced that they have fooled anyone who thinks otherwise” (p. 1). Bodies of literature point towards the fact that underrepresented faculty members tend to feel out of place with traditional academic culture. Sadao (as cited in Thompson, 2008) mentions that individuals often share similar backgrounds and experiences in academe, which narrows down expectations in the workplace, especially for faculty within minority groups. The “imposter syndrome” is experienced more frequently by marginalized

women faculty, who often are subjected to societal perceptions that they are incompetent and need to prove that they are skilled and credible (Wallace et al., 2012). Furthermore, institutions that are predominantly White tend to present codes of behaviors that reinforce a specific social order, which isolates or excludes people who are marginalized like women, minority racial groups, gender nonconforming individuals, and other underrepresented groups (Vidal-Ortiz, 2017), further perpetuating the “imposter syndrome.” It is also important to note that members of a campus community (faculty, staff, and students) in predominantly White institutions can unconsciously engage in implicit, innocent, or even explicit engagements with dominant or traditional institutional norms, reinforcing prejudices and systematic discrimination as a result.

Another critical aspect that is frequently discussed is the process of tenure and promotion for faculty members. The tenure and promotion process makes up a significant portion of an individual’s academic career and is an important component in every higher education institution. Gaps in policies and the tenure process present various barriers for minority faculty that White faculty members do not encounter (Kelly et al., 2017). Studies reveal that affirmative action or opportunity-hire programs, used to increase diversity for underrepresented faculty end up contributing to Black faculty being perceived as less qualified and credible (Kelly et al., 2017); Stanley, 2006). Additionally, the heavy recruitment of underrepresented faculty members without attending to racism and the hostile climate in an academic setting leads to a “revolving door effect” for Black faculty on tenure track (Kelly et al., 2017). This produces adverse outcomes for faculty retention and reinforces institutional racism. Fenelon (2003) describes the tenure process as “affirmation systems, with an increasingly higher bar for performance by those who may disagree with the dominant meritocratic ideologies, and an increasingly lower set of standards for those scholars in alignment with the official and informal explanations for the

general lack of diversity” (p. 91-92). Throughout different studies, Black faculty have reported the lack of institutional support like mentoring, hostile treatment and microaggressions, and other stressors involving the review or promotion process (Kelly et al., 2017; Stanley, 2006; Thompson, 2008; Wallace, 2012). Consistent evidence reveals common workplace stressors in the areas of review, promotion, and tenure like service-based time constraints, teaching load, having to meet unclear workplace expectations, and subtle discrimination faced by minority faculty (Kelly et al., 2017; Stanley, 2006; Thompson, 2008). Stanley’s (2006) analysis reports the difficulties minority faculty face in interpreting implicit and explicit rules in academia. They are forced to examine such expectations through the lenses of their identities, including race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and so on, which contribute to occupational stress in the university environment. Black faculty members also report increased responsibilities and expectations they face on the road to tenure and promotion as well as differential classroom expectations directed towards them (Stanley, 2006; Thompson, 2008).

Evidently, such issues reveal the lack of institutional commitment to retention efforts across different institutions, mainly private and predominantly White institutions. Furthermore, the review of literature indicates that research agendas pursued by faculty of color play a significant role in tenure and promotion processes. Stanley (2006) mentions that faculty of color tend to engage in research that benefits communities of color, which includes topics like affirmative action, diversity and inclusion, culture and ethnicity, and so on, but such research can be perceived by mainstream, White scholarship as less credible, risky, and even marginalized and devalued (Fenelon, 2003; Stanley, 2006; Thompson, 2008). Fenelon’s (2003) study on tenure and research agendas in race-based, controversial fields implicates that dominant group issues continue to influence institutional treatment of tenure and research agenda, leading to

marginalized faculty having to compromise their research over critical issues. When institutions determine the scope and assign value to mainstream research that excludes issues of race, ethnicity, and other minority-specific issues, faculty of color are disadvantaged in the tenure and promotion process (Stanley, 2006).

In analyzing literature, it is also crucial to address issues in faculty retention and welfare that are unique to faculty members who are women of color. Wallace et al. (2012) present evidence from one study that women remain underrepresented in faculty as they account for less than 40% of full-time faculty in all higher education institutions and only about 15% of tenured and tenure-track faculty in high-ranking departments. Within this data, Black women faculty members only constitute 2.5% of total tenured, full-time positions and were concentrated in lower, nontenure track positions (Stanley, 2006). Although this body of research was carried out a few years ago, statistics from the National Center of Education (2020) also displayed that Black women faculty remain severely underrepresented despite increased diversity in campus climate over the years. Faculty of color, especially women, experience unique challenges that hinder their productivity and career development as they often lack access to informal networks and information, monetary resources, and mentorship or support in research and teaching (Kelly et al., 2017; Thompson, 2008; Wallace et al., 2012). On top of this, they are expected to meet performance expectations in the tenure process and create a balance between their professional and personal lives (Kelly et al., 2017; Stanley, 2006).

Various qualitative and autoethnographic studies report that women faculty of color face unique obstacles in the classroom. One common experience is challenges to their authority in the classroom environment. As their teaching commonly reflects research interests on race-focused courses or other nonmainstream topics, this in turns affects student evaluations and subsequently,

the tenure review process (Kelly et al., 2017; Perry et al., 2015; Stanley, 2006; Thompson, 2008; Wallace et al., 2012). Black women faculty and other underrepresented faculty members are often expected to mentor students from similar backgrounds, which can contribute to harmful stereotypes about Black women as nurturing maternal figures instead of competent academics (Wallace et al., 2012). Perry et al.'s study (2015) also states that race-focused courses are likely to present controversy in the classroom that challenge dominant ideologies and systematic issues like White privilege and racism, which can induce discomfort and conflict; as mentioned earlier, such courses are usually not seen as credible by White colleagues (Kelly et al., 2017).

Additionally, women faculty of color tend to remain hypervigilant about verbal and nonverbal forms of communication in the classroom as these may inaccurately portray negative images of themselves or reinforce racial stereotypes. Again, this presents an additional stressor related to their perceived competence and performance reviews (Perry et al., 2015; Wallace et al., 2012). A broad collection of similar experiences imply that hostile climates reflect mainstream stereotypes and racial prejudice, devaluing the credibility of women faculty of color and hindering their productivity as a result. Thus, it is imperative that the embodiment of negative and pervasive notions that contribute to racial prejudices within the system should be intentionally addressed and included in conversations surrounding faculty recruitment and retention. Fundamentally, having a deeper understanding of how to represent the interests of underrepresented faculty members better and effectively measure faculty retention, satisfaction, and welfare will contribute to effective policies and practices that promote faculty retention synonymous to recruitment rates.

Primarily, efforts to uphold diversity and multiculturalism within institutions must be carried out collectively with proper retention and institutional support for underrepresented

faculty members. The lack of diversity impacts minority students and the overall campus climate (Jackson et al., 2020; Nichols & Stahl, 2019), and prior research demonstrates a dire need for diversity in faculty and college leadership in the twenty-first century. While various fields of research have analyzed faculty representation and recruitment, more detailed and focused research is essential to dive deeper into factors that affect the retention and welfare of faculty and identify action steps and best practices to support and retain underrepresented faculty. Proper recruitment and retention of minority faculty are crucial in “ensuring adequate and effective cultural diversity education along with minority advocacy of racial and ethnic equity in higher education” (Abdul-Raheem, 2016, p. 64). As retention is a critical component that ensures longevity in the profession (Thompson, 2008), identifying gaps and patterns of disparities in prior research will lead to progressive conversations among college administration and leadership, increased awareness of the importance of faculty retention and welfare, as well as practical policy solutions that will lead towards improvement in faculty diversity and racial representation at the primary level. Some practical solutions include supporting faculty pursuit of social justice learning and teaching opportunities financially, nominating and supporting underrepresented faculty for leadership development opportunities, recruiting and retaining cluster hires from underrepresented minority groups in every department, and more (Stanley, 2006). Essentially, university administrators and leaders must address the lack of action and actively put solutions into practice, as “solutions” too often yield yearly conversations and dialogue while gaps between policy and practice persist. Inarguably, confronting this lack of action requires the collective effort and ongoing commitment of a university.

Method and methodology

This study provides a detailed analysis of publicly available secondary data to assess the state of diversity in several public research institutions across the Midwest. The case within the study is a university in southwest Michigan, along with four other large, public research institutions in the midwestern region of the United States. These comparable four-year institutions boast diverse populations that range from 20,000 to 30,000 students, faculty, and staff members, and are known for high levels of research activity. Assessing the diversity landscape for underrepresented racial groups within these institutions will include the analysis of disaggregated data across different dimensions like race, ethnicity, gender, tenure, and program type to gain an in-depth, multifaceted understanding of faculty diversity, inclusion, and equity in university policies and practices. Using secondary data from recent years (2016-2021) and comparing secondary data sets across different institutions will provide relevant context for answering the research questions and identify recent patterns in faculty retention. Sources of data include data sets, statistics, faculty dashboards, and reports from the Office of Institutional Research of the five campuses. For nationwide statistics and a general overview of this issue in the literature review, this study uses population data available through the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) and the American Council on Education (ACE). In addition, comparisons between the five chosen institutions will be carried out using the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), a tool used to compare institutions based on different variables which draw upon data sets and other information reported by universities.

While the main focus of this study is the retention and welfare of Black faculty members, this study applies an intersectional framework by analyzing different factors related to race and other aspects like ethnicity and gender where applicable. An intersectional approach accounts for

the overlapping and conflicting dynamics of people's identities and experiences related to systems of inequities involving race, gender, class, sexuality, and how these intersect to produce dynamics of power and prejudice (Cho et al., 2013; Nichols & Stahl, 2019). Employing an intersectional analysis is crucial for this study because it will allow for researchers to identify gaps and issues within policies and practices that systematically disadvantage and discriminate against groups with overlapping disadvantages. A systematic review by Nichols & Stahl (2019) on intersectionality in higher education pointed towards the need for scholarship to extend its scope in examining the intersection of social identities, systems of inequalities, and its impacts on institutions. While it is impossible to fully explore all dimensions of overlapping identities and analyze them in detail, this study will identify and discuss any outstanding patterns or differences within the data to further understand the unique struggles and experiences of faculty within the four institutions. Doing so will lead to an in-depth comprehension of the intersections of different identities and how this plays a role in faculty diversity and equity within policies and practices.

Progress in diversity and representation of minority faculty is hindered when recruitment efforts are not equally tied to retention. According to Thompson (2008), institutions tend to focus more on recruitment rather than retention, which allows schools to avoid systemic change (Weissman, 2019). While recruitment efforts are integral to diversity in faculty, they are not inclusive of success (Thomson, 2008), and the aim is to identify patterns of retainment and retention of faculty to gain a deeper understanding of proper representation while accounting for recruitment policies as well. The research will analyze employee retention rates over the past ten years by disaggregated data on race, ethnicity, and gender to identify patterns or disparities within secondary data sets and other available forms of data. Subsequently, current initiatives

and policies related to DEI efforts within the institutions will be discussed in terms of faculty retention and welfare as well. Available data from 2016 to 2019 is analyzed to ensure consistency, and the discussion section will offer possible explanations for any fluctuations within the data. In measuring retention rates, this study uses a general formula to ensure consistency in calculations within the five chosen institutions:

$$\left(\frac{\text{Number of employees in 2019} - \text{new hires}}{\text{Number of employees in 2016}} \right) \times 100$$

Results

Figure 1 provides an overview of the distribution of faculty by tenure status within the five conveniently sampled institutions as of fall 2019. In almost all the institutions, tenured faculty made up the most of faculty composition compared to tenure track and nontenure track faculty members. Figure 1 also shows an uneven distribution for tenure track and nontenure track faculty within different institutions.

Figure 1

Tenure status of faculty by rank, Fall 2019.

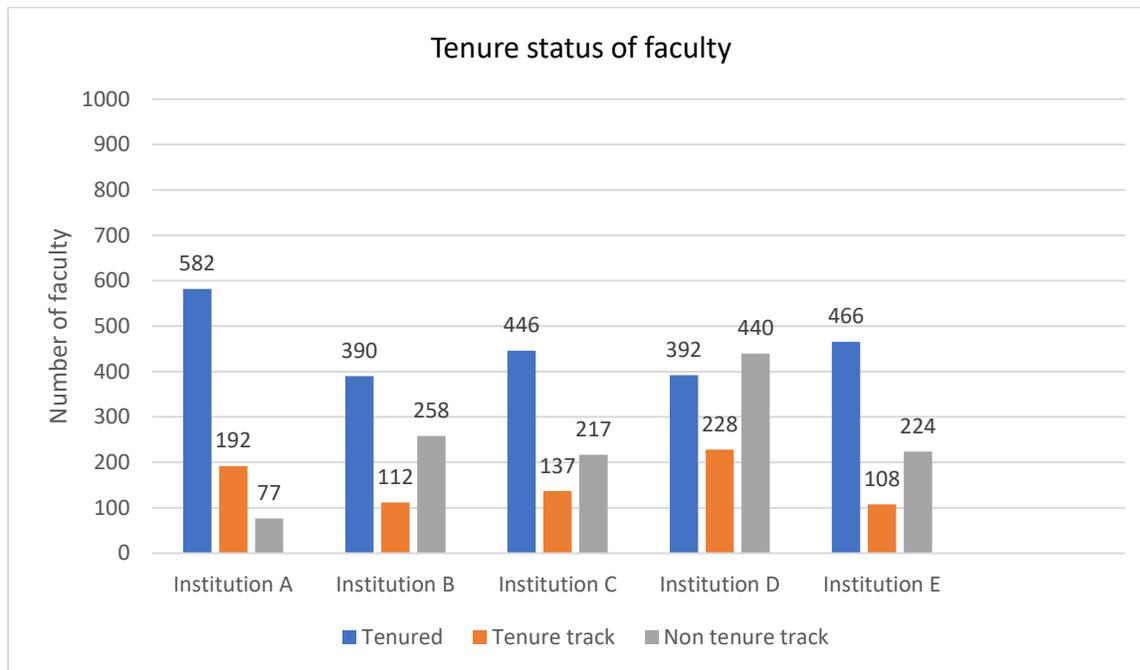


Table 1

Tenure status of faculty by gender, 2019.

Institution	Tenured		Tenure track		Nontenure track	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
A	343	239	83	109	32	45
B	215	175	60	52	108	150
C	253	193	65	72	77	140
D	222	170	118	110	172	268
E	265	195	58	50	120	104

Table 1 shows the tenure status of faculty broken down by gender in 2019. Unfortunately, data for faculty who identify as nonbinary/queer was not available via the IPEDS comparison tool and database. Within tenured positions, male tenured faculty members in every institution represented the majority. Within these five institutions, the numbers of tenure track faculty by gender are inconsistent, but data in Table 1 displays a pattern of underrepresentation of women within tenured positions and a higher number of women in nontenure track positions within all five institutions.

Table 2

Tenure status of faculty by race/ethnicity, 2019.

Institution	Tenured Faculty					
	White	Black	Asian	Hispanic/Latino	Others	TOTAL
A	412	24	68	19	59	582
B	299	15	47	20	9	390
C	303	14	44	10	75	446
D	319	11	47	8	7	392
E	357	16	60	17	10	460

Institution	Tenure Track Faculty					
	White	Black	Asian	Hispanic/Latino	Others	TOTAL
A	126	11	36	10	9	192
B	78	4	19	2	9	112
C	83	4	12	9	29	137
D	164	10	22	8	24	228
E	73	4	13	0	18	108

Institution	Non-Tenure Track Faculty					
	White	Black	Asian	Hispanic/Latino	Others	TOTAL
A	68	1	3	0	5	77
B	229	6	8	4	11	258
C	185	5	8	6	13	217
D	386	15	19	15	5	440
E	201	4	6	3	10	224

*Note: “**Others**” include racial/ethnic groups that are not statistically significant, as well as groups with unknown ethnicities, two or more races, and non-resident aliens.

Table 2 shows a breakdown of faculty by race/ethnicity within different ranks. Table 2 shows that Black and Hispanic/Latino faculty members were the least represented in tenured ranks in all five institutions, while White faculty made up the majority of tenured faculty members. When looking at racial distribution within rank, Black and Hispanic/Latino faculty members have the smallest numbers at all levels of tenure than White and Asian faculty members.

Figure 2

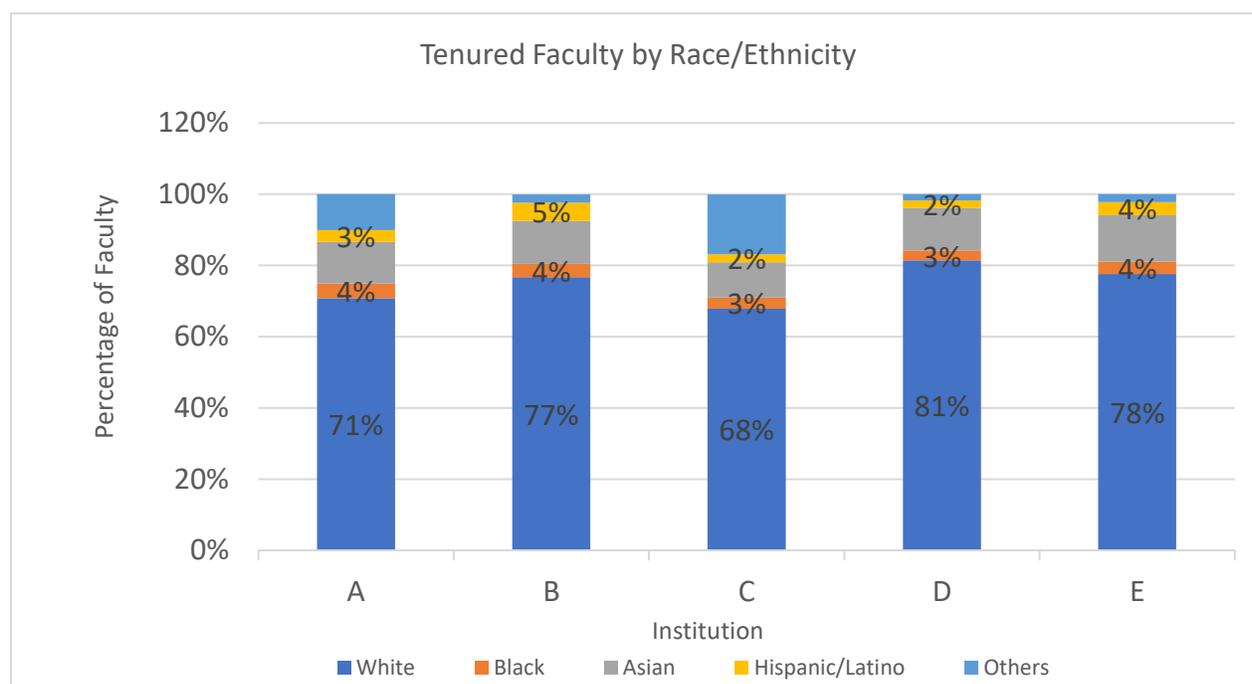


Figure 2 provides a visual representation of the distribution of race/ethnic groups in tenured positions derived from IPEDS numbers. A visual graph makes it easier to make comparisons and identify similarities and differences between the five institutions. In comparing these five institutions, Figure 2 shows a recurring pattern across different institutions indicating the lack of representation for Black and Hispanic/Latino faculty members. It is worth noting that institution C has a large percentage of faculty members who are nonresident aliens, which contributes to a higher number of tenured faculty members under the category “*Others*.”

Table 3

Retention rates by institution from 2016 through 2019.

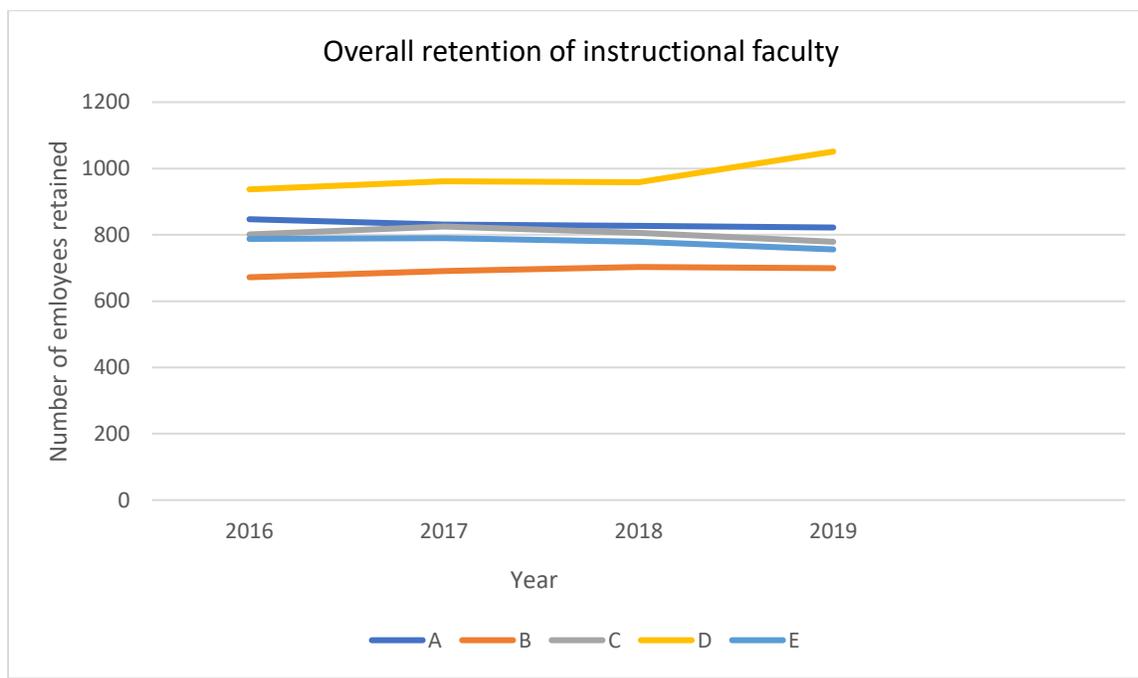
$$\left(\frac{\text{Number of employees in 2019} - \text{new hires}}{\text{Number of employees in 2016}} \right) \times 100$$

Institution	Retention rate			
	Minority groups	Women	Men	Overall
A	75.76 %	84.68 %	82.61 %	83.62 %
B	71.26 %	76.54 %	72.92 %	69.90 %
C	70.45 %	91.95 %	78.15 %	84.56 %
D	57.45 %	90.42 %	73.22 %	81.36 %
E	84.40 %	73.35%	71.81 %	72.47 %

Table 3 shows a breakdown of retention rates for the five institutions by gender and race/ethnicity. The formula above was used to calculate the retention rates for instructional faculty from the years 2016 to 2019. Overall retention rates provide a reference for comparison when looking within groups. While institution C had the highest retention rates, it had a lower retention rate for minority instructional faculty compared to other institutions. In looking at the retention of minority instructional faculty, Table 3 shows that institution D has the lowest retention rate while institution E has the highest retention rate. Notably, in all five institutions, the retention rates for women instructional faculty were higher than men instructional faculty.

Figure 3

Overall retention of the number of instructional faculty by year.



Minority faculty: Includes faculty who designate themselves as Black, non-Hispanic; American Indian or Alaska Native; Asian, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, or Hispanic.

Figure 3 shows the trend in retention numbers for all instructional faculty from 2016 to 2019. In most institutions, there were no significant increases or decreases in the overall numbers of faculty retained except for institution D, which saw an increase in retention rates after 2018.

Figure 4

Retention of the number of male instructional faculty by year.

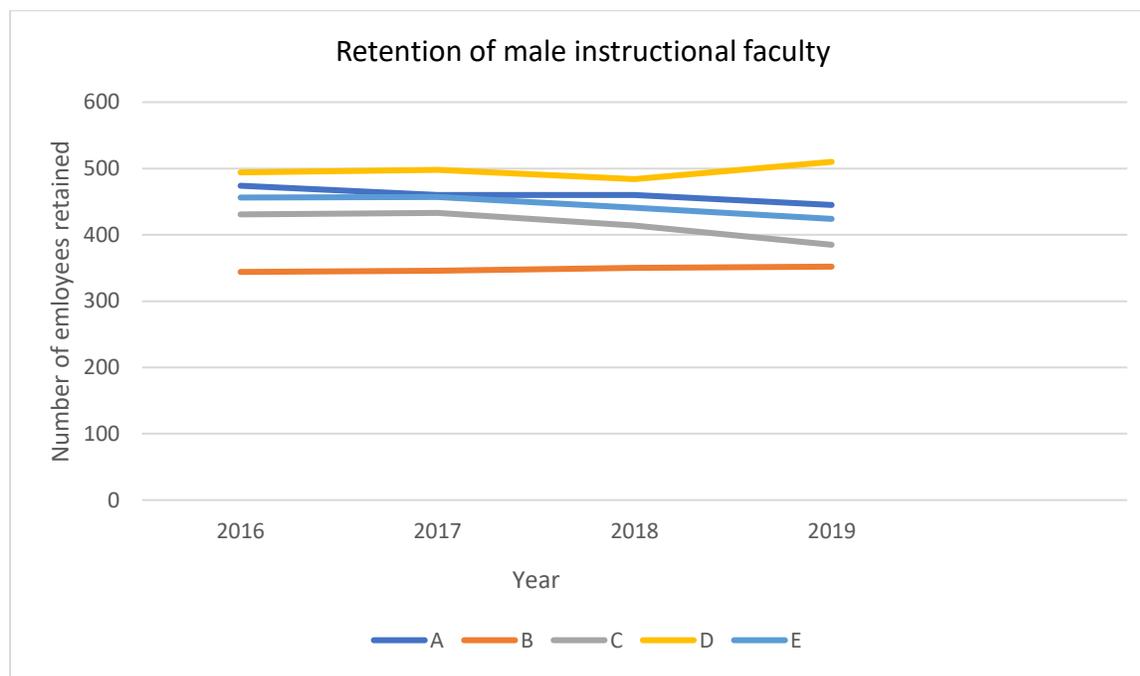


Figure 4 shows the retention of male instructional faculty from 2016 to 2019. The numbers of male instructional faculty in institution B remained almost the same over the four years, while institutions A, C, and E saw slight decreases in the numbers of male faculty retained after 2018. Following the trend of increase in institution D (see Figure 3) for all instructional faculty members, there was an increase in the number of male instructional faculty retained.

Furthermore, data in Figure 5 shows that there were slight variations for retention of female instructional faculty in institutions A, B, C, and E. In contrast, institution D saw a sharp increase after 2018, similar to patterns seen in overall retention numbers and the retention of male instructional faculty (see Figure 3 and Figure 5).

Figure 5

Retention of the number of female instructional faculty by year.

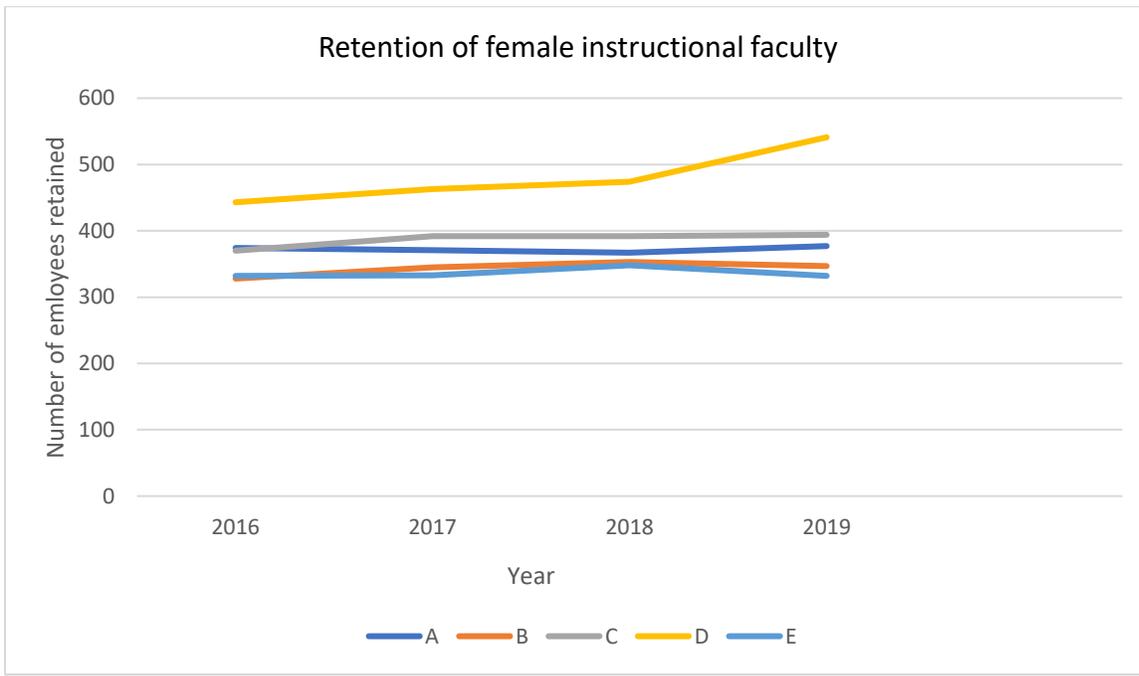
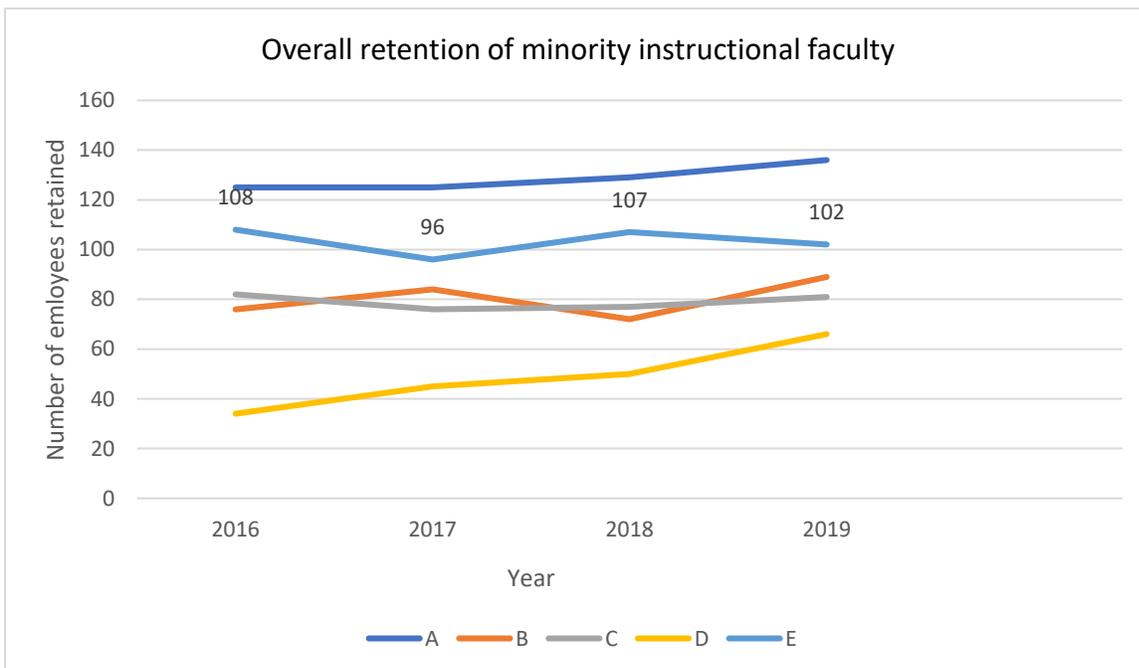


Figure 6

Retention of the number of minority instructional faculty by year.



In Figure 6, institutions A and D showed an increase in the number of minority faculty retained throughout the four-year period. Figure 6 shows that the numbers of minority instructional faculty remained consistent for institution C. On the other hand, institution B had fluctuations in numbers but showed an increase in the number of minority faculty retained from 2018 to 2019, while Institution E had a slight decrease in the numbers of minority faculty retained by the end of 2019.

Discussion

The results indicate that faculty representation within these institutions reflect trends in national data based on gender and race. Patterns of racial, ethnicity, and gender representation by ranking in the data generally align with corresponding representation trends in prior research. Comparing faculty by rank is useful for providing insight into future trends of faculty diversity (Li & Koedel, 2017). Within the five institutions, the number of tenured male faculty members represented the majority compared to tenured female faculty members (Figure 2). Figure 3 shows that Black and Hispanic/Latino instructional faculty members remain underrepresented in tenured positions. While the data does not reflect that marginalized faculty are overrepresented in tenure track and non-tenured positions, it demonstrates that Black and Hispanic/Latino faculty members are severely underrepresented at all levels of tenure within these institutions. In addition, the percentages of Black and Hispanic/Latino faculty at all levels of tenure do not proportionately represent the racial distribution in the U.S. population based on data from the U.S. Census Bureau (2019). This points towards a need for further inquiry on the tenure review process and other external factors that might impact the lack of representation in tenured faculty, especially within large, public research institutions which place high value on research work and determine the type of publications that can guarantee an individual's success within academe.

In analyzing retention rates, it is important to note that the percentage of retention rates for women faculty members tend to be higher than of male faculty members. While findings suggest that higher education institutions are moving towards a more diverse workforce, retention rates for underrepresented racial and ethnic groups within these five institutions, including Black, Hispanic/Latino, Asian, American Indian or Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander were significantly lower than the overall percentage of retention rates in three out of the five institutions. Trends in retention rates over the years 2016 to 2019 showed a decrease in overall retention rates, except for institution D, which had a surge in faculty retention. It is important to note that institution D had a larger composition of faculty to begin with compared to the other institutions, and a significant number of newly hired faculty was brought in during 2018, which may contribute to this increase. Notably, Figure 6 demonstrates a slight decrease in trends of male faculty retention in four institutions. Factors like retirement rates and employee turnover may play a role in this shift, but the number of male faculty and female faculty who are retained over the period remain mostly the same.

Subsequently, the number of minority faculty increased over time for most of these institutions, and these numbers were increasingly retained over time, pointing towards improvements in recruitment and retention of faculty within minority groups. However, distinctions and disparities within these groups are not explicitly presented within common data sets and it is difficult to identify gaps across and within racial and ethnic groups by simply looking at institutional data sets on the surface. For example, in looking at minority faculty and retention rates, underrepresented racial and ethnic groups are classified into one category, but analyzing data within these specific groups might suggest different results and provide more context on the experiences of specific racial and ethnic groups. Figure 3 offers a more in-depth

perspective of faculty composition by race and ranking, as there is a recurring pattern within the data that shows that White and Asian faculty members are overrepresented in tenured positions and other ranks. Moreover, there are unique distinctions even within these racial categories that should be acknowledged. Essentially, disaggregated data is crucial in ensuring that research and reporting are accurate and transparent, especially when it concerns racial-ethnic and gender gaps.

According to Kelly et al. (2017), attention to recruitment without commitment to fostering a welcoming and supportive environment for underrepresented faculty will lead to devastating consequences for institutions. Diversity and representation of faculty encompass a host of factors like equitable recruitment and retention practices, changing perceptions of faculty diversity, institutional culture and environment (Edwards et al., 2015), and institutions must prioritize conversations that address these factors at all levels of the institution to ensure that the underrepresented faculty are valued and retained for their contributions. Knowing that the lack of representation and retention in marginalized faculty stems from systemic issues like racism and discrimination, hostile campus environment, limited financing, lack of mentoring and support, and many other factors point towards an urgency in addressing this issue. The research demonstrates that institutions should constantly evaluate policies and practices related to recruitment and retention. Moreover, transparency is needed to foster trusting and long-term professional relationships with underrepresented faculty. Evidently, advancing DEI efforts and faculty representation requires collaboration between all members of the campus community, and various constituencies from deans and directors to students and faculty must be consulted to remove institutional barriers that hinder marginalized individuals from fully participating in the university community (Moody, 1988).

Limitations

Furthermore, not every institution has the same approach and method to reporting faculty data. This presents limitations for an in-depth study on racial and gender disparities and might cause data to be slightly skewed. On that account, data, when condensed into numbers and statistics, do not tell the whole story, and recruitment and retention rates are only the tip of the iceberg when looking at the underrepresentation of faculty as a systemic, multidimensional issue. There are several limitations of this study due to the type of data analyzed, which was based on publicly available institutional data. Using generalized statistics narrowed down the scope of the data and failed to provide information on other disparities within racial and ethnic groups. Other elements like research funding, program and field type, performance evaluations/review process, and leadership representation within these institutions were not discussed as it proved difficult to find publicly available data for such detailed information. Applying an intersectional perspective proved difficult as there was insufficient institutional data to analyze disparities within gender and racial/ethnic groups. The lack of data on LGBTQ+ individuals and other factors like socioeconomic class, disability, and so on also limited the scope of this study. This demonstrates that more in-depth, longitudinal research is needed to analyze factors that affect faculty retention and welfare within different groups. Subsequently, focusing on general data and overall retention rates is helpful in analyzing broader patterns and trends over time but does not account for the unique experiences of underrepresented faculty within these institutions. When marginalized groups are underrepresented within institutions, their interests are not proportionately represented, and empirical data limits the understanding and awareness of these unique perspectives.

Conclusion

Ultimately, this study presents a systematic analysis and review of faculty representation and retention in five conveniently sampled public Midwestern academic institutions. There is value in research on increasing faculty diversity because the retention and recruitment of marginalized faculty members bring significant impacts on the retention and graduation rates of underrepresented students in higher education, especially African American and Hispanic/Latino students (Edwards et al., 2015). The ability of diverse faculty to serve, mentor, and cater to the needs of a diverse student body will benefit institutions in every aspect, and this study implicates the importance of faculty representation and the need for more in-depth research on faculty retention and welfare. Furthermore, recognizing the contributions of marginalized groups in higher education curriculum and having a diverse faculty body leads to a positive learning experience for students and every member of the campus community. Institutions are responsible for scrutinizing policy implications and determining best practices that will benefit underrepresented faculty members and uphold positive institutional values.

Subsequently, this analysis also leads to the next set of questions that can dive deeper into the complex realities of faculty retention. As this study focuses on public research institutions, investigating grant funding and the allocation of resources for underrepresented faculty members would shed light on the tenure process and outcomes, providing possible explanations for representation within tenure positions. Moreover, research on the faculty representation in different fields and program types would lead to a better understanding of research and innovation within public institutions. Lastly, the relationship between performance reviews, student evaluations, and the success rate of underrepresented faculty members is a vital topic to be explored continuously and taking practical action steps towards addressing this issue is

necessary. Needless to say, a variety of data contributing to research areas for underrepresented groups will offer a broad array of perspectives and lead to more diverse and equitable outcomes in higher education.

Implications

The contributions within this research implicate that there is room for further examination to identify strategies and solutions to enhance the prospects for increased representation for minority faculty. This includes the dissemination of information that assists in the commitment to diversity, taking steps towards and setting long-term, sustainable goals to retain and recruit underrepresented faculty. Besides, diverse leadership boards and selection committees with intentions of equitable practices in various departments will ensure faculty diversity (Edwards et al., 2015). More practical solutions for improvement involve formal or systematic procedures in place to diversify faculty like search and selection committees, hiring pools, dialogue to discuss and address the experiences and needs of underrepresented faculty, and increased awareness and acceptance of a campus culture that celebrates and values diversity. Beyond this, there is a need for immediate action to address the lack of underrepresented faculty retention and recruitment, as annual dialogues alone can be counterproductive in allowing institutions to maintain a faux practice of valuing diversity and inclusion.

Subsequently, department chairs and deans should provide underrepresented faculty members with opportunities to offer feedback on how they perceive the campus environment and incorporate their experiences into the policymaking process to ensure equitable and inclusive work environments (Stanley, 2006). Doing so amplifies the voices of underrepresented minority faculty members and ensures that their interests are accounted for. Moreover, institutions need to be held accountable for faculty diversity by upholding transparency through a reliable reporting

system. This includes developing data management systems to track faculty diversity based on date of hire, rank, tenure track status, race and ethnicity, retention, attrition, and other factors related to the diversity climate, which will help monitor the rate of progress and identify any barriers to institutional growth and development (Stanley, 2006).

Fundamentally, if diversity is an institutional priority, espoused words must be consistent with actions and enhancing diversity and inclusion should be an essential criterion for performance evaluations of department chairs (Stanley, 2006). Additionally, allocating financial support and mentorship for faculty pursuit of social justice learning and teaching is necessary to establish the credibility of underrepresented minority faculty members and assign value to critical research areas. Next, having a deeper understanding of marginalized experiences and disparities that exist within groups is also essential for institutional equity. For example, not recognizing the struggles of women faculty and other minority groups poses a threat to retention and welfare (Thompson, 2008). While studies show that faculty diversity is gradually improving and moving towards more equitable proportions, there are formidable challenges involved in the retention of underrepresented faculty, and supporting their success requires collective and active participation in the implementation of strategies. Inarguably, efforts are in progress, but there is much more to be done in advancing institutional diversity and ensuring the retention and welfare of minority faculty.

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