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Reaffirm to Affirm: Enhancing Minority Faculty Development at the PWI

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Reaffirm to Affirm: Enhancing Minority Faculty Development at the PWI

Abstract

The objective of this roundtable discussion is to examine the preparation of minority faculty as it relates to succeeding in an academic career. Although substantial research has been conducted on faculty preparation (Gaff, 1997; Garcia, 2000, Tice, Gaff, and Pruitt-Logan, 1998), conversations fall short when it comes to ongoing success development of faculty. This discussion will focus primarily on initiatives/plans to encourage the expansion and success of minority faculty at PWI's. For the purposes of this discussion, minority faculty is defined in terms of race/ethnic and gender.

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In recent years, there has been a growing concern on the part of research scholars to understand the socialization experiences of new faculty into academic profession. Gaff and Lambert (1998) contend that prospective faculty should begin to develop professional competence in teaching, research, and professional service. Prospective faculty should also have learning experiences in the different settings in which the profession is practiced (e.g., colleges and universities with different missions, student bodies, and faculty responsibilities) as well as learn about the complexities of teaching and service in course work, workshops, and seminars.

Through the socialization process, prospective faculty learns about institutional functioning. In essence, through this process, faculty become aware of how to identify and access institutional support and thus, where their energies must be directed in order to become productive scholars. In terms of the political environment, the socialization process enables the openness of faculty collegiality for the purposes of mentoring as well as helping prospective faculty "learn the ropes" which provides support that can be extremely valuable in the professoriate.

While new and junior faculty exhibit flexibility in how they do their work, they are often frustrated by insufficient time demands, difficulty in establishing supportive collegial relationships, insufficient resources, fear of non-reappointment, and struggles in balancing work and personal life (Garcia, 2000). Given the importance of the early years of the faculty appointment combined with the documented frustrations of new faculty during these

years, questions arise regarding the effectiveness of the socialization of scholars into successful role performance, and in particular, the role of faculty (Tierney & Bensimon, 1996). This roundtable discussion seeks to provide insights into the socialization of prospective faculty members as well as new faculty in an attempt to move the academy towards preparing minorities for entering and succeeding in the professoriate.

The purpose of this roundtable discussion is to discuss strategies related to the successful transition of minority scholars into the academic profession. The goal of the session is to explore critical issues surrounding the representation of minorities in the professoriate for the purposes of defining solutions to bring about greater success for positioning new minority faculty members in the future. This discussion will focus on educational issues and challenges from three contemporary perspectives: (1) Socialization in Graduate School (Preparation for faculty roles); (2) Socialization to Academic Departments (Adjusting to the faculty role); and (3) Socialization to the Profession (Becoming a Scholar).

Presenters

Johnny D. Jones, **II**, Ed.D. is the Director of Recruitment and Retention/Higher Education Administration Faculty at Washington State University. In addition, he is the chair of the Diversity Committee, College of Education partnership liaison with Langston University and Mississippi Valley State University, and also directs the Future Teacher of Color and Future Leaders of Color Programs. Dr. Jones graduated from Mississippi Valley State University, earned his Masters degree from Springfield College in Springfield, MA and his Doctorate from Berne University, Basseterre, St. Kitts, West Indies.

Willie J. Heggins, **III**, Ph.D. is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Educational Leadership/ Counseling Psychology. Dr. Heggins is co-director of UP AL (University Partner for Academic Leadership) and the education leadership partnership with Thailand. In addition, Dr. Heggins is on the leadership team of BOT A (Brothers of the Academy). Dr. Heggins graduated from South Carolina State University, earned his Master and Doctorate degrees from Iowa State University.

Michelle Williams, M.S. is a graduate student in Higher Education Administration! Graduate Assistant in Student Services. Ms. Williams coordinates MGSO (Multicultural Graduate Student Organization) and the FTOC/FLOC programs. Ms. Williams earned her Bachelor and Master degrees from University of Illinois.