

Understanding Interventions That Encourage Minorities to Pursue Research Careers: Setting the Context

Orlando L. Taylor
Vice Provost for Research
Graduate Dean
Howard University
otaylor@howard.edu

Why Care About Increased Diversity in the Research Community?

■ Some Obvious Points

- Research resides at the core of American leadership in creativity and innovation.
- In view of the declining presence of international students and scholars and the simultaneous rise in the % of American minorities (and women), the US cannot retain its global leadership unless it attracts FAR more individuals from these groups to the research community.
- Increasing Diversity means that we MUST attract , RETAIN and GRADUATE more persons from these groups in PhD and Postdoctoral programs for research facilities and for faculty members in the nation's colleges and universities.

Thus, the Reasons for Commitment to Diversity in the Research Community

- Fulfillment of the American Dream.
- Meeting Workforce Needs.
- Contributing diverse perspectives on research priorities, research methodologies, data analyses and interpretations, and dissemination to wider audiences.
- Enhancing the talents of White and Male researchers.

Low Ph.D. Production Correlated with Low Faculty Representation

- Is there an “Empty” or a “Leaky” Pipeline Problem.
- In 2005, there were 43,354 doctorates awarded; 26,312 to US Citizens and Permanent Residents.
- But only 139 (.3%) to Native Americans; 1493 (3.4%) to Asian Americans; 1688 (3.9%) to African Americans; and 1294 (3.0%) to Hispanics: Total=10.6%
- Yet, African Americans earn about 9.1% of baccalaureate degrees; Hispanics 6.7%; Asian Americans 5.7%; and Native Americans .8%; Total=22.3%.
- We could more than double doctoral production.
- Minorities even fewer among the 45,000+ Postdocs.

Possible Strategies for Reducing Barriers

- Strengthen Mentoring for research careers—beginning at the UNDERGRADUATE level: Too few minorities engaged in undergraduate research. Attention to TYPE of financial support.
- Re-envision the PhD such that adequate research preparation is built into PhD education while reducing the expectation for a postdoc to pursue a research career.
- Consider creating innovative hiring models that combine a pre-appointment postdoc at the hiring institution before effecting a regular (tenure track) academic or research appointment.
- Address the perception by some minorities that the research “game” (research priorities and publication priorities) is dominated by an *old boy* and an *old school* network where minorities are not members. Stereotype threat???
- Aggressively seek to increase faculty diversity, especially at research universities.
- Pay attention to the interaction between gender& race/ethnicity