No More Noah’s Ark: Inviting a Climate of Diversity through Faculty Mentoring Programs

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Abstract:

Increasingly, the faces of college students are black and brown – quite a different picture from what institutions of higher education looked like 50 years ago. Conversely, faculty do not mirror that racial/ethnic diversity. Despite significant gains in educational pursuit and attainment of ethnic/racial minorities, many students enter classrooms and interact with faculty members who do not look like them and/or have limited experiences working with diverse populations, affecting engagement and retention rates of diverse students. Understanding this truth, institutions of higher education have sought to increase the diversity of the faculty, but no longer is hiring racially/ethnically diverse faculty enough to create positive and long-lasting effects on the diversity climate.

The purpose of this work is to identify the best practices and specific elements of mentoring models that create/reinforce the diversity climate on campus, specifically in regards to faculty recruitment and retention. This is achieved by laying theory over documented successful mentoring programs that support and retain diverse faculty, and unpacking the narratives of racially/ethnically diverse faculty as communicated in published works. The identified practices are several – psychosocial support, faculty inclusion and removing cultural taxation. The findings leave implications for administrators, junior and tenured faculty, and other researchers in regards to building and fortifying a diversity climate, managing and mentoring faculty/peers, and investigating the nuanced experiences of racial/ethnic minorities in academe, respectively.