

*More Rivers to Cross:*  
A Report on the Status of  
African American Professors  
at Penn State University (UP)  
Part 1

January 20, 2020

*“No, no, we are not satisfied, and we will not be satisfied until justice rolls down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream.”*

*Dr. Martin Luther King, 1963*

## **Preface**

On April 4, 1968 in Memphis, Tennessee, Dr. Martin Luther King was assassinated. Commemoratively, on Tuesday, April 4, 2019 more than a half-century later, a group exceeding 50 Black Penn State professors along with others convened on the University Park campus for a forum entitled, *“An Afternoon With African American Faculty at Penn State: More Rivers to Cross.”* The primary aim of this gathering was to discuss issues and concerns related to their status and equitable representation in the academy (Appendix A).<sup>1</sup> This conclave represented a broad cross-section of faculty by discipline, rank, and tenure. The meeting was also attended by the State Conference President, Dr. Joan Duvall Flynn, of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the oldest and most prominent civil rights organization in the nation. A major presentation focused on the number of Black professors at Penn State and the lack of diversity among its faculty. Other salient issues discussed included the cultural climate, student evaluation of teaching, promotion and tenure issues, and additionally, the experiences, mentorship, retention, and acceptance of Black undergraduate and graduate students.

Prior to this meeting, appearing in the student newspaper, *The Daily Collegian*, were three editorials written by Black professors focusing on the paucity and plight of African American faculty at Penn State (Appendix B). Additionally, individual groups of African American faculty were meeting informally to discuss various topics related to their presence and status on campus.

The history of African American faculty at Penn State is fairly recent. Although the first Black student, Calvin Waller, entered Penn State in 1899 more than 40 years after it was founded, the first full-time African American professor, Mary E. Godfrey, was not hired until 1956 as an assistant professor of art education.<sup>2</sup> Charles T. Davis began service in 1961 as an associate professor and became the first Black professor promoted with tenure to full professor in 1963.<sup>3</sup>

The progress beyond these inaugural achievements has been exceedingly slow and devoid of a sustained commitment across departments and colleges. While Dr. King’s tragic death in 1968 ushered in an era of increased enrollment of Black students in most predominately White universities and colleges across the nation, Penn State was among those institutions that failed to live up to the dream. In 1976, 35 African Americans held faculty positions at Penn State representing less than 1% of the entire faculty. By 1982, this number had increased to 38 Black faculty or 1.16%. The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette ran a front page “special report” entitled “Not No. 1” in February of 1983 citing the low number of African American students (2.5%) and faculty

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<sup>1</sup> The terms African American and Black are used interchangeably throughout this report.

<sup>2</sup> [http://blackhistory.psu.edu/timeline/mary\\_e.\\_godfrey\\_first\\_negro\\_full-time\\_faculty\\_member](http://blackhistory.psu.edu/timeline/mary_e._godfrey_first_negro_full-time_faculty_member)

<sup>3</sup> [http://blackhistory.psu.edu/timeline/charles\\_t.\\_davis\\_joins\\_the\\_faculty\\_as\\_associate\\_professor\\_of\\_english](http://blackhistory.psu.edu/timeline/charles_t._davis_joins_the_faculty_as_associate_professor_of_english)

(1.2%) at Penn State.<sup>4</sup> Shortly thereafter the publishers strongly rebuked the University in an editorial noting that it was “woefully behind” and “far below state and national averages” and that numbers of black faculty have even fallen “over the past six years” (Appendix C).<sup>5</sup>

In 1969, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania was “found to be one of 10 states operating a racially segregated system in higher education”.<sup>6</sup> In response to the 1969 court order to desegregate and to fulfill the mandates of Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, the university was included in the “Pennsylvania’s 1983-1988 Desegregation Plan” to increase the enrollment of Black students and faculty. Some 10 years post the 1988 Plan, the “Framework to Foster Diversity 1998-2003” was introduced as part of the university’s strategic plan with a similar purpose. For all practical purposes this report assesses what has transpired since the 1998-2003 strategic plan to hire and maintain Black faculty at the UP campus.

It must be also be noted that Black students have also played an important role in advocating for increased representation of African Americans in the classrooms and research labs of Penn State. In fact, their documented concerns date back as far as 1948 and there has been a cyclical pattern of Black student protests (1968, 1979, 1988 and 2001).<sup>7</sup> Almost 20 years ago, members of the Black Caucus, along with their supporters held a number of meetings and demonstrations that evolved into a ten day campus occupation of the Hub-Robeson Center, known as “*The Village*”, during the spring semester of 2001. These actions were a pivotal set of events receiving widespread local, state, and national attention and culminating in a negotiated University endorsed agreement called, *A Plan to Enhance Diversity at Penn State*. The bold and courageous activism of these students still resonates with many faculty and staff who supported their cause.

Approximately 7 years ago, the Forum on Black Affairs (FOBA), an organization of black faculty and staff, published a report entitled the, *2013 Status of Black Faculty and Staff at the Pennsylvania State University* (Appendix D). As noted, this document was an extension of previous reports written in 1981, 1999, and 2000 on the “status of Black People at Penn State” and presented “four challenges that Black faculty, staff, and administrators at Penn State face”:

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<sup>4</sup> Pittsburgh Post-Gazette: Special Report by Barbara White Stack, p.1, February 23, 1983

<sup>5</sup> Pittsburgh Post-Gazette Editorial, p. 6. March 1, 1983

<sup>6</sup> The Effects of Public Policy Conflicts and Resource Allocation Decisions on Higher-Education Desegregation Outcomes in Pennsylvania by James B. Stewart (2001). In “The Quest for Equity in Higher Education: Toward New Paradigms in an Evolving Affirmative Action Era” by Lindsay, Beverly, Justiz, Manuel J., Editors, State University of New York Press pp. 63-98.

<sup>7</sup> In 2002, Robin E. Hoecker, a former student in the Department of African and African American Studies wrote an honors thesis surveying the history of black faculty, staff, and students entitled, [The Black And White Behind The Blue And White: A History Of Black Student Protests At Penn State](#). This work is a valuable chronology of the journey of African Americans at Penn State and from “whence we came”.

Challenge 1 - Overcoming Stagnation; Authors found that the growth of Black faculty at Penn State has been less than 1 percent in over 30 years in relation to the growth in the total number of faculty.

Challenge 2 - Increasing Representation of Blacks in Senior Leadership Roles: Without a constant increase and retention of Black faculty and staff at Penn State, there is no clear mechanism for career advancement, and for promoting faculty and staff to senior-administrative positions.

Challenge 3 - Reporting and Implications: More transparency is needed in reporting data regarding promotion and tenure of Black faculty as well as reporting the promotion of Black staff.

Challenge 4 - Changing the Reality of the Black Experience at Penn State: Numerous faculty and staff indicated experiences of racial/ethnic bias, which were obstacles to career advancement opportunities. The most consistent challenge was a feeling of isolation, due to the small number of Black faculty and staff, and the constant need to re-educate non-ethnically diverse groups about racial issues.

A number of recommendations to address these specific issues were submitted as part of their report. It is not known if or how the University responded.

With respect to these important matters, African American professors at Penn State are not alone in addressing and bringing them to the attention of those within and without the university. For example, a recent document produced by an independent group of Latino faculty at the University of Texas at Austin entitled, *Hispanic Equity Report*, is instructive and aptly resonates.<sup>8</sup>

The present report is an extension of the longstanding concerns of African American faculty, students, and others at Penn State and beyond regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion and evolves directly from the forum of “*An Afternoon with African American Faculty at Penn State*” of 2019. As such, it is yet another clarion call to the University administration to review seriously and to respond affirmatively and manifestly to these issues. While some notable progress has been achieved, it is far short of the principled “All In” declaration of President Eric Barron and his predecessors and reinforces the evidence-based assessment that there are still, *More Rivers to Cross*.

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<sup>8</sup> [https://www.academia.edu/40680567/HISPANIC\\_EQUITY\\_REPORT-\\_UNIVERSITY\\_OF\\_TEXAS\\_AT\\_AUSTIN](https://www.academia.edu/40680567/HISPANIC_EQUITY_REPORT-_UNIVERSITY_OF_TEXAS_AT_AUSTIN)

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## Introduction

African Americans represent 10.6% of the 12,813,969 persons residing in the state of Pennsylvania.<sup>9</sup> According to the Penn State Factbook of 2019, 4.1% of the student body at the UP campus enrolling 46,723 individuals were African American.<sup>10</sup> An accurate enumeration of Black professors at the UP campus requires an analysis based on their status, tenure, administrative roles, and distribution across campuses over a 15 year period between 2004-2018. Additionally, the cultural climate and challenges that African American as well as other faculty of color face at Penn State with respect to bias and systemic obstacles deserves a robust and candid discussion. Each of these aims is related to the “*All In at Penn State: A Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion*” declaration recognizing “the value of having a diverse faculty” of which we fully subscribe.<sup>11</sup> As exemplified by this report, we are also committed to the principle of equity in the pursuit of knowledge, pedagogy, and service to students and the Commonwealth.

This report attempts to advance these aims using both official University and non-University sources and is presented in two separate editions. The present edition (Part 1) includes three separate sections. Section 1.0 presents an overview of some general issues and dynamics of race and racism that Black scholars encounter in the academy at all levels, disciplines, and phases of tenure. This contextual discussion is based on the literature and has clear and direct relevance to black professors at the University Park (UP) campus and beyond.

Section 2.0 of this report provides an in-depth analysis of the number and distribution of African American professors on the UP campus between 2004-2018 according to professorial rank and tenure status, gender.

Section 3.0 presents an analysis of the enumeration of faculty in UP colleges. In addition, a separate analysis of African American professors who appeared on departmental websites provides a current representation prior to the Fall Semester of 2019.

Section 4.0 presents two major statements about the shortcomings and biases of student evaluation of teaching affecting Black and other faculty of color by two academic bodies: 1) the Penn State University Faculty Senate; and 2) the American Sociological Association and more than 15 other professional academic organizations. This section also includes a detailed review of the literature on the use of student evaluation of teaching and the intrinsic biases affecting Black professors.

Though the present analysis is limited to the University Park campus we surmise that the findings are not dissimilar from the satellite Penn State campuses especially as it relates to the lack of Black faculty and related challenges. An additional report (Part 2) is forthcoming based on the input of Black faculty and students and in consultations with organizations and others.

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<sup>9</sup> Source: The American Community Survey, 2019

<sup>10</sup> Source: Penn State Office of Planning and Assessment, *Penn State Factbook*.

<sup>11</sup> Source: “What is All?” <http://allin.psu.edu/faq.html>

## 1.0 Black Faculty at Predominately White Institutions (PWI) of Higher Learning

*"I insist on bearing witness to Black pain and suffering at PWIs because the deniers are out there. We are told that what we know in our very bodies to be true isn't credible. This is a different kind of violence, the epistemic kind" (Yancy, 2019).*

Increasing the diversity of US college and university faculty has been the subject of longstanding national discussions and debates. Since the civil rights movement, several national and local programs have been launched to advance the diversity of faculty. However, the percentage of African American faculty has remained disappointingly low. According to the Chronicle of Education's analysis of the demographics of more than 400,000 professors at institutions across all Carnegie classifications, 75 out of every 100 full-time faculty members at four-year colleges are White, 10 are Asian, 5 are Black, 4 are Hispanic, and .4 are Native American (Myers, 2016b).

At large flagship state universities, in particular, the diversity of faculty is far lower than that of the student body (Myers, 2016a). Wilson (2016) and Brown (2016a) report that as student populations are growing more diverse, students are pressing universities to hire more minority faculty members. Flaherty (2015) notes, however, that increasing the representation of African American faculty is challenging because few Black students are pursuing doctoral degrees given climate concerns and the attractive jobs in corporate businesses and industry. Moreover, some argue that the reason most academic departments lack faculty of color is not that they cannot find any, but rather because they lack the will to hire any (De La Torre, 2018; Gasman, 2016). Gasman (2016) maintains that faculty search committees are a major part of the problem because they are not trained in recruitment, are rarely diverse in makeup, and are often more interested in hiring people who look and act just like them rather than expanding the diversity of their department: "They reach out to those they know for recommendations and rely on ads in national publications. And, even when they do receive a diverse group of applicants, often those applicants 'aren't the right fit' for the institution." Often, the search committee points to the Black candidates' lack of "quality" because they did not obtain a Ph.D. from an elite institution or were not mentored by a prominent person in the field. Moreover, when faculty from under-represented groups are hired, it is frequently the case that retention is low and career advancement and promotion are stymied. Faculty from under-represented groups find that on top of the usual demands on research, service, and teaching, they have to work to fit in culturally (Brown, 2016a).

In the following sections, we describe some of the significant challenges experienced by Black faculty that reduce their representation in the academy and their progression through the tenure ranks. Professorial status is a challenging vocation. Although all faculty regardless of race, ethnicity or gender are expected to excel professionally, an unwritten rule is that Black professors should do so without complaining about racism, discrimination or systematic bias. The experiences of African American men and women as professors bear considerable notice as

it contrasts substantially with those of their non-Black peers. Research shows that teaching, research, service, and even presenting at conferences are a different experience for Black faculty. For example, during the tenure process, senior faculty members do not have the expertise to assess the interdisciplinary research upon which minority scholars often focus on (Brown, 2016a). Also, the tenure process usually does not account for the extra service and mentoring work that Black professors shoulder (Brown, 2016a; 2016b). In this section, we intend to foster a more vigorous dialogue around institutional racism and exclusionary practices.

### **Being Twice as Good**

African American professors feel that they cannot be “average” if they want to earn tenure and promotion. An anecdote repeated by African American elders is that they have to be “twice as good as Whites” to get the jobs that Whites did not even want. Nothing should be handed to you and using external forces like racism to explain away your underachievement is not acceptable.

This belief of Black faculty and an implied demand by others that they have to work harder and achieve more than their majority peers is burdensome and stressful. It places them under constant pressure to be exceedingly productive and heightens the visibility of color, especially when there is only one Black faculty member in the department. Underachievement can become a stand-in for the limitations of the entire race and the bearer of this burden must continuously prove that they are worthy of their faculty appointment and not merely an “opportunity hire.” Being twice as good also means that Black professors must take responsibility and persist, even in the face of perceived racism and the feelings of isolation that go along with being the only person or one of a few of your “race” on the faculty (Brown, 2016a).

Being “twice as good,” however, does little to protect against race-based exclusion and its associated mental toll. Black faculty report being ignored, treated with contempt and disinterest, and being excluded from research and leadership roles at their respective universities (Brown, 2016a; Jackson, 2015). African American faculty are often excluded from the informal social networks and decision-making process that their white peers are often privy. They receive fewer opportunities for collaborative research, which diminishes their rate of publications and research grants (National Science Foundation, 2015). Research also shows that Black professors at PWIs endure additional challenges such as isolation from colleagues, biased critiques and lower evaluations of their classroom effectiveness, lower pay than their White counterparts, marginalization of their research, and less mentoring (Guillory, 2015). In academe, Black scholars work in a context where they are consistently made aware of their status as an under-represented and undervalued scholar and the marginalization that this engenders. One often has to act as if these differences do not matter. Many Black faculty at Penn State feel unsupported and blocked in their careers. Some cited heads of departments and deans who actively discouraged them from applying for promotions. Others describe an exclusive system in which White colleagues “co-sign each other’s applications, share each other’s teaching content, and support one another” (Sian, 2019).



### **Performing While Black**

In a study of faculty experiences of present research at scholarly venues, McGee and Kazembe (2016) found that Black faculty were racially stereotyped at work and were expected to entertain and perform for colleagues in ways that were not expected of their White counterparts. Black faculty reported that audiences critiqued or questioned their research as not being sufficiently objective and rigorous, their appearance as being unprofessional or “ethnic”. Such experiences have made a majority of respondents sacrifice vital parts of their identity to avoid criticism or to avoid being called upon to entertain White colleagues. This hostile environment not only blocks talented and gifted Black faculty from rising through the ranks, but it is mentally taxing and forces many of these faculty to leave the profession altogether.

### **Invisible Labor and Cultural Taxation**

Many faculty of color experience an additional service burden as universities seek to diversify their student bodies, staff, faculty, and administration. Deans may unintentionally place higher service burdens on their faculty when they assign Black faculty to committee work that requires a plurality of perspectives. In this setting, Black faculty share the burden of educating their colleagues and students about systems of inequality. This labor is largely under-appreciated and unrecognized during annual performance evaluations and in the tenure and promotion process.

African American faculty also do a disproportionate amount of service work such as mentoring and advising students and junior faculty, serving as a faculty advisor for campus clubs along with service on committees. The few Black faculty on campus engage in the hidden work of protecting Black students. This is an immense responsibility for Black faculty that White colleagues do not shoulder (Perry, 2016). While pressing and necessary, service work presents a significant obstacle to the promotion and retention of Black faculty. This obligation is particularly troublesome for the Black women, the “maids of academe”, who are often overextended and undervalued (Harley, 2008). Harley (2008) notes that Black women report being repeatedly overlooked for promotion, regularly confused for administrative staff, and unsupported by other colleagues, including other women. While Baez (2000) contends that faculty of color can use service work as a site for social justice efforts that promote the success of racial minorities in the academy, this leaves precious little time for the research that will earn promotion and tenure.

Grollman (2015) argues that the invisible labor of African American faculty reflects a cultural taxation: “the pressure faculty members of color feel to serve as role models, mentors, even surrogate parents to minority students, and to meet every institutional need for ethnic representation.” Students of color face a constellation of issues such as economic pressures; they are often intergenerationally the first in their families to attend college; and racially hostile classrooms and unwelcoming environments for learning and living. The institution does not value the mentoring that goes into supporting these students, but Black students actively seek out same-raced professors to listen and to offer advice.

## **Racial Battle Fatigue**

The minuscule number of African American faculty serving as life coaches, surrogate parents, and financial planners to Black students have many negative impacts on their mental health and wellbeing. There are few tenured African American faculty who might serve as role models and mentors to Black junior faculty and students. Black students studying at predominantly White institutions may not have a single Black professor during their undergraduate experience due to the dearth of Black faculty. When negative racialized experiences occur on campus, these students often seek out African American faculty for comforting and counseling and reassurance. *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education* (2019), for instance, tracks campus racial incidents ranging from racially themed parties, name calling, racial slurs on social media, and physical attacks. These incidents take an emotional toll on Black faculty and contribute to feelings of social isolation and emotional pain.

In 1970, the distinguished psychiatrist Chester Pierce coined the term microaggressions to refer to the subtle and less obvious forms of offensive behavior, either directly or indirectly, intended to subordinate or denigrate members of racial and ethnic minority groups. Microaggressions have been described by others as brief and commonplace daily verbal behavioral or environmental indignities (whether intentional or unintentional). These subtle actions communicate hostility, insensitivity and negativity to an individual or group (Sue, 2010; Sue et al., 2008). Smith (2004) employed the term “racial battle fatigue” to describe the physical and psychological toll taken due to perceptions of unceasing discrimination and microaggressions. While studying how racialized microaggressions affected Black students at PWIs, he (2004) found that experiences with chronically unsafe and hostile campus environments can trigger severe mental health disorders.

Further microaggressions, though quite real, are by their very nature evidential to the recipients; they are not always verifiable as official complaints of bias and discrimination. Racial battle fatigue sets in as Black faculty struggle to navigate majority White institutions, anticipate and avoid cultural clashes to fit in, and maintain scholarly productivity while at the same time they are called upon to mentor African American students who are protesting issues that they perceive as dangerous, widespread, and often ignored. Such stress goes beyond the confines of the campus, crippling a Black professor’s ability to hold together their work, family, and social lives. Wingfield (2015) argues that being a Black professor at a PWI can be more miserable than being a Black student at one because faculty remain with the institution for a longer time and are more vested in efforts to improve campus climate. Black faculty bottle up personal and professional attacks on them and their scholarship, which leads to stress and attrition (Perry, 2016).

**Summary:** Penn State, as with many other predominately White institutions of higher learning, is severely challenged to address the issues of racism and equity within the academy. The experiences documented in this report by African American professors are similar to those encountered by Black faculty at Penn State and demonstrate that racialized encounters are systemic and must not be cast off as “one-off” incidents. African American faculty are particularly impacted by the history of institutional intransigence and a culture of “benign

neglect”, which influences their professional satisfaction and emotional well-being as well as advancement and retention. One of the ancillary consequences is the negative effect on Black students and African American communities within Pennsylvania as well as their perceptions and views about Penn State as a welcoming and wholesome environment.

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## 2.0 Census of African American Professors at Penn State University (UP)

This section of the report presents an analysis of data from multiple sources of the patterns and trends of African American professors at Penn State University Park (UP) campus over a 15-year period between 2004-2018.<sup>12</sup> The Penn State University Factbook reports that in 2004, there were 2,608 full-time faculty employed on the UP campus and by 2018 this figure had increased by one-third to 3,474. An enumeration provided by the Penn State Office of Planning and Assessment states that in 2004 there were 2,977 UP professors and 3,822 in 2018 representing an increase of 28.4%.<sup>13</sup>

Accurate data on the trends and the absolute number of Black faculty is critical as their representation indicates the degree of adherence to the University principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion and attainment of goals espoused by the administration. Included in this section are the most current available data on the number, tenure and rank, and distribution of Black professors at UP and is divided into 4 components: 1) Pattern and Trends of Black Professors; 2) Tenure and Rank; 3) Professorial Rank and Gender; and 4) African American Representation in Specific College Faculty.

According to data from the Penn State Office of Planning and Assessment, it would appear that there were 109 professors at UP in 2004 who were classified as Black or African American. Fifteen years later, in 2018 the number of Black faculty had seemingly increased to 112 representing a net increase of just 3 professors or 2.8% (Table 1). In actuality however, the actual count of Black faculty is artificially inflated and misleading because according to the Office of Planning and Assessment, **“For 2018, with the implementation of a new human resource information system, post-doctoral scholars and fellows were reclassified from part-time to full-time.”** It is not clear how many of the 2018 post-doctoral scholars and fellows were African American. This administrative adjustment has a greater effect, both statistically and pragmatically, on smaller groups of faculty and thus misrepresents the number of Black professors on the UP campus in 2018. Further, post-doctoral scholars and fellows are temporal and unlikely to have a major impact on classroom teaching, mentoring or be substantively involved in departmental affairs and service to the university.

**Table 1**

**Number of African American Professors at UP: 2004-2018**

Year	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Professors	109	115	102	106	102	103	101	106	98	101	101	108	116	110	112

Source: Modified numbers from the Penn State Office of Planning and Assessment: 2004-2018

<sup>12</sup> The sources include: data from the Penn State Office of Planning and Assessment; Penn State Fact Books 2004-2018; The Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) of the National Center for Education Statistics collects data annually from colleges and university on faculty, student, and institutional characteristics. Penn State University Park information on faculty by race and ethnicity is accessible via this database.

<sup>13</sup> The faculty in the Penn State Law School, which is located on the University Park campus, are not included in these tabulations or the analysis in this Report.

Table 2 presents data on the number of African American faculty based on the Penn State Factbook, 2004-2018. For each year the number of Black professors is lower than the data from the Office of Planning and Assessment. In particular, there is a difference of 9 faculty (8.7%) in 2018. Taking the unadjusted and more accurate institutional figure of 103, the percentage of African American professors actually decreased from 105 in 2004 to 103 in 2018 representing a net loss of 2 professors or a negative percentage difference of -1.9%.

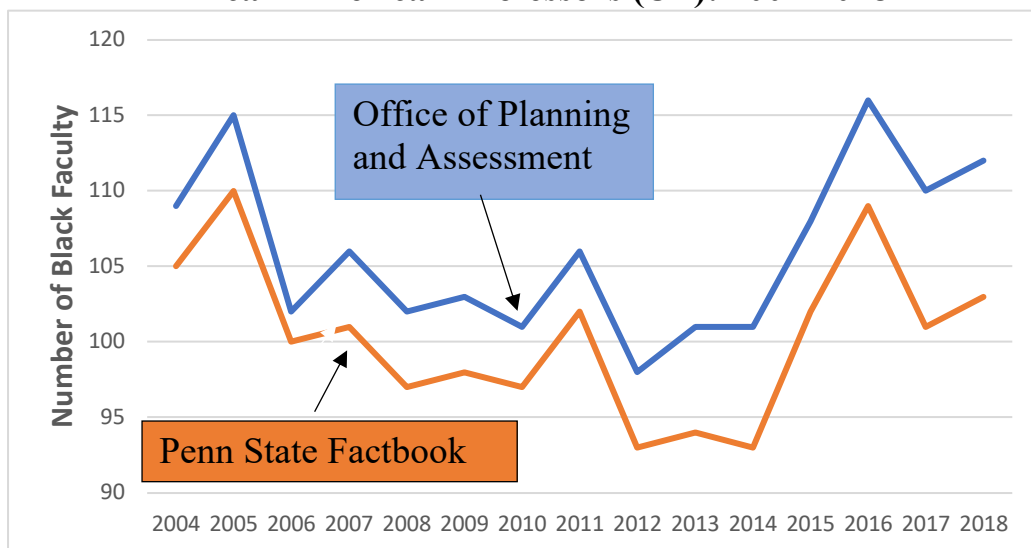
**Table 2**  
**Number of African American Professors at UP: 2004-2018**

Year	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Professors	105	110	100	101	97	98	97	102	93	94	93	102	109	101	103

Source: Penn State Factbooks: 2004-2018

Differences between the two sources of data on the enumeration of African American professors are illustrated in Graph 1. The patterns in the line graph are similar over the 2004-2018 time period showing a slightly higher census from the Office of Planning and Assessment. However, the numbers diverge appreciably beginning in 2012 resulting in distinct differences through 2018 or over the last 5 years.

**Graph 1**  
**Planning and Assessment and Factbook Numbers of African American Professors (UP): 2004-2018**

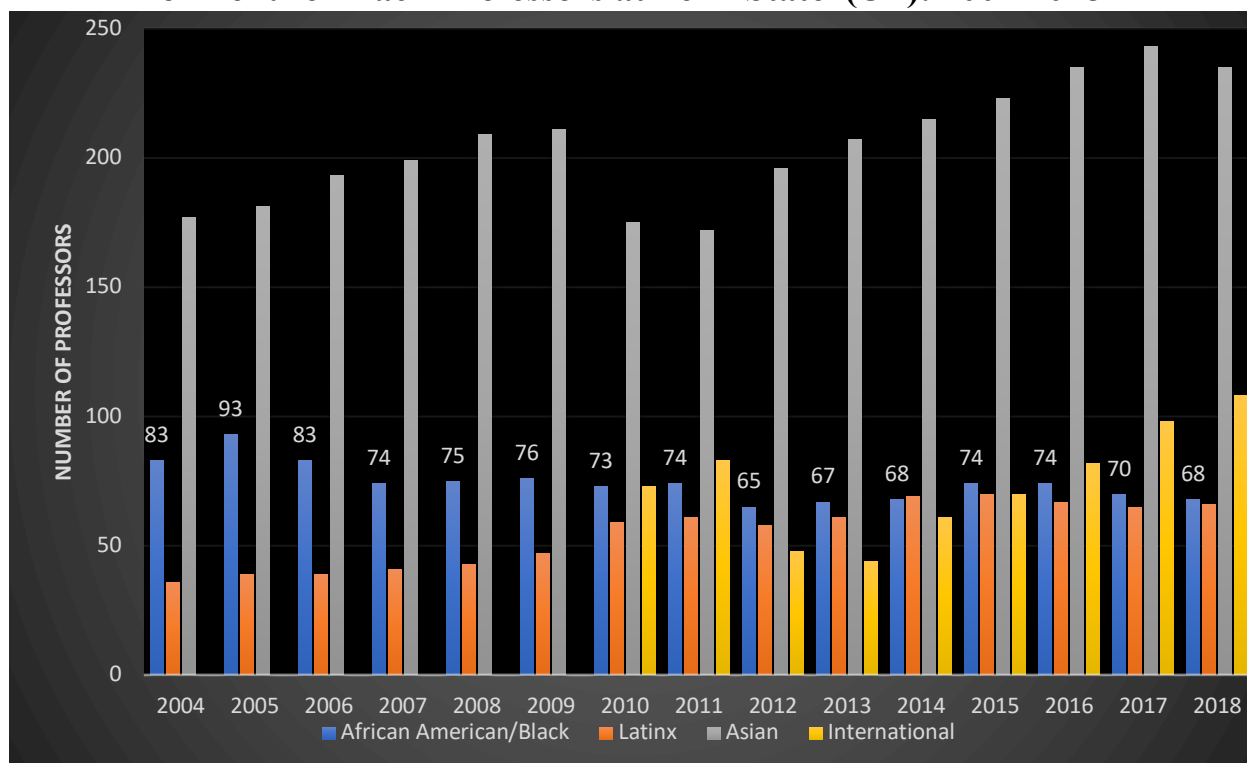


Source: Office of Planning and Assessment and Penn State Factbooks: 2004-2018

## Tenure and Rank

Faculty status at Penn State is differentiated by tenure and rank and a serious analysis of the representation of Black professors must take this fact into account. The number of Black, Latinx, Asian, and International tenured or tenure-tracked professors is presented in Graph 2. These data show that the number of African American professors at UP who were either tenured or held a tenure-track position decreased from 83 in 2004 to 68 in 2018. A negative percentage change of -22.1% or a loss of 15 tenured or tenure-track faculty positions.<sup>14</sup> In 2004, African American tenured or tenure-track professors represented 4.8% of all tenured or tenure-track UP professors (N=1719) compared to 3.9% in 2018 (N=1847). Interestingly, tenured and tenure-track African American faculty comprised 76.1% of all Black professors in 2004, however by 2018 this proportion had decreased to 60.7%.

**Graph 2**  
**Number of Black, Latinx, Asian, and International Tenured or Tenure-Track Professors at Penn State (UP): 2004-2018**



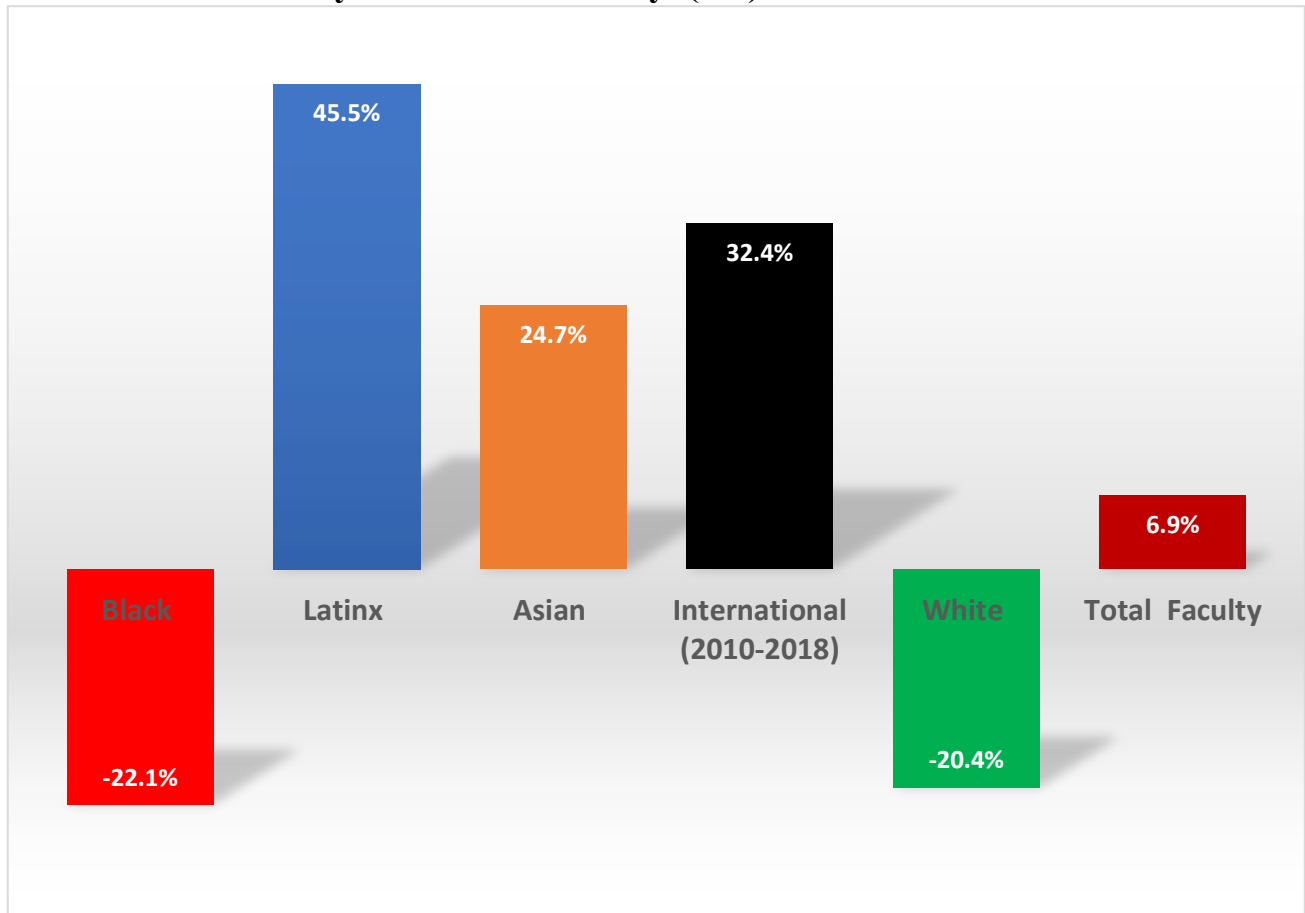
Source: Penn State Office of Planning and Assessment

As shown in Graph 3, the number of tenured or tenure-track positions among all UP faculty increased about 6.9% during this time period. Further revealed in this graph is the percentage

<sup>14</sup>Tenure and rank data were obtained from the Penn State Office of Planning and Assessment, which despite valid questions about the census count, has the most accurate and current data on faculty tenure and rank.

change in the racial and ethnic composition of faculty holding tenured or tenured-track positions between 2004-2018. While other UP minority groups increased proportionally (namely Latinx, 45.5% and Asians, 24.7% and international professors, 32.4%), this was not the case for African American professors.<sup>15</sup> The decrease of 22.1% among Black professors represented the greatest percentage change among all tenured or tenure-track professors by race and ethnicity. The 15-year percentage change among White tenured or tenure-track professors is also negative (20.4%).

**Graph 3**  
**Percentage Change in Tenured and Tenure-Track Professors**  
**by Race and Ethnicity (UP): 2004-2018**

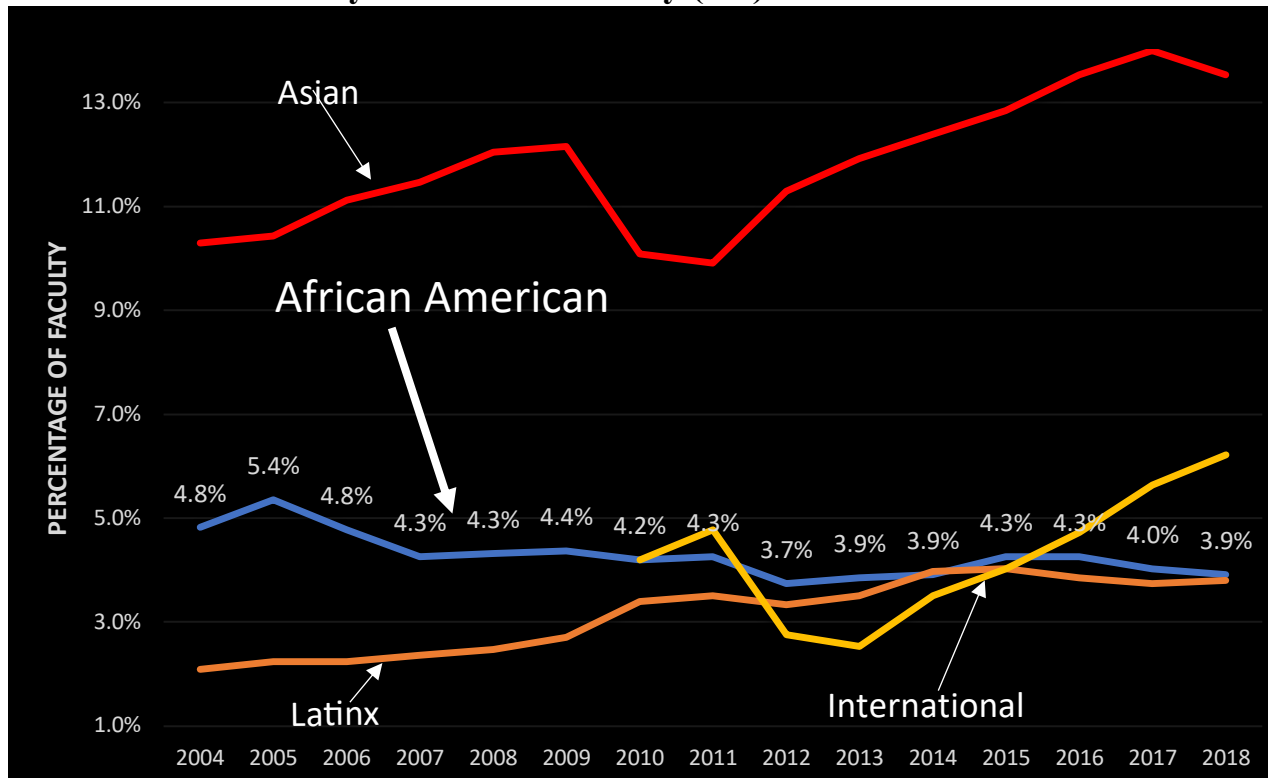


**Source:** Penn State Office of Planning and Assessment

<sup>15</sup> The comparison with Latinx tenured or tenure-track faculty must take into account that the large percentage increase is essentially due to their smaller absolute number in 2004 (i.e., n=36).



**Graph 4**  
**Annual Percentage of Tenured and Tenure-Track Professors**  
**by Race and Ethnicity (UP):2004-2018**



Source: Penn State Office of Planning and Assessment

Graph 4 reveals the relative proportion of tenured and tenure-track professors among different racial and ethnic groups including international faculty at the UP campus between 2004-2018. African American tenured and tenured track professors continued to decline from the high point of 5.4% of all tenured and tenure-tracked UP faculty in 2005 and eventually converged with Latinx faculty by 2018 comprising 3.9%.

Table 3 presents the distribution of African American faculty by academic rank. It is assumed that most full, associate or assistant professors are either tenured or in a tenure-track position. The distribution by rank and the trends across the 15-year period is shown in Graph 5. The number of full professors, which is the smallest group of Black professors, has remained fairly consistent between 2004-2018 ( $\bar{x}=23.6$ ,  $SD=2.64$ , See Table 3). The percentage difference from 2004-2018 of African American full professors represented an increase of 21.1%.

In contrast, the percentage difference in the number of African American associate professors is negative, -18.9%. As shown in Table 3, the number of associate professors ( $\bar{x}=29.1$ ,  $SD=3.67$ ) decreased after 2005 and for a period of about 7 years remained below 30. Their presence began to increase after 2014 but never reached the 2004 pinnacle of 37 Black associate professors.

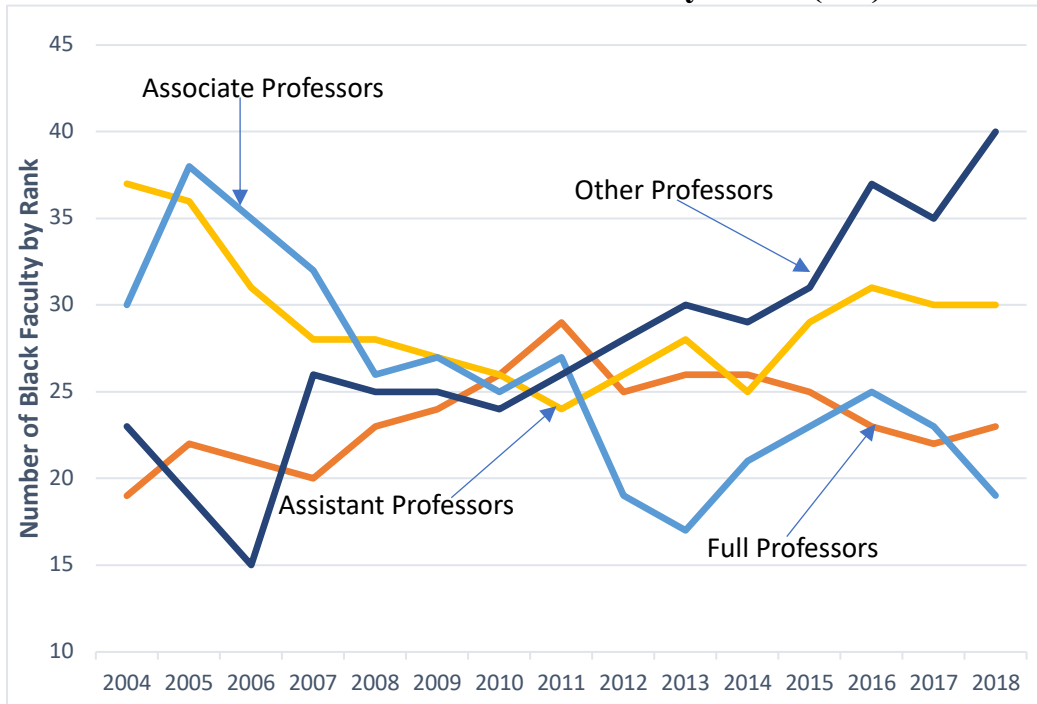
Most notably, the decline in the number ( $\bar{x}=25.8$ ,  $SD=5.99$ ) of Black assistant professors is far steeper and enduring (from 38 in 2005 to 19 in 2018) than either their associate or full professor colleagues. In fact, as a group they have experienced the greatest percentage decrease (-36.7%) in the number of African American faculty at Penn State.

**Table 3**  
**Number of African American Faculty by Rank: 2004-2018**

Year/Rank	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Average	% Difference	St. Deviation
Full Professors	19	22	21	20	23	24	26	29	25	26	26	25	23	22	23	23.6	21.1%	2.64
Associate Professor	37	36	31	28	28	27	26	24	26	28	25	29	31	30	30	29.1	-18.9%	3.67
Assistant Professor	30	38	35	32	26	27	25	27	19	17	21	23	25	23	19	25.8	-36.7%	5.99
Other	23	19	15	26	25	25	24	26	28	30	29	31	37	35	40	27.5	73.9%	6.56
Total Black Faculty	109	115	102	106	102	103	101	106	98	101	101	108	116	110	112	106.0	2.8%	5.52
Total Faculty	2977	2976	3000	3071	3137	3187	3192	3196	3209	3298	3354	3409	3429	3393	3822	3243.3	28.4%	221.40

Source: Penn State Office of Planning and Assessment

**Graph 5**  
**Number of African American Professors by Rank (UP) 2004-2018**



Source: Penn State Office of Planning and Assessment

**Professorial Rank and Gender**

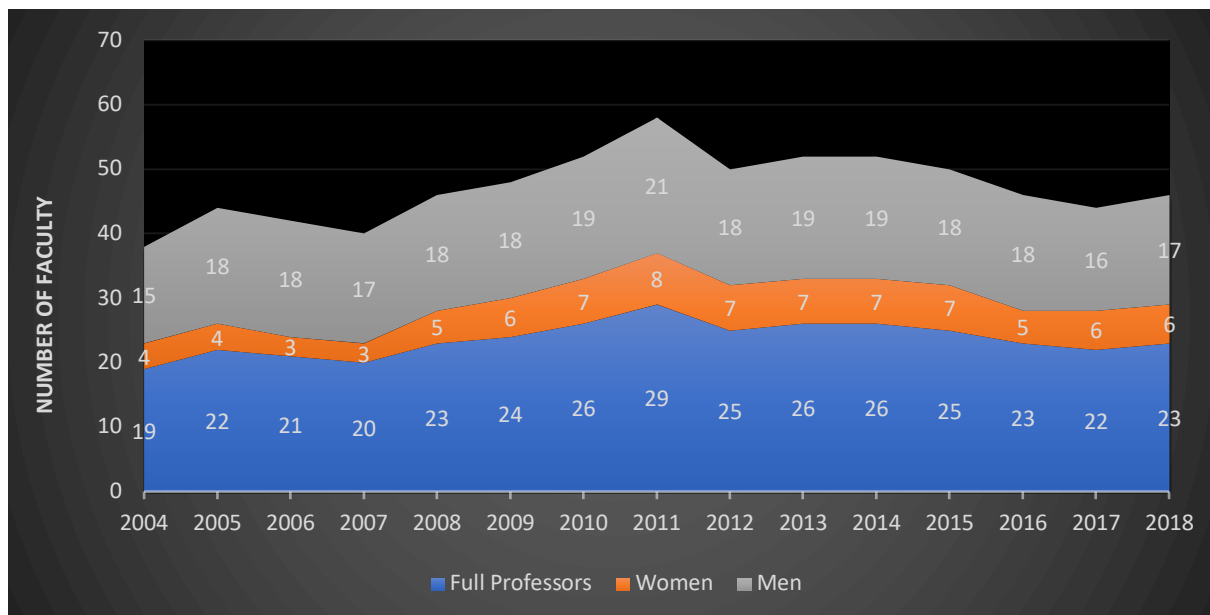
Table 4 shows the gender distribution of UP African American faculty by rank over the last 15 years. The largest gender disparity is among full professors. Male full professors have clearly predominated as evidenced by the overall average ratio of 3.16 men to every 1 woman professor and the closest it has come to parity has been 2.6 men for every 1 woman. In contrast, a crossover pattern is evident in the gender ratio of associate professors. Beginning in 2004, the male dominated group of associate professors gradually decreased and reached gender parity in 2011. Since that year, there has been a consistent and inverse ratio in which Black women have comprised the largest group of associate professors and ratios ranging from 1.31 to 1.54 females for every 1 male associate professor. The overall average ratio from 2004-2018 of men to women associate professors is equal (1.03). The rank of assistant professors is far less variable as women have consistently represented the preferred gender on the tenure-track entry level. In fact, among assistant professors the gender ratio has never reached parity in any single year and the overall mean ratio is .063 or 1.58 females for every Black male assistant professor. The data for “Other” professors reflect a pattern in which the overall mean male to female ratio is almost the same (1.08). Graphs 6-9 illustrate the gender distribution for each faculty group using wave chart diagrams.

**Table 4**  
**Number and Ratios of African American Professors by Rank and Gender: 2004-2018**

Year	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Total/Mean Ratio
<b>Full Professors</b>	19	22	21	20	23	24	26	29	25	26	26	25	23	22	23	354
Female	4	4	3	3	5	6	7	8	7	7	7	7	5	6	6	85
Male	15	18	18	17	18	18	19	21	18	19	19	18	18	16	17	269
<b>Full Professor Gender Ratio</b>	3.75	4.50	6.00	5.67	3.60	3.00	2.71	2.63	2.57	2.71	2.71	2.57	3.60	2.67	2.83	3.16
<b>Associate Professor</b>	37	36	31	28	28	27	26	24	26	28	25	29	31	30	30	436
Female	12	12	12	11	13	13	12	12	15	17	15	18	18	17	18	215
Male	25	24	19	17	15	14	14	12	11	11	10	11	13	13	12	221
<b>Associate Professor Gender Ratio</b>	2.08	2.00	1.58	1.55	1.15	1.08	1.17	1.00	0.73	0.65	0.67	0.61	0.72	0.76	0.67	1.03
<b>Assistant Professor</b>	30	38	35	32	26	27	25	27	19	17	21	23	25	23	19	387
Female	20	21	18	20	16	18	15	16	10	10	13	15	16	16	13	237
Male	10	17	17	12	10	9	10	11	9	7	8	8	9	7	6	150
<b>Assistant Professor Gender Ratio</b>	0.50	0.81	0.94	0.60	0.63	0.50	0.67	0.69	0.90	0.70	0.62	0.53	0.56	0.44	0.46	0.63
<b>Other Professor Gender Ratio</b>	23	19	15	26	25	25	24	26	28	30	29	31	37	35	40	413
Female	14	11	7	13	11	11	11	8	11	14	13	16	20	18	21	199
Male	9	8	8	13	14	14	13	18	17	16	16	15	17	17	19	214
<b>Other Professor Gender Ratio</b>	0.64	0.73	1.14	1.00	1.27	1.27	1.18	2.25	1.55	1.14	1.23	0.94	0.85	0.94	0.90	1.08
<b>Grand Total</b>	109	115	102	106	102	103	101	106	98	101	101	108	116	110	112	1590

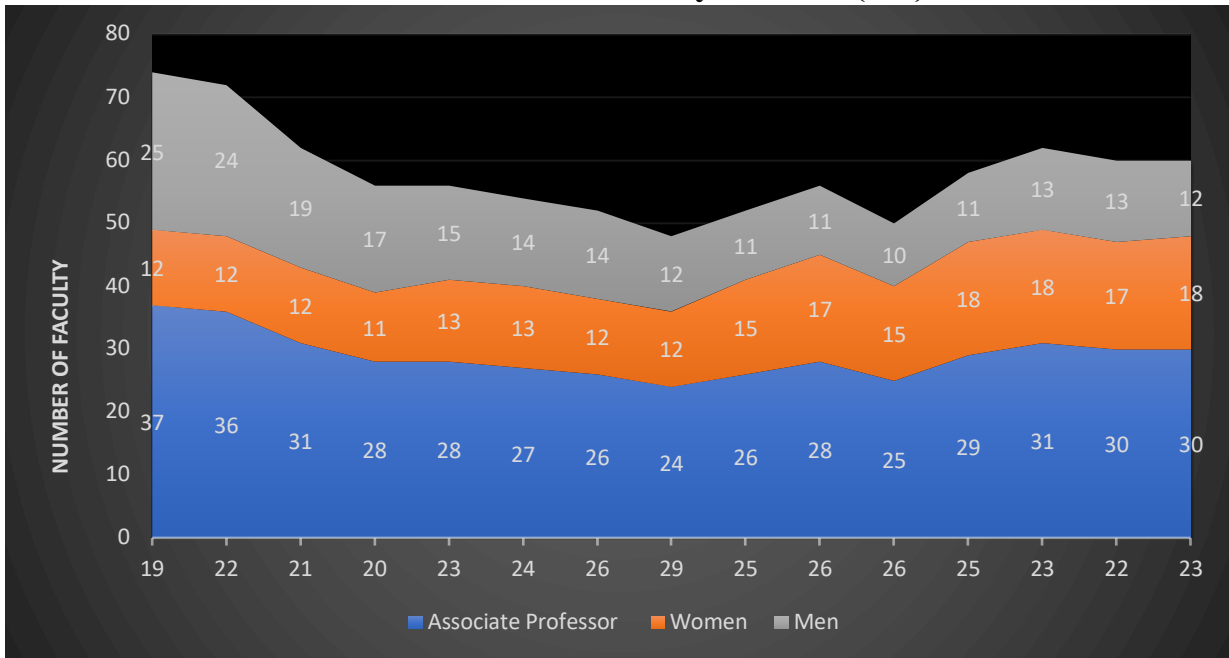
Source: Penn State Office of Planning and Assessment

**Graph 6**  
**Black Full Professors by Gender (UP): 2004-2018**



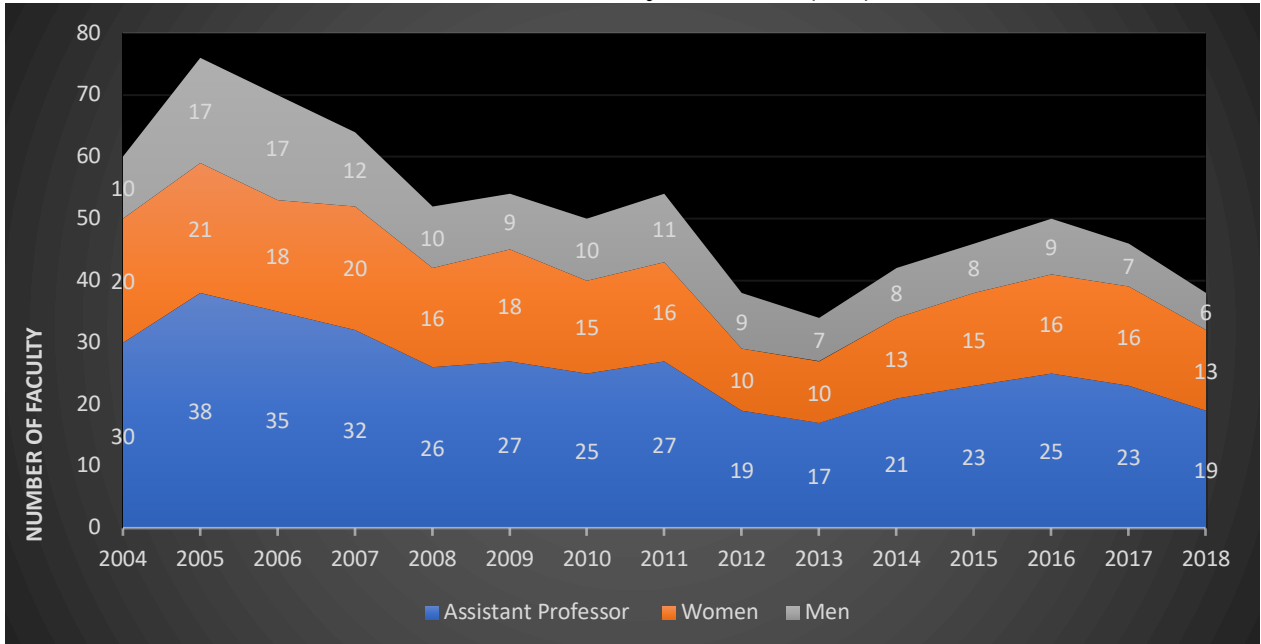
Source: Penn State Office of Planning and Assessment

**Graph 7**  
**Black Associate Professors by Gender (UP): 2004-2019**



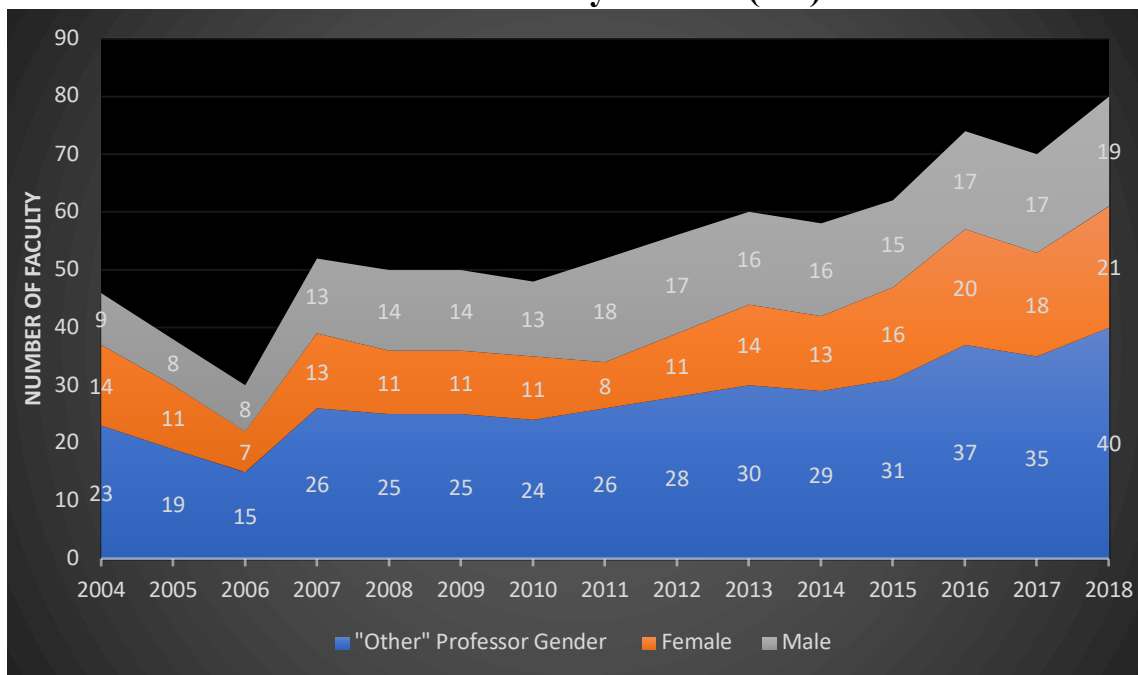
Source: Penn State Office of Planning and Assessment

**Graph 8**  
**Black Assistant Professors by Gender (UP): 2004-2018**



Source: Penn State Office of Planning and Assessment

**Graph 9**  
**Black "Other" Professors by Gender (UP): 2004-2018**



Source: Penn State Office of Planning and Assessment

**Summary:** Although the two primary sources of data for this report are somewhat discrepant, that show a similar pattern indicating that the total number of Black professors at Penn State has not increased substantially over a 15-year period between 2004-2018. In fact, the more accurate assessment reveals that their numbers have actually decreased. Moreover, with respect to tenure and tenure-track positions, African American professors experienced the greatest decline in their absolute numbers and relative proportions compared to Latinx, Asian, and international faculty whose numbers did not decrease. The number of African American professors who were tenured or on a tenure-track decreased by -22.1% and this group represented a smaller proportion of the all Black professors. Among this group of tenured and tenure-track faculty, the ranks of associate and assistant professors had fewer members as their numbers decreased over the 15-year period by -18.9% and -36.7%, respectively. A smaller number of tenured and tenure-track African American professors has major implications for the ability to influence institutional change, academic productivity and research, and relations with undergraduate and graduate students. The analysis of professorial rank and gender revealed that African American women professors were far less likely to be represented at the full professor level than their male counterparts whereas African American men were underrepresented as assistant professors. In a separate analysis using “cosmetic diversity” methodology, we analyzed descriptive data for 2018-2019. The results revealed fewer Black professors on the UP campus in 2018 than either of the two official figures (Appendix E).

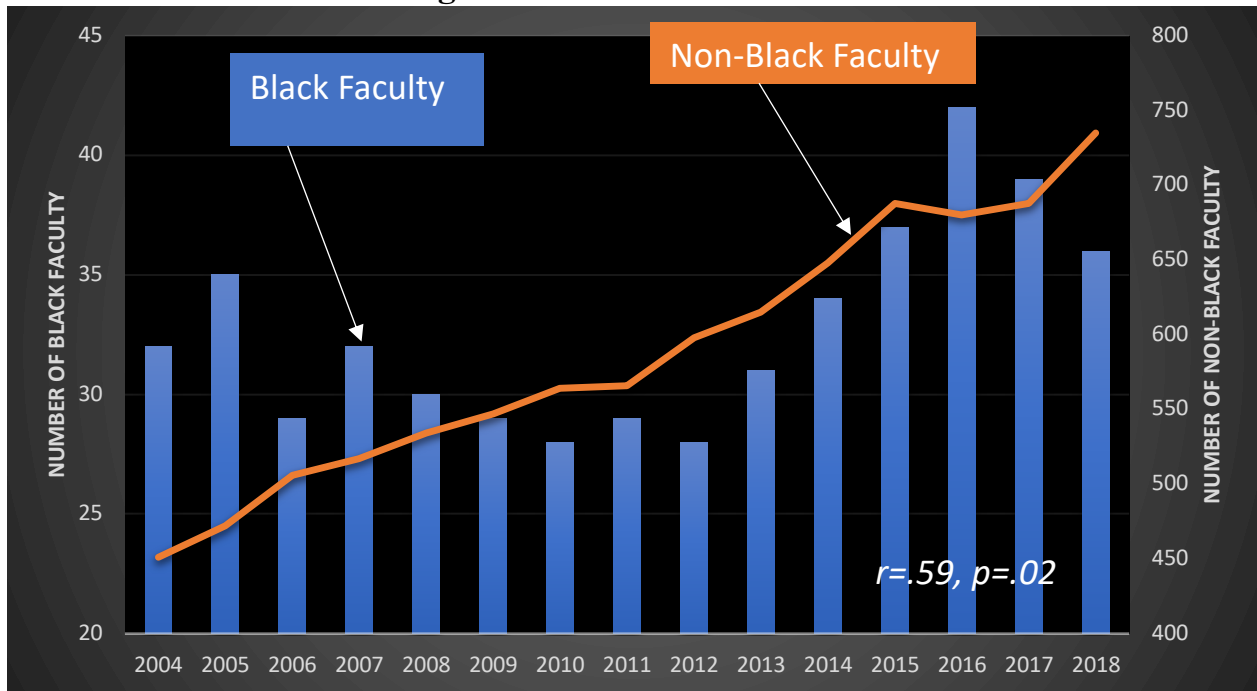
### **3.0 College Specific Patterns and Trends**

As previously noted, it is also important to assess the distribution of African American faculty throughout the 13 UP colleges and various departments. Data from the annual Penn State Factbooks from 2004-2018 were analyzed to complete this section of the report. For purposes of clarity, the trends and patterns referred to in this section include Black and non-Black professors (i.e., White, Asian, Hispanic, Native American or the “Other” category).

#### **College of Liberal Arts**

The College of Liberal Arts consists of the largest number of UP faculty (n=771) and represented 20.4% of all PSU faculty in 2018. Graph 10 illustrates the trends in the number of Black (blue bars) and non-Black professors in the college between 2004-2018. Since 2004, the number of non-Black faculty rose by 63% in contrast to the pattern of Black faculty, which increased by 12.5%. The correlation between Black and non-Black faculty is  $r=.59$  and is statistically significant ( $p=.02$ ) indicating that over this period there was a corresponding pattern of increase in Black and non-Black faculty. That is, as the number of non-Black faculty increased between 2004-2018, the number of Black faculty also increased but not as consistently or proportionally. For example, the greatest increases (from 28 to 42, 50%) in the number of Black faculty in the college occurred between 2012-2016, which also corresponds to a period in which the number of non-Black faculty (598 to 680, 13.7%) also increased but not at the same rate. By 2018, however, Black faculty had declined to 36 professors.

**Graph 10**  
**Black and Non-Black Faculty in the**  
**College of Liberal Arts: 2004-2018**



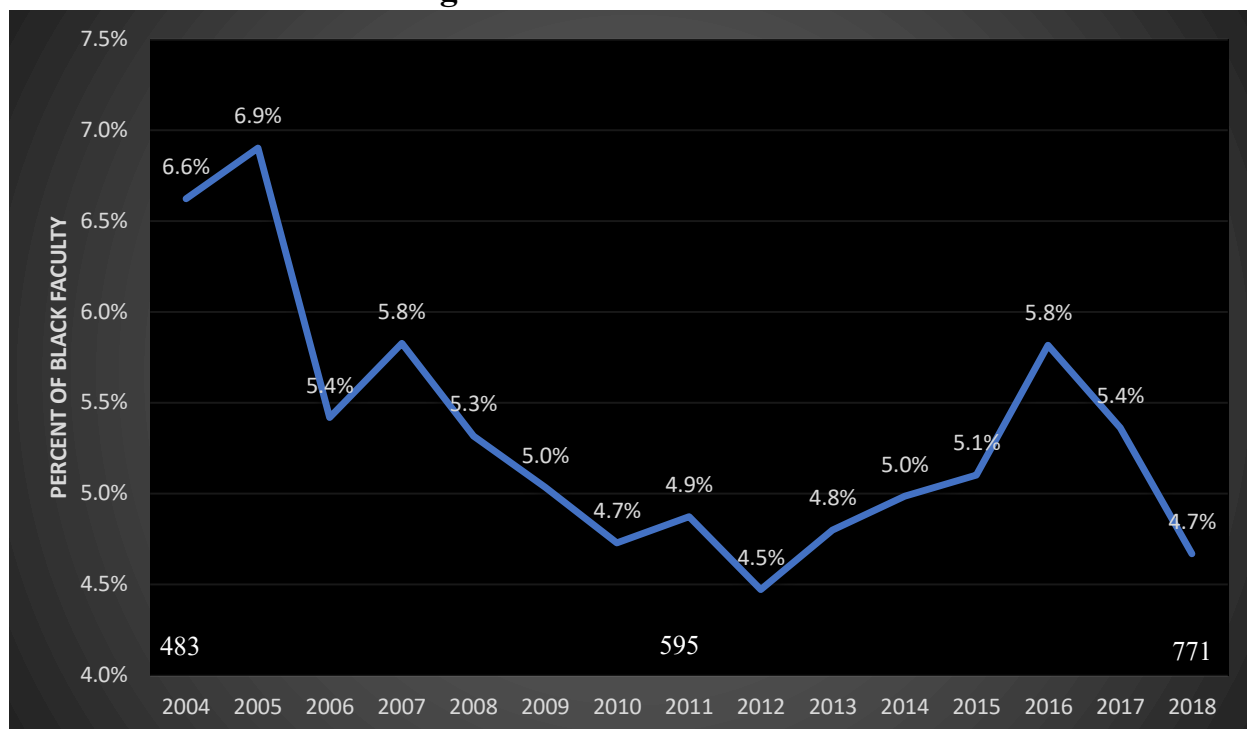
Source: Penn State Factbooks: 2004-2018

Data presented in Graph 11 reveal that after the peak period of 2005 (6.9%), the percent of African American faculty in the College of Liberal Arts decreased to 4.5% in 2012. In 2018, the percentage of Black professors in the college was (4.7%). The mean percent of Black faculty was 5.3% over the entire period and 5.2% for the last five years.

An important point of consideration in assessing the number and percent of Black professors in the College of Liberal Arts is the number of African American scholars in the Department of African American Studies. As might be expected, this department consists mainly of African Americans and thus is responsible for the largest proportion of the Black faculty in the College as well as the university. While highly laudable, the recent hiring in 2019 of 7 Black professors in the college with major or cluster appointments in the Department of African American Studies or Diaspora Studies increases the number of Black faculty, it does little to address the systemic problem of “academic segregation”. This phenomenon referred to as the “Harlem Protocol”, raises critical questions about diversity, equity, and inclusion across all UP departments and colleges.



**Graph 11**  
**Percent of Black Faculty in the**  
**College of Liberal Arts: 2004-2018**

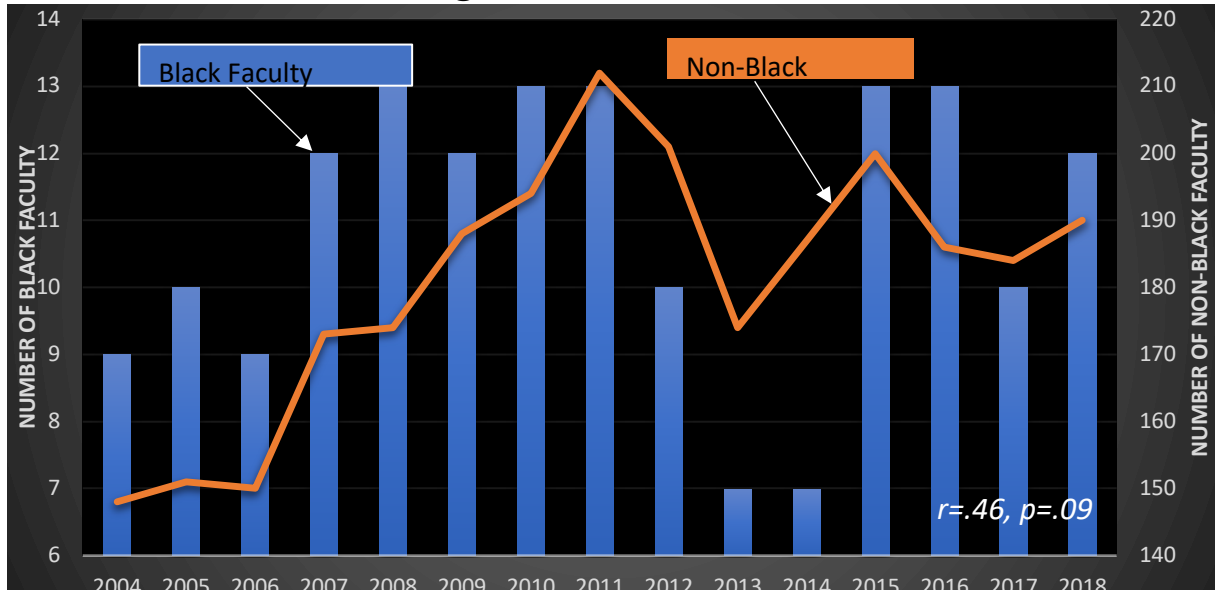


Source: Penn State Factbooks: 2004-2018

### College of Education

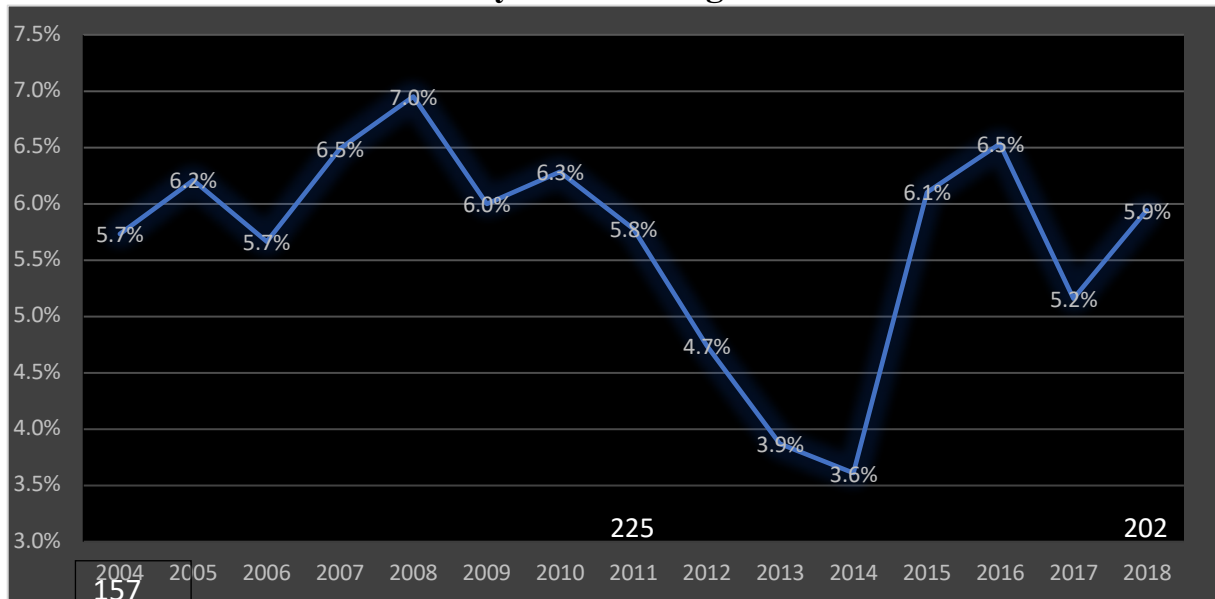
In 2018, the UP College of Education faculty totaled 202 professors and 12 were classified as African American. Between 2004-2018, the mean number of Black professors in the college was 10.9 and the percentage increase was 25%. The number of Black professors rose parallel to the rise of all faculty in the college between 2004-2011 but declined markedly from 2012-2014. The correlation between the number of Black faculty and non-Black faculty in the college is  $r=.46$  ( $p=.09$ ) for the entire period indicating that there is a moderate though non-statistically significant association between the two groups. Over the last five years, the average percent of Black faculty in the college was 5.5%, which is slightly below the average for the entire period of 5.9% (Graph 13).

**Graph 12**  
**Number of Black and Non-Black Faculty in the**  
**College of Education: 2004-2018**



Source: Penn State Factbooks: 2004-2018

**Graph 13**  
**Percent of Black Faculty in the College of Education: 2004-2018**



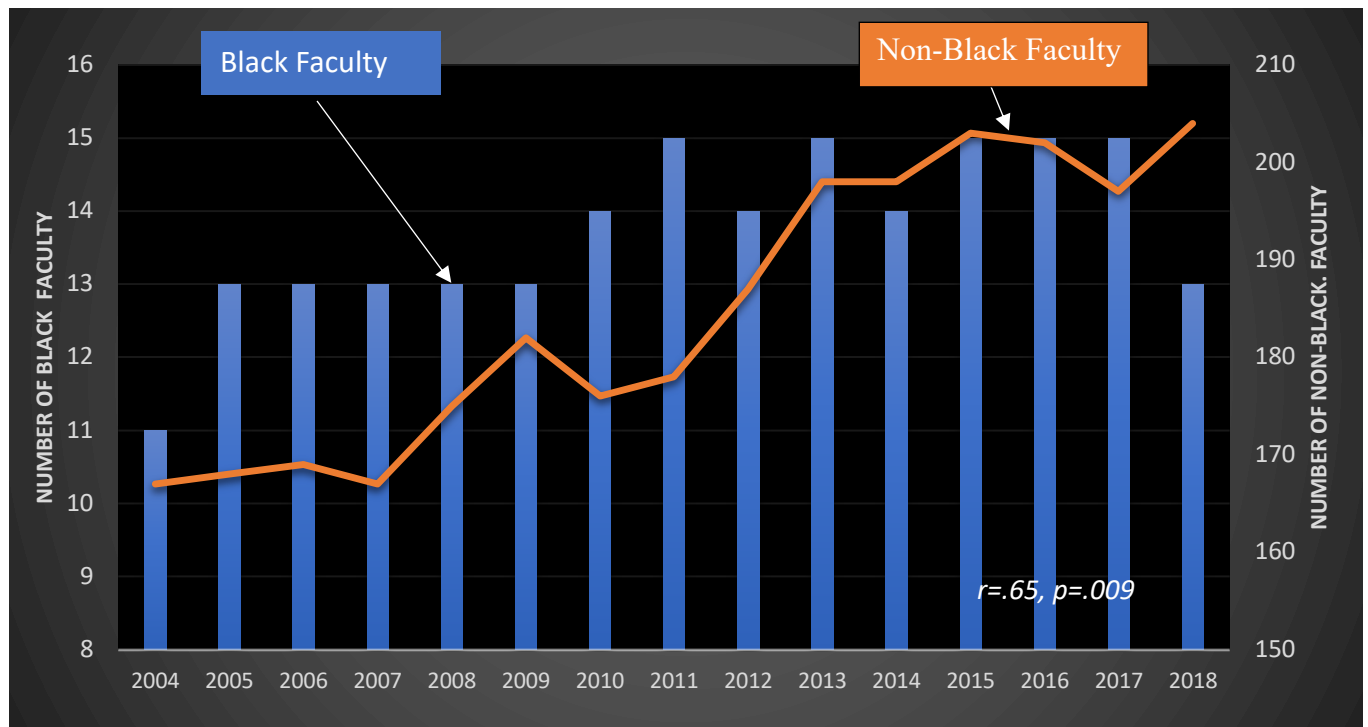
Source: Penn State Factbooks: 2004-2018

## College of Arts and Architecture

As shown in Graph 14, the number of African American professors in the College of Arts and Architecture is strongly and significantly correlated ( $r=.65$ ,  $p=.009$ ) with the number of non-Black professors. The increases in both groups appear consistent across the period. Of the 217 faculty in the college in 2018, 6.0% ( $n=13$ ) were African American. The percentage increase in the number of Black and non-Black faculty between 2004-2018 was fairly similar: respectively, 18.2% and 22.2%.

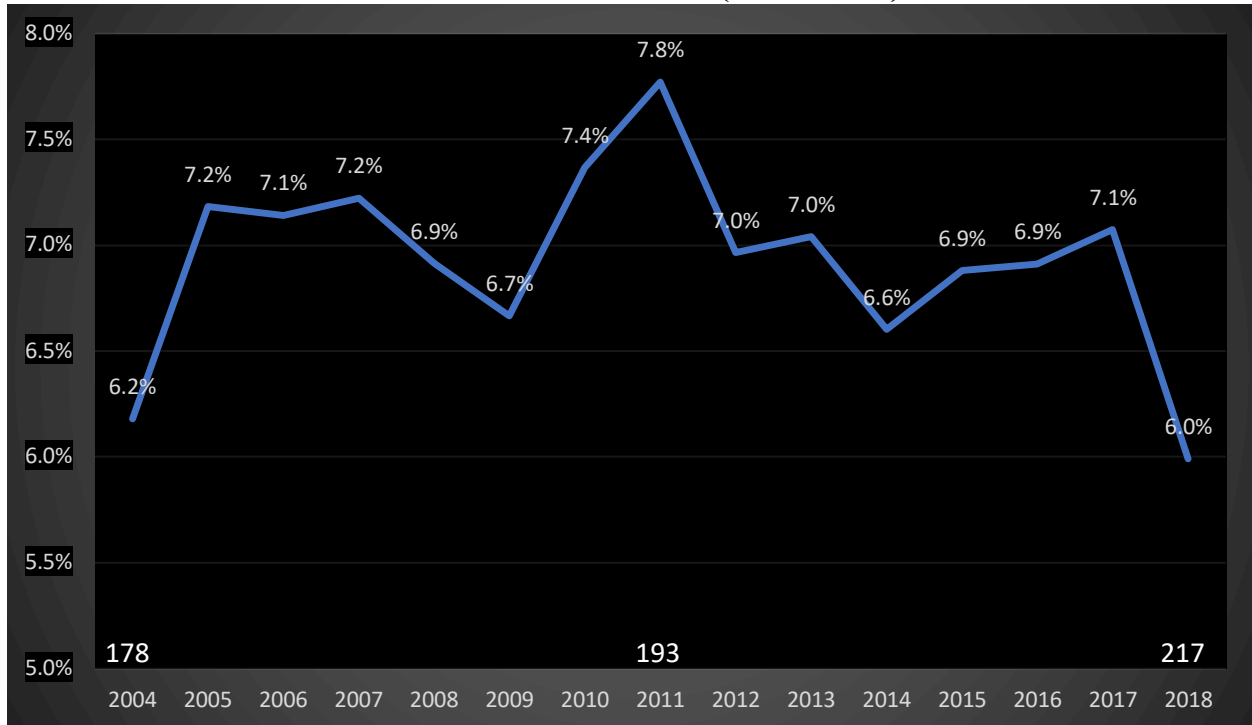
Graph 15 reveals the proportion of Black faculty in the college for each year. In 2004, Black professors represented 6.2% of all faculty in the college, which contrasted with the peak year of 7.8% in 2011. The average proportion of Black faculty over this 15-year period was 6.9%.

**Graph 14**  
**Number of Black and Non-Black Faculty in College of Arts and Architecture:2004-2018**



Source: Penn State Factbooks: 2004-2018

**Graph 15**  
**Percent of African American Faculty in the College of Arts and Architecture (2004-2018)**

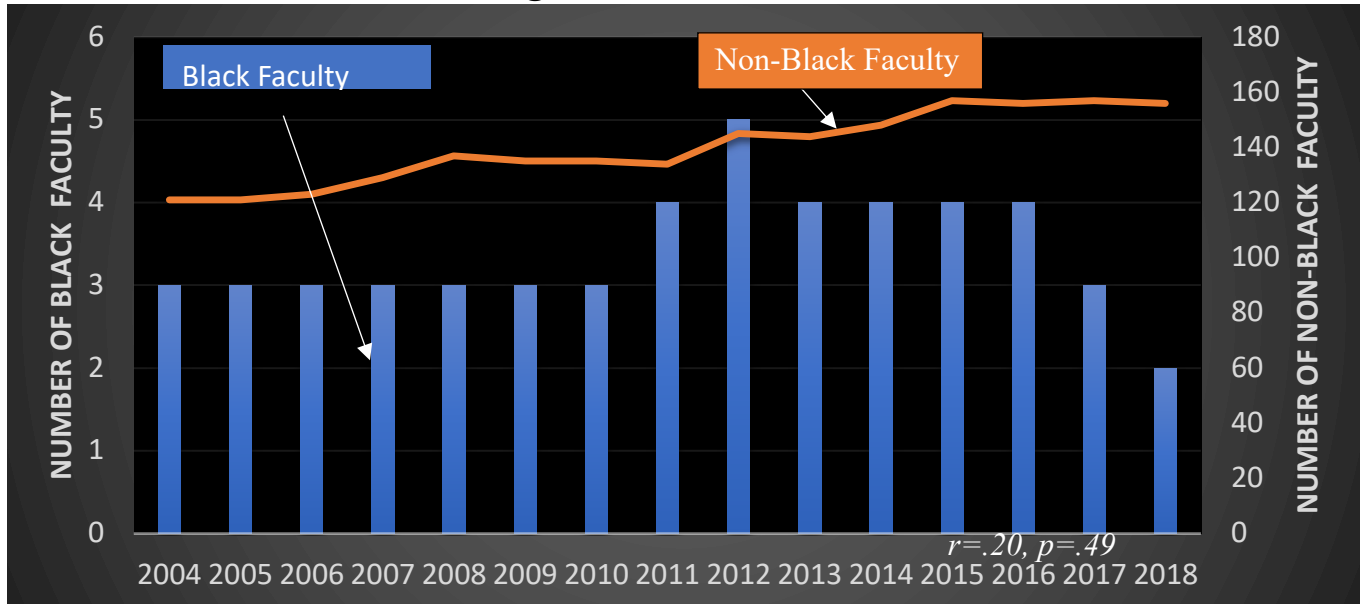


Source: Penn State Factbooks: 2004-2018

### **Smeal College of Business**

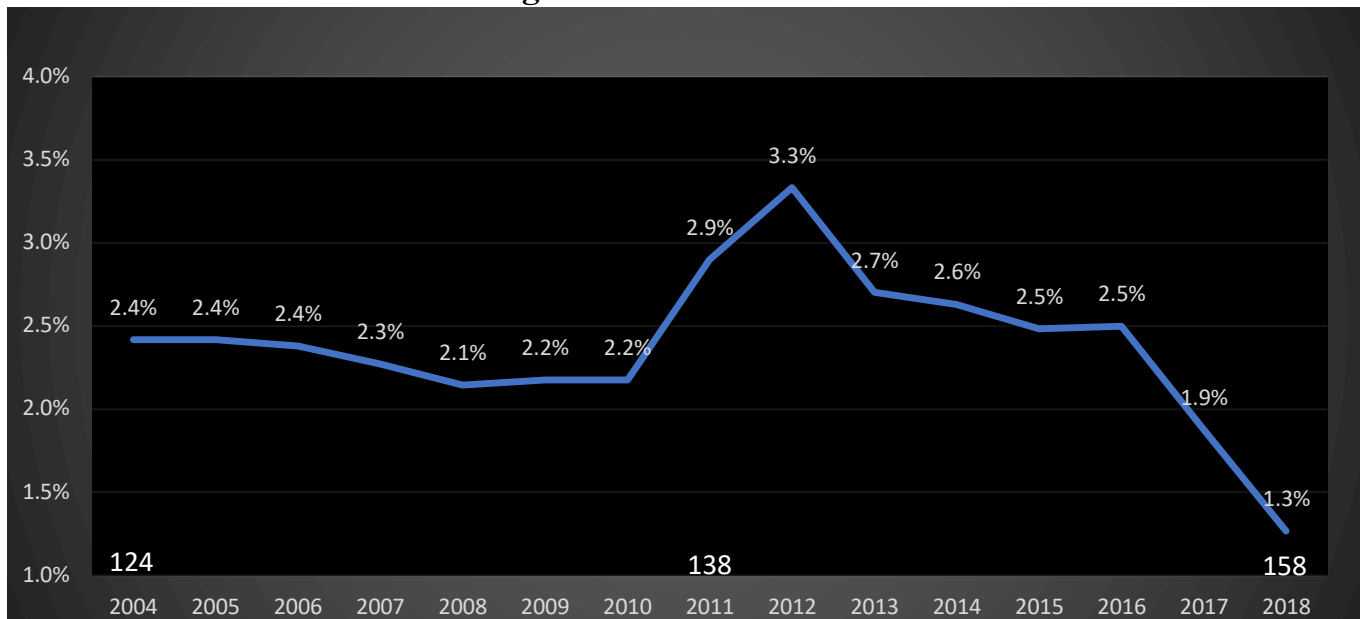
In 2018, the Smeal College of Business reported 2 African Americans on faculty representing 1.3% of professors. Between 2004-2010 there were 3 Black professors in the college. This number increased to 4 African American faculty in 2011 and to 5 in 2012 and as shown in Graph 16 the number remained at 4 until 2016. The percentage change in the number of Black faculty between 2004-2018 declined by 50% compared to corresponding percentage change of a 22% increase in non-Black faculty ( $r=.20, p=.49$ ). The trend line in Graph 17 indicates the proportional representation of Black faculty in the college over the 15 year period. The peak percentage of Black professors in the college was 3.3% in 2012 ( $n=5$ ) and continued to decline after 2012 to 1.3% ( $n=2$ ) in 2018.

**Graph 16**  
**Number of Black and Non-Black Faculty in the**  
**Smeal College of Business:2004-2018**



Source: Penn State Factbooks: 2004-2018

**Graph 17**  
**Percent of African American Faculty in the**  
**Smeal College of Business: 2004-2018**

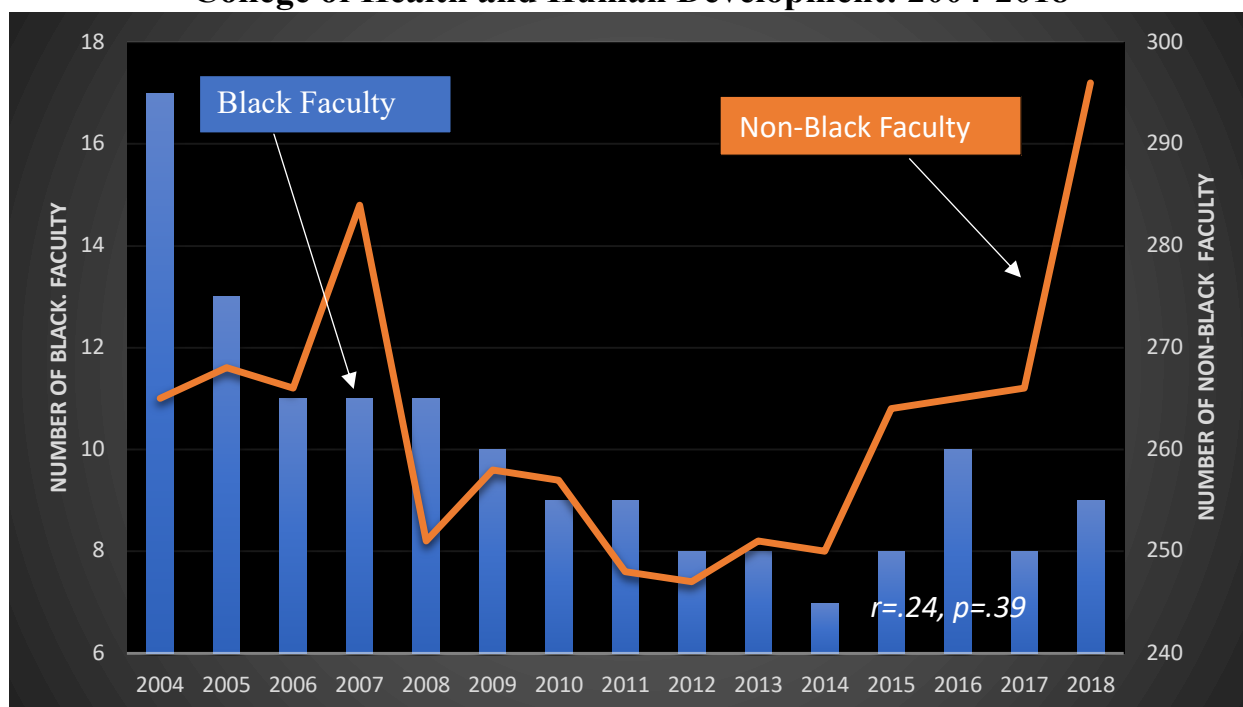


Source: Penn State Factbooks: 2004-2018

## College of Health and Human Development/Nursing

Graph 18 present data on African American faculty between 2004-2018 in the College of Health and Human Development. The College of Nursing (formerly the School of Nursing) was originally established as a part of the College of Health and Human Development and included until 2008. The data presented in Graph 19 includes the School of Nursing between 2004-2007. As shown, non-Black faculty decreased after 2007 due to the establishment of the School of Nursing as a separate college in 2008. However, this decline was artificial and not due to actual attrition. Thus, the trend line in Graph 18 of non-Black professors does not represent an accurate picture of either the College of Nursing or the College of Health and Human Development during this period. A more accurate representation would be to combine the joint faculties over the entire period as was the case between 2004-2007. Consequently, the combined data for Black and non-Black faculty from both colleges are presented in Graph 19.

**Graph 18**  
**Number of Black and Non-Black Faculty in the**  
**College of Health and Human Development: 2004-2018**

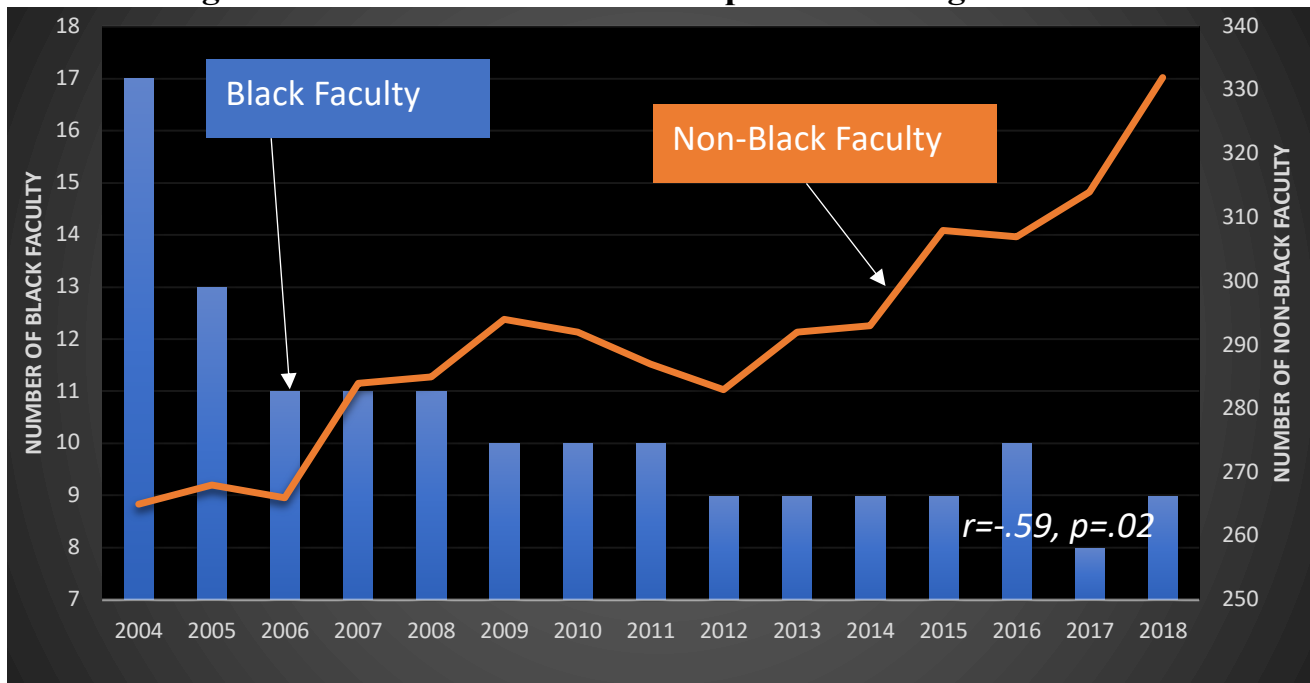


Source: Penn State Factbooks: 2004-2018

As shown in Graph 19, the number of African American professors of HHD faculty (including the College of Nursing) declined, almost uninterrupted, since the high point of 2004 (n=17). Black faculty averaged 9.9 professors over the 15-year period. The percentage change in the

number of professors between 2004-2018 decreased by -47% for Black faculty compared to a 25% increase for non-Black faculty. The correlation between Black and non-Black faculty was  $r=-.59$  ( $p=.02$ ) was statistically significant indicating that Black faculty as a group declined in direct proportion to the increase in the number of non-Black faculty in the college. In 2018, there were 9 Black faculty in the representing 2.7% of 341 faculty.<sup>16</sup> The trend line for the proportion of African American faculty over this period is presented in Graph 20 showing the continuous decline in the representation of African American faculty in both colleges combined since 2004. Since the College of Nursing became an autonomous unit in 2008, it has employed either 1 or 2 African American professors. Between 2016-2018, the Penn State Factbook indicated that it had no Black professors on faculty.

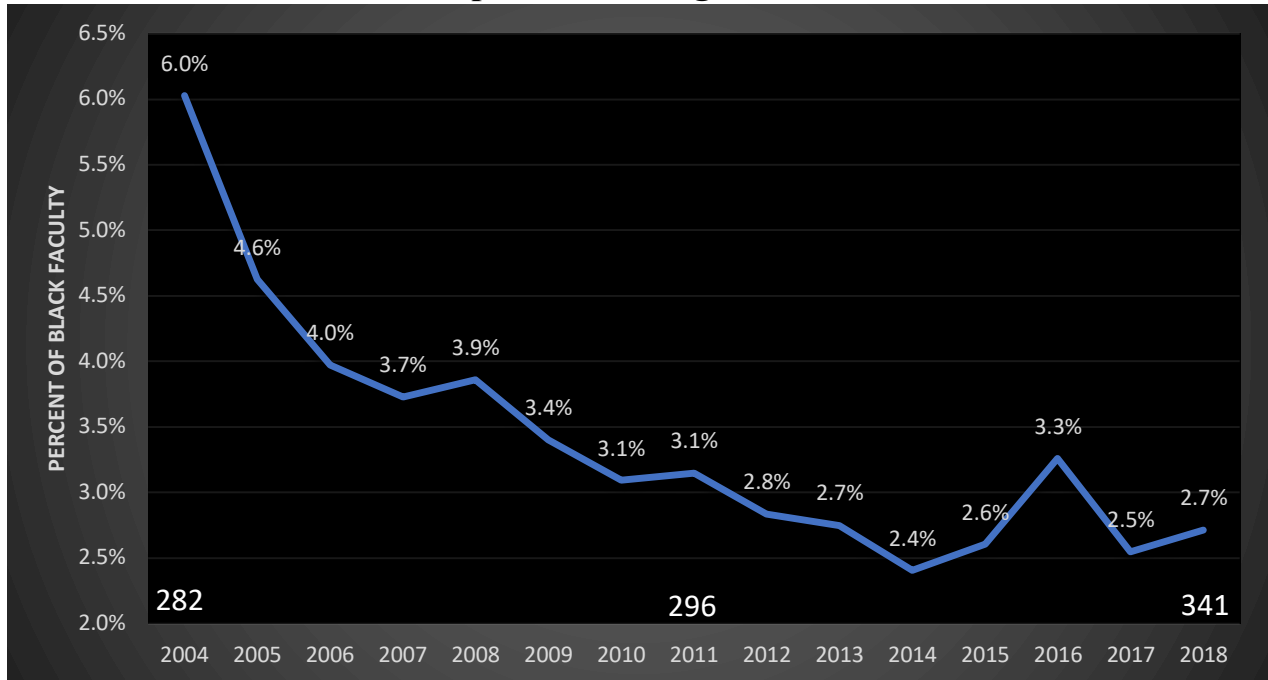
**Graph 19**  
**Number of Black and Non-Black Faculty in the**  
**Colleges of Health and Human Development/Nursing:2004-2018**



Source: Penn State Factbooks: 2004-2018;

<sup>16</sup> In actually, this number of 9 African American professors in the College of Health and Human Development/Nursing (as with other colleges) can be quite misleading since faculty status is accorded to many administrators and research staff who have little or no teaching responsibilities or academic departmental affiliation and participation. See Appendix B, editorial, "Walk the Walk".

**Graph 20**  
**Percent of African American Faculty in the College of Health and Human Development/Nursing: 2004-2018**



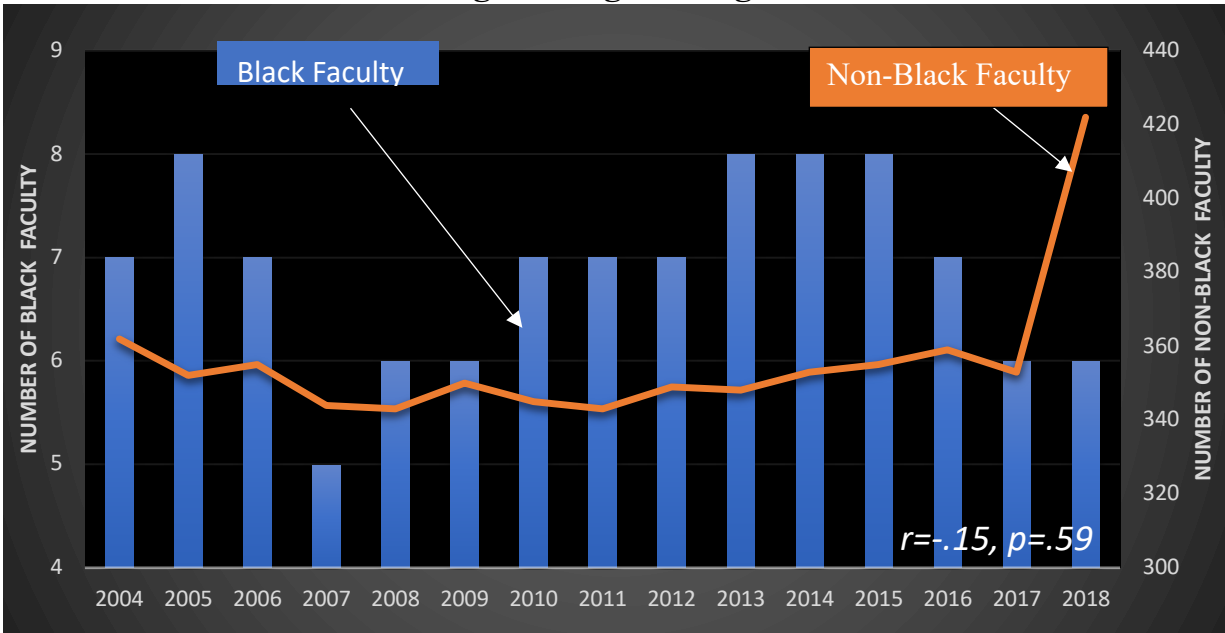
Source: Penn State Factbooks: 2004-2018

### College of Engineering

The data shown in Graph 21 and Graph 22 indicate the small number of African American professors and their proportion in the College of Engineering between 2004-2018. In any given year, Black professors have never exceeded a total of 8 and the average is 6.9, and for the last 5 years the mean is 7. The correlation between Black and non-Black faculty is negative ( $r=-.15$ ,  $p=.59$ ) and is not statistically significant, suggesting that the hiring and retention of Black faculty in the department was independent of that which occurred among non-Black faculty. In 2018, there were 6 African American professors representing 1.4% of all faculty in the college ( $n=428$ ) which is similar to the lowest percentage in 2007. Despite the gradient increase between 2007 and 2013 to the highest level of 2.2%, the relative proportion of Black faculty in the college has been decreasing fairly steadily since 2015 (Graph 22).

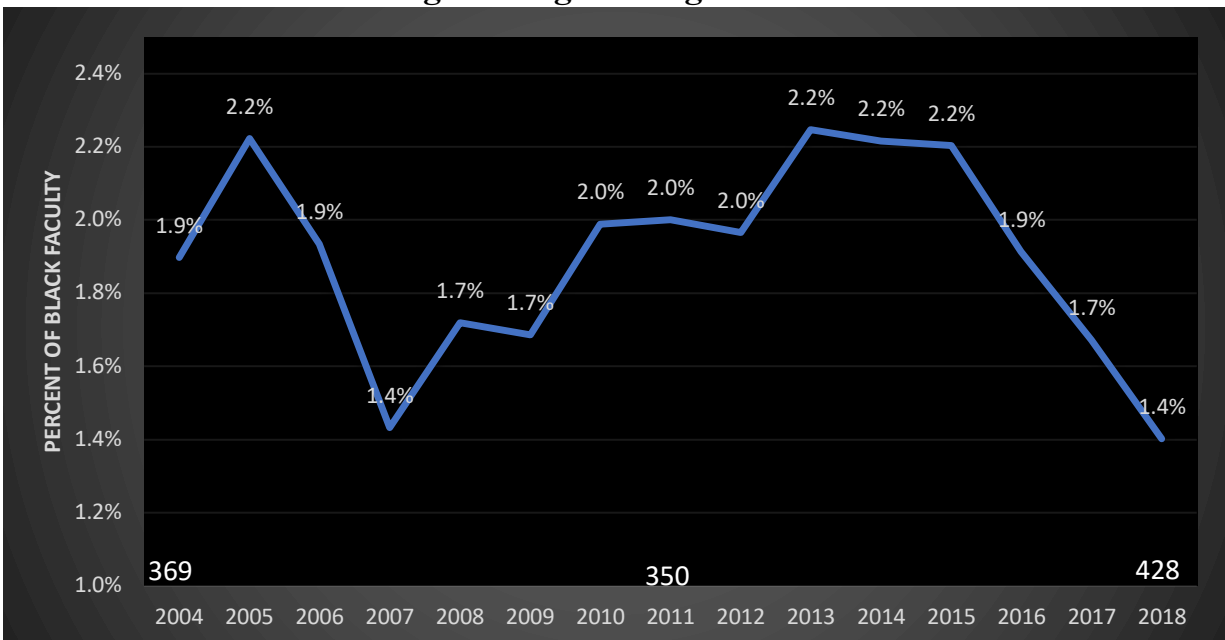


**Graph 21**  
**Number of Black and Non-Black Faculty**  
**in the College of Engineering: 2004-2018**



Source: Penn State Factbooks: 2004-2018

**Graph 22**  
**Percent of African American Faculty in the**  
**College of Engineering: 2004-2018**



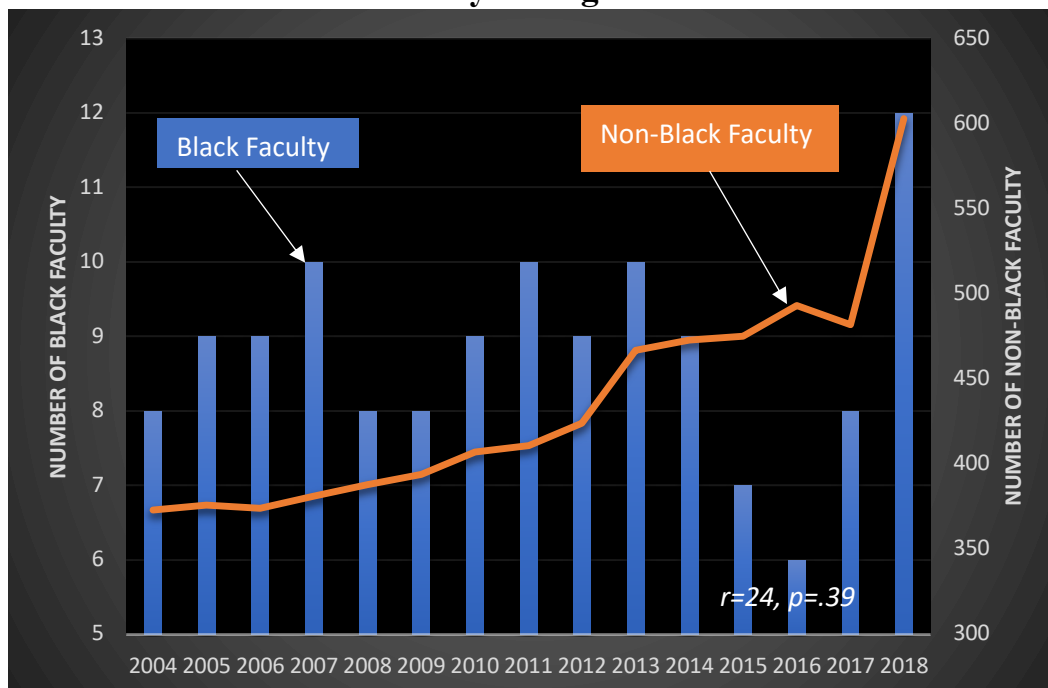
Source: Penn State Factbooks: 2004-2018

## Eberly College of Science

The Eberly College of Science is the second largest college on the UP campus consisting of 615 faculty in 2018. As shown in Graph 23 in 2004 there were 8 Black faculty in the college and 15 years later the number increased to 12. However, as previously noted, the data for 2018 represents a definitional change in who is actually counted as a faculty member: “For 2018, with the implementation of a new human resource information system, post-doctoral scholars and fellows were reclassified from part-time to full-time.” Thus, the increase of 4 African American faculty between 2017 and 2018 in the college may be misleading and the accurate number may be closer to 8 as opposed to 12, which would not be appreciably different from the number of Black faculty in 2004. The correlation ( $r=.24, p=.39$ ) between the number of Black and non-Black faculty over the 15-year period is neither large nor statistically significant indicating that as the number of non-Black professors increased in the college, there was no substantive corresponding increase in the number of Black professors.

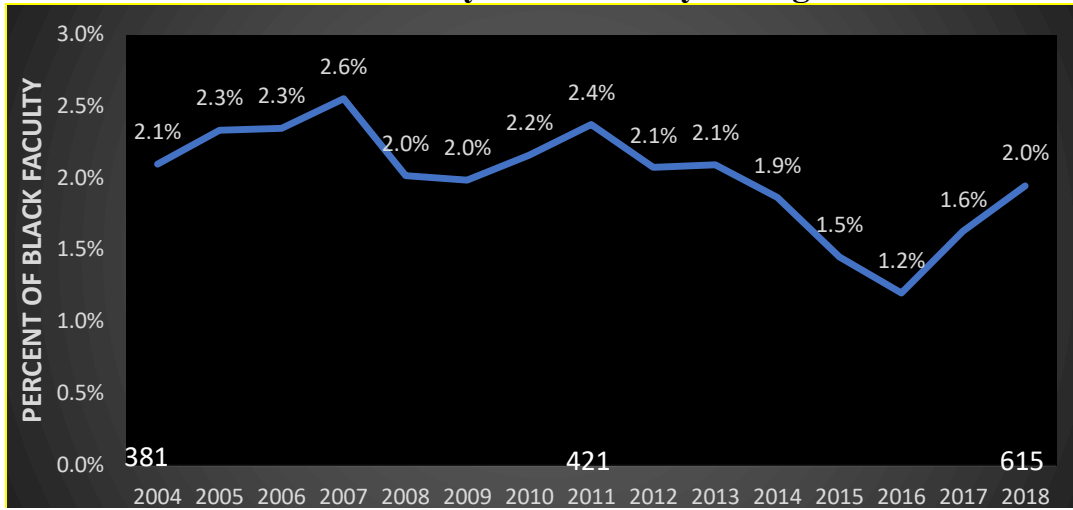
Graph 24 shows the annual proportion of Black professors in the college between 2004-2018. The basic pattern of African American professors in the college varies and shows a steep decline after 2011. Between 2011 and 2016 the mean proportion of African American professors declined to 1.2%. The mean proportion of African American professors is 2.0%, which is greater than the average over the past 5 years (1.6%).

**Graph 23**  
**Number of Black and Non-Black Faculty**  
**in the Eberly College of Science**



Source: Penn State Factbooks:2004-2018

**Graph 24**  
**Percent of Black Faculty in the Eberly College of Science**

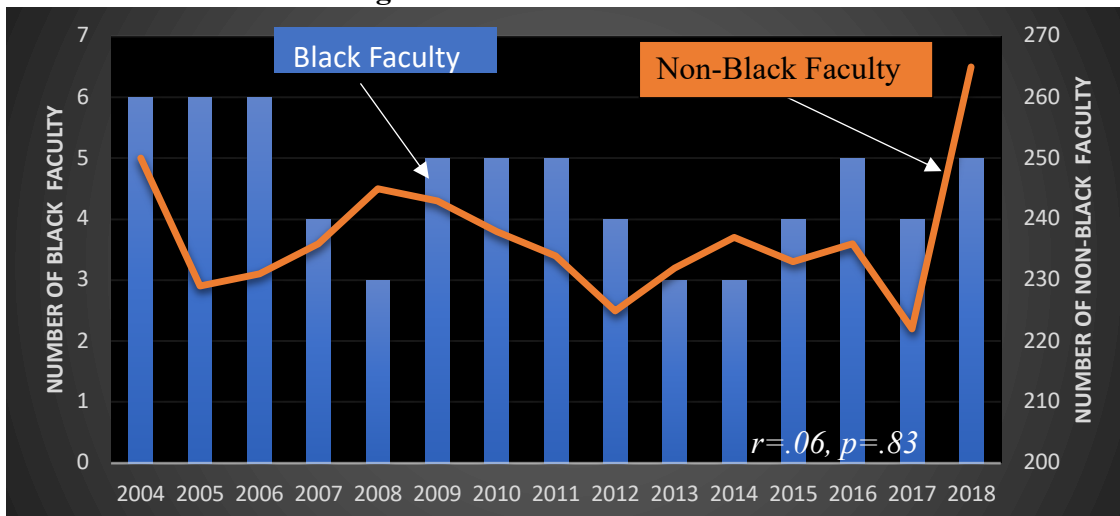


Source: Penn State Factbooks:2004-2018

**College of Earth and Mineral Sciences**

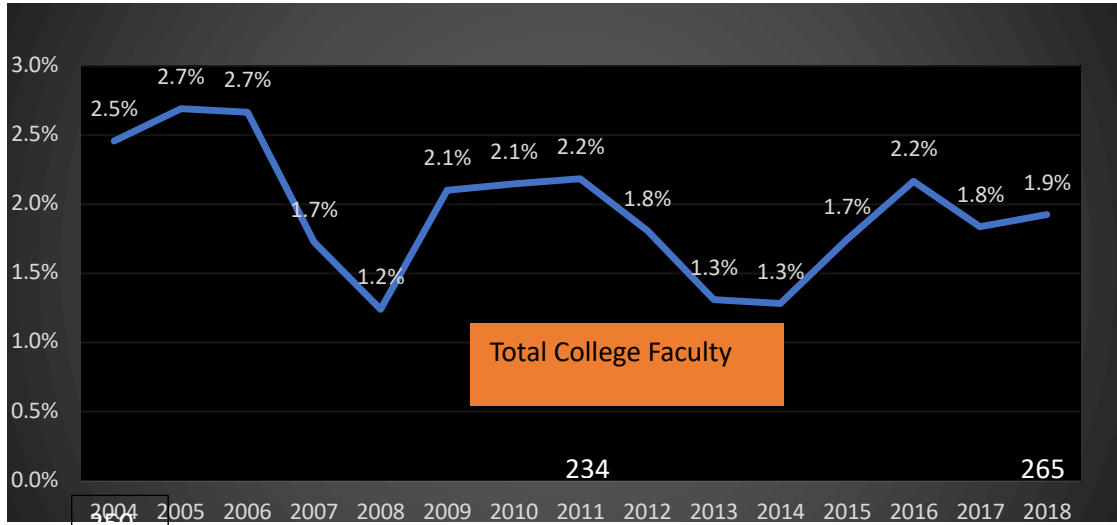
In the College of Earth and Mineral Sciences, the number of Black faculty has varied from 3 to 6 individuals over the course of the 15-year period of this report and there is no consistent pattern. As displayed in Graph 25 the fluctuation or pattern in the number of Black faculty is unrelated ( $r=.06, p=.83$ ) to non-Black faculty between 2004-2018. The mean number of African American professors was 4.5 and 4.2 over the last 5 years. Over this period, the proportion of Black faculty ranged from 1.2.% to 2.7% and in 2018 represented 1.9% (n=5) of 265 total faculty (Graph 26).

**Graph 25**  
**Number of Black and Non-Black Faculty in the College of Earth and Mineral Sciences**



Source: Penn State Factbooks: 2004-2018

**Graph 26**  
**Percent of African American Faculty in the**  
**College of Earth and Mineral Sciences**

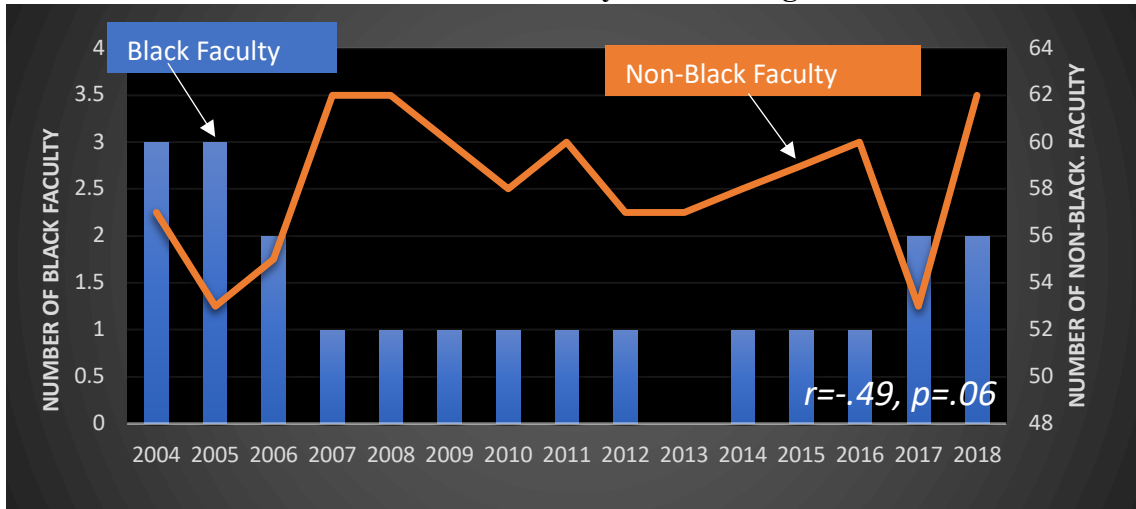


Source: Penn State Factbooks: 2004-2018

### College of Communications

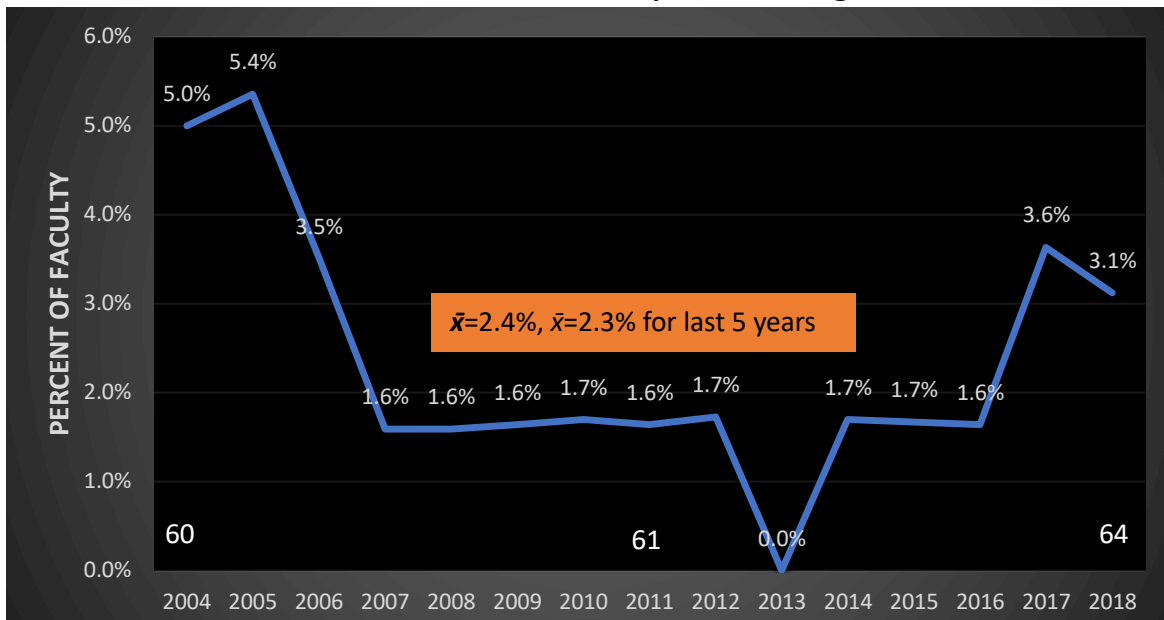
As shown in Graphs 27 and 28 in 2018 there were 2 African American professors in the College of Communications representing 3.1% of all faculty. For most (2007-2016) of the 15-year period there was only 1 African American professor in the college and in 2013, the college did not have any on faculty. In 2004 and 2005, Black faculty comprised about 5% (n=3) of all faculty. There was a negative correlation ( $r=-.49, p=.06$ ) between the number of Black and non-Black faculty.

**Graph 27**  
**Number of Black and Non-Black Faculty in the College of Communications**



Source: Penn State Factbooks: 2004-2018

**Graph 28**  
**Percent of African American Faculty in the College of Communications**

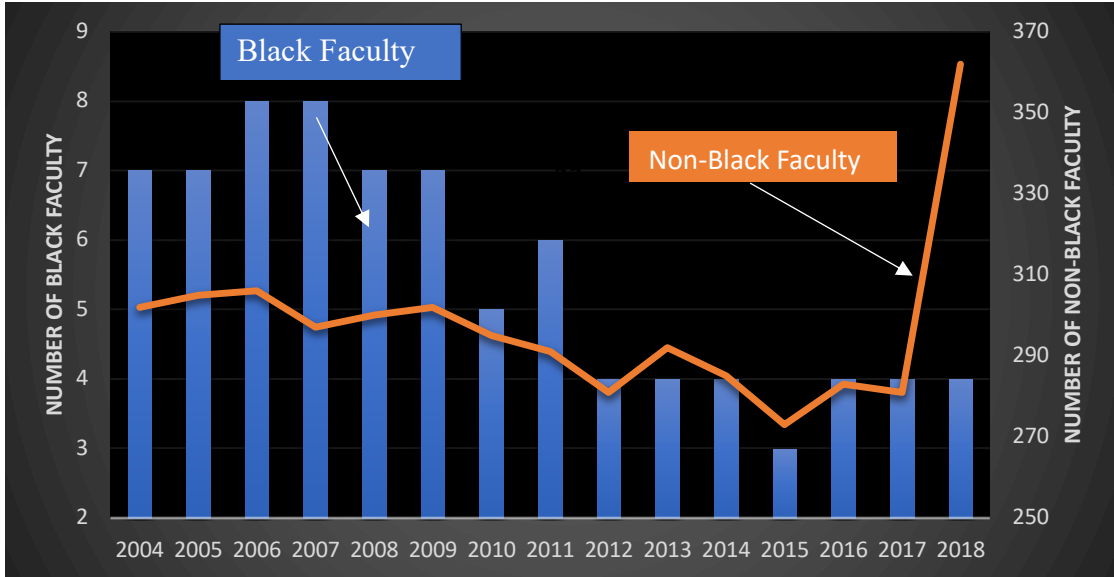


Source: Penn State Factbooks: 2004-2018

### College of Agricultural Sciences

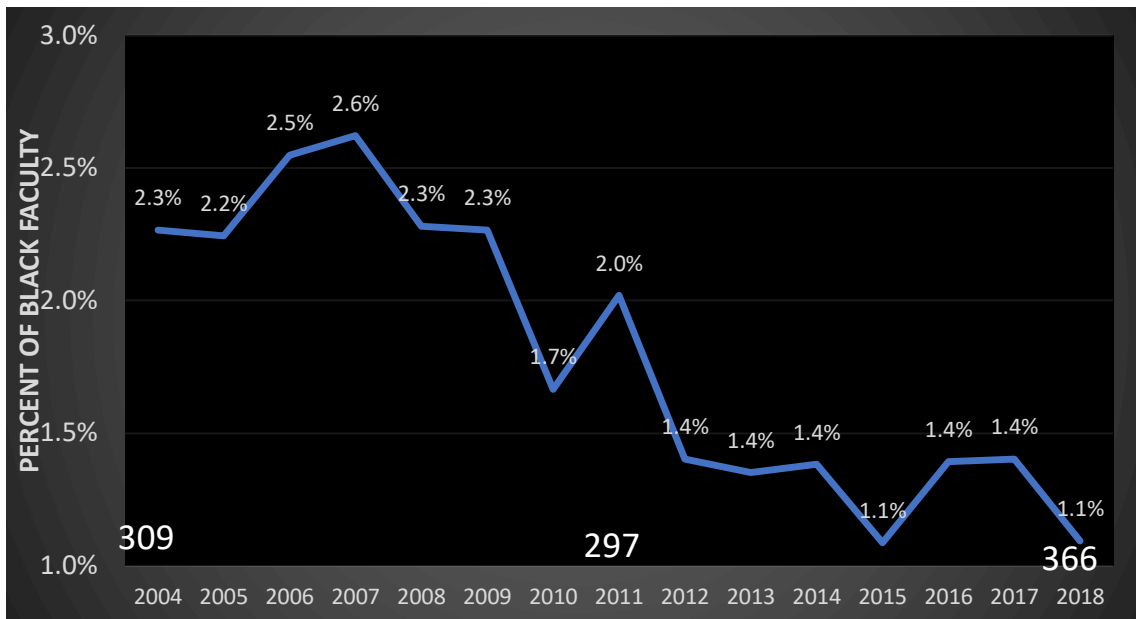
Graph 29 presents the pattern of African American faculty inclusion in the College of Agricultural Sciences on the UP campus between 2004-2018. During the first 6 years of this period, they occupied 7 or 8 faculty positions annually but after 2009 their numbers began to decrease precipitously and from 2012 to 2018 there were 50% or more fewer black faculty (n=4) in the college. In fact, African American faculty represented 2.3% of all professors in the College but by 2018, this percentage had plummeted to 1.1%, (Graph 30). The trend of non-Black faculty has also decreased over this period. There was no statistically significant correlation ( $r=.22, p=.43$ ) between Black and non-Black faculty in the college. The number of non-Black faculty spiked upward rather strikingly from 2017-2018, which probably reflects the Office of Data and Assessment definitional modification as to who they define as a faculty member. Notwithstanding, it did not result in an increase in the number of African American faculty, artificially or otherwise.

**Graph 29**  
**Number of Black and Non-Black Faculty in the**  
**College of Agricultural Sciences: 2004-2018**



Source: Penn State Factbooks: 2004-2018

**Graph 30**  
**Percent of African American Faculty in the**  
**College of Agricultural Sciences: 2004-2018**

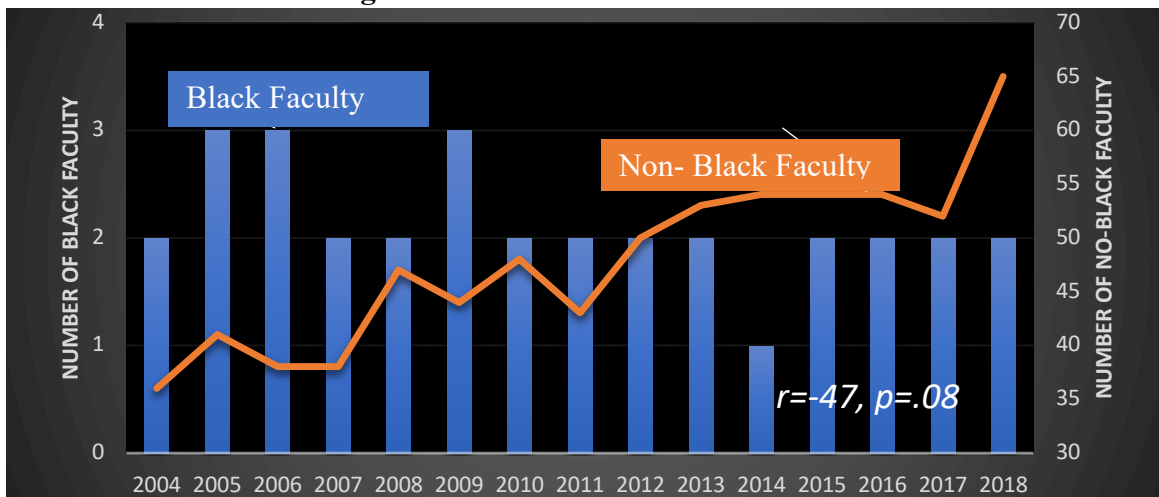


Source: Penn State Factbooks: 2004-2018

## College of Information Sciences

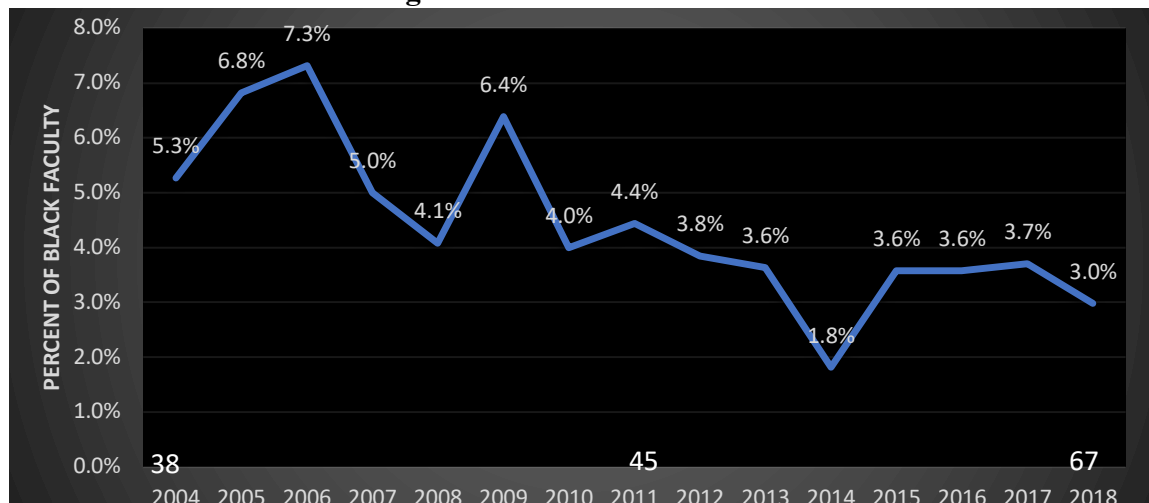
The data on the number of Black and non-Black Faculty in the College of Information Sciences as presented in Graph 31 reveal a contrasting pattern. The number of African American professors remained constant for 11 of the 15 years averaging 2.1 professors annually. The trend of non-Black professors continued to increase in numbers almost doubling from 36 in 2004 to 65 in 2018, a percentage increase of 81%. What is also apparent in Graph 32 is that the percent of Black faculty in the college has continued to decrease, from 5.3% in 2004 to 3% in 2018.

**Graph 31**  
**Number of Black and Non-Black Faculty in the**  
**College of Information Sciences: 2004-2018**



Source: Penn State Factbooks: 2004-2018

**Graph 32**  
**Percent of African American Faculty in the**  
**College of Information Sciences: 2004-2018**



Source: Penn State Factbooks: 2004-2018

**Summary:** Although it would be possible to rank each of the above colleges according to an index of inclusion of African American faculty, both historically and currently, it is clear that there are major barriers to the equitable and continuous representation of Black faculty in most of the colleges at Penn State. Albeit there are multifaced societal problems affecting our institutions of higher learning, this report suggests strongly that there is endemic systemic reluctance to increasing and maintaining faculty diversity within a considerable number of departments and colleges at the University Park campus.

#### **4.0 African American Faculty and Student Evaluation of Teaching**

There is an extensive literature dating back more than 30 years about the experiences of African American faculty in predominately White institutions of higher learning. This literature consists of conceptual, theoretical, and empirical works. According to Smith and Hawkins (2011), “The most noted and unexplored adverse situations are problems associated with teaching evaluations and diverse faculty, particularly Black faculty.” These “situations” with their myriad challenges are neither new nor limited to Penn State but reflect a deeply-rooted, pervasive, and extant societal and cultural dilemma.

Over the past few decades, colleges and universities have undertaken major changes in their curriculum to improve teaching. Not incidentally, these changes have been motivated and influenced by the costs of tuition, textbooks, and other college related expenses along with a consumer-oriented approach aiming “to please the client” and the assumption that “the customer is always right”. Given the important role of student evaluations of faculty in hiring, tenure and promotion, awards, and annual salary increases as well as determining university policy (Basow and Martin, 2012), it is critical to assess the fairness of these measures particularly pertaining to African American faculty. One scholar (Nast, 1999) aptly notes that:

Evaluative instruments are ostensibly designed to judge the performance and knowledge of faculty, a judgement that assumes that students possess a breadth of knowledge about the subject matter about which the faculty member teaches. Thus, a faculty member teaching an introductory geography course is judged in part by first-year students as to the scholarly knowledge that they possess.

Many, if not most, students at predominately White universities have life experiences that “are marked by cultural homogeneity from birth to adulthood” having never had contact with a Black person in a position of authority such as a professor. Jackson and Dangerfield (2004) explain that, “Consequently, when a White student who grows up in a racially homogenous environment meets a Black person for the first time face-to-face, it can be shocking... and in the classroom these students “are struggling with the process of reconciling what they have been taught socially at home and in their communities with what they are being asked to intellectually ponder in academia.” Within this context, students as well as African American and other faculty of color



are engaged in a set of challenging and frequently uncomfortable interpersonal dynamics that extend beyond mere pedagogy.

The use of student evaluations of teaching (SETs) or SRTEs of faculty raises critically important questions that have continued to present a major barrier to the success, satisfaction, and retention, of Black faculty at Penn State and the successful recruitment and retention of others. This section presents two important statements on faculty evaluations by the Penn State Faculty Senate Committee and more than 15 academic professional organizations led by the American Sociological Association. In addition, a review of the literature related to Black faculty and the biases of student evaluation of teaching is also provided.

### **Penn State University Committee on Faculty Affairs Report**

Student evaluations of faculty instruction have been a part of the Penn State University system since 1985. In March of 2017, the Senate Committee on Faculty Affairs of the Penn State Faculty Senate released a 28-page report entitled, Student Rating of Teaching Effectiveness (SRTE) Evaluations: Effective Use of SRTE Data. As stated in the report, the purpose was “to provide guidance about some of the most common misuses of student ratings data in the faculty evaluation process, and to set forth guidelines for best practices in the use and evaluations of SRTEs.” The Committee decided that it was necessary to clarify “what student ratings are and are not” prior to addressing the primary aims of the report. In this regard they highlighted the following points.

- Student ratings are student perception data
- Student ratings are not measures of student learning
- Student ratings are not faculty evaluations
- Student ratings are here to stay

The Senate Committee Report on Faculty Affairs is an important statement as it relates directly to issues and experiences of African American faculty at Penn State and is consistent with the existing literature on student biases in their teaching evaluation of “non-traditional faculty”. As noted in the report:

“The faculty who are most likely to be negatively impacted by faculty-faculty comparisons are those who do not fit common stereotypes about the professoriate—typically women and faculty of color. Biases, even unconscious biases, against non-majority faculty are well known in the academy (Gutgold & Linse, 2016), especially in White-male-dominated fields such as business and the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering & Math) disciplines (National Academies, 2006; Street et al., 1996). However, such bias can also negatively impact any faculty member who is seen as different by students and faculty evaluators.”

Student ratings instruments are designed to reflect the collective views of a sample of

students. They are best at capturing the modal perceptions of respondents, but they are not the best instruments for capturing rare views, i.e., the views of students represented by the tail of the distribution. While students with outlier views are not unimportant, they should not be given more weight than the views of most students. This is particularly crucial when evaluating the ratings of non-majority faculty because we often see students with biased views represented in the tails of the distribution.

Students, like all human beings are biased. But students, like other members of society, are not monolithic in their views. In other words, not all students are biased in the same ways. The real question here is whether student bias against some attribute of a faculty member is widespread and strong enough to overwhelm the students' ratings of the faculty member's teaching or course environment and solely reflect students' bias.

The research on gender bias has a longer history than does the research on racial, ethnic, or cultural bias, in part because minority faculty still constitute a relatively small percentage of the faculty. The number of studies is increasing and evidence is mounting that such biases exist among students and may impact student ratings (Anderson & Smith, 2005; Davis, 2010; Galguera, 1998; Gilroy, 2007; Hendrix, 1998; Lazos, 2011; Reid, 2010; Smith, 2007, 2009; Smith & Hawkins, 2011; Smith & Johnson-Bailey, 2011/12). However, at this point the bias is not sufficiently strong or widespread to explain consistently low ratings across all courses for a faculty member.

Faculty who do not fit students' perceptions of what a professor should look or act like can experience bias from the students. Student ratings researchers have identified among students the same biases that exist in society (gender, sexual orientation, political, religious, etc.). While these biases definitely exist, the research indicates that the biases rarely, if ever, fully explain ratings that cluster at the low end of the ratings scale.

The fact that student ratings instruments are not designed to capture rare student views is one reason why we hear contradictory information about whether or not student ratings are biased against women faculty, faculty of color, and other non-majority attributes of faculty. For many years, studies that analyzed large samples of courses from a variety of disciplines consistently showed no significant difference in ratings due to systematic gender bias (Feldman, 1992, 1993; Franklin & Theall, 1994). Yet, women faculty, particularly in male-dominated fields in the STEM disciplines (science, technology, engineering, and math) continued to suggest that these studies did not represent their experiences. Given the relatively small numbers of women faculty in these fields, ratings that reflect bias will be represented in the tails of the distribution, not in the peak of the distribution. As a result, these biases are more difficult to detect.

Although institutions such as Penn State have adopted mechanisms [such as "All In", the Multicultural Resource Center and Office of Educational Equity] "to acknowledge multiple cultures through celebratory events, this cannot and should not be used as an indicator of true cultural understanding" (Jackson and Crawley, 2003). These approaches though quite necessary

should not and cannot be conceived of either implicitly or explicitly as sufficient categorical approaches and remedies to address the biases of SRTes affecting Black faculty. In this regard, the university's responsibility is not currently being met.

### **American Sociological Association (ASA) Statement**

In September of 2019, the ASA along with more than 15 other academic professional organizations (including the American Anthropological Association, American Political Science Association, and the American Historical Association) issued a policy statement of student evaluations of teaching (SETs). Their statement emanated primarily from the clamor among a diverse group of social scientists and others teaching at university and colleges to address the intrinsic biases associated with (SET) or SRTes. In addition to the methodological issues, the statement highlights the significant problems with respect to certain demographically defined faculty. It reads in part:

...in both observational studies and experiments, SETs have been found to be biased against women and people of color (for recent reviews of the literature, see Basow and Martin 2012 and Spooen, Brockx, and Mortelmans 2015). For example, students rate women instructors lower than they rate men, even when they exhibit the same teaching behaviors (Boring, Ottoboni, and Stark 2016; MacNell, Driscoll, and Hunt 2015), and students use stereotypically gendered language in how they evaluate their instructors (Mitchell and Martin 2018). The instrument design can also affect gender bias in evaluations; in an article in *American Sociological Review*, Rivera and Tilcsik (2019) find that the range of the rating scale (e.g., a 6-point scale versus a 10-point scale) can affect how women are evaluated relative to men in male-dominated fields. Further, Black and Asian faculty members are evaluated less positively than White faculty (Bavishi, Madera, and Hebl 2010; Reid 2010; Smith and Hawkins 2011), especially by students who are White men. Faculty ethnicity and gender also mediate how students rate instructor characteristics like leniency and warmth (Anderson and Smith 2005).

The consensus and recommendations of the ASA and other professional organizations are presented below:

- 1) Questions on SETs should focus on student experiences, and the instruments should be framed as an opportunity for student feedback, rather than an opportunity for formal ratings of teaching effectiveness.
- 2) SETs should not be used as the only evidence of teaching effectiveness. Rather, when they are used, they should be part of a holistic assessment that includes peer observations, reviews of teaching materials, and instructor self-reflections. This holistic approach has been in wide use at teaching-focused institutions for many years and is becoming more common at research institutions as well.

- 3) SETs should not be used to compare individual faculty members to each other or to a department average. As part of a holistic assessment, they can appropriately be used to document patterns in an instructor's feedback over time.
- 4) If quantitative scores are reported, they should include distributions, sample sizes, and response rates for each question on the instrument (Stark and Freishtat 2014). This provides an interpretative context for the scores (e.g., items with low response rates should be given little weight).
- 5) Evaluators (e.g., chairs, deans, hiring committees, tenure and promotion committees) should be trained in how to interpret and use SETs as part of a holistic assessment of teaching effectiveness (see Linse 2017 for specific guidance).

The two statements by the Faculty Senate and the American Sociological Association are indicative of the general and strong concern of academics about the shortcomings and biases of SETs such as the SRTes. The conclusions of highly reputable professional organizations represent an acknowledgement of the long-standing problems and challenges of student evaluations of teaching such as the SRTes and the specific difficulties facing Black faculty and others. As such they are supportive of concerns expressed by faculty at Penn State about racial and ethnic bias of SRTes.

### **Literature Review of Studies of Teaching and Black Faculty**

Studies (Fortson & Brown, 1998; Babad, Darley, & Kaplowitz, 1999; Ogier, 2005; Smith 2007; McPherson & Jewell, 2007; Basow and Martin, 2012; Boatright-Horowitz & Soeung, 2009; Reid 2010; Smith and Hawkins, 2011; Yan et al. 2019) on the effects of race and ethnicity of college and university faculty and students on SET yields results showing statistically significant differences. Reid (2010) states that the "preponderance of studies utilizing actual SETs found that racial minority faculty are evaluated more negatively than White faculty." The collective literature suggests some broad thematic patterns pertaining to Black faculty with clear relevance to African American professors at Penn State. A quite recent study of students in Australia The lack of a critical mass at most universities and the reluctance of many institutions to delve into this "minefield" is another reason why there are so few studies. Even so, universities such as Penn State could conduct reliable and valid studies by compiling the information on SRTes by racial and ethnic classifications across years to ascertain results.

### **Occupational Stereotyping: White Men as the Standard**

According to Lipton and colleagues (1991), occupational stereotyping is a theory of "a preconceived attitude about a particular occupation, about people who are employed in that occupation, or about one's suitability for that occupation." On college campuses because of the historical imbalance, discriminatory practices, and certain traditions, White men represent the archetypal college professor and the standard of occupational stereotyping by which all other

groups are judged. Basow and Martin (2012) argue that occupational stereotyping places an additional burden on women and minorities who “often must work harder to be perceived as equally competent as White men (the normative group)” Biernat, Fuegen, & Kobrynowicz, 2010; Foschi, 2000). In other words, if a White male professor does it, then it more likely to be considered acceptable and normal. Class assignments, attendance, use of cells and computers, tardiness, class discipline might be perceived as negative, and overly stringent if the professor is African American, Hispanic and/or a woman compared to White male professors. In fact, Bavishi, Madera, and Hebl (2010) in one of the few studies of its kind found that even before students enter the classroom or engage with a faculty member, racial stereotypes and prejudices govern their assessments of Black professors. In their study, of White, Asian, and Black professors they “manipulated hypothetical CVs on the measures of competence, legitimacy, and interpersonal skills” and examined if “perceived legitimacy of the professors will mediate the relationships between race and perceptions of interpersonal skills and competence”. Their results revealed that the sample of incoming college students stereotypically viewed African American professors as less legitimate and competent than Caucasian and Asian American professors. Other scholars have noted that when Black professors are few in number, occupational stereotyping is likely to be even more prevalent among White students and thus more likely to be “driven by stereotypes more than by objective qualifications” (Fiske & Taylor, 1991; Huffcut & Roth, 1998; Reid, 2010).

Reid (2010) conducted a study of 3,717 faculty who were evaluated by students using the online site “Rate My Professor” and analyzed the ratings by race and gender. He found “support for the idea that racial minority faculty, particularly Black faculty, were evaluated more negatively than White faculty in terms of Overall Quality, Helpfulness, and Clarity, but were rated higher in Easiness.” Based on his study of the race effect on SET, he characterized occupational stereotyping as “a double violation of stereotype-based expectancies.” He argues that:

The first violation is that faculty of color deviate from the stereotypical expectation that professors are bearded, bespectacled, White men (Messner, 2000). This violation of stereotype-based expectancies may create psychological discomfort (Lepore & Brown, 1997; Macrae & Bodenhausen, 2000). This discomfort could then be associated with racial minority faculty members in ways that could negatively affect student perceptions of teaching.

The second violation is related to what some racial minority faculty are. The mere presence of racial minority professor in the classroom is sufficient to activate the negative racial stereotypes directly implicated in the perception of quality instruction like intellectual competence (Brigham, 1993; Devine, 1989; Dovidio & Gaertner, 2004; Greenwald & Banaji, 1994; Steele, 1997) because race is one of the dimensions that humans use to instantly, automatically categorize others (Lepore & Brown, 1997; Zarate & Smith, 1990).

In sum, the literature generally supports the view that the modal category of White male professors as the standard by which Black and other faculty of color are judged is a major problem of bias that is reflected in student evaluations of instruction by African American faculty.

### **The "Diversity Trap"**

Over the past two decades, colleges and universities have been increasingly offering "diversity" courses and requiring students to take them to fulfill major and graduate requirements (Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2000). Many African American professors at predominately White universities are often inclined to teach courses across disciplines related to the Black diaspora as part of their commitment to providing students with broad understanding of the historical and contemporary theories, ideas, social forces and factors that have sanctioned and institutionalized racial subjugation in American society. Others, particularly younger faculty, are frequently "recruited" by heads of departments to fulfill an unmet need for "diversity, equity, and inclusion" in their curriculum. Regardless of the noble rationale and the importance of these kind of courses, they do not come without a cost to Black faculty teaching them. In fact, Nast (1999) has described the task of teaching antiracism courses as "the kiss of death". Presentations and discussions about racism, White supremacy, White privilege or even critical remarks about the racism of the Trump Administration are often perceived by many White students as offensive, inflammatory, subjective, and accusatory. This is even the case when only a component of the course or a few lectures are devoted to "diversity" related topics. In their review of the literature on this subject, Basow and Williams stated that:

In race-focused diversity courses, most likely to be taught by minority faculty, students appear to view African American faculty as more biased and subjective, although more knowledgeable, than White faculty teaching the same course (Anderson & Smith, 2005; Littleford, Ong, Tseng, Milliken, & Humy, 2010). In general, faculty teaching about White privilege to White students often receive lower student evaluations in those courses than in their other courses (Boatright-Horowitz & Soeung, 2009), a finding that may contribute to the lower ratings of African American and Hispanic faculty frequently found.

To assuage their discomfort with being challenged or introduced to thought provoking ideas, historical patterns of discrimination and racism, and social inequality in American society, Nast (1999) observes, "That students use evaluations to register anger and disapproval at having to negotiate topics and issues in a scholarly way which conflict with heretofore learned social values and assumptions..." These actions have major consequences for Black professors. In an article entitled, *Teaching White Privilege to White Students Can Mean Saying Good-Bye to Positive Student Evaluations*, Boatright-Horowitz & Soeung (2009), commented that:

The published literature abounds with anecdotes about negative student reactions to antiracism teaching, particularly when it involves teaching White students about White

privilege (McIntosh, 1988). Some scholars have reported that their classroom teaching experiences were negatively impacted, and their professional legitimacy questioned, because they discussed racism. White students need to be encouraged to confront their own racist tendencies and acknowledge their privileged statuses, an important first step as they begin to understand diverse viewpoints. But as instructors, we face a serious dilemma. This form of antiracism teaching is potentially harmful to faculty careers.

Further, they stated that “deciding whether to teach such courses becomes a personal ethical issue. Are you willing to accept the negative consequences of this form of teaching? Are your faculty colleagues and university administrators willing to support you in these efforts?” Under some circumstances, Black faculty may not have a choice as heads and administrators employ “cosmetic diversity” strategies to increase multiculturalism and in response to the demands of Black students and others. Faculty teaching courses in diversity, equity and inclusion studies or those addressing issues of White supremacy and inequality must continuously be mindful that promotion, tenure decisions, annual salary increases, and awards are increasingly based on measures such as SRTes.

### **Intersection between Race and Gender**

A key concern of bias in SETs and SRTes is the dual impact of racial and gender bias among students and their effects on the student teaching ratings. Gender, irrespective of race and ethnicity, independently impacts SETs. This is particularly the case for women who teach in disciplines that have traditionally employed few women such as the basic sciences. Mitchel and Martin (2018) examined the hypotheses “that women are evaluated based on different criteria than men, including personality, appearance, and perceptions of intelligence and competency and that women are rated more poorly than men even in identical courses and when all personality, appearance, and other factors are held constant.” Their findings based on both qualitative and quantitative analyses revealed that women are evaluated differently and compared “more poorly” to men. In a paper that received a good deal of media attention, Boring and her fellow researchers (2016) from France and the U.S. analyzed data of over 23,000 students based on natural and classical experimental designs found that SET are biased against female instructors by a substantial and statistically significant amount. Laube et al (2007) point out that students often “expect a female teacher to engage in a different set of behaviors to satisfy a particular standard than they would expect of her male counterparts.” Basow and Martin (2012) in their review stated that women are often expected to assume traditional maternal roles in the classroom such as being “more available and more nurturing” than their male colleagues. Their evaluations of students are based more on these qualities than others, which result in comparable scores but not necessarily higher ones as male professors. Thus “comparable ratings of male and female faculty may mask a differential set of student expectations for faculty behavior.” Similarly, other studies (Reid 2010) have shown an inconsistent effect on gender on SETs as it interacts with other factors.

With respect to Black women professors, the study by Bavishi et al. (2010) found that African American women professors “were rated the lowest on the Competence, Interpersonal Skills, and Legitimacy scales, compared to all other groups.” A “double stigma” and “double jeopardy” exists as students assess their competence and legitimacy through both gendered and racial lenses. In fact, some Black women professors may adjust their approaches and styles of teaching so as to accommodate White students who are culturally conditioned to view teaching as the sole domain and privilege of White male professors and thereby protect themselves from negative evaluations and student complaints (Laube et al. 2007).

Additionally, this is also a concern of African American men who as Reid (2010) pointed out may have to contend with the additional burden of fear responses from students who implicitly associate men of color with violence, hostility, and crime. He found that the SETs of minority men were lower than of other groups and after controlling for other factors observed that “Black male faculty were rated more negatively than others”. In an article entitled, *White Student Confessions About A Black Male Professor: A Cultural Contracts Theory Approach To Intimate Conversations About Race and worldview* written by a former Penn State professor, Ronald Jackson and a colleague Rex Crowley (2003), the views of Whites toward a Black professor’s “presence and pedagogy” were examined. The fact that Black male faculty constitute an even smaller proportion than Black female professors on campuses and at Penn State (is another important reason to address issues of race and gender biases at predominately White universities.

For example, Jackson & Dangerfield (2004) note that there are several popular and public projections about Black males including, but not limited to, Black masculine persons as violent, criminal, non-intellectual, and lazy/inferior. These popular cultural projections serve as the basis from which prejudices may be formed when individuals do not have direct contact and/or relational experiences with Black males. Consequently, when a White student who grows up in a racially homogenous environment meets a Black person for the first time face-to-face, it can be shocking. Moreover, when the Black person is the White student’s professor, racial projections about that professor may become exacerbated by issues of power, authority, and credibility.

### **Intellectual Competence**

The belief that African Americans are innately less intelligent and less intellectually qualified than Whites to understand and employ complex systems and processes is deeply rooted in the history of American society and its institutions of higher learning and it is embraced by a wide spectrum of the American public. One scholar (Jean-Daniels, 2019) concluded that “for those of us who have decided to enter academia as faculty members and have varying shades of Black skin, the experience can parallel the practice of ‘driving while Black.’ There is an ongoing questioning of your right to be in the space; challenges from students who question your authority; and questioning by administrative staff who ultimately see you as an interloper in their space...”



Students entering and attending college have been exposed to and socialized within these beliefs systems by way of the media, personal experiences, family and communities, political leaders, etc., and thus do not view the race of professors in a social vacuum and thus are not inured to the ideology of racial superiority. Based on the premise that “the pervasiveness of the low-intelligence stereotype may bias student evaluations of African American professors...” Ho, Thomsen, and Sidanius (2009) investigated how Black and White college instructors were assessed via the “evaluative dimension of intellectual competence, a central component of racial stereotypes concerning Blacks and Whites.” Their results revealed that there were no differences in assessments of overall performance, however, both African American and European American students placed more emphasis on the dimension of academic competence of Black professors than their White counterparts in making overall evaluations. Basow and Martin (2012) maintain that these attitudes and racial and ethnic stereotypes may require efforts by some Black and Hispanic professors to demonstrate and “prove” their “knowledge and competence in ways that White professors do not”. In a qualitative study of how a small group of Black and White professors establish credibility in the classroom, Hendrix found that Black professors believed that White students used a different set of criteria for “judging their classroom credibility” and applied a more stringent standard overall than did Black students. Unlike their White colleagues, Black professors expected White students to doubt their credibility based on their race and adopted verbal and non-verbal messages to establish their credibility.

Topical areas that were not ethnically or culturally linked to “being Black” (e.g., engineering, dentistry, medicine) presented a greater challenge with respect to establishing credibility. Black professors reported employing a multiple set of “strategies” for establishing credibility including: associating themselves with the stature of departmental colleagues and other professors and the institution itself and thereby implying that “he would not have been hired had he not also “possessed extraordinary credentials”; stating or demonstrating their personal credentials or skills.

**Summary:** This review of the literature on student evaluation of teaching presents the empirical evidence refuting their validity and reliability and denoting the intrinsic racial bias. Major professional scientific organizations, as well as the Penn State Faculty Senate, have also weighed in on the discussion concluding that student evaluations of teaching “have been found to be biased against women and people of color.” Further, these organizations argue against the use of student evaluation of teaching as a measure of teaching effectiveness or quality. The use of the existing system of SRTEs at Penn State contributes to this of form of institutional racism and has serious consequences for Black faculty including others. In a follow-up to this report, these topics will be explored further with specific reference to African American faculty at Penn State.

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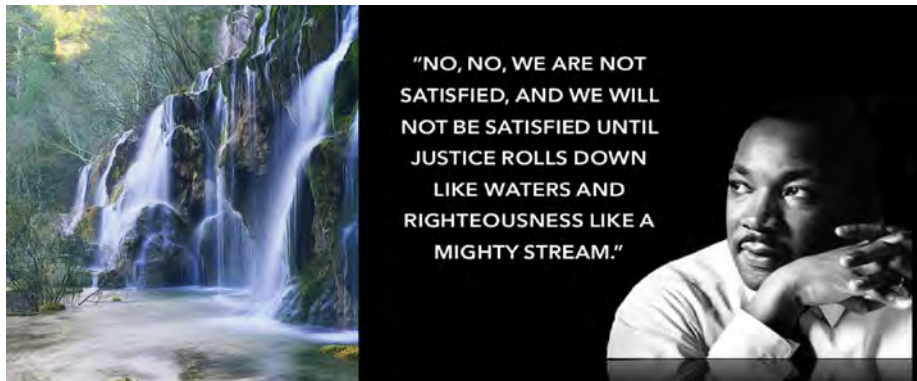
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**Summary:** The above review of the literature on student evaluation of teaching presents the empirical evidence refuting their validity and reliability and denoting the intrinsic racial bias. Major professional scientific organizations, as well as the Penn State Faculty Senate, have also weighed in on the discussion concluding that they “have been found to be biased against women and people of color.” Further, these organizations argue against the use of student evaluation of teaching as a measure of teaching effectiveness or quality. The use of the existing system of SRTEs at Penn State contributes to institutional racism and has serious consequences for Black faculty including others. In a follow-up to this report, these topics, along with recommendations, will be explored further with specific reference to African American faculty at Penn State.

## APPENDIX A

*An Afternoon with African American Faculty at Penn State:  
More Rivers to Cross*



**AGENDA**

(125 Smeal Business Building, Penn State University Park)

- 1:00-1:30 pm** **Black National Anthem & Introduction—Dr. Gary King**, Professor of Biobehavioral Health—*Trends and Patterns of African American Faculty at Penn State: 2004-2018*
- 1:30-2:00 pm** **Keynote—Dr. Errol Henderson**, Associate Professor of Political Science—*Being Black at Penn State #BBPSU...and other Unhappy Truths*
- 2:00-3:00 pm** **Faculty Panel: Voices from the Front Lines**—Moderated by **Dr. Gregory Jenkins**, Professor of Meteorology and Atmospheric Science
- **Dr. Wanda B. Knight**, Associate Professor of Art Education, African American Studies, and Women's, Gender & Sexuality Studies
  - **Mr. Marc L. Miller**, Assistant Professor of Landscape Architecture
  - **Dr. Darryl Thomas**, Associate Professor of African American Studies and Political Science
  - **Dr. Lynette M. Yarger**, Associate Professor of Information Sciences and Technology
- 3:00-3:15 pm** **Break**
- 3:15-4:00 pm** **State Conference President, Dr. Joan Duvall-Flynn, of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People Pennsylvania State Conference (NAACP-PA) and Penn State Student Panel**—Moderated by **Dr. Gary King** and **Dr. Joan Duvall-Flynn**
- 4:00-4:45 pm** **Interactive Session**—Facilitated by **Dr. Wanda B. Knight**
- 4:45-5:00 pm** **Closing**



## APPENDIX B

[https://www.collegian.psu.edu/opinion/letters\\_to\\_editor/article\\_a167470c-0b90-11e8-ba9d-a3e566ba4bda.html](https://www.collegian.psu.edu/opinion/letters_to_editor/article_a167470c-0b90-11e8-ba9d-a3e566ba4bda.html)

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR: Walk the walk

Gary King | For the Collegian

Feb 7, 2018

 **The recent history of hiring black and other underrepresented faculty is still mired in a period of ‘benign neglect.’ ”**



» Gary King, professor in the Department of Biobehavioral Health

In 1969, African Americans were just beginning to integrate predominately white universities and colleges after the death of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and the turbulence of the civil rights movement.

The next year, Daniel Patrick Moynihan the former senator and advisor on urban problems to President Richard Nixon wrote, "The time may have come when the issue of race could benefit from a period of 'benign neglect.' " Much progress has been made since.

Unfortunately, in the case of Penn State and particularly the College of Health and Human Development (CHHD), the recent history of hiring black and other underrepresented faculty is still mired in a period of "benign neglect."

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Despite the platitudes and homage to liberalism misnomered as diversity, equity and inclusion, the present CHHD administration's record has been atrocious in retaining or recruiting African American and Latino faculty.

Over the last 10 years black and Latino faculty have left CHHD (the fourth largest student college on campus) as if they were subject to a staggered and irreplaceable eviction decree.

Were it not for the commendable efforts of two previous heads of the Department of Biobehavioral Health (three black faculty), of which I have been a member for 20 years, the absolutely abysmal proportion of generously defined black faculty in CHHD would be 1.8 percent (5 of 271).

Moreover, the 2.9 percent total (8 of 274, which is below the university average of 3.2 percent) would be further reduced if only tenured or tenured-track instructors were counted.

In actuality, I am the only African American male faculty and the only black full professor in the entire College, a singular distinction exceeded appreciably in previous years.

Some departments in the College have seldom invited black and minority faculty to present at colloquia and have few if any graduate or undergraduate students from underrepresented minorities.

Further, through policy machinations such as spousal hires, creation of unconventional positions, failure to hold departments fully accountable, lack of courage and commitment, and differential preferences, CHHD has subverted institutional policy.

Consequently, it has not lived up to the university's mission, strategic plans or promise to recruit and retain African American or Latino faculty.

The implications of this form of "benign neglect" are considerable for all students and faculty, but especially for those of color.

For one, the important scientific contributions to the health disciplines nurtured by a supportive and multicultural environment are missed.

Secondly, students are inadequately prepared to attend to patients, conduct research, or administer health policy or promotion in increasingly diverse settings.

Third, a policy of "benign neglect" becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy and the pattern of exclusion becomes widely acknowledged among black and Latino academicians and students. And this "cultural grapevine" can be very difficult to overcome.

Finally, this state of affairs is insulting to the status of Penn State as a great university excelling in research and teaching.

Most students who arrive at Penn State have never seen or interacted scholastically with a black or Latino instructor, and there is little likelihood that by the time many leave CHHD, that this unenviable record will be broken.

Perhaps instead of "All In," a modification of the NFL's "Rooney Rule" is needed for colleges such as CHHD based on a one-to-one recruitment of black athletes corresponding with the recruitment and retention of black and other underrepresented faculty, students, and staff of color.

Above all, Penn State should not be an oasis of "benign neglect" and excuses.

Martin, among many others, would not be pleased.

*Gary King is a professor in the Department of Biobehavioral Health.*

[https://www.collegian.psu.edu/opinion/letters\\_to\\_editor/article\\_de7f77f4-f389-11e8-8c47-f39a42ca198d.html](https://www.collegian.psu.edu/opinion/letters_to_editor/article_de7f77f4-f389-11e8-8c47-f39a42ca198d.html)

## Teaching while Black at Penn State | Letter to the Editor

Letter by Gary King

Nov 29, 2018

*Editor's Note: Another letter to the editor that discussed additional negative effects of SRTEs can be found **here**. It was written by Professor David P. Baker and was published on Nov. 28.*

Not too long ago, I met a newly hired administrator and raised the question of faculty hiring and diversity. Without batting an eye, he responded with the anointed arrogance of professional supremacy and flippantly replied, "Yea, if they're qualified".

Unfortunately, this is the same atavistic attitude that prevails among too many students and some faculty and administrators here at Penn State when it comes to their encounters with and prejudgments of Black, Latinx, and other minority faculty.

And this is nowhere more apparent than in student evaluations of teachers or the notoriously misused SRTEs, which heads of departments, promotion committees and faculty search committees rely on sensationally and uncritically in their assessments.

In the Spring of 2017, a Faculty Senate report advanced the discussion and issued a robust and incisive analysis entitled: Student Rating of Teaching Effectiveness (SRTE) Evaluations: Effective Use of SRTE Data.

This document challenged the general view that SRTs are either complete measures of student learning or faculty evaluations and noted they are fraught with erroneous assumptions and consequential shortcomings. Specific reference highlighted "Bias due to gender, race, ethnicity, or culture" though the cited studies of faculty of color were limited.

While all faculty are subject to the vagaries of student opinions and perceptions, for Black professors this takes on a quality that entails the uncomfortably personal and institutional experiences of race and racism that we have come to expect and deflect.

As practically any Black prof at Penn State can tell you, these experiences leave an occasionally bitter and indelible impression of the student body and the administration. Many of us have had to endure the demeaning task of proving we are "qualified."

And this is acutely the case of Black male professors regardless of rank or tenure status. To lecture in a culturally anglicized dialect is a clear sign of not being "qualified"; to employ a pedagogy that is different is yet another sign of not being "qualified"; to make by happenstance a mistake in class is surely an indication of not being "qualified"; and perhaps most of all, to look, think or act in any way "Black" is certain sign of not being "qualified".

So, what is a Black prof to do? Should we avoid any topic remotely related to race, sexism, and inequality or current issues such as gun control and violence or the racism of President Trump? Should we not discuss history and exhort students to see the present through the past and by extension a possible future? Should we take the "ease and appease" approach and not require too much rigor or reading for exams or quizzes or even class decorum especially if we are about to "come up"? Should we smile more often, modulate the voice, and/or tell jokes to appear "nonthreatening" in an effort to assuage White students? Or should one just "Get Out"?

Studies have been remarkably consistent in their results regarding racial and ethnic bias and the unfairness of student evaluation of faculty. In a recent literature review and an empirical study, Wallace and colleagues (2018), noted a number of personal characteristics associated with student faculty evaluations pertaining to both race and gender of the instructor including culturally perceived mannerisms, physical attractiveness or appearance, accents, and perceived sexuality.

Littleford et al. (2010) demonstrated that challenging a student's worldview of (e.g., about racism, structural inequality, White privilege) can be dangerous to one's SRTEs. In his research, Reid (2010) studied data from over 3,000 student evaluations of professors revealing that African American and Asian teachers were ranked the lowest and Black males received the lowest scores of any racial/gender group. These studies are among the many works on this important topic and are keenly instructive.

Realistically however, why should we expect this situation to be any different considering that it reflects in part the state of black faculty and "benign neglect" at Penn State? More broadly configured, it is essentially no different than what other African Americans such as police and firemen, medical practitioners, and journalists face (save perhaps traditional domains encompassing athletes, artists of syncopation, chauffeurs, and preachers).

I might also add that the bias against Black faculty is not limited to White students as many Black, Asian, and Latinx students also endorse racist stereotypes by avoiding our courses, expecting and doing less, and evaluating more stringently.

College instruction is not as easy a vocation as it may seem and we as professionals do not always meet or exceed our expectations. Everyone benefits when teaching is improved but no one benefits when teaching assessment is poorly conceived, weaponized by students, and detonated by administrators.

Given the cogent research and the Faculty Senate report as well as the experiences of Black, Latinx and women faculty at Penn State, the current use of SRTEs by administrators is unavoidably and undeniably discriminatory.

Students cannot change the SRTE system. Only the administration working with faculty can do so. This venerable institution should assume the responsibility of addressing this issue as a matter of equity.

One approach to changing the SRTE system is to assemble a body of fair minded faculty and administrators to examine racial and gender differences in SRTE survey scores across an array of factors such class size, course level of difficulty, elective versus required courses, for example, and develop a new system. If in fact student evaluations of faculty are here to stay, they should not remain in their present form nor be the sole means by which administrators

and promotion and recruitment committees assess teaching. As other colleges and universities have changed their student evaluation systems in the interest of fairness and validity, so should Penn State.

*Gary King is a professor in the department of Biobehavioral Health at Penn State.*



## Letters to the Editor

[https://www.collegian.psu.edu/opinion/letters\\_to\\_editor/article\\_56c889e0-19d6-11e9-918c-4b0acfadb892.html](https://www.collegian.psu.edu/opinion/letters_to_editor/article_56c889e0-19d6-11e9-918c-4b0acfadb892.html)

### Being Black at Penn State | Letter to the Editor

Letter by Errol A. Henderson 17 hrs ago



I have been at Penn State since 2002. I am the only tenured African American professor in the history of the Penn State political science department. How long is that? George Atherton taught political science at PSU in the 19th century: yes, that Atherton. Think about it: the United States has had an African American president before the political science department at PSU has promoted an African American to full professor. The department has never tenured a black woman.

None of this should be surprising. There has been roughly three percent African American faculty at PSU for 30 years: this is a deplorable record.

This is often concealed by the University's continued promotion of its "diverse" faculty/students, which shows trends that are typically not reflected among its African American equivalents.

For example, black student enrollment still does not reach levels achieved at PSU in the mid-1980s. Yet, the Chief Academic Officer, Provost Nick Jones, when asked about PSU targeting diverse hires, replied: “we don’t discriminate one way or the other” (**see below**). One way or the other? What’s the “other”? There has been three percent African American faculty for 30 years, and the provost is concerned with racial discrimination of “one way or the other”?

It sounds like the “good people on both sides” type of argument.

The provost’s comments reflect, inform, and sets the policy and tone for the university; and this is evident in the political science department where my treatment as the only tenured black professor in its history is much different—and negatively so—than that of white professors.

For example, when I arrived in the department in 2002 there were no black PhD students in our classes. I helped recruit three black women who not only graduated but two of whom became our best placements at Big Ten universities. I asked the head to put their pictures on the front of our department web page as a testament to our seriousness and recent success in educating black women PhDs and as well as a recruiting tool.

The head, a senior white woman professor, refused. Seeing no reason for the refusal given that there were stock pictures of white students on our web page—and one black person who wasn’t even a PSU student, as far as I know—I repeated my requests.

The department stonewalled for several years using a range of excuses including deleting all pictures of people on the front page. Now there are a variety of pictures on the web page, which conceals the years of resistance by the department of this simple act of acknowledging black women PhD graduates in political science.

Much worse is the instance when I raised the issue to the department head of a senior white male professor using the sexist slur, “bitch,” in a departmental meeting. I immediately objected to this professor; but when I complained to the head, a white woman senior professor, she told me that

this white man's use of the slur, "bitch", was tantamount to the use of the word "dear." The white woman head then accused me of contributing to a hostile climate because I'd used the word dear before and the white man professor was promoted. Today both of these people determine if I will even be considered for promotion, which surprisingly, I am not.

This is typical for those of us who complain of the hostile climate we are compelled to work in: we are the ones who are accused of creating the hostile climate that we are subjected to: often by the very people—administrators and senior professors—who create and maintain this hostile climate.

For example, in my formal annual evaluation, a previous department head, also a white woman, began to talk to me about black rapists and how she had been stalked by black men when she taught at another university—this was nowhere near the subject that we were discussing at the time.

Taken aback, I asked her what did this have to do with me or my annual evaluation; and she replied "well, you never know where people are coming from?"

When I told her that these were racist tropes and complained to the dean, also a white woman, my concerns were dismissed, and the Head was given an award by that dean.

The racism is beyond attitudinal, it is institutionalized in the evaluative criteria the department and college use as well. They rationalize using SRTEs that we know are biased by race and gender by arguing that these are not the only criteria they use—but they shouldn't be used at all if we know they are biased—and egregiously so with regard to race (and imagine how that works out for the only black professor in a department's history).

Even first year education students at Penn State have recognized this and the Collegian has published articles related to it (e.g. **Daily Collegian November 28, 2018**).



student newspaper, as Gary King did recently (e.g. **Daily Collegian February 7, 2018**)

But, again, the department and college has not devised a system to account for the racism of administrators and colleagues in the department who may conduct peer reviews.

For example, a senior white male colleague in my department stormed out of a meeting in contempt of the idea of having a staff member from the Office of Educational Equity attend a faculty meeting to discuss “implicit bias”—not racism, just “implicit bias”.

What confidence can a black colleague have for such a white senior professor who will evaluate their teaching and research—especially that which focuses on white supremacy and patriarchy, and to vote on their promotion, who will not even tolerate a discussion of implicit bias, much less, racism?

Particularly troubling is the published research showing that students’ SRTE ratings are consistently lower for new, female, minority and physically disabled faculty regardless of their teaching quality.

This is not even a small sample of the toxic racist climate that I’m compelled to work in, create in, teach in, research in, do service in, and be black in...here at PSU...#BeingBlackatPennState #BBPSU.

If professors and administrators will treat black professors in such racist ways, then how do you think they treat black students, or student applicants? Among my many and largely ignored suggestions to the provost is that in certain situations (e.g. a major department that is still experiencing historic racial “firsts,” such as having the first black tenured professor in its history), oversight and/or interventions from the provost office are necessary.

But then again, when the provost spoke with faculty in our college, he opened his comments with an ethnic “joke” ...so?

Another requirement is that those of us who have been subjected to the prevalent and enduring white racism on this campus from colleagues, administrators, staff, and students should give voice to their experiences, at minimum, and take concerted action, even if it begins with just a letter to the student newspaper, as Gary King did recently (e.g. **Daily Collegian February 7, 2018**)

## **APPENDIX C**

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Final Edition

VOL. 56—NO. 100

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 1962

25 CENTS



Today

Shirley and I will... Today Shirley and I will... Shirley and I will... Shirley and I will...

On oil price rise... President Reagan... On oil price rise... President Reagan...

Lavelle replaced... Dealing a knockout... Lavelle replaced... Dealing a knockout...

A modest proposal... Allegheny County... A modest proposal... Allegheny County...

LTV classifies... It's one official... LTV classifies... It's one official...

What to do... These Carls... What to do... These Carls...

Club rock... A year ago... Club rock... A year ago...

All in the family... Current... All in the family... Current...

Down average... Closing... Down average... Closing...

Down average... Closing... Down average... Closing...

Down average... Closing... Down average... Closing...

Down average... Closing... Down average... Closing...

Down average... Closing... Down average... Closing...

30-acre stadium complex offered

By Albert J. Mori... Before 1960... 30-acre stadium complex offered...

...offer up the present stadium... 30-acre stadium complex offered...

...Under the terms of the... 30-acre stadium complex offered...

...will be followed by the... 30-acre stadium complex offered...

...Actual construction... 30-acre stadium complex offered...

Is Penn State 'too rural' for black students?

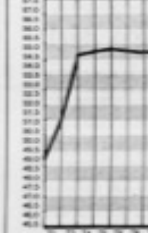


Deane... Is Penn State 'too rural' for black students?



Blacks at Penn state... The Planning Department...

PSU enrollment



PSU enrollment... That's an important...

Not No. 1

Penn State ranks low in numbers of blacks... Special report...

Panel vote asks rejection of Adelman

WASHINGTON (AP)—... Panel vote asks rejection of Adelman...



Adelman... Panel vote asks rejection of Adelman...

...Adelman... Panel vote asks rejection of Adelman...

...Adelman... Panel vote asks rejection of Adelman...

USS importing steel from Korea for tower

By Michael Schroeder... USS importing steel from Korea for tower...

...USS importing steel from Korea for tower...

Probers blame FDR for internment Japanese

WASHINGTON (AP)—... Probers blame FDR for internment Japanese...

...Probers blame FDR for internment Japanese...

Grandfather cleared in killing of rapist

By Jim Gallagher... Grandfather cleared in killing of rapist...



...Grandfather cleared in killing of rapist...

Girls and boys and computers

...Girls and boys and computers...

...Girls and boys and computers...

...Girls and boys and computers...

...Girls and boys and computers...

...Girls and boys and computers...

Table with 2 columns: Name and Percentage. Includes names like Ann Lambert, Ambridge, Buchanan, etc.



# Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

WILLIAM BLACK and PAUL BLACK JR.  
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## Penn State and blacks

The people in Happy Valley should be unhappy about the record that Pennsylvania State University has made in all tracking black students.

The statistics are stark. Since 1972, Penn State has increased its total student enrollment by nearly 50 percent, carrying a period where its total student enrollment went up by 5,000 to 36,743. It has a student body that is 2.3 percent black in a state with a black population of 8.8 percent, raising it to the bottom third of state-supported schools in Pennsylvania.

The excuses are easy to make. Penn State is located in rural Centre County, home of few blacks. Most Pennsylvania blacks come from the cities and therefore prefer an urban environment and its amenities.

But as Robert Coleman, chairman of the Pennsylvania Equal Rights Council, tells us bluntly, "The real reason is racism, not the environment."

The attitude of some faculty and students has been an obstacle to having sufficient black faculty. There Penn State is woefully behind, with a proportion of black faculty members and administrators for both state and national averages. (1.8 percent of faculty, 1.5 percent of administrators and 1.5 percent of all employees.) Worse, the faculty and administrators members have fallen in the past six years.

It is true that the overall number of faculty has dropped in the past decade. But with an enrollment growth of 1,000 during that time, there already has been more room for faculty expansion in Penn State's other departments than in many other hard-pressed institutions.

Well and good, Chief, our casual guess is a person is a person, where he lives he will be at least that curious. Penn State's record is no better at its leading centers, such as McKeesport and Ogontz, which are its nearest major metropolitan centers.

Furthermore, Penn State seems to have had no trouble recruiting black faculty members. Why would they be different from other blacks in their willingness to study in a rural environment? Couldn't be because they are deliberately misled and have not yet adjusted?

But the university made a sufficient financial commitment to recruiting blacks (there is only one full-time black recruiter at the main campus) to be seen. Penn State has established the Paul H. Robeson Cultural Center to promote black studies, created a Black Scholars scholarship program for students and the President's Opportunity Fund to attract black faculty by lowering salary ceilings, established a special program for disadvantaged students and set up workshops to improve faculty sensitivity to other cultures.

One can only conclude that any programs to attract black faculty and administrators have been somewhat halfhearted. The chairmanship of Penn State is not to underestimate the role of faculty and staff in helping recruit and retain black faculty and students. It cannot be considered a truly first-class university until it encompasses this dimension.

## County housing mess

The Allegheny County Board of Commissioners should have OK'ed to review the administrative and financial records of the county Housing Authority.

The authority is facing \$750,000 in spending above budget, plus a \$20 million debt from last year. It is undergoing two investigations — by the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the county controller's office and the Pennsylvania Economy League.

Already the investigators say they have found the agency faces bankruptcy because of overruns on contracts, inflated estimates of housing occupancy and a failure to keep track of revenues and expenditures.

Executive Director Anthony Pankowski had money from different programs merged into one account so that when the authority's oversight was another portion of the budget or into its reserve fund. In press interviews on different occasions, Mr. Pankowski has not been clear as to whether or not he was aware of the lack of budget control. Starting taking the job in June 1978, Mr. Pankowski had been assistant chief deputy controller, but

ag worked under Commissioner Gerald Weitz when Dr. Weitz was mayor.

HUD has refused to cover the spending overruns or cover mismanaged funds, such as \$10,000 for new office furniture for Mr. Pankowski and the board of directors. HUD also refused to reimburse a \$100,000 expense for office furniture in a low-rent program for your budget deficit. HUD also refused to reimburse a \$100,000 expense for an administrative office of HUD staff, an administrative office with which most people would agree. Talk about check chains on the "Yonkers."

Furthermore, the HUD records of accounts cannot and be projected onto the agency's own budget. That's because it is that HUD would take over the "operations."

The Pennsylvania Economy League is studying the situation to find ways to improve management procedures. A new computer system is being installed that Mr. Pankowski hopes will aid in projecting budget corresponding.

But the county commissioners need to take a serious look on whether the auditing firm can be used and kept to hand funds without a change of its management. Otherwise, any budget from whatever source may be in vain.

## Presbyterians reunite

Another wound from the Civil War period now is being healed with the successful merger vote of the Presbyterians of the North and of the South to create after a 120-year split.

The Pittsburgh Presbytery was among the 120 presbyteries of the United Presbyterian Church — the Northern denomination — to vote for reunification with the Presbyterian Church in the United States. The plan worked out over the past 12 years toward the right required a two-thirds vote of the North's 147 presbyteries — a result that had not been considered to be so close — and 100 presbyteries of the 41 presbyteries in the Southern denomination. When the vote reached 444 in the PCUS, the merger was assured, with the actual congregation to meet in connection in June in Atlanta.

The merger is of particular interest in the Pittsburgh area, where Presbyterians historically have been the dominant Protestant group with a particularly strong representation in the corporate community. The 40,000-member Pittsburgh Presbytery is the largest in the Northern division. Dr. Harold Scott, executive director, said the re-

unification will make little difference in the lives of local Presbyterians. But the merger means, he said, that "this portion of the North and of the South is reunited to help to redress and to be again united." And the reunification obviously has significance wider than just the religious realm in that it provides an other instance of old sectional differences and bitterness over the slavery and Civil War issues being overcome. At this juncture, it should be noted, this was not a black-white issue, as blacks long had been accepted in full standing in both denominations.

Earlier in the century there was a strong impetus to merge denominations toward the goal, when expressed by the movement toward, of July 1900, the prayer of Christ "that they may all be one." That has seemed less a considerable result an objective in the so-called reunification objective in recent decades toward other matters — still racism, poverty and the like.

That makes all the more significant this merger, since that it was widely and broadly of the faith. The movement accordingly may be viewed that it is not divided.



### Letters to the editor

## A rape victim's right to privacy

Regarding editor James G. Craig in his Feb. 28 column, "Rape in the West,"

The fact that some women are not published does not mean they are not worthy of publication. It means that the editor has to make a choice of what to publish and what to omit. It is not the editor's job to decide what to publish and what to omit. It is the editor's job to decide what to publish and what to omit.

It is true that the overall number of faculty has dropped in the past decade. But with an enrollment growth of 1,000 during that time, there already has been more room for faculty expansion in Penn State's other departments than in many other hard-pressed institutions.

The publishing industry is not "victimless," rather, it is a constant war against the forces of ignorance and the forces of the bad. The forces of the bad are the forces of the bad. The forces of the bad are the forces of the bad.

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### Trashy Fifth

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### Why is the DEPT. OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT?

It is true that the overall number of faculty has dropped in the past decade. But with an enrollment growth of 1,000 during that time, there already has been more room for faculty expansion in Penn State's other departments than in many other hard-pressed institutions.

### For facts

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### William Safire

Washington Column — It is true that the overall number of faculty has dropped in the past decade. But with an enrollment growth of 1,000 during that time, there already has been more room for faculty expansion in Penn State's other departments than in many other hard-pressed institutions.

### The best of times

It is true that the overall number of faculty has dropped in the past decade. But with an enrollment growth of 1,000 during that time, there already has been more room for faculty expansion in Penn State's other departments than in many other hard-pressed institutions.

### Seal Day

It is true that the overall number of faculty has dropped in the past decade. But with an enrollment growth of 1,000 during that time, there already has been more room for faculty expansion in Penn State's other departments than in many other hard-pressed institutions.

## Give OPEC a kick while it's down

Washington Column — It is true that the overall number of faculty has dropped in the past decade. But with an enrollment growth of 1,000 during that time, there already has been more room for faculty expansion in Penn State's other departments than in many other hard-pressed institutions.



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## **APPENDIX D**

April 1, 2013

**THE FORUM ON BLACK AFFAIRS**

**WORKING PAPER:  
2013 STATUS OF BLACK FACULTY AND STAFF AT  
THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY**

Submitted to: Leslie Laing, FOBA President

By The Special Committee on  
Status of Black Faculty and Staff at Penn State

Members:

Grace Hampton, Chair

Joyce Hopson-King

Wanda Knight

James Stewart

Beverly Vandiver

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**Overview:** FOBA has written major reports in 1981, 1999, and 2000 on the status of Black People at Penn State. This 2013 report is a continuation of FOBA's efforts to support the University in making this institution a more welcoming and inclusive environment for all. We highlight four challenges that Black faculty, staff, and administrators at Penn State face, and we provide recommendations to meet these challenges in maintaining and establishing even more proactive strategies toward diversifying the University across all of these positions.

**Challenge 1: Overcoming Stagnation:** The data indicate that the growth of Black faculty at Penn State has been less than 1 percent in over 30 years in relation to the growth in the total number of faculty. The number of staff in relation to the total number of staff for each staff category has ranged from 1.3 to 4.4 percent over the past 10 years. The representation of faculty (3%) and staff (5.9%) at the Commonwealth campuses are worse than at University Park, as these individuals are located at 19 different locations.

**Challenge 2: Increasing Representation of Blacks in Senior Leadership Roles:** Currently, there are only 3 Black senior administrators at University Park and 2 Black chancellors at the Commonwealth campuses. Without a constant increase and retention of Black faculty and staff at Penn State, there is no clear mechanism for career advancement, and for promoting faculty and staff to senior-administrative positions.

**Challenge 3: Reporting and Implications:** More transparency is needed in reporting data regarding promotion and tenure of Black faculty as well as reporting the promotion of Black staff. Both sets of information need to take into account gender.

**Challenge 4: Changing the Reality of the Black Experience Penn State:** The views of Black faculty and staff were mixed and layered. Positive experiences were based on the support of non-Black faculty or outside sources. Numerous faculty and staff indicated experiences of racial/ethnic bias, which were obstacles to career advancement opportunities. The most consistent challenge was a feeling of isolation, due to the small number of Black faculty and staff, and the constant need to re-educate non-ethnically diverse groups about racial issues.

### Recommendations

- 1. Increase Efforts to Diversify University Administration and Other Positions:** Central administration needs to be the model for the rest of the University by reflecting what diversity can and should be at the University. There needs to be an increased institutional commitment to equity in recruitment, hiring, retention, and career advancement, especially at the Commonwealth campuses, where there is an underrepresentation of diverse faculty and staff in relation to the number of diverse students on the campuses.
- 2. Strengthen and Require Regular Diversity Training and Accountability:** FOBA recommends that the University revise its diversity policies at Penn State or create additional ones. Diversity training should be routinely required of all University employees, including graduate assistants.
- 3. Increase Oversight and Accountability of the Diversity Strategic Plan:** FOBA recommends that the Office of the Vice Provost for Educational Equity be provided with additional authority to hold units accountable for weak diversity plans and poor implementation and follow through.

4. **Increase Accountability for the Retention of Black Faculty and Staff:** FOBA recommends sharing the oversight between the Office of the Provost and the Office of the Vice Provost for Educational Equity. We strongly recommend revisiting the scope and role of the current Senior Faculty Mentor, which was established as a part-time position. We believe a Staff Mentorship Program for Blacks and other underrepresented groups would be helpful in creating a pipeline for diverse staff to successfully move into administrative positions.
5. **Expand the Vision of Scholarship:** Efforts need to be increased to educate program coordinators, department heads, members of promotion and tenure committees, and other evaluators about expanding their vision of teaching, research, and scholarship to include issues of diversity.

**WORKING PAPER:  
2013 REPORT ON THE STATUS OF BLACK FACULTY AND STAFF  
AT THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY**

**Introduction**

The Forum on Black Affairs (FOBA)<sup>1</sup> has monitored and made concrete suggestions regarding the recruitment, development, and retention of Black<sup>2</sup> faculty, staff, undergraduate and graduate students for more than thirty years. Moreover, FOBA has written major reports in 1981, 1999, and 2000 on the status of Black People at Penn State. This 2013 report is a continuation of FOBA's efforts to support the University in making this institution a more welcoming and inclusive environment for all. With the aforementioned objective in mind, this working paper highlights four challenges that Penn State faces and provides recommendations to meet these challenges in maintaining and establishing even more proactive strategies toward diversifying the administration, faculty, and staff at Penn State.

Through the four challenges, we will present what has transpired regarding efforts to diversify administration, faculty, and staff since the first report in 1981, and we will provide perspectives from currently employed Black faculty, staff, and administrators, who shared their views and experiences during monthly FOBA meetings and two town hall gatherings at University Park campus. This report will also offer a list of recommendations that, if implemented, FOBA believes will (a) improve the campus climate, (b) successfully diversify the University, and (c) strengthen the economic growth and stability of the University while enhancing its scholarly reputation.

**Challenge 1: Overcoming Stagnation**

In the last three decades, the overall numbers of full-time Black employees at Penn State show only a slight increase. In 1981, FOBA presented to President John W. Oswald our report titled *"Bucking the Trend" – Toward the Development of a Program to Stabilize and Expand the number of Black Faculty, Staff, and Graduate Students at the Pennsylvania State University*. The report acknowledged the increase in the number of Black full-time employees at Penn State between 1975 and 1980. Black full-time employees increased by 58.1 percent, even though Blacks constituted only 2 percent of the full-time employees in 1980 in comparison to 1.4 percent in 1975. While this increase over a 5-year span was impressive and provided optimism about the future of diversity at Penn State, the numbers for Black faculty and staff have not continued to be this impressive.

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<sup>1</sup> Periodically, the term "we" will be used to denote FOBA, not the views of the authors of the paper.

<sup>2</sup> In keeping with the name of our organization and to ensure inclusiveness, the term Black will be used throughout the report and will refer to individuals of African descent.

Table 1 chronicles the number and percentage of Black faculty from 1988 to 2012. In the 24-year span, Black faculty members have almost tripled. However, these numbers are not impressive when examined against the growth of the number of total faculty at Penn State, which includes the Commonwealth Campuses, Dickinson School of Law, and Hershey College of Medicine.

**Table 1: Number and Percentage of Black Faculty in Relation to Total Faculty (1988-2012)**

	1988	1993	1998	2003*	2008	2012
	N	N	N	N	N	N
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Black Faculty	60 1.8	74 2.0	99 2.5	152 3.0	165 3.0	169 3.0
Total Faculty	3,333	3,700	3,960	5,045	5,473	5,762

*Note.* The number of total faculty for 1988, 1993, and 1998 were not immediately available and thus are estimated values based on the number and percentage of Black faculty.

\*Dickinson Law School joined Penn State in 2000.

The state of Black faculty at Penn State appears to be reflective of a nation wide trend. In commenting about Black faculty in California’s higher education, Marquez (2010) noted that there has been no substantial change in Blacks’ presence in higher education. We are in agreement with this assessment. Affirmative action policies that were previously successful in improving representation of Blacks and other disadvantaged students are now either dismantled or greatly restricted. This process has been set in motion by several decisions of the U.S. Supreme Court, with another major ruling on Affirmative Action in higher education expected during spring 2013 (*Fisher v. University of Texas at Austin*).

We also agree with Marquez’s (2010) assessment that the lack of Black faculty will have an effect on the educational opportunities of Black students and other underrepresented students. In turn, the failure to provide equitable educational opportunities for these students will have long-term disastrous consequences for economic competitiveness. Research has shown that bringing together workers with different qualifications, backgrounds, and experiences improves problem-solving and spurs innovation and creativity (Forbes Insight, 2011). Increasing diversity in faculty will lead to increasing great opportunity for the United States to become more competitive in the global economy by capitalizing on the unique talents and contributions that diverse communities bring to the table.

Equally important is the presence of Blacks in non-faculty positions. In regard to Black staff at Penn State, which includes non-faculty professionals, clerical, technical, skilled crafts workers, and maintenance/service personnel, the numbers are equally stagnant. Table 2 shows the number

and percentage of Black staff based on the available data from 2003-2012 in 2-year increments. The largest percentage of Black staff at Penn State was in 2003, where 4 percent were professional (non-faculty), 3.9 percent were technical, and 4.4 percent were in maintenance/service. However, 2003 was the lowest percentage of Blacks in clerical positions (1.5%). The largest growth in these positions have been in 2012 (2.1%), an increase of 0.6% in an 8-year span. In contrast, 2012 has been the year with a reduction of staff as a whole at Penn State. In turn, this downturn is reflected in the reduction of Black staff employed at Penn State.

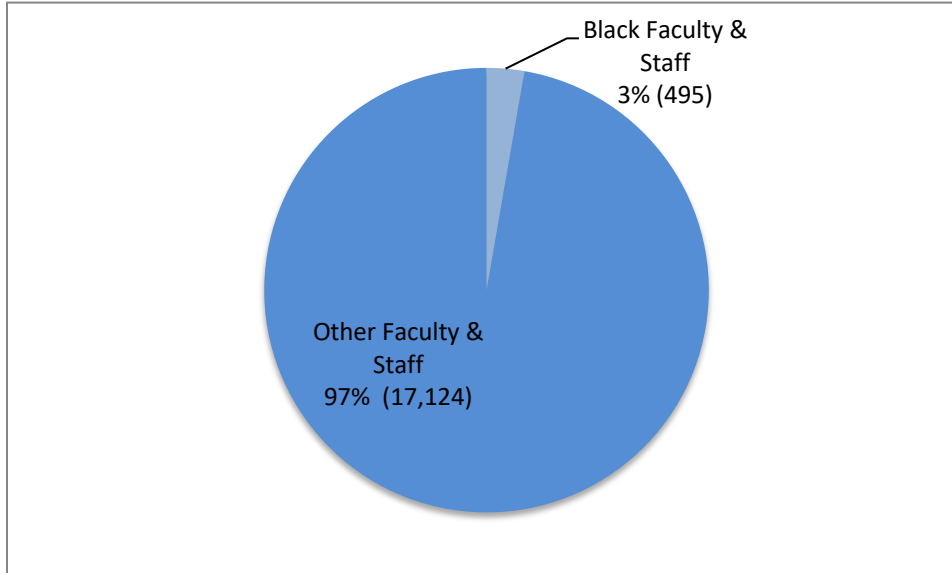
**Table 2: Number and Percentage of Black Staff at Penn State from 2003-2012**

	2003		2005		2007		2009		2012	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Professional (non-faculty)	163	4.0	152	3.5	151	3.2	164	3.2	135	3.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,074</b>		<b>4,295</b>		<b>4,783</b>		<b>5,145</b>		<b>4,390</b>	
Clerical	36	1.5	38	1.7	42	1.9	42	1.9	53	2.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,353</b>		<b>2,250</b>		<b>2,169</b>		<b>2,234</b>		<b>2,554</b>	
Technical	41	3.9	27	3.0	26	3.0	28	2.9	14	1.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,039</b>		<b>897</b>		<b>913</b>		<b>954</b>		<b>843</b>	
Skilled Crafts	8	1.3	8	1.2	7	1.0	8	1.1	10	1.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>607</b>		<b>656</b>		<b>698</b>		<b>708</b>		<b>757</b>	
Service	82	4.4	81	4.3	74	4.0	75	3.9	60	3.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,851</b>		<b>1,878</b>		<b>1,870</b>		<b>1,918</b>		<b>1,793</b>	
<b>Total Employees</b>	<b>15,867</b>		<b>16,190</b>		<b>16,807</b>		<b>17,693</b>		<b>17,541</b>	

*Note.* Data obtained from Penn State’s Affirmative Action Office include the Dickinson School of Law and the College of Medicine, but not the PA College of Technology or the Hershey Medical Center. Each total under a category represents the total number of Black employees for that category.

Sadly, thirty-two years later, the fall 2012 data indicate that there are 495 Black people employed at Penn State. This number represents only 2.8 percent of 17,619 of all faculty and staff employed at all locations, excluding PA College of Technology, throughout the Penn State System (see Figure 1 below). Thus since 1980, 30 plus years later, the growth of Black full-time employees at Penn State is less than 1 percent (0.8). Surely this negligible increase is not reflective of the University’s commitment to diversity and inclusion; however, this finding does underscore the fact that the institution needs to make significant improvement in diversity hiring.

**Figure 1: Total Number of Black Faculty and Staff at Penn State in Fall 2012**



*Note.* Data obtained from Penn State’s online Fact Book. To be consistent with prior data reported, total number of faculty and staff (17,619) excludes the PA College of Technology and the Hershey Medical Center, but includes the Dickinson School of Law and the College of Medicine.<sup>3</sup>

In examining the number of Black employees at the Commonwealth campuses, excluding Great Valley, the figures, on the surface, look better than the figures at University Park. Out of 3,622 workers, approximately 4 percent of the employees are Black. See Figure 2 below.

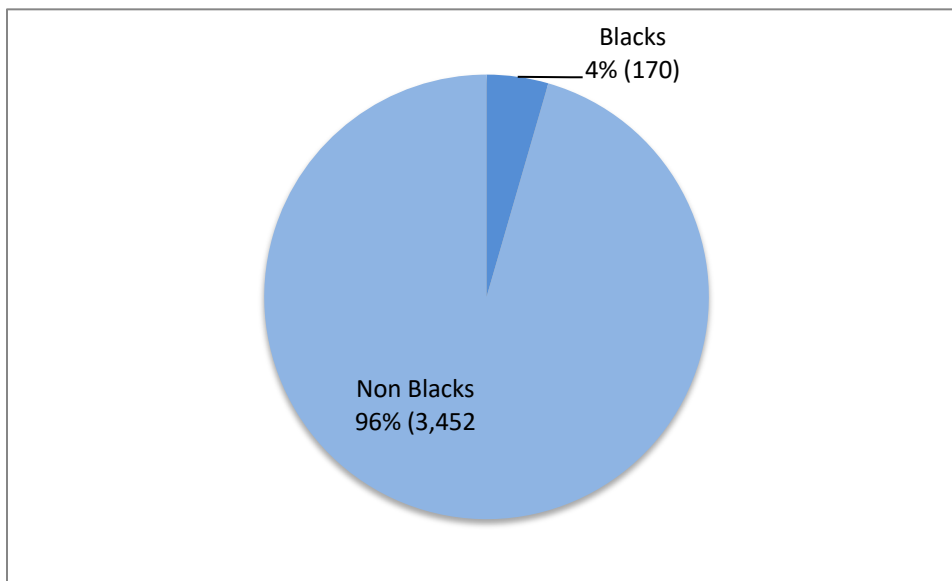
Disaggregating the data by staff and faculty indicates that 5.9 percent (123/2,077) of the staff employees are Blacks, whereas the Black faculty at the campuses is 3 percent (47/1,545), which is similar to the number of Black faculty at University Park. However, the number of Black faculty and staff at the Commonwealth Campuses is extremely disconcerting given the fact that the 4 percent represents the distribution across 19 locations. For example, 26 of the 47 Black faculty members are located on only 3 campuses (Harrisburg, Greater Allegheny, and Abington). Furthermore, 5 of the 19 campuses have zero (0) Black faculty and another 5 have only 1 Black faculty. The numbers are particularly disconcerting given that on several of the campuses, there are a significant number of Black students. For example, in Fall 2012, almost 30% of the students at Schuylkill were Black (242/867). These findings clearly underscore our concern noted on page 3: The absence of a critical mass of Black faculty and staff on any of the Commonwealth Campuses will have an adverse impact on the educational opportunities of Black students.

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<sup>3</sup> At this time, it is unknown why the total number of Penn State employees obtained from the Affirmative Action Office is different from the numbers provided online at Penn State’s Fact Book, when PA College of Technology is excluded from the analyses.



**Figure 2: Total Number of Black Faculty and Staff at Penn State's Commonwealth Campuses in Fall 2012**



Note. Data obtained from Penn State's online Fact Book. Total number of faculty is 3,662, excluding PA College of Technology.

An even more alarming concern is that it has been informally reported, but not officially confirmed, that a significant number of Blacks (staff, faculty, and administrators) will have left Penn State at the end of the 2012-13 academic year. These departures may be for various reasons, including retirement, new employment opportunities, non-renewal of contracts, and failure to receive tenure. A loss of this magnitude would be detrimental to the Black community and to the institution in general, particularly when we consider the fact that the University has a documented low hiring rate of Blacks in the past decade. If this statistic is true, then this should be a sufficient factor for the University Administration to investigate current practices and implement new ones regarding the recruitment and retention of Black faculty, staff, and administrators at Penn State.

### **Challenge 2: Increasing the Representation of Blacks in Senior Leadership Roles**

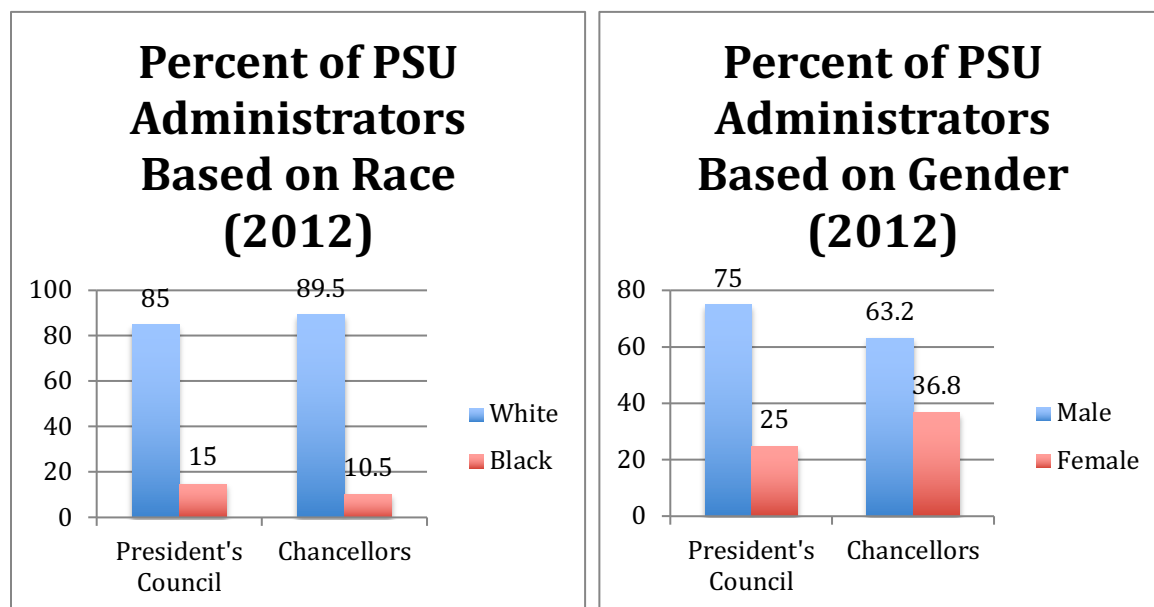
In 1980, there were 9 Blacks at Penn State classified as administrators and managerial employees, an increase in almost 5 times the original number in 2007 ( $N = 42$ ), and 6 times the original number in 2012 ( $N = 56$ ). While these numbers indicate that Blacks have made progress in leadership roles at Penn State, many of these positions are not central or clearly visible.

Furthermore, close examination of the data reveals that there is an absence of Black administrators in key positions. In fact, there are no Black deans of the colleges at University Park and there are only two Black Chancellors in the Commonwealth Education System, one at the Fayette campus, and the other at the Greater Allegheny campus. The last Black University Park dean was Rodney Reed, who served from 1990-1997. Currently, there is only 1 Black female in a senior level position at the University (the chancellor at Fayette), and 3 visible positions are held by Black males: Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, Vice Provost for

Educational Equity and the Vice Provost for Global Programs are the highest executive positions held by Blacks at Penn State. The last Black female central administrator was Grace Hampton, who served as vice provost from 1988-1995.

Below, Figure 2 provides a breakdown of Penn State’s administration by race and gender. The University’s current website lists 19 individuals<sup>4</sup> under “Our Administration,” as the “President’s Council” and 19 chancellors for the Commonwealth campuses, excluding Great Valley, per the presentation of the information in Penn State’s Fact Book. The patterns are slightly different for the President’s Council and the Commonwealth chancellors. Approximately 85-90% of the administrators are White and about 11-15% are Black, and 37% of the chancellors are women, but approximately 25% are on the President’s Council.

**Figure 2: Percentage of Penn State Administrators By Race and Gender**



These statistics are representative of the 2010 U.S. Census for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and for the United States based on the prevalence of Whites (PA = 83.8%; U.S. = 78.1%), but are way below average for all racial/ethnic minorities or underrepresented groups (PA = 20.5%; U.S. = 38.5%), and for women (PA = 51.2%; U.S. = 50.8%).

While the representation of Blacks is higher at the administrative level at Penn State than in other classifications (faculty and staff), efforts are still needed to maintain and increase the representation of racial/ethnic minorities at this administrative level. Increasing the diversity of central administrators might likely have a positive effect on increasing Black faculty and staff as well as retaining them at Penn State.

<sup>4</sup> The Vice Provost for Global Programs is not part of the President’s Council, however, because of his importance as a senior administrator, he is included in the statistics. As a result, the calculations were based on 20 individuals for race and gender, not 19.

In 1981, FOBA cited Florence Ladd from an article published in the Chronicle of Higher Education titled, *Getting Minority –Group Members in Top College Jobs*. Ladd (1981) noted, “When predominantly [W]hite institutions conduct searches for senior-level administrators, minority-group candidates often emerge, are interviewed, and then, with few exceptions, are quietly ignored or cordially rejected.” FOBA maintains that this statement may still be applicable today, when we consider the trends in Black faculty and staff representation at Penn State.

To date, there appears to have been less than a dozen Blacks who have been appointed to central administrative positions at University Park and chancellor at one of the Commonwealth Campuses: Francis Achampong, Michael Adewumi, William Asbury, Blannie Bowen, Grace Hampton, Beverly Lindsey, Curtiss Porter, Rodney Reed, and James Stewart.<sup>5</sup> While there are several university programs, such as the Administrative Fellows Program and the Mentoring Program sponsored by the Commission for Women, to date, these programs have not led to the appointment of Blacks in key administrative positions at Penn State. More effort should be made to include Blacks in both programs, along with increased efforts to place Blacks that complete the program into administrative positions within the University. Given the low number of Black faculty and staff, the University reduces its opportunity to achieve greater diversity in its future leadership cohorts. So naturally, increasing faculty and staff diversity enhances the opportunities for future career advancement and the diversity of leadership at Penn State.

### **Challenge 3: Reporting and Implications**

On March 12, 2013, the Senate Committee on Faculty Affairs presented the annual report on Faculty Tenure Flow Rates for 2012-13. This report has been compiled for the past 16 years. Tenure rate is provided separately by gender and minority status, but not conjointly. Faculty Affairs reports, “tenure rates for minority faculty have been lower than for non-minority faculty (54 percent and 59 percent).”<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, “tenure rates for females have been lower than for males (52 and 61 percent).”<sup>7</sup> While few faculty do not receive tenure, it is not clear whether a systematic disparity exists by gender or race/ethnicity. The Faculty Affairs Committee claims that, “apparent disparities in tenure rates by gender and race/ethnicity probably reflect substantive differences across academic fields as much as or more than differences by demographic groups...” However, FOBA contends that the University has the ability to provide more accurate numbers and increased transparency regarding the success rate of tenure-track faculty.

While the explanations provided are reasonable regarding the distribution of women across disciplines, Faculty Affairs provide no evidence that what has occurred at Penn State is true in all cases of non-tenure for racial/ethnic faculty. This lack of evidence is where anecdotal information exists to challenge Faculty Affairs’ conclusion. A number of tenured racial/ethnic minority faculty members report witnessing unfairness in the support and evaluation of racial/ethnic minority faculty on tenure-track. Lack of support includes tactics such as giving

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<sup>5</sup> There may have been other Black chancellors at the commonwealth campuses in the past, but the current information is not readily available.

<sup>6</sup> The 54% is the tenure rate for minority faculty and 59% is the tenure rate for non-minority faculty.

<sup>7</sup> The 52% is the tenure rate for females and 61% is the tenure rate for male faculty.

tenure-track racial/ethnic minority faculty additional administrative tasks of running academic programs or assigning large advising loads thereby reducing time spent on research.

No information is readily available about how staff members fare in the process of promotion, particularly Black staff. We recommend that information regarding this process be made public and that procedures be established to increase the candidate pool for Black applicants for staff positions at the University.

The data presented in this working paper illustrate a disparity between the stated university mantra that declares, “Fostering diversity must be recognized as being at the heart of our institutional viability and vitality and that the diversity should be a core value of the academic mission, and a priority of the institution.” (*A Framework to Foster Diversity at Penn State, preface*)

#### **Challenge 4: Changing the Reality of the Black Experience at Penn State**

FOBA’s monthly membership meetings and two Town Hall gatherings provided an opportunity for individuals to share their experiences as employees of Penn State. Current faculty, staff, and graduate students attended the meetings. The ideas discussed and feelings expressed are offered below:

#### **What has been your experience as a Black person at Penn State?**

- Many expressed a more positive experience in recent years associated with the increased hiring of additional Black faculty and staff.
- Some Black faculty and staff stated that there is a “constant need to re-educate” the larger Penn State community about issues related to Blacks at the University. With each new administration or strategic plan, “We have to start over, rather than build upon a solid foundation of past experiences.”
- There is a continuous discussion regarding how or why the lack of diversity is normative at Penn State and why the lack does not seem to register in the minds of decision makers.
- Several individuals described their Penn State experience as mixed and layered. One individual reported that his/her experiences over the past ten or fifteen years have covered the full gamut of both positive and negative experiences from significant racial prejudice, which included having items thrown at the individual, to the hurling of racial epithets as the individual moved about campus. However, the individual’s experiences became more positive after moving into an administrative position at the University.
- Moreover, testimonials from numerous Black faculty and staff indicate that racial and ethnic bias does, indeed, exist at Penn State. Such bias pollutes career advancement opportunities as well as promotion and tenure opportunities.
- There were accounts of overt racist actions such as the denial of crucial resources to covert spread of malicious rumors that create suspicion and perceptions of inadequacy of Black faculty. Consequently, some Black faculty mentioned that they feel obligated to

illuminate issues of diversity in their scholarly work to bring about change for social justice.

- Informants acknowledged that institutionalized racism exists in some aspects of Penn State and many feel pressured to “prove” their value within the department.
- Some noted that being Black often leads to the burden of diversity. “Disproportionately, we are involved in taking up tasks because we want change and to ensure that our voices are heard. Yet in the end, there is little change and these efforts do nothing to enhance our careers.”
- The most consistent comment was regarding isolation; it remains problematic at both the personal and professional levels. Some acknowledged that there is a support structure available, but many individuals noted “isolation always confronts us in what we do.” Many of our Black faculty and staff are forced to work alone, have no staff support, or are the only person of color in their units.
- Many staff members indicated that Blacks are overtaxed, dealing with disappointment and isolation constantly in addition to juggling multiple responsibilities without acknowledgment or reward. Additional responsibilities do not yield promotion or raises.
- Various individuals noted that White colleagues were supportive, but they really did not understand the nature of what it means to be a “minority” at a predominantly White institution.
- Some noted that efforts to collaborate or partner on projects and research were not advantageous and that they were often discouraged when seeking inclusion.
- Some find support through organizations like FOBA, but they felt little support on the job.
- Several individuals reported a constant battle to obtain needed support and resources. The relentless stress associated with these battles impinges on the productivity of Black faculty and staff.
- One faculty member indicated that there was an inequitable distribution of resources, exclusion from communications received by other faculty members and the assignment of a heavy teaching load.
- Black administrators also complained frequently about a lack of support, consistently reduced budgets or funding, and reduced resources. An inequitable distribution of graduate assistantships was also identified as an ongoing problem.
- Undermining decisions of Black administrators and staff was also a constant theme.
- Faculty concerns were expressed that some departments are still “ingrained” and “it’s difficult for people of color to gain tenure.” In addition, there are missed opportunities to

increase the number of Blacks at Penn State. Thus, the Colleges and Departments do not always make good use of the opportunity to hire additional Black faculty from the ranks of those individuals receiving Penn State fellowships and residencies.

- Other participants reported that their research and service that seek to amplify social justice and/or support people of color, gay, lesbian, and transgendered populations is marginalized in the academy. Additionally, Black junior faculty reported that their mentors, colleagues, and/or supervisors advised them to avoid conducting “too much” research on issues of diversity or research on specific racial or ethnic topics.
- Some reported that their mentors, colleagues, and/or supervisors advised them to abandon their race- and/or gender-related research agendas altogether for fear that promotion and tenure evaluators or well-regarded mainstream venues for scholarly publication would not value their work.
- Black faculty and staff, like other underrepresented groups, bring diverse themes to their scholarship, research, service, and teaching, increasing diversity in the curriculum, and introducing different forms of pedagogy, which have the potential to increase engagement of students within the campus community.
- Likewise, many agreed that the absence of diversity and dwindling diversity among Black faculty and staff sends a strong message regarding the lack of opportunities and possibilities for those representing diverse groups.
- Some indicated that it would be nice if there were a diverse pool of mentors at the University as the couple of programs providing this service lack cultural diversity.
- Many Black faculty and staff expressed concern over Town and Gown issues, quality of life, and educational concerns for their children.
- Participants indicated that failure to address community diversity issues reinforces practices that work against retention of people of color.
- Concerns were also expressed regarding the support given to Black administrators at all levels. It was noted that White individuals under the supervision of Black administrators are able to by-pass them and have their issues addressed by a White administrator. This situation undermines the Black administrator and weakens his or her position as a leader.

### **Why do Black Faculty and Staff Stay at Penn State?**

- Aside from Penn State’s reputation of exemplary research, teaching and service, many Black faculty and staff indicated that having a higher sense of purpose for their role at Penn State and a belief that their presence alone can bring about change causes them to remain at the university. In addition, some have found solidarity with other Black colleagues and believe their presence alone influences change. Most felt that what they do everyday has an impact on the lives of Black students and that is truly rewarding.

- While many of the same tensions exist and continue to challenge the Black community at Penn State, the overall University experience has improved.
- Every participant suggested that the University from the top-down needs to do more to improve and foster diversity.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING DIVERSITY**

The Forum on Black Affairs has been appreciative of the collaborative relationship with Penn State's administration as well as the support provided at various junctures. Given this backdrop, our recommendations are provided in the spirit of continuing to support this fine University as it seeks to become a leader in the areas of diversity and inclusion.

### **1. Increase Efforts to Diversify University Administration and Other Positions**

- 1.1.** It is recommended that the University take a more proactive approach to increasing and maintaining diversity and inclusion. This recommendation requires a systemic effort and top-down approach on the part of central administration. Central administration needs to be the model for the rest of the University by reflecting what diversity can and should be at the University. Our concern is evidenced in the statistics presented earlier about the demographic make-up of the President's Council, chancellors at the campuses, and the deans at University Park. We want to see more visible representation of Blacks and women in the upper levels of leadership.
- 1.2.** For Penn State to be more proactive and inclusive, there needs to be an increased institutional commitment to equity in recruitment, hiring, retention, and career advancement, especially at the Commonwealth Campuses, where there is an absence of diverse faculty and staff in relation to the number of diverse students on the campuses. The same mechanism of recruiting diverse faculty and staff cannot continue to be used. Additionally, success will require not approving searches to go forward without a competitive short list of qualified female and racially/ethnically diverse candidates.
- 1.3.** One mechanism that should be implemented is to, first, make all employee searches transparent. All searches would be required to submit to the Office of Affirmative Action information about how they intend to search for candidates, to report what they actually did, and to document the number of applicants based on demographic data and qualifications, as well as to list as much as possible similar data about the candidates on the short-list. The demographic information about the candidate selected should be public knowledge as well. Furthermore, this mechanism would require that a public summary document regarding the demographics of the pool of candidates for senior-level positions (to increase transparency and accountability) be available. It is also important to continue to invite and include FOBA, the Commission on Racial/Ethnic Diversity (CORED) and the other Commissions to be a part of all future searches.

- 1.4. Increased diversity in the Office of Human Resources is needed. Similar to the demographic make-up of central administrators, this office should model the diversity we want to see across the University. FOBA also recommends that the University hire an outside employment/search firm that specializes in diversity to conduct a review of Penn State's operations to ensure that all possible steps are being taken to foster a diverse workforce. Without visible diversity of qualified personnel administrators, recruiting Blacks is made more difficult. The employment/search process should be one that generates the type of diverse workforce that is consistent with the University's articulated vision.
- 1.5. The University needs to increase its efforts in the hiring of racial/ethnic minority staff assistants, physical plant staff, and auxiliary service staff. Such an action will also improve Town and Gown relations, increase networking, partnerships, relationships and a sense of belonging within the Penn State community. Greater diversity increases the attractiveness of Penn State (for persons from diverse backgrounds as well as others who value diversity).
- 1.6. Increased diversity should be routinely acknowledged and rewarded. Such acknowledgment should be within and across departments, units, and colleges. While the Commissions and the Office of Multicultural Resources acknowledge individuals' diversity efforts, it is not evident that the University has a system in place that acknowledges and rewards individuals as well as units, departments, or programs for their efforts and best practices.

## 2. Strengthen and Require Regular Diversity Training and Accountability

The Forum on Black Affairs is appreciative of the President's response to recent acts of insensitivity or bias and the resulting public announcements, which reminded the entire University community that these behaviors are not reflective of our beliefs and values. We recommend the establishment and promotion of exemplars of best practice that must be implemented for effective diversity management. In essence, Penn State needs to make diversity initiatives more sustainable, not simply as a reaction to overt episodic events.

For example, President Erickson has sent out regular messages about the position of the university regarding the sex abuse scandal. The two messages that stand out are (a) the periodic emails from the President about sex abuse resources and (b) President Erickson's promise to the University community (<http://president.psu.edu/goals>), specifically (a) to "reinforce the moral imperative of doing the right thing—the first time, every time"; and (b) to lead by example. Part of this promise included revisiting all standards, policies, and programs, to reorient the Penn State culture, and to ensure proper governance and oversight across the University.

- 2.1. FOBA recommends that the University revises its diversity policies at Penn State or create additional ones. Several Penn State policies exist that specifically address intolerance (AD29) and nondiscrimination and harassment (AD41; AD42); and fair employment/affirmative action practices (HR01 & HR11). While these policies serve as the foundation for the healthy growth of diversity at Penn State, they do not create the



expectation of what must or should occur once intolerance, discrimination, and harassment have been minimized or reduced.

- 2.2. Diversity training should be routinely required of all University employees, including graduate assistants. To do so will require expanding staff in and increasing resources through the Office of Affirmative Action and the Office of Human Resources. Funding should be allocated to hire additional diversity trainers and initiatives for implementing new training modules, webinars and community building. Thus, FOBA believes that diversity standards or competencies should be included in the Staff Review and Development Plan (SRDP) as well as for the new review process for all employees. Having a diversity policy that specifies annual diversity training for all employees would be a significant step in changing the climate at Penn State and make the entire community more welcoming. The policy should also address the consequences when employees do not follow through with training.
- 2.3. All University administrators need to be more visible in promoting positive efforts to diversify the University in a sustained and systematic fashion. For example, institutional leaders, including unit and department administrators, deans, and provosts should actively immerse themselves in the hiring process by; evaluating the attractiveness of a program or department regarding the hiring of diverse individuals, assessing the climate of the unit for diversity, evaluating hiring criteria, reviewing job descriptions, creating diverse competent search committees, selecting chairs for the search committee, ensuring that the broader pool is diverse, monitoring outreach initiatives, and supporting efforts to ensure that qualified diverse candidates have been encouraged to apply. FOBA, CORED, Commission for Women, and the Commission on LGBTE have volunteered to meet with candidates while visiting the University. Some units need to be applauded for their efforts in this matter, but the expectation needs to be extended to other units.

### **3. Increase Oversight and Accountability of the Diversity Strategic Plan**

- 3.1. FOBA recommends that the Office of the Vice Provost for Educational Equity be provided with additional authority to hold units accountable for weak diversity plans and poor implementation and follow through. In 1998, the University implemented the initial “Framework to Foster Diversity.” FOBA agrees with the University’s premise that “Fostering diversity must be recognized as being at the heart of our institutional viability and vitality, a core value of the academic mission, and a priority of the institution.” While we believe this premise has been the University’s intention, we believe more is needed to foster and implement a sustainable level of diversity at Penn State. Since 1998, the goal of the diversity plans has been to incorporate diversity throughout the University’s strategic plan. We understand the rationale for doing so; diversity should be an integral aspect of the entire University, but there is little evidence that diversity has been fully integrated into every aspect of the University.
- 3.2. As a result, we recommend a two-pronged approach to the implement diversity throughout the University. The diversity plan should be integrated into the strategic plan of all units. But the Office of the Vice Provost for Educational Equity should also have

oversight for the implementation of all diversity plans. Without such oversight, there is no objective mechanism in place to actually track implementation—the successes and failures—as well as expectations of accountability for lack of effort on the part of units.

**3.3.** The issue of accountability in regard to diversity also emerged from the recommendations of the Core Council committee. However, what was most discerning about the Core Council’s recommendations was the lack of input from diverse members of the University. In fact, this lack of diversity contributed to preliminary recommendations that would have gutted several key offices and reversed the limited progress that has been achieved to date. For example, the multicultural coordinators in the colleges were one of the targets of these retrenchment efforts. While a review of the roles and responsibilities of the multicultural coordinators is important to ensure their effectiveness, it is unacceptable that some administrators question their efficacy, especially when there is limited support, isolation, and no obvious commitment to diversity within these units. This concern is all the more reason for the Office of the Vice Provost for Educational Equity to be given increased ability to make critical decisions regarding diversity initiatives and their implementation in an effective manner.

#### **4. Increase Accountability for the Retention of Black Faculty and Staff**

- 4.1.** Based on a combination of statistics and anecdotal evidence reported earlier, it is recommended that there be increased oversight in the promotion and tenure process of Black faculty as well as the promotion process of Black staff. Points 4.2 to 4.5 focus on the faculty process, and points 4.6 to 4.8 address staff recommendations.
- 4.2.** This expanded oversight should be in place at the time of a faculty member’s first review, which is typically conducted in the second year of the tenure process, and monitoring should continue until the tenure process has been completed. The rationale for the early oversight is that Black faculty’s tenure status is often in jeopardy at an early stage and this process cannot be reversed at the sixth-year review. By monitoring the faculty’s progress early on, there is still time to correct unfair procedures or processes that may be in place. Furthermore, such oversight would increase the faculty’s knowledge about their own rights. Too often these faculty are unaware of the Senior Faculty Mentor or they are reticent about inequity or unfairness, for fear of retaliation by senior faculty in their units.
- 4.3.** FOBA recommends sharing the oversight between the Office of the Provost and the Office of the Vice Provost for Educational Equity. While the Senior Faculty Mentor needs to report to the Office of the Vice Provost for Educational Equity, little oversight and change can occur without the person serving in this capacity also reporting directly to the President, which had been the original organizational format.
- 4.4.** We strongly recommend revisiting the scope and role of the current role of the Senior Faculty Mentor, which was established as a part-time position. It is not possible for a single individual, without staff or assistants, to provide services and oversight of several campuses. The position is another critical example of splitting functions and overloading faculty and watering down support to Black faculty. Through the oversight

process, if it is found that a faculty member has been unfairly treated, it is recommended that this matter be addressed immediately by central administration and not be left solely in the hands of the academic unit. Such an oversight process will lend additional support to faculty members that are being unfairly treated.

- 4.5. In addition to oversight, there needs to be some form of accountability in place for units that show a systematic pattern of creating an unfair tenure-process for Black faculty. Without consequences, there is no reason to believe that such units will choose to change entrenched inequitable practices.
- 4.6. In regard to qualified staff and mid-level administrators, there should be increased opportunity for both to achieve promotion. Although the Administrative Fellows Program serves faculty and staff, we believe an additional Staff Mentorship Programs for Blacks and other underrepresented groups would be helpful in creating a pipeline for diverse staff to successfully move into administrative positions.
- 4.7. The proposed programs would include several components, including annual professional development training and structured opportunities for career advancement. These initiatives would increase support and reduce the sense of isolation for Black staff. Although there are currently extensive professional development training programs for staff, none of these programs target the distinctive concerns of Blacks, nor do they provide avenues for career advancement.
- 4.8. The proposed mentoring program would provide consultations and serve as a liaison with supervisors of other units, create additional partnerships and support, and address a range of issues from career development and problem solving to the handling of sensitive issues.

## **5. Expand the Vision of Scholarship**

There is a need to assess and reward faculty achievements based on a more inclusive definition of scholarship that includes non-traditional forms of research and new forms of scholarly, creative, or pedagogical activities—some of which might be made possible, primarily, through new media and digital technologies. An expanded vision of scholarship and the structure for assessing and rewarding faculty achievements should benefit all, including Black faculty and other underrepresented faculty. Efforts need to be increased to educate program coordinators, department heads, members of promotion and tenure committees, and other evaluators about expanding their vision of teaching, research, and scholarship to include issues of diversity.

## **CONCLUSION**

It is the intent of this working paper to highlight the challenges that Black faculty and staff confront at Penn State, the negative impact on the daily experiences of Black faculty, staff, and administrators at Penn State, and bring to light the inadequacies of the current diversity efforts. With this information serving as a foundation, we have presented a series of recommendations to enhance the overall climate at the University for all stakeholders. FOBA believes that the implementation of these recommendations will allow Penn State to regain its status as an

acknowledged champion of diversity and become a more inclusive and diverse institution. FOBA looks forward to the discussion of the report and its recommendations with university officials and is committed to working collaboratively to facilitate their implementation.

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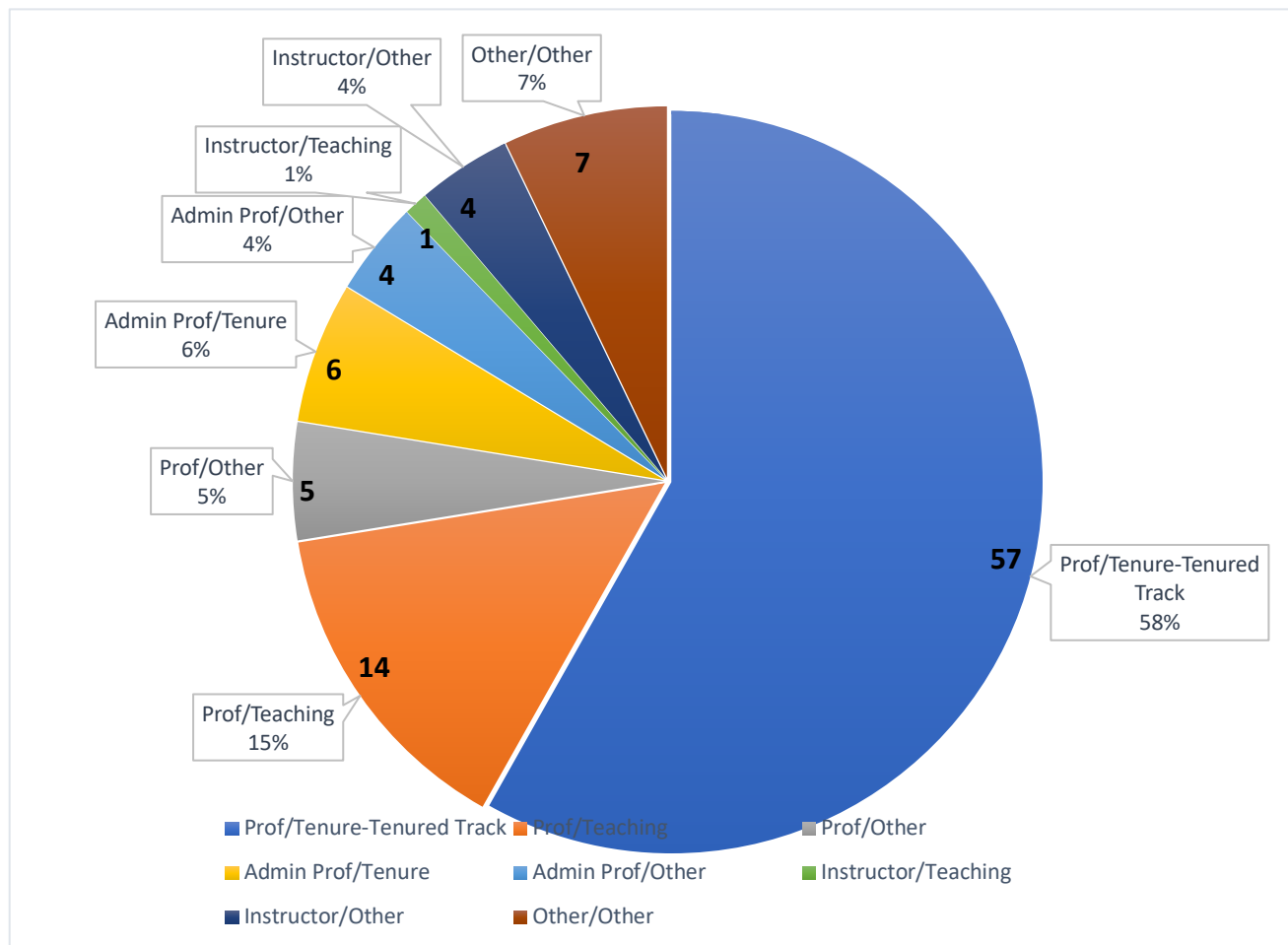
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## **Appendix E**

### Black Professors on the University Park Campus: 2018-2019

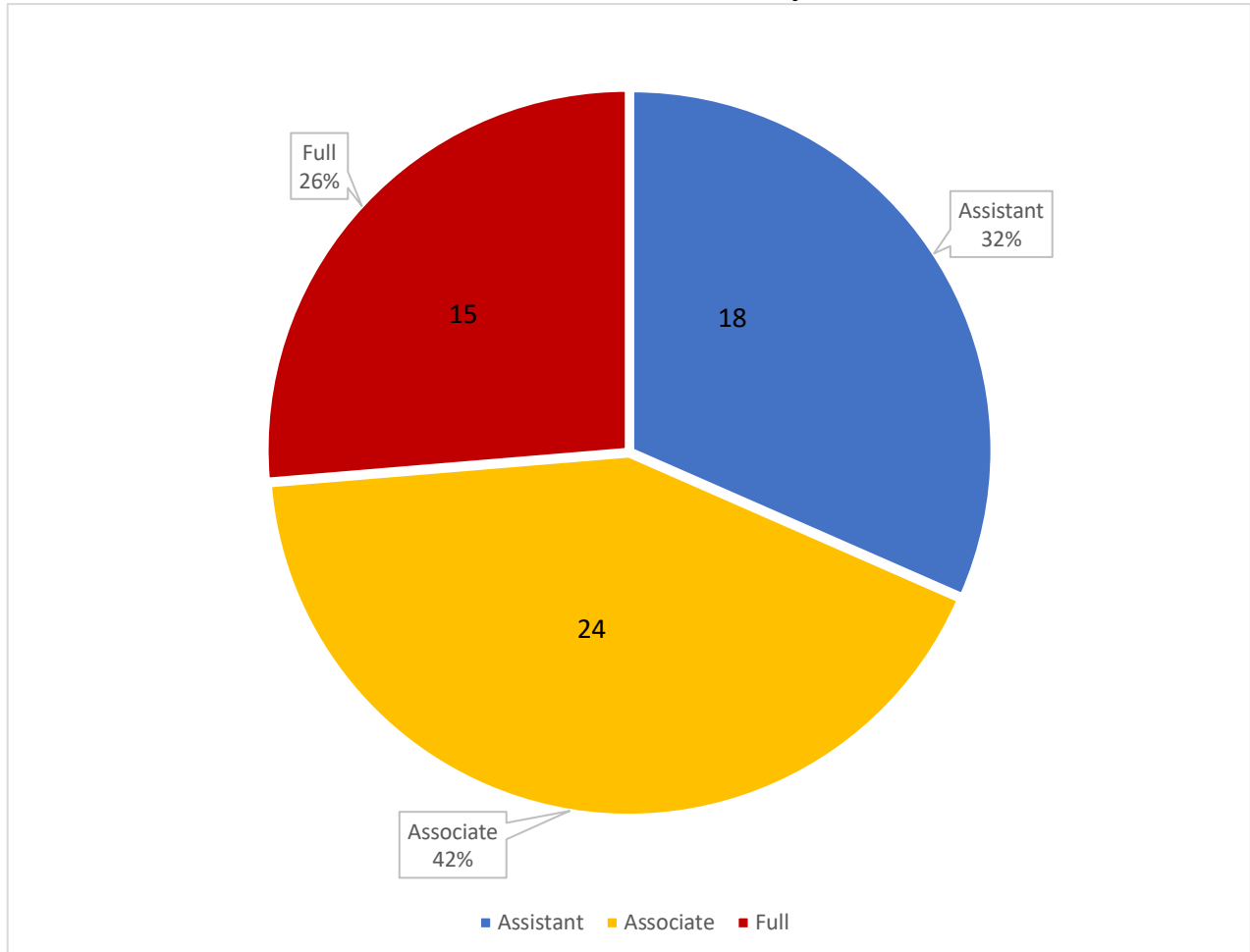
The following data were gathered using “cosmetic diversity” methodology to assess the visible representation of African American/Black professors on the website of academic departments at Penn State University during the months of June and July of 2019 (Ford and Patterson, 2019). A database was compiled of the available professional and demographic characteristics of individuals listed as faculty based on their imputed physical appearance of being either African American or Black. These data, though observational, provide a current and comparable source of recent information by which to assess the census of Black professors during the academic year of 2018-2019 at Penn State including their gender, rank, administrative title, department, and college. Graph 33 shows the June-July 2019 distribution of African American professors (n=98) at Penn State by rank.

**Graph 33**  
**Black Professors By Rank at UP (2018-2019)**





**Graph 36**  
**Tenured and Tenure-Track Professors By Rank: 2018-2019**



A smaller portion of African American women professors were tenured-track assistant professors (n=11, 42%) than those who were tenured associate professors (n=12, 46%). However, only 12% (n=3) of Black women faculty were full professors. The comparable figures for Black men (n=31) were 22% (n=7), 39% (n=12), and 39% (n=12), respectively (Graphs 37 and 38).



**Graphs 37 & 38**  
**Tenured and Tenure-Track Professors By Rank and Gender:**  
**2018-2019**

