

African American Women Faculty at Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs):

Empowering through Mentoring

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Abstract

Recent movements that focus on social justice and racial equity have been the impetus for demands by students and faculty at Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs) to pressure institutional leadership to address how systemic racism plays out in policies and practices that pose barriers to persistence and success in higher education (e.g. promotion and tenure, administrative positions) for faculty from traditionally underrepresented groups (e.g. African American, Latino/a Indigenous people). There is increasing research in this area but there is still a paucity of research on specific factors that influence persistence, career development, and advancement for African American women faculty at Predominantly White Institutions. Racism and gender discrimination are significant barriers to the persistence and career advancement of African American women faculty at PWIs and this is even more pervasive in STEM. This paper will address research on African American women at PWIs and highlight the role mentoring as resistance and resilience plays in supporting African American women faculty.

Keywords: higher education, PWIs, mentoring, persistence, African American women faculty

African American Women Faculty at Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs):**Empowering through Mentoring**

When Black women win victories, it is a boost for virtually every segment of society.

—Professor Angela Davis

Call to Action

For a generation, after generation African American women have been resilient, persistent, and resistant to domination and subordination of White, patriarchal, colonialist ideology, and oppressive structures. We have relied on networks of family, friends, communities, and our spirituality to cope with racism, gender discrimination, and the devaluing of our work and worth. Through all the challenges, there are also many triumphs; and African American women remain resilient and thrive. African American women in higher education are modeling Black excellence and Black joy in all the spaces they navigate that was initially meant to oppress and deprive them of their rights and dignity. Research highlights that African American women encounter numerous experiences of racism, gender discrimination, micro/macroaggressions, and other oppressive structures that have shaped their experiences at PWIs. However, some experiences demonstrate how they have conquered and thrived. The author of this manuscript has encountered all of what has been characterized in this manuscript and much more while navigating a career in science and science education at both Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and PWIs.

Though mentoring support is not the sole reason for successfully navigating PWIs, it is essential; and it is the primary reason the author of this paper is a senior-level professor and administrator at a PWI. Moreover, the author serves as a mentor for many junior faculty and graduate students through similar mentoring models and mentoring strategies highlighted throughout the research. To be clear, PWIs have a longstanding history of racism and gender discrimination. Mentoring, in and of itself, will not ameliorate the oppressive structures African American women and other faculty from traditionally underrepresented groups encounter daily. However, multiple

mentoring models highlighted in this paper emphasize the asset-based approach to the advancement of African Americans and African American women at PWIs.

This critical literature review will synthesize ways that institutions can support faculty from underrepresented groups and women. One of the most salient findings is the impact of mentoring and its role in supporting and advancing faculty from underrepresented groups in academia (Evans & Cokley, 2008; Henderson & Hunter, 2010; Kosoko-Lasaki et al., 2006; Patton & Harper, 2003). This paper will highlight the importance of empowering through mentoring through asset-based approaches as opposed to deficit model approaches, as a way of promoting the success of African American women faculty at PWIs. This paper also provides insights into the transformation of the institutional climate and culture that marginalizes African American faculty and traditionally underrepresented populations at PWIs (Hrabowski & Maton, 2009). It is also important to emphasize the strengths-based approach (Hrabowski & Maton, 2009) and provide insights on the successes of African American faculty at PWIs. Indeed, there are African American faculty that thrive at PWIs. However, to diversify the professoriate, factors that promote retention and persistence must be highlighted, and it is paramount that universities support the advancement of African American faculty at PWIs. Diversity among faculty at PWIs enhances the academic community at these institutions because faculty from diverse backgrounds serve as role models, mentors, and enrich the intellectual climate both at the university and in the surrounding communities (Gasman et al., 2011).

African American faculty are critical for promoting a sense of belonging and community for students from underrepresented groups and according to research, their presence has a significant impact on the retention rate of African American graduate students (Fries-Britt & Kelly, 2005). It is also important to gain insight into challenges and barriers faced by African Americans at PWIs because this will provide knowledge on ways to create an environment that is equitable for all faculty and students (Fries-Britt & Kelly, 2005). Oftentimes, it is African American faculty who are more likely to serve as role models, mentors, advocates, and advisors for African American students both at the undergraduate and graduate level. Therefore, a more diverse faculty also enhances the

intellectual environment, student counseling, and mentoring across college campuses (Gasman et al., 2011). Moreover, African American students are more likely to enroll at institutions with a higher representation of African American faculty. It is also important to note that recruiting, retaining, and advancing African American women faculty at PWIs is crucial for broadening participation in STEM and diversifying the STEM workforce.

Statement of the Problem

Although institutions of higher education (IHE) are employing more faculty of color, the demographics remain largely unchanged (Guillaume & Apodaca, 2020). As a result, the academy is still primarily White and male across the nation. Though there are several initiatives across institutions designed to diversify faculty representation, the numbers of African Americans in faculty positions remain alarmingly low (Alexander & Moore, 2008; Carter-Sowell et al., 2019; Frazier, 2011).

Based on data from the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Black and Latino/a faculty make up only approximately 12% of the full-time faculty at post-secondary, degree-granting institutions. The number of White males who are full-time faculty at degree-granting institutions in 2018 was 40% with 35% being White women. African American women, Latino/a, and American Indian/Alaska Natives make up 1 percent or less of the full-time faculty (NCES, 2018). An analysis of literature on African American faculty demonstrates that the underrepresentation of African American faculty is especially pervasive in the academy in STEM fields (Parson et al., 2018). Moreover, racial inequities and discriminatory policies and practices are contributing factors to the lack of representation of African American faculty in the academy (Allen et al., 2000).

There has been ongoing research over the past four decades on the experiences of African American faculty at institutions of higher education (IHE), including PWIs (Alexander & Moore, 2008; Epps, 1998; Fries-Britt & Kelly, 2005; Perna et al., 2007; Seigel et al., 2015; Turner, 2003).

Discrimination in academia at PWIs is pervasive and often covertly insidious (Alexander & Moore, 2008). Much of the discrimination occurs through the context of a so-called merit system (Alexander & Moore, 2008). African American faculty at PWIs often contend with an environment that perpetuates a hegemonic culture designed by and for White men (Hamilton, 2002 as cited in Alexander & Moore, 2008; Schiele, 1996 as cited in Alexander & Moore, 2008). This said, many university policies and practices inherently discriminate against faculty based on gender as well as racial/ethnic diversity. This discrimination often plays out in relationship building and even hiring practices when faculty select other faculty based on who they are most “comfortable” with or who they know of through other colleagues. Moreover, bias and discrimination also play out in favoritism toward White faculty, leading to their advancement in leadership positions and committee appointments (Alexander & Moore, 2008). Ultimately, favoritism adversely impacts promotion, tenure, and retention of African American faculty at PWIs since this is considered the ultimate measure of success in the academy. It can also be noted that African American and Black faculty are often sought out and invited to PWIs because of their scholarship in diversity, equity, and social justice. However, in promotion and tenure considerations, their work is more likely to be scrutinized and devalued in comparison to their White colleagues (Canton, 2013).

Unfortunately, much of the research on the underrepresentation of African Americans in general at institutions of higher education (IHE) focuses on African Americans, in general, as a larger category; and few studies focus specifically on African American women in academia at PWIs (Evans & Cokley, 2008). It is important to note that the experiences of African American women in the academy are often characterized by both racial and gender-based discrimination, which are often the primary reason for their denial of promotion and tenure or why they leave the academy altogether (Evans & Cokley, 2008). There are now more studies focusing on the culture and climate of both graduate school and the academy as key factors in perpetuating the underrepresentation of African American faculty in higher education (particularly at higher ranks and in administration). This is

likely to be even more applicable to African American women faculty in higher education at PWIs, as the following overview of the available literature, demonstrates. This research is also important because it shifts from the cultural deficit approach and puts the onus on the institutions to take responsibility and accountability for perpetuating racist and discriminatory practices that pose barriers to advancement of African Americans at PWIs (particularly as this relates to promotion and tenure).

African American Faculty at PWIs

Some of the challenges that African American faculty encounter at PWIs include social isolation/alienation, racism, and discrimination in policy and practices. These challenges can be characterized as impacting them psychologically, emotionally, and spiritually (Alexander & Moore, 2005). Furthermore, the challenges African American faculty encounter range from policies and practices that are discriminatory to microaggressions, microinvalidations, microinsults (Pittman, 2012), racial oppression, and low morale (Carr et al., 2007; Kulis et al., 1999). Taken together, they not only adversely impact their career advancement but also result in their leaving the academy.

There have been some studies that examined the role of alienation, marginalization (Turner, 2003), the role of socialization (Alex-Assensoh, 2003; Dixon-Reeves, 2003; Kosoko-Laski et al., 2006). Examining factors that result in the dissatisfaction and leaving of African Americans in the academy should be a top priority because African American faculty in higher education promotes academic excellence as well as a critical aspect for advancing academic enterprises (Barrett & Smith, 2008). Although White faculty may be polite and friendly with African American colleagues, at the same time, they can devalue the work of African Americans, provide only casual mentoring, challenge intellectual and pedagogical abilities, and minimize and dismiss their views, perspectives (Alexander & Moore, 2008), and scholarship (Nieman, 2003). Several key factors have been identified as promoting retention of African American faculty, including enhancing job satisfaction,

and career advancement (e.g., promotion, tenure, leadership roles) (Frazier, 2011; Gasman et al., 2011; Kosoko-Lasaki et al., 2006).

Another factor that impacts the advancement and progress of African Americans and other faculty of color in the academy is “cultural taxation” (Canton, 2013; Guillaume & Apodaca, 2020; Joseph & Hirshfield, 2011). The term “cultural taxation” was coined in 1994 by Amado Padilla and the term was used to describe the extra burden of service and responsibility unduly and uniquely carried by racially and ethnically diverse faculty from traditionally underrepresented groups (Canton, 2013). More specifically, this phenomenon is defined as the price faculty from traditionally underrepresented groups pay for admission and retention in higher education. Furthermore, they are also expected to serve as an advocate, therapist, or counselor - a role not expected of White faculty (Canton, 2013); and they rarely receive adjusted workloads or "credit" for these additional service responsibilities. Faculty from traditionally underrepresented groups often view mentoring as their responsibility (especially given the fact that many of them had mentors and supporters that advocated for them). Unfortunately, mentoring is often considered "invisible labor" and they rarely receive workload adjustments given the time commitments they dedicate to this additional service which can often take away from the time they may need to dedicate to research and scholarship. This is a particular concern since research and scholarship are measured for promotion, tenure, and ultimately job security.

African American Women Faculty at PWIs

African American women are underrepresented in disproportionate numbers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). Research demonstrates that social identity is key to the career development of African American women in STEM (Ong, Wright, Espinosa, & Orfield, 2011). In the academy, African American women in STEM face numerous challenges to advancing their careers (Syed & Chemers, 2011). African American women faculty in STEM are faced with balancing career advancement in a non-traditional field while upholding the role of their

gender and race (Cech et al., 2011). Additional barriers to persistence in higher education as faculty for African American women in STEM include their desire for improving the culture and climate through activism at their institution (Ko et al., 2013). This often further marginalizes their experiences since their dedication to the advancement and recruitment of younger faculty and students—whom they often spend a significant amount of time mentoring and supporting—can supersede their professional career development (Ko et al., 2013 as cited in Charleston et al., 2014). Research on African American women who have transitioned from HBCUs to PWIs describes their experiences at the PWIs as isolating and “chilly” making them often question their academic abilities and professional identities (Joseph, 2012). These feelings at PWIs were in stark contrast to their feelings of nurturing support and belonging at HBCUs (Joseph, 2012). Subsequently, without support from mentors, particularly given the “chilly climate” of STEM, this can result in a lack of job satisfaction and a higher likelihood of leaving the academy altogether.

African American women make evident each day, as they navigate spaces at PWIs, the existence of racial and gender-based oppression and cultural hegemony perpetuated at PWIs. Black feminist thought is often used to describe these tensions and challenges faced by African American women faculty at PWIs (Henderson et al., 2010). Although there is some research on the experiences of African American women in higher education (Atwater, 1995; Bowie, 1995; Bradley 2005; Singh et al., 1995), few studies have focused on specific barriers to their success in higher education and career advancement as it relates to promotion and tenure (the measurement for so-called success in academia) (Evans & Cokley, 2008) and the role mentoring plays in their navigating the academy for career advancement (Alexander & Moore, 2008; Evans & Cokley, 2008). More specifically, there is a need for more research on strategies for retaining African American women in the academy that don’t use a deficit lens or perspective.

Challenges posed by both racism and sexism adversely impact the success and career advancement of African American women in the academy (Evans & Cokley, 2008). According to research, African American women describe experiencing greater difficulties in higher education

than White women (Collins, 1986; Howard-Vital, 1989). Though they may experience similar issues as it relates to gender, race-related obstacles and barriers make their navigation in the academy much more complex than their colleagues that are not African American (Bradley, 2005; Singh et al., 1995).

African American women report perceiving themselves as tokens in their departments at PWIs since they are often the only African American women in their departments or various other spaces on their campuses (Bradley, 2005). They are also often called on to serve as mentors and participate on many diversity-related committees which put a strain on their time allocation for research productivity (Evans & Cokley, 2008; Bradley, 2005; Turner, 2002). Research publications and productivity are the primary basis for evaluating performance and determining promotion, tenure, and even merit pay (which impacts salary). Women in academe often have heavier teaching loads, more service and committee work than men (Evans & Cokley, 2008), and “cultural taxation” (Canton, 2013; Padilla, 1994; Wijesingha & Ramos, 2017). For African American women, these service loads and non-research-oriented activities are further exacerbated.

Thus, gender discrimination often limits their access to resources and opportunities key to their career advancement, and race-related biases and discrimination further limit their access to valuable resources and benefits afforded to White faculty (Austin, 1991 as cited in Evans & Cokley, 2008; Evans & Cokley, 2008; Joshrud & Wunsch, 1991 as cited in Evans & Cokley, 2008). This also speaks to the seminal work of the “double bind” by Malcolm et al., which highlights the experiences and “price” of being a woman from underrepresented groups in STEM (Malcolm, 1976).

Further, African American women are often marginalized in their departments due to their chosen research lines or areas (Evans & Cokley, 2008), which may focus on equity, diversity, racial/ethnic, and gender-based issues (Hall & Maramba, 2001). These areas are often dismissed as not being “real research” and less valued in academia, particularly when this research is conducted by African Americans. Moreover, since research on equity, diversity, inclusion or multicultural-related

topics is typically less valued in academia, publications are more likely to be in journals with lower impact factors or journals not considered mainstream (Evans & Cokley, 2008). This is yet another way that the work of African American women can be dismissed or undervalued. It serves as another obstacle to their success in the academy (Evans & Cokley, 2008).

Empowering through Mentoring

Some of the factors highlighted in the research reviewed in the prior section are institutional (e.g., policies, practices), while some focus on the individual level (faculty workload, networking). Ultimately, the most important goal of any factors or strategies to address these issues is that they transform the institutional climate and culture while providing access and opportunities for career advancement that do not further marginalize or alienate African American women in academia.

The word mentor has its origins in the epic tale by Homer entitled *The Odyssey*. A mentor can serve multiple roles, and, over time, the term has evolved to have various meanings (Patton & Harper, 2003). As aforementioned, there is very little research on the experiences of African American women faculty relative to mentoring (Patton & Harper, 2003), particularly at PWIs. That said, this paper will highlight the importance of mentoring relationships for African American women in higher education (Penny & Gailliard, 2006) and at PWIs. Mentoring support can be empowering and serve as a form of resistance, providing space for African American women faculty to grow their professional identity and thrive at PWIs.

Mentoring relationships may be one of the most important collaborations a faculty member will have in higher education. Mentoring is a key element to academic resilience and excellence. It can be characterized as the "missing link" for African American women in higher education (Patton & Harper, 2003). Research by Blackwell (1983) as cited in Patton and Harper (2003) describes how African American women in higher education are much less likely to have mentors when juxtaposed with men in higher education.

The National Science Foundation (NSF) ADVANCE programs include great examples of effective mentoring models and networking opportunities for broadening the participation of women from traditionally underrepresented groups in STEM fields. NSF ADVANCE and similar programs enhance the recruitment and retention of women in STEM fields and provide strategies and support for advancing their careers and enhancing self-efficacy for women from traditionally underrepresented groups in STEM (Wagner, 2004 as cited in Henderson et al., 2010). Unfortunately, a review of literature on African American women faculty and mentoring programs yielded few results for programs in higher education. This is especially concerning and shows a need for a call to action for more programs to support African American women in the academy, both at faculty levels and as graduate students. Administrators and university leadership must support mentoring programs and emphasize the importance of providing organized mentoring support while also recruiting senior-level African American faculty to serve as mentors, as well. Since career advancement and higher retention rates are some of the most reported benefits of mentoring, research by Henderson, et al. (2010) highlights mentoring as resistance to oppression, organizational obstacles, and additional negative aspects that African American women faculty experience at PWIs.

The seminal work by Black feminist theorist, Patricia Hills Collins (1986), highlights African American women as “outsiders in the academe” where they are often devalued and viewed as less deserving of recognition and compensation. To address these challenges mentoring can be a key strategy for resilience and reduce marginalization and social isolation for African American women in the academy. However, when discussing mentoring as resistance or empowerment in academe, it is essential to address the intersectionality of race and gender (Henderson et al., 2010). Moreover, it is important to use a culturally inclusive approach for mentoring as it relates to African American women--particularly since there are implications for how race and gender impact African American women faculty at PWIs.

Though cross-cultural mentoring relationships with White faculty can facilitate the academic success of African American women faculty, it is just as important to ensure interactions with mentors that are based on race/ethnicity and gender (Alexander & Moore, 2008). Work by Jackson et al., (1996) highlights African American women overwhelmingly prefer mentors that are African American women. African American women in higher education describe the importance of mentors that they can trust and those that provide guidance and support that can go beyond just academic and professional insights (Patton & Harper, 2003), particularly, since experiences in academe can overlap with personal life, family outside of academe.

Though it is important to note that just because a colleague or peer is an African American woman does not mean that they would like to mentor other African American women or would even be a good mentor. In the words of the great author, anthropologist, filmmaker, and activist Zora Neale Hurston, “all my skin folk ain't kinfolk” is a term that is well understood in the African American community. This said, for the many African American women that are excellent mentors, counselors, friends, and advocates for other African American women at PWIs, they may be difficult to find and connect to without networking support.

This speaks to the importance of professional organizations and conferences that emphasize networking support from a holistic perspective and connect women from traditionally underrepresented groups to others with similar interests that may not be at their institutions. One excellent example of professional organizations that support women from traditionally underrepresented groups is the STEM Women of Color Conclave (SWOCC) hosted annually to convene the largest national forum for STEM Women of Color in higher education. Addressing the lack of representation of African American women in academia, while still being intentional in mentoring programs is key since having a mentor that looks like them, with similar experiences in academe, and a more vested interest in them is crucial (Patton & Harper, 2003) for retention of African American women faculty at PWIs. Research by Kosoko-Lasaki et al., (2006) highlights that

intentional mentoring across all levels in academia is critical to ensure success for women and traditionally underrepresented groups. Engaging with mentors is both beneficial and crucial since it can provide key information on navigating academe. African American women faculty are critical since they are perfectly situated to teach other African American women about the politics of the academy. Their own experiences and identity can also help build positive self-concepts (Patton & Harper, 2003). Professional identity and self-concept play a key role in the success of African American faculty (particularly in STEM fields); and seeing faculty and colleagues/peers from their racial/ethnic background is crucial to preventing alienation and isolation. This is especially so for African American women at PWIs since their representation is so low (particularly at senior levels).

It is important to note that some multiple mentoring models and structures are empowering for African American women in higher education at PWIs, including peer mentoring, multiple mentors, informal/formal mentoring, and cross-institutional mentors. The following sections highlight some of these different mentor-mentee relationships.

Institutional mentoring relationships. Mentors at the mentee's institution can provide valuable insight on navigating policies, practices, and understanding how policies and "politics" play out in key areas that impact advancement (e.g., promotion and tenure, annual reviews) (Alexander & Moore, 2008), especially when much of this information was constructed and is usually implemented and enforced by White faculty at PWIs. Mentors within the institution can also help shape career plans and goals and assist with relationship-building and collaborations with faculty with similar research interests.

Mentors outside of the mentee's institution can provide an objective lens to issues and provide context for career advancement and development. They can also serve as a source of moral support and a place for the mentee to confide. Moreover, colleagues who mentor outside of the institution can also serve as reviewers and provide recommendations on the mentee's work from outside of the institution (Alexander & Moore, 2008).

Informal and formal mentoring. Some institutions do provide formal mentoring programs for new and more junior faculty, though these programs are often hit or miss for the mentee. However, more formal mentoring programs for women are often uncommon (Kosoko- Lasaki et al., 2006). When faculty are paired with mentors that may not have the same research interest or do not value the work of the mentee, this can pose a significant barrier to success for the mentee. This can be of particular concern to African American women at PWIs since most faculty members are White and may have had limited interactions with African Americans and African American women to be specific. White faculty and administrators may also be more likely to judge the work and merit of African American women more harshly when providing feedback and insight. Research by Alexander and Moore (2008) examined the context of formal vs informal mentoring relationships for African Americans and findings demonstrated that participants benefitted from mentoring models that were more structured and formal.

There are also concerns with mentoring due to the lack of African American senior-level faculty. It is more likely at PWIs that African American women will be paired with White faculty or have a mentoring committee that is all White (Alexander & Moore, 2008). This, in turn, can result in more isolation and racial microaggressions that adversely impact African American faculty (Constantine et al., 2008) socially, emotionally, and psychologically - all factors which can impact their career advancement.

African American faculty often need to seek mentors outside of their institutions through informal mentoring relationships which can be a challenge if they do not have a network. Therefore, institutions need to be intentional about mentoring programs and ensure that internal mentors are willing to serve as such (Alexander & Moore, 2008). PWIs also need to be sure to make sure there are some methods for evaluation of the mentoring relationship. The mentor should be at the senior level when at all possible (Alexander & Moore, 2008). Some research has even emphasized course releases for mentors to be sure there is time for them to engage in meaningful ways. This can ensure

that the mentor is committed to the growth and career advancement of the mentee. Programs with these aspects are key to the advancement of African American women at PWIs. They can promote retention of African American women faculty and situate them to become mentors themselves once promoted and tenured.

Multidimensional mentoring. Research also demonstrates that there is often a need for multiple mentors for African American women faculty at PWIs. Mentoring is critical for African American women, particularly because of the role of intersectionality due to their race and gender (Turner, 2002). African American women in academe have often had their intelligence, qualifications, and authority challenged - not just by their colleagues but by their students, as well (Evans & Cokley, 2008). This is an issue that White men and many others in academe do not have to contend with as faculty. More specifically, these challenges highlight how it is especially important to have mentoring support systems in place that are a part of the institution's infrastructure. That said, one mentor is not sufficient and multiple mentors are essential (Benishek, Bieschke, Park, & Slattery, 2004). The mentoring relationship must be cross-gender or cross-cultural, particularly since there are such disproportionate numbers of African American women at PWIs (Huntley et al., 2000 as cited in Evans & Cokley, 2008). Examples of having primary and secondary mentors are also helpful where a primary mentor may be able to provide insight on the mentee's research and the secondary mentor may be able to provide insight on more unique needs of the mentee as they navigate academe (Evans & Cokley, 2008). This model also may meet the diverse needs of African American women faculty, and it is also important that these mentoring relationships start during graduate education or as new faculty (Evans & Cokley, 2008).

Access to multiple mentors with diverse perspectives and experiences can also facilitate research productivity (key to success in academe). Having more mentors can help establish the mentee when they can serve as co-presenters and co-authors on publications. They can also provide insight on teaching and service overloads, as well as other commitments that may hamper their career

advancement (Evans & Cokley, 2008). Since African American women are also more likely to have more service commitments and responsibilities that are non-academic than their White peers (Bradley 2005; Turner, 2002) it is also helpful to have multiple mentors to advise and provide counsel to add "additional voices" for a more realistic perspective that may not be as effective coming from just one mentor. Multiple mentors can also provide multiple voices for administrators when advocating for reduced teaching loads and service responsibilities. Finally, the multiple perspectives may also be useful in better understanding the politics of the institution and having strong advocates. There is always strength in numbers. More voices providing insight and rationale to the mentee (particularly when the voices are senior-level faculty or administrators) can create better chances for success.

Peer mentoring. Through the lens of Black feminist thought (Hill Collins, 1986; 1991) multiple tensions exist for African American women as faculty at PWIs. Subsequently, research by Henderson et al., (2010) and Patton and Harper (2003) suggests the positive impact of peer mentoring models. Peer mentoring provides a less traditional and hierarchical model for mentoring (Henderson et al., 2010). Black feminist thought and peer mentoring programs provide opportunities to engage through mutual respect for expertise and knowledge; and they address the intersectionality of the experience of African American women in academe (Henderson et al., 2010). Peer mentoring relationships allow African American women to engage with each other as role models, confidants, and even friends in more of a mutual relationship with less of a hierarchical or power dynamic within the relationship (Henderson et al., 2010). Peer mentors can also assist with helping their peers find their "academic feet," socialize them to the academy and serve as a source of support. These relationships can also reduce feelings of competitiveness and enhance coping strategies (Chesney-Lind et al., 2006; Mullen & Forbes, 2000). To recruit and retain African American faculty in higher education research has identified various coping strategies, and factors within the context of the academic culture (Perna et al., 2007). It is also important to note that there can be different models

for peer mentoring networks. Work by Kram and Isabella (1985) provides insight into the varied types of mentors for this type of peer mentoring network.

Conclusion with Recommendations for PWIs

Effective mentoring and intentional institutional policies that support mentoring can serve as tools for resistance and empowerment while promoting transformation and the continued work of dismantling racist policies and practices embedded in institutions of higher education. Moreover, preparing and retaining more African American women in academia is essential for transforming the institutional culture and climate at PWIs and other institutions of higher education. In the words of the great poet and civil rights activist Dr. Maya Angelou: "Each time a woman stands up for herself, she stands up for all women." These are words to guide African American women in academia and pave the way for others to do the same and much more.

To provide more opportunities for mentoring relationships that are productive, administrators (e.g., department heads, deans) need to be intentional when hiring faculty and ensure that multiple mentoring models and opportunities for mentoring are available. Moreover, professional development opportunities that address mentoring relationships and relationship building are also a way to ensure that new faculty are open to being mentored; and that veteran and more seasoned faculty understand the role they play in advocating and mentoring junior level faculty for success. One important aspect to highlight is the fact that implementing strong mentoring programs can open doors for recruitment of diverse faculty and provide a culture and climate that fosters a sense of belonging for African American faculty as well as other faculty from traditionally marginalized and underrepresented groups in higher education at PWIs.

Although many of the above mentoring strategies or frameworks are beneficial for all faculty, PWIs must bear in mind the importance of a "sense of belonging" that is a significant aspect of mentoring relationships relative to recruitment and retention of African American women faculty. It is also important to note that there is no "one size fits all" for mentoring faculty that are traditionally underrepresented in higher education at PWIs. Subsequently, university leadership at all levels (e.g.,

president, provost, unit leaders) must be intentional in not just recruiting faculty from underrepresented groups, but intentional in retaining them. In addition, the institution's organizational culture and climate play a significant role in promoting retention at PWIs. This said leadership at PWIs should be attuned to developing policies and practices that support the evidence-based mentoring frameworks and strategies described in this paper to ensure success, persistence, and empowerment of African American women faculty at PWIs.

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