Sister Outsider Within: Advancing Black Women Faculty at Historically Black Colleges and Universities in the US

STEM Gender Equality Congress
Berlin, Germany

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PRAIRIE VIEW A&M UNIVERSITY
25.7%  

Women comprise a little more than one-fourth of all tenured faculty in STEM at 4-year colleges and universities in the United States...

National Science Foundation, Women, Minorities, and Person’s with Disabilities, 2014
Women of color represent only 2.3 percent of the tenured or tenure track faculty and 5.1 percent of non-tenure-track faculty, despite the fact that they make up 12.5 percent of the U.S. population.

Number of STEM Faculty at HBCUs by Race, 1993 and 2006.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Women</th>
<th></th>
<th>Men</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>Black</td>
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<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>1,160</td>
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<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>1,300</td>
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<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>1,600</td>
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<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>1,400</td>
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<tr>
<td>% Change</td>
<td>+157</td>
<td>+71*</td>
<td>+25</td>
<td>+21</td>
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*A p-value of 0.05 indicates that the change is significant.

Average Number of Black Women STEM Faculty at HBCUs and Non-HBCUs.

HBCU: 1.4
Non-HBCU: 1.4

Black Women Faculty at Historically Black Colleges and Universities: Perspectives for a National Imperative
Kelly M. Mack, Claudia M. Rankins and Cynthia E. Winston
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Supporting STEM Excellence

Develop a continuum of activities that assists women faculty in their professional development and growth while retaining them within the academic and administrative ranks at HBCUs in Colleges or Schools of Engineering and Technology.
When I dare to be powerful, to use my strength in the service of my vision, then it becomes less and less important whether I am afraid. - Audre Lorde

- Establish Professoriate Affinity Communities (PAC).
- Explore the perspectives of key stakeholders (i.e. Deans, Department Chairs/Heads, etc.).
- Establish communication mechanisms for life-long engagement.
- Disseminate best practices to HBCU engineering administrators.
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Establishing Professoriate Affinity Communities (PAC)

1. Annual workshops held in Houston, Texas
2. SEED Grants to support research efforts
3. Career Coaching
4. Writing Groups

If I didn't define myself for myself, I would be crunched into other people's fantasies for me and eaten alive.  - Audre Lorde
Purpose

The SEED Grant opportunity was designed to promote research activities and provide grant writing mentoring.

The project awarded nine individual SEED Grants in 2011, four more in 2012, and one collaborative SEED Grant in 2012.

Fourteen women from nine different HBCUs were recipients of the project’s SEED Grant awards.

Outcomes

• Participants were able to start-up a new technical research emphasis or broaden current research

• Preliminary results, which were essential to getting funding, making presentations, and/or submitting paper for publication.
Purpose

Career Coaching was provided by a professional coach.

Focused on career planning and career mapping.

The eleven Career Coaching participants were from nine HBCUs.

Outcomes

• Positive impact on time management
• Helped in preparation for and in putting together packets for promotion to full professor

Only by learning to live in harmony with your contradictions can you keep it all afloat. - Audre Lorde
Purpose

The Writing Group assisted participants in their efforts to write grant proposal narratives, papers for possible publication, and other documents related to their research efforts.

Findings

• Good to have accountability for writing
• Inconsistent participation due to scheduling

When we speak we are afraid our words will not be heard or welcomed. But when we are silent, we are still afraid. So it is better to speak. — Audre Lorde
Seed Funding
- Women who received SEED Grants reported that it gave them credibility with other faculty, especially male faculty members, and opened up opportunities for collaborations.

Career Coaching
- Coaching helped position a number of the participants for promotion to full professor.

Writing Groups
- Creating schedules that work for multiple participants and connecting faculty who have common interests in research.
It is not our differences that divide us. It is our inability to recognize, accept, and celebrate those differences.

Audre Lorde