

Making It To The Top: Have Women And Minorities Attained Equality As Higher Education Leaders?

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ABSTRACT

University presidents play a major role in setting and managing the course of higher education in the U.S. In the past, females and minorities were under-represented in such positions. However, as the number of females and minorities seeking advanced degrees has increased, the number of female and minority candidates capable of applying for such positions has increased. The purpose of this investigation was to discern whether women and minorities are proportionately represented in the halls of academic leadership.

Keywords: Higher Education Leadership; University Presidents; University Presidential Salaries

INTRODUCTION

The emphasis on equality in the United States has been a key topic in social, political, and educational arenas for decades. There have been great strides made in the goals of proportional participation and equal access in higher education. Since leadership plays an important role in higher education changes, the need for diverse leaders is important.

This paper explores women and minorities in higher education leadership positions to determine if they have achieved proportional participation and/or equal pay in academic leadership positions. Specifically, this research targets university presidents - the gatekeepers of academia. Earlier research on this topic focused on participation. However, this piece goes one step further - to also include a look at compensation. The objective of this research is three-fold: 1) to determine if women and minorities are proportionately represented in university presidential positions, 2) to learn if women and minorities reach their positions at the same rate as white males, and 3) to determine if women and minorities have achieved equal pay in higher education's top positions. This research is useful in providing a look at where women and minorities are in higher education presidency positions.

The condition of women and minority participation in higher education has been widely documented. The U.S. Department of Education provides statistical information that shows how legislation and other initiatives have greatly increased the number of women and minority graduates at all levels. In the employment arena, the number of women and minorities attaining leadership positions in higher education has also increased. This paper examines where women and minorities stand in the "big picture" of higher education leadership.

METHODOLOGY & FINDINGS

This research is part of an on-going longitudinal study of university Presidents that began in Spring 2008. An attempt was made to include information from as many university presidents as possible. A variety of means were used to collect information to address the three objectives. Statistical and salary data were obtained from the US Department of Education and websites of the universities were perused. Many contained information on the presidents that allowed the three objectives to be addressed. In addition, emails to clarify or expand on the

information on the website were sent asking for the needed information to complete the study. This research will provide a look at where women and minorities stand in the higher education leadership picture.

Objective 1 was to determine if women and minorities are proportionately represented in university presidential positions. The race and gender of the presidents in both years of the study are shown in Table 1. It is interesting to note that for both Study Year 1 (SY1, n = 614) and Study Year 2 (SY2, n = 833), the percentage of males (84%) to females (16%) was the same.

Table 1: Percentage of University Presidents by Race and Gender for Study Years (SY) 1 & 2

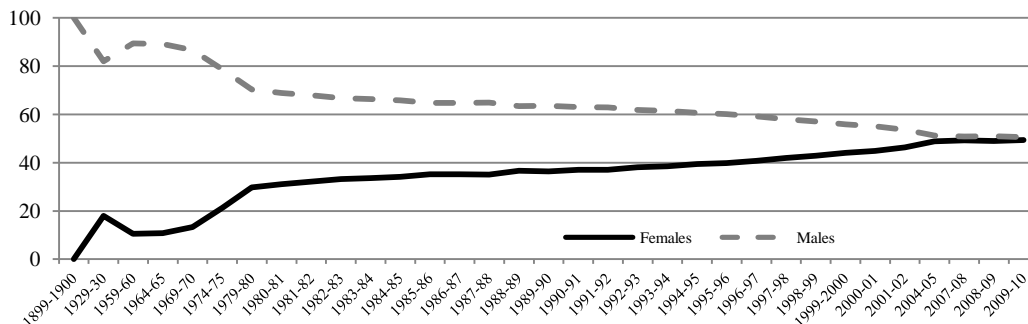
n=614						n=833					
Race	% of Total	Academic Year 2007/2008				Race	% of Total	Academic Year 2012/2013			
		Males	%	Females	%			Males	%	Females	%
White	85.2%	444	72.3%	79	12.9%	White	85.1%	594	85.3%	115	83.9%
African-American	10.6%	52	8.5%	13	2.1%	African-American	10.0%	69	9.9%	14	10.2%
Hispanic	2.0%	8	1.3%	4	0.7%	Hispanic	1.7%	10	1.4%	4	2.9%
Native American	0.5%	3	0.5%		0.0%	Native American	0.4%	3	0.4%		
Other	1.8%	10	1.6%	1	0.2%	Other	2.9%	20	2.9%	4	2.9%
TOTAL		517		97		TOTAL		696		137	

Further, an additional analysis between Private and Public universities in SY2 yielded similar results for both gender and white/minority comparisons, which is indicated in Table 2.

Table 2: Percentage of University Presidents by Race and Gender and Type of University SY2

Gender (n=833)	Total	Public	%	Private	%
FEMALES	137	68	17%	69	16%
MALES	696	340	83%	356	84%
TOTAL	833	408		425	
Race (n=833)	Total	Public	%	Private	%
White	85.0%	335	82.1%	373	87.8%
African-American	10.1%	46	11.3%	38	8.9%
Hispanic	1.7%	10	2.5%	4	0.9%
Native American	0.4%	2	0.5%	1	0.2%
Other	2.9%	15	3.7%	9	2.1%
TOTAL		408		425	

In this study, while the percentages of females and minorities who achieved the position of university president were considerably lower than those of white males, it is necessary to look at the historical data of higher education to get the full picture. Women and minority participation lagged significantly behind white males in the early years of higher education's history. As a result, their participation in post-graduate studies, which is a requirement for almost all seeking to earn a presidential post, also got a later start. For example, a statistical illustration provided by the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) shows that women did not begin earning doctoral degrees until the late 1800s (see Graph 1). However, females (51.7%) now earn more doctoral degrees than males (48.3%).



Graph 1: Percentage of Doctoral Degrees Earned in the Higher Education by Gender

Source: National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES)

Table 3 indicates the divide between minority and white doctoral degree attainment for the three academic years - 1999-2000, 2004-2005, and 2009-2010. As indicated in Table 3, the number of doctoral degrees conferred on Blacks, Hispanics, Asians, and Native Americans during this time period increased. As an example, the number of Blacks receiving doctoral degrees increased some 47% in the ten-year time period.

Table 3: Number and Percentage Change in Doctoral Degrees Conferred to U.S. Residents: Academic Years 1999-2000, 2004-2005, and 2009-2010

	NUMBER			PERCENTAGE			PERCENT CHANGE
	1999-2000	2004-05	2009-10	1999-2000	2004-05	2009-10	
TOTAL	106,494	118,369	140,505	100	100	100	31.94
White	82,984	89,763	104,426	77.92	75.83	74.32	25.84
Black	7,080	8,527	10,417	6.65	7.20	7.41	47.13
Hispanic	5,039	6,115	8,085	4.73	5.17	5.75	60.45
Asian/Pacific Islander	10,684	13,176	16,625	10.03	11.13	11.83	55.61
Am. Indian/Alaska Native	707	788	952	0.66	0.67	0.68	34.65

Source: U.S. Department of Education, NCES, IPEDS, "Completions Survey" (IPEDS-C:99); and Fall 2000, Fall 2005, and Fall 2010, Completions component.

To provide further insight on women and minority participation, Objective 2 of this study was to determine if females and minorities reach their positions of university president at the same rate as white males. While there has not been a "clear-cut" path to a presidency, one known fact is that the path requires candidates to have a proven record of experience through many years of academic, professional, and/or military service. Therefore, this study looked at the number of years from the president's terminal degree to their first presidency. Both the year of terminal degree attainment and year of first presidential post were found for 485 of the presidents in this study. Table 4 indicates the number of years from terminal degree attainment to the appointment for those in the study.

Table 4: Average Time from Terminal Degree Attainment to First Presidency

Race	% of Total	Males	82.5%	Females	17.5%
		Count	Years	Count	Years
White	85.6%	344	22.9	71	22.8
African-American	10.7%	42	19.6	10	22.1
Hispanic	1.6%	6	24.8	2	21.0
Other	2.1%	8	21.8	2	32.5
TOTAL		400	22.57	85	22.93

White (22.8 years), African American (22.1 years), and Hispanic (21.0 years) females in presidential positions all achieved their presidencies in less time than their white male counterparts. Arguably, white females and white males earned their presidency in relatively the same time. So, while the number of females and minorities may not yet be proportionately represented, they are currently achieving such appointments at a quicker pace than their white male counterparts. African-American and Hispanic females are reaching presidential status approximately one year quicker than white males, which is similar to a finding in an earlier study (Wallace et al., 2009).

The goal of Objective 3 was to determine if women and minorities have achieved equal pay in higher education's top positions. For SY2, average salaries were calculated for both gender and race and differentiated by type of institution. The results of this study indicate that for the public sector, there are no significant wage gaps between males (\$396,361) and females (\$386,442) (see Table 5). Also, when analyzing race differences, African-Americans (\$400,342) out-earn white presidents (394,483) by an average of \$6,000. The private sector produced the largest average compensation gaps between males (\$558,153) and females (\$454,079).

Table 5: Average Salaries by Gender, Race, and Type of Institution

AVERAGE SALARIES BY GENDER & TYPE OF INSTITUTION						AVG. DIFF.
(n=272)	TOTAL	PUBLIC	COUNT	PRIVATE	COUNT	PUB./PRI.
FEMALES	49 (18%)	386,442	19	454,079	30	67,637
MALES	223 (82%)	396,361	86	558,153	137	161,792
TOTAL	272	\$ 9,919		\$ 104,074		\$ 94,155
AVERAGE SALARIES BY RACE & TYPE OF INSTITUTION						AVG. DIFF.
(n=272)	TOTAL	PUBLIC	COUNT	PRIVATE	COUNT	PUB./PRI.
White	89.3%	394,483	91	541,097	152	146,614
African-American	8.1%	400,342	10	504,252	12	103,910
Other	2.6%	382,035	4	597,171	3	215,136
AVERAGE		\$ 392,287		\$ 547,507		\$ 155,220

CONCLUSION

Throughout the years, there have been many theories to explain gender compensation inequity, including women leaving career tracks in lieu of more family time, risk aversion behaviors of women, perceptions of hostile work environments, an unwillingness of females to mentor other women, and discriminatory pay practices (Luna & Medina, 2006). However, the method employed to examine participants in this study provides a different understanding to the current inequities in presidential positions. This approach calculates the number of years that it took for individuals to proceed through the academic pipeline, achieving their first presidential position after receiving the terminal degree.

For both years of the study, percentage of males and females remained the same (84%, 16%), even after widening the study to include additional participants for SY2 (833; SY1 = 614). Further, in SY2, white Presidents represented 85% of the participants, while minorities represented 15%. However, when taking into consideration the average time from terminal degree to presidency, women and men are experiencing similar results in average years. Further, the combined average of years from terminal degree to presidency was 22.63. The percentage of male (63%) and female doctoral degree attainment (37%) 22 years ago illustrates that the gender inequities in presidential positions can be largely explained by the fact that males were attaining doctoral degrees at a greater rate. In the future, the gap between males and females should equalize and women presidencies should become more common because women now surpass men in doctoral degree attainment.

For minority groups, the percent of degree attainment and presidential attainment presents a different picture. For instance, 22 years ago, African Americans represented only 3% of doctoral degree holders. In the present study, they accounted for 10% of presidents. Hispanics represented doctoral attainment at 2% of the higher education community and they represented 1.7% of presidents. Native Americans, with only 0.3% doctorates 22 years ago, can count themselves among .4% of presidents today (Wallace et al., 2009). So, among minority populations, one could argue that minority presidents are proportionately represented.

Finally, this study reveals that males are out-earning females in both public and private sectors, with a larger gap being in the private sector. However, when examining race, African Americans have the highest average income in the public sector and presidents, who were both non-white and non-African American, represented the highest average salaries in the private sector. Additional research could shed more light on the situation by providing an analysis of salary comparisons through rankings of universities and also exploring additional professional information about university presidents. Further examination of current and future presidents can paint a picture of not only where women and minorities stand, but what it takes for them to achieve these top positions in higher education.

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