


Chapter 12

A Vision for the Future: Toward Equity and Inclusion in Higher Education

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ABSTRACT

As the prior chapters have indicated, there is a need for equity and more inclusion in higher education to prevent and eradicate all forms of microaggressions. Although there have been advances in many sectors of society within the United States in the 21st century, much progress remains in higher education. Current efforts to address disparities and create more inclusive environments have had profound effects for students, faculty, staff, administrators, and stakeholders; yet barriers toward continuing our positive progression remain. This chapter provides an overview of equity and inclusion in higher education, case examples based on faculty experiences with microaggressions, resources, and recommendations that can be utilized when addressing microaggressions faced by African American faculty for positive outcomes toward equity and inclusion now and in the future.

INTRODUCTION

As the prior chapters have indicated, there is a need for equity and more inclusion in higher education to prevent and eradicate all forms of microaggressions. Although there have been advances in many sectors of society within the United States in the 21st century, much progress remains in higher education. Current efforts to address disparities and create more inclusive environments have had profound effects for students, faculty, staff, administrators, and stakeholders; yet barriers

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Toward Equity and Inclusion in Higher Education

According to the Race and Ethnicity in Higher Education 2024 Status Report (American Council on Education; Kim et al., 2024), Black or African American faculty account for 9.3 percent of part-time faculty, 6.1 percent of full-time faculty, 9.0 percent of all full-time positions with no academic rank, 4.0 percent of full professors, 6.5 percent of associate professors, and 7.2 percent of assistant professors. The full-time positions are at public four-year institutions (44.3 percent), private non-profit four-year institutions (30.5 percent), for-profit institutions (12.0 percent), public two-year institutions (7.9 percent), R1 doctoral institutions (4.0 percent), other doctoral institutions (30.2 percent assistant professor and 28.2 associate professor), tenured or tenure-track faculty at private non-profit four-year institutions (51.5 percent), public two-year institutions (47.6 percent), and public four-year institutions (64.4 percent). While this recent report indicates progress has been made in our institutions, Black or African American faculty remain underrepresented in every position and nearly all categories. When recent research and reports on the experiences of Black or African American faculty in higher education is also considered, there are specific indicators that illustrate the need for equity and inclusion in all aspects of higher education (for our students, staff, faculty, and administrators). For example, according to 46 first-person accounts of racial trauma of Black women faculty members, Johnson and colleagues (2024) identified issues related to systemic marginalization (i.e., placing less value on contributions/research), institutionalized racism and sexism (hostile or unwelcome and unsupportive work environments), discrimination or implicit bias (e.g., with manuscript reviews with some editorial boards), gendered and racial microaggressions (i.e., undermining or undervaluing credentials, accomplishments), and other types of issues that make being an underrepresented (and/or first-generation) faculty member more difficult than it should be.

In some of the first-person accounts mentioned, there were both negative experiences and positive when the issues were addressed. One of the negative effects of the experiences with microaggressions occurred when a faculty member expressed dealing with depression after internalizing instead of working to address the concerns when it happened, while some positive outcomes occurred when faculty navigated challenges with an accountability group. Based on the experiences shared in this example, a community of peers can establish a sense of belonging and camaraderie

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