An Analysis of African-American Faculty Experiences During the Tenure Process

Date: November 8, 2018
Time: 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.
Place: South Campus, Marillac Hall, TLC Monsanto Room

Abstract
How faculty allocate their time among research, teaching, and service, and the perceived quality of that work determines whether faculty obtain tenure (Bellas & Toutkoushian, 1999; Link, Swann, & Bozeman, 2008; Price & Cotten, 2006). Prior research indicated that African American faculty comprised 4.5% of the faculty at high-activity research institutions and 3.5% of faculty at very-high-activity research institutions (The Chronicle of Higher Education Almanac 2016-2017, 2016).

The purpose of this study was to 1) document African-American faculty experiences during their tenure probationary period at PWI research institutions; 2) compare faculty experiences during the pursuit of tenure by race; 3) identify behavior that can detract from and contribute to success in promotion and tenure at PWI research institutions (information can be utilized for the benefit of all faculty as well as administration); 4) evaluate whether African-American faculty perceive any differences in their experiences when compared to the experiences of Caucasian faculty; and 5) to identify which factors, such as mentoring, may contribute to the success of African-American faculty who have obtained tenure.

The study involved 85 full-time higher education faculty. Faculty were anonymously surveyed to obtain information regarding the pursuit of tenure at their perspective institutions. Five African-American faculty members were interviewed regarding their particular experiences.

While the study results showed no statistically significant difference between the amounts of time faculty of different ethnicities spend teaching, researching, and providing service, the analysis of the information obtained was essential. Enlightenment on what it takes to be successful at PWI research institutions is necessary to maintain and increase the number of African-American faculty in the academy. An increase in African-American faculty at PWI research institutions is important because diversity of thought is a byproduct of diverse perspectives. The university is the breeding ground for exploration of knowledge. If the majority of full-time faculty remain Caucasian and male, the opportunity for diverse perspectives and points of view diminishes. People from different backgrounds and cultures bring forth different ways of viewing their environment and the world. This openness of thought and expression is a tenet of academic freedom (American Association of University Professors, n.d.a).

Defense of Dissertation Committee
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