

Perceived Factors That Influence Achievement of Tenure for
African American Faculty at Virginia Polytechnic Institute
and State University and Old Dominion University

by

Adriane Robinson

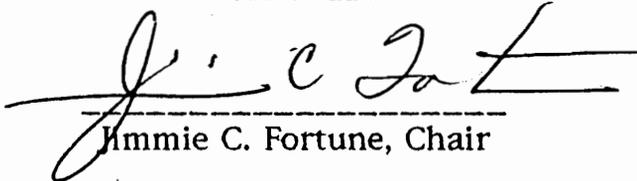
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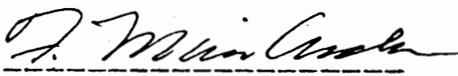
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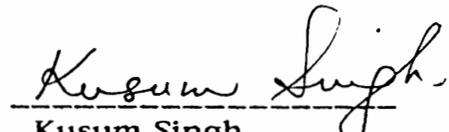
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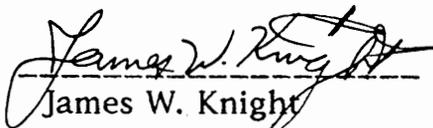
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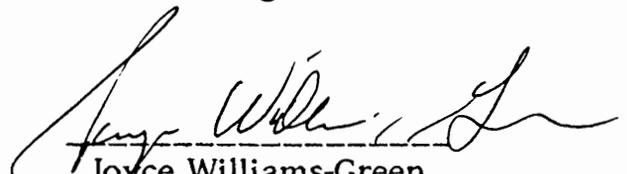
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PERCEIVED FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE ACHIEVEMENT OF TENURE FOR
AFRICAN AMERICAN FACULTY AT VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE
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Abstract

I was sitting here trying to think if some of the comments that we are sitting here making were unique to blacks in the tenure and promotion process, and I think that for the most part they are. I was trying to figure out why, and one thing that came to mind was the level of fear or trust that we have in the system that tends to be dominated by white male mentality and thought. Whereas, our contemporaries who are not black are faced with a lot of similar types of concerns, I think they're inclined to trust the system more in that they are not necessarily fearful of how this subjectivity or discussion will be turned against them, merely because of their color, because that is not an issue....

This study was conducted to discover and explore perceived factors that influence the achievement of tenure for African American faculty at two predominantly white institutions. Data for this study were collected by conducting focus group interviews with African American faculty. A total of 22 faculty participated in one of four focus group interviews. Data were analyzed by the constant comparative and axial coding method of analysis.

The findings of this study indicate that progression towards tenure for African American faculty is related to how they experience the institutional environment and to structural factors related to the tenure

process. Three major themes characterize their experience: (a) issues related to the traditional criteria for tenure, (b) value of tenure, and (c) interaction with the academic environment, that is, the institutional culture. The following are common threads underpinning the factors identified: (a) institutional fit, (b) double standards, (c) racism, (d) prejudicial attitudes and perceptions, and (e) trust and dishonesty.

The challenge to attain tenure, despite the obstacles are viewed by the participants in this study as an intrinsic motivation to stay and “play the game”.

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Dr. Lloyd D. Andrew, I dedicate this dissertation to you. I know you are proud of me.

Finally, I dedicate this dissertation to the most important person in my life, besides the Lord God Almighty, my son, DeAndre Wheeler. You tried to understand what I was going through and had to make many sacrifices. I was not always there for you, but you understood. You supported me and never went astray. The Lord could not have blessed me with a better son! I love you! You're the best!!!

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

In 1972, the federal government issued educational amendments to the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to cover public and private educational institutions with provisions for preventing discrimination. Affirmative action programs were utilized by institutions of higher education to expand employment of African Americans, other minorities, and women in higher education (Blackwell, 1983). However, by 1981 African Americans accounted for only 4.2% of all full-time faculty at institutions of higher education in the United States. By 1991, the presence of African American faculty at institutions of higher education increased only slightly to 4.7% (Carter & O'Brien, 1993). Institutions of higher education continue to struggle with recruiting and retaining African American faculty, particularly at predominantly white institutions (Blackwell, 1983; Bjork & Thompson, 1989; Exum, 1983; Sutherland, 1990).

African American faculty are sparsely represented on predominantly white campuses for complex reasons. Several plausible explanations include: a) the lack of a minority graduate pool, b) choice of careers outside of academe where salaries are more attractive, c) discriminatory hiring practices, and d) the ineffectiveness of affirmative action plans and programs (Blackwell, 1983; Brown, 1988; Moore, Jr. 1988; Wilson & Melendez, 1985). While these factors explain part of the problem associated with retention and the recruitment of African Americans into the faculty pipeline, they do little to explain the

problems associated with retention in relationship to the achievement of tenure.

African American faculty experience higher attrition rates than their counterparts at predominantly white institutions. One problem related to the departure of African American faculty from institutions of higher education, “appears to be associated with the winnowing processes of promotion and tenure” (Brown, 1988; p.26). That is, African American faculty experience greater difficulty attaining tenure. Many tend to leave institutions of higher education before being considered for tenure.

Background

Historically, African American faculty were excluded from employment in white institutions of higher education. The U. S. Supreme Court’s decision in *Plessy v. Ferguson* in 1896, laid the legal foundation for sanctioning segregated education. However, there is documentation that between 1873 and 1877, a black faculty member was employed at Georgetown University and the University of South Carolina (Brown, 1992). Thereafter, there is documentation that employment opportunities for African American faculty to teach at white institutions of higher education existed after World War II.

After World War II, white institutions of higher education experienced a shortage of white faculty members due to casualties of the war. As a result, opportunities for black faculty to teach at white institutions of higher education emerged. During the period between

1940 and 1946, 26 African Americans were employed in faculty positions at white colleges and universities in the northern region of the United States (Fleming, Gill & Swinton, 1978). In addition, a study sponsored by the Julius Rosenwald Fund, reported that in 1941, there were two black tenured faculty members at predominantly white institutions in the United States.

By the end of the 1980's, black faculty represented approximately 2% of the instructional faculty at predominantly white institutions (Brown, 1992). Historically, their representation at predominantly white institutions has been diminutive because black colleges and universities have traditionally been the academic home of African American faculty (Billingsley, 1982). African American faculty are still primarily represented on the campuses of historically black colleges and universities. In fact, the percentage of African American full-time instructional faculty at predominantly white institutions declined between 1981 and 1987. In 1988, 64% of all full-time African American faculty were at historically black institutions (Brown, 1988).

Shortage of Black Faculty

When one considers that the lack of black faculty on college campuses may be due to supply, it is important to consider the causes of faculty shortages in higher education in America. One factor contributing to the shortage is the decline of students pursuing advanced degrees. The number of graduating doctoral students has steadily declined when compared to the proportion of students earning

doctoral degrees during the 1970's and early 1980's. Data from the National Research Council Survey of Earned Doctorates (SED) and the Survey of Doctorate Recipients (SDR) for the period 1975 to 1986, reveals that for the general population 25, 940 Ph. D.s were conferred in 1975, as compared to 22,452 in 1986 (Brown, 1988).

This trend is also prevalent in the conferring of doctoral degrees to African Americans (Wilson, 1988). In 1978, African Americans were the recipients of 3.3% of all doctorates conferred and in 1994, only 2.7% of doctoral degrees were conferred to African Americans (Cross, 1995/96). Unfortunately, the majority of Ph. D.s earned by African Americans are in the Social Sciences and Education, where the labor market is least active (Brown, 1988). In 1994, African Americans earned 44.1% of the doctorate degrees conferred nationwide in Education and 18.3% in the Social Sciences (p. 49). They are least likely to earn degrees in Engineering and the Physical Sciences, where in 1994, African Americans earned 4.8% and 4.0% , respectively, of the degrees conferred in these disciplines (Cross, 1995/96).

A continuing decline in the number of black graduate students, will most certainly perpetuate the absence of African American faculty on college and university campuses. Kolbert (1985) contends that the absence of African American faculty may also be due to (p. A39):

- 1) the declining importance universities have assigned to recruiting and retaining minority graduate students;
- 2) the lack of minority role models for minority graduate students among the faculty, and;
- 3) the discouraging job outlook for new doctorate holders.

The doctoral degree is important for entry into the faculty pipeline through a tenure track position (Boyer, 1990). In 1987, 55% of the nation's professoriate held doctoral degrees, 28% held masters degrees and 1.5% had some graduate work, but no graduate degree. As of 1987, the percentage of professors holding doctoral degrees at public institutions surpassed the national average. At public research institutions, 72% of the professorate held doctoral degrees, at public doctorate institutions 73%, and at public comprehensive institutions 63% of the professorate held doctoral degrees in 1991. (Chronicle, 1993).

Another factor contributing to the decline of faculty is the fiscal crises (VanderWaerdt, 1982). In an effort to cut costs and restructure, administrators at institutions of higher education are limited in their ability to increase the number of new faculty and replace retirees. Moreover, many institutions are offering faculty early retirement incentives.

In 1993, the Chronicle of Higher Education Almanac predicted that the rate of retiring faculty would surpass the rate of expected new hires through 1997. This imbalance might significantly contribute to the supply and demand for African American faculty. According to Brown (1988), there is an oversupply of Ph. D. s pursuing academic careers in academe, who are competing with Ph. D.s outside of academe for the positions in higher education that are being refilled (p. 25). This demand for Ph. D.s is not due to growth in institutions of higher education, but to attrition in higher education and corporate America.

Many administrators at predominantly white institutions argue that there is an inadequate pool of qualified black scholars available for employment in higher education (Harvey & Scott-Jones, 1985; Moore, Jr., 1988). Some contend that the pool of African American doctorates is declining, others would challenge this view, arguing that the number of African American candidates available for employment exceed the number of jobs available (Menges & Exum, 1983; Moore, 1988).

Affirmative Action Hiring Practices

Finkelstein (1984) reports that studies conducted during the 1960's and early 1970's concluded that discriminatory hiring practices prevailed despite affirmative action initiatives, but varied by discipline. Discriminatory hiring practices were more apparent in the humanities and social sciences where women and minorities were largely concentrated. There were less visible patterns of discriminatory hiring practices in the physical sciences where African Americans and women are least represented.

Shoemaker and McKeen (1975) found that blacks and other minorities were more likely to be interviewed than whites, but less likely to be hired. They attributed this to the focus on affirmative action policies and guidelines. Finkelstein (1984) suggests that affirmative action itself does not affect hiring rates of minorities. Instead, the effect of affirmative action policies on hiring practices is mediated by departmental needs (Steele and Green, 1976). That is, that the needs of

the department determine hiring practices, they are not driven by affirmative action policies and initiatives.

During the 1960's and early 1970's, Steele and Green (1976) found that academic departments which had no minorities employed and departments which did not lose a minority through attrition, failed to use formal recruitment procedures for hiring as outlined in affirmative action policies. They found that departments which experienced higher minority attrition rates were more likely to make a greater effort to recruit minorities did not use formal recruitment procedures. Minorities and women were typically sought for a position that were previously occupied by a minority. Once that position was filled, minorities and women were not sought to fill additional positions that were open.

Affirmative action programs and policies may also contribute to discriminatory behaviors in other ways. Affirmative action programs and policies are viewed as forms of special treatment that allow standards to be lowered for African Americans and therefore, they are not looked upon as true academics (Exum, 1983; Smith & Witt, 1990). Sulton, Jr. (1990) contends that African Americans often feel that the commitment to diversification is shallow because their experience is one that signifies that they are present for the purpose of complying with affirmative action initiatives, rather than for the opportunity to become tenured faculty members. He further argues that patterns in hiring practices suggests that institutions of higher education are only looking for the well known superstars.

Steele and Green (1976) also examined how candidates were evaluated by the hiring criteria applied by department chairs. They found that blacks and other minorities were rated high on items that were less important and low on items of most importance. They concluded that this practice undermined the strengths of blacks and other minorities, while highlighting their weaknesses in the interviewing process.

Institutional hiring practices that “produced de facto discrimination in higher education” in the past may explain part of why African American faculty are now losing ground in higher education (Brown, 1992). Carter and O’Brien (1993) examined the employment and hiring patterns for full-time faculty of color by analyzing data from faculty surveys conducted by the U. S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). Their analysis include a comparison of the number of full-time faculty hires with the actual employment gains in tenure-track and non-tenure-track positions over a ten year period, from 1981-1991. They note that the EEOC estimates that there were 390,000 new hires to full-time faculty positions during this time period. Some of these new hires were replacements due to attrition factors such as retirement, death, job changes, or retrenchment.

They found that African American faculty were selected to fill non-tenure track positions more often than tenure-track positions. Between 1981 and 1991, the number of African Americans hired in non-tenure track positions increased by fifty-one percent. This absence of opportunities for tenure track positions may have an adverse affect on

career advancement opportunities for African American faculty because these positions are typically less rewarding and do not offer the job security possible in a tenure track position.

Carter and O'Brien (1993) conclude in their study that African American faculty are not staying at the same institutions for long periods of time. More importantly, they are not staying at predominantly white institutions (Elmore & Blackburn, 1983; Exum, 1983; Sutherland, 1990) . In 1986, the American Council on Education reported that the participation of black faculty at white institutions was declining (Brown 1988, p. v.; Wilson 1987). One possible explanation is that they leave because many are in non-tenure track positions and are not secure in these positions.

Studies (Logan, 1990; Luu, 1985; Tack & Patitu, 1992; Williams-Green, 1989) conducted which examine job satisfaction, have concluded that black faculty in non-tenure track positions are more likely to leave higher education because they perceive that their opportunities for advancement are lessened and there is no job security. Black faculty in tenure track positions also leave because they perceive they will not get tenure (Blackwell, 1983; Brown, 1988; Exum & Menges, 1983). It is estimated that only 50-60 percent of all new hires, between 1981 and 1991, made it through the tenure process (Moore & Johnson, 1989).

An issue that has not been fully explored relative to the retention of African American faculty is the impact of the tenure process. Perhaps African American faculty do not stay at institutions of higher education because they perceive that achieving tenure is not possible. Another

possible explanation is that senior faculty perceive that African American faculty cannot endure the tenure process. Blackwell (1983) states that a revolving door syndrome exists.

Historically, departments typically hired only one African American faculty member in an effort to diversify or satisfy a commitment to affirmative action (Steele & Greene, 1976). A tenure track position renders the faculty member eligible for tenure consideration after a probationary period. The probationary period allows the department an opportunity to observe the faculty member, during which time “continued evaluation for reappointment” occurs (VA Tech Faculty Handbook, 1994).

According to Blackwell (1983), when the probationary period is complete the decision often is a denial of reappointment and subsequently the faculty member is dismissed. Blackwell (1983) argues that reappointment is denied on the basis that the faculty member did not meet necessary requirements for permanence of the position. Thereafter, another minority is hired and the revolving door continues.

Tierney & Rhoads (1993) refer to the revolving door as a tendency for faculty of color to leave academe because they become discouraged with the outlook regarding the attainment of tenure. They state that the revolving door syndrome represents a socialization process that has failed the institution and its new faculty.

Statement of the Problem

Higher education staff information reports must be submitted to the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) biannually by all public and private institutions of higher education with at least 15 full-time employees. Carter & O'Brien (1993), conclude in their examination of the EEOC data for 1991, that African American, American Indian, and Latino full-time faculty, are less likely to hold tenure in comparison to white faculty at predominantly white institutions. In 1991, 58% of all African American faculty who held positions at both public and private institutions of higher education in the United States held tenure, whereas 71 % of white faculty held tenure.

Obtaining a faculty position is not sufficient to sustain an academic career. Surviving the tenure and promotion review process is essential. The review process not only determines if a faculty member stays at one particular institution, but because positions are limited, it may be the factor that determines if one remains in the profession.

Until African American faculty acquire tenure at rates equitable to their counterparts they cannot fully participate in the endeavors underlying the principles of academic freedom. They cannot be free to seek, discover, teach, and pursue the intellectual inquiry they deem important to the contributions of knowledge.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to: a) explore and gain an understanding of African American faculty perceptions of the factors

that influence the tenure process, and; b) to explore the influence and importance of a black community presence within and outside of the academic institutions, at Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University (VPI) and Old Dominion University (ODU). “African American” and “black” are used interchangeably throughout this study.

Significance of Study

If problems associated with recruiting African American faculty continue to prevail, such as the lack of a minority graduate pool, the gains in efforts to achieve diversity, equity, and access, will be lost. Therefore, strategies designed to retain, enhance, and enable African American faculty to attain tenure are essential.

All public and most private four-year institutions of higher education have a tenure and promotion system. Faculty employed by institutions of higher education that have a tenure system cannot stay at those institutions without gaining tenure (Boyer, 1990). More importantly, until African American faculty acquire tenure they cannot fully participate in the endeavors underlying the principles of academic freedom, for example, job security and freedom of speech.

Achieving the goals of equity, diversity, and access for faculty and students are essential to the mission of higher education institutions. Diversity can significantly contribute to the quality of education in fulfillment of the educational mission of higher education (Milem & Astin, 1993). Hodgekinson (1986) projects that African American

students and other minority groups, will become the majority on college campuses by the year 2000.

Recruiting and retaining African American faculty is essential because studies (Scott, 1995; Fleming, 1981; Pascarella, Smart, & Stoecker, 1989) suggests that students value their presence on predominantly white campuses. Their presence can be important to the retention and academic success of African American students. The presence of African American faculty also aids in ensuring that the concerns of African American students are represented in areas of decision-making, not privy to students, within an institution.

While retaining African American faculty is related to the achievement of tenure, attention must be given to assessing factors that impede or enhance the attainment of tenure.

Research Questions

This study discovered and explored perceived factors that influence the achievement of tenure for African American faculty. The following research questions were addressed:

1. What factors do African American faculty perceive influence the achievement of tenure at Virginia Tech and Old Dominion Universities?
2. What factors influence the decision of African American faculty to stay at Virginia Tech and Old Dominion Universities for the required time necessary to be considered for tenure?

3. How do African American faculty at Virginia Tech and Old Dominion Universities define a black community?
4. How does the presence of a black community within and/or outside of the universities influence the decision of African American faculty to stay at Virginia Tech and Old Dominion Universities for the required time necessary to be considered for tenure?

Assumptions

1. African American faculty began their academic careers at Virginia Tech and Old Dominion Universities with the intent of obtaining tenure.
2. African American faculty began their academic careers at Virginia Tech and Old Dominion Universities because they wanted to pursue their professional careers at predominantly white institutions.
3. African American faculty are prepared for and have the educational qualification (terminal degree, for example) to pursue a professional teaching career in academe at Virginia Tech and Old Dominion Universities.
4. African American faculty are willing to fulfill the requirements for tenure at Virginia Tech and Old Dominion Universities.

Definition of Terms

Terms used throughout this study are defined below. They are defined according to their use in this study.

African American - A person of African descent, identified as a member of the black race, who is a United States citizen. For the purpose of this study, the terms African American and black are used interchangeably.

Community - A society of people having common rights and privileges or common interests, civil, political, or ecclesiastical, usually living in one locality under the same culture. A community can be any group of people, not necessarily in spatial proximity, who share basic interests and traditions (Bergevin, 1963).

Collegiality - A relationship that is based upon mutual respect and feelings of professional equality that is an outgrowth of the academic, professional, and personal interactions among faculty members.

Focus Group Interview - An interview that occurs when a group of people are convened by an interviewer to participate in a focused discussion for the purpose of collecting data on a particular phenomenon.

Faculty - Persons employed at an institution of higher education in a full-time tenure-track instructional position or is tenured.

Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) - Higher educational institutions founded for the specific purpose of educating black students in the United States, where at least 90 percent of the student enrollment is composed of African Americans.

Minority - An African American or any other person who is a member of an underrepresented group by race or gender.

Predominantly White Institution (PWIs) - Higher educational institutions where at least 80 percent of the student enrollment and faculty are white Americans.

Perception - A term used to describe how an individual sees, feels, or experiences a situation or event, based on individual values, socialization, and interests (Patton, 1990).

Probationary period/status - This term is applied to the succession of term appointments, which an individual undertakes on a full-time faculty appointment, and during which continued evaluation for reappointment and for an eventual tenured appointment takes place (Virginia Tech Faculty Handbook, 1994).

Tenure - An institution developed for the protection of the academic freedom of the teaching faculty in institutions of higher education.

Tenure-track - A faculty appointment, on probationary status and under consideration for tenure (Bowen & Schuster, 1986).

Chapter II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the literature as it relates to factors that influence the progress of African American faculty in the academy. This review is constructed by discussing the following topics: (a) tenure and culture, (b) hiring and tenure patterns at VPI and ODU, (c) attitudes of the majority concerning scholarship, (d) affirmative action, (e) inequity in promotion and tenure, (f) barriers unique to minorities, and (g) self-perception of discrimination among minorities.

Tenure and Culture

Tenure systems developed from the concepts associated with academic freedom (Bowen & Schuster, 1986; Boyer, 1990). Academic freedom applied by college and universities provides faculty the right to conduct research in their respective disciplines and express their views without fear of restraint or dismissal.

Tenure is viewed as a contractual arrangement, potentially granting employment for life to a faculty member and is inherent in the principles of academic freedom, developed by the American Association of University Professors. According to Bowen & Schuster (1986) the underlying principles of tenure is the academic community's right to discover and disseminate truth. It provides faculty the freedom to teach and pursue intellectual inquiry. Tenure should guard against "destruction of teaching and research capabilities through enforced

conformity to the dominant views of local communities, no matter how ignorant or prejudicial” (VanderWaerdt, 1982, p. 519).

A universal definition of tenure applicable to every college and university does not exist. The standards and procedures for granting tenure are developed by individual institutions on the basis of the institution’s by-laws, academic practices, customary usage (Mullaney and Timberlake, 1994). The process for granting tenure involves a judgment by peers and self-judgment of the candidate seeking tenure. Candidates for tenure, judge whether or not they have met the criteria for tenure based on what they are told by members of the institution and by written documents, usually a faculty handbook or other guide. Peer judgment is based not only on knowledge and expertise in the discipline, but also on traditional practices of the institution. Therefore, what is valued and judged to have merit for granting tenure may be problematic because of institutionalized values.

While it is acknowledged that institutions of higher education embrace an egalitarian philosophy, they are committed to institutionalized meritocratic values. Promotion and tenure processes are purportedly merit based. This merit based process is considered to be neutral, objective, universalistic, and achievement based. However, the shaped academic culture of institutions of higher education have been and many still are homogeneous by class, race, ethnicity, and gender (Harvey & Scott-Jones, 1985; Moses, 1989; Sandler, 1986). In addition, the academic culture is shaped by the politics of governance and customary practices.

Culture, as defined by Gramsci cited in Takaki (1994) “can be hegemonic: an order in which a certain way of life and thought is dominant, in which one concept of reality is diffused throughout society in all its institutional and private manifestations, informing with its spirit all taste, morality, customs, religious and political principles, and all social relations”. There are two types of cultures that can be identified: 1) subjective or world view, and 2) material or concrete. Triandis (1975) defines world view or subjective culture as the way a cultural group perceives its environment, including stereotypes, role perceptions, religion, social organizations, language, norms, attitudes, values, ideals, and perceived relationships between events and behaviors. Material culture or concrete includes the objects and artifacts of a culture. Institutional patterns in the United States are characteristic of the predominant culture, which is a European world view, often referred to as the western world view.

In summary, one's culture can be characterized as the combination of : (1) what one thinks is important - values, (2) what one believes is true - belief system, and (3) how one thinks things should be done - norms.

African American faculty bring to the institution different values, expectations, interests, and behaviors (Elmore & Blackburn, 1983; Exum, 1983; Sutherland, 1990). The values emphasized in assessing merit may not be adequate for assessing the performance of African American faculty. The values of meritocracy defend the status quo and serve to justify standards and policies (Anderson, 1988). That is, that merit is a

judgment based on worth to the institution. Worth and merit is determined by what is important to the dominant culture.

African Americans have not had a long standing presence in predominantly white institutions. The way in which African Americans are viewed in terms of merit and worth to the institution can be problematic because the traditional concepts and measures of merit prevail (Exum, 1983). The commitment to these meritocratic values may be the most fundamental obstacles facing minority faculty (Exum, 1983; Menges & Exum, 1983; Astin, 1982).

It has been documented that women made more progress entering the academic profession than blacks as a group, although blacks began in the 1970's to hold positions in predominantly white institutions in greater number (Finkelstein, 1984; Carter & O'Brien, 1993). However, blacks remain underrepresented among the faculty at predominantly white institutions of higher education. How can the differential status of black professors be accounted for in relation to their white counterparts?

Finkelstein (1984) offers two possible explanations. The first has to do with the differential treatment of blacks. This differential treatment is explained as a function of overt discrimination based on sex and/or race. The second possible explanation is that blacks perform different professional duties and bring different values to their academic careers, than those who represent the majority. As a result, they are viewed as a group, less productive and are less likely to be rewarded by the academic system.

Sandler (1986) refers to overt discrimination as micro-inequities. According to Sandler (1986), collectively there are ways in which “individuals are either singled out, or overlooked, ignored, or otherwise discounted on the basis of unchangeable characteristics such as sex, race or age” (p. 3). Instead of being treated as individuals, people are treated according to preconceptions about the groups with which they belong, that is, by race or gender. This creates a climate that undermines the self-esteem and morale of individuals. In addition, individuals may become professionally and socially isolated by declining to participate in collegial academic activities with others. Gellhorn (1993) refers to micro-inequities inherent in the culture of institutions of higher education as a form of subtle racism. For example, affirmative action initiatives and programs are viewed by some as entitlement programs. Thus, African American faculty hired under these initiatives are seen as unqualified and their work is not valued.

Patterns of Practice

To test whether overt discrimination contributes to the differential treatment of African Americans, Finkelstein (1984) suggests examining: (1) hiring practices, (2) attitudes of the majority toward the scholarly work of African Americans and affirmative action policies, (3) inequity in the distributions of salary, promotion, tenure and other rewards, and (4) the self-perception of discrimination among minorities and women. Inequities in salary and other rewards will not be addressed in this study, since the focus is on tenure.

Hiring and Tenure Patterns

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (VPI)

Virginia Tech is classified as a Research University I by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. In addition to offering a full range of baccalaureate programs and graduate education through the doctorate, high priority is given to research. VPI is a public university with approximately 1,800 faculty members.

The faculty are divided into five categories for the purpose of applying faculty policies, such as promotion and tenure: the collegiate faculty, library faculty, extension and public service faculty, administrative and professional faculty, and research faculty (Faculty Handbook, 1994). The focus of this study is on the collegiate faculty who hold full-time positions in academic departments, divisions or centers in nine colleges.

As a land-grant institution, VPI serves as the educational agency in partnership with the State of Virginia to serve the citizenry of Virginia, through the Virginia Cooperative Extension Service. The Virginia Cooperative Extension Service, provides non-credit educational programs in the areas of agriculture, home economics, and community resource development. In 1947, the first African American faculty was hired in Extension Service. This African American female was granted tenure in 1982.

Until 1970, only three additional African Americans joined the ranks of faculty at VPI. These additional faculty were also hired in

Extension and were granted tenure. For almost 25 years, VPI did not hire any additional African American faculty.

Between 1970 and 1979, the hiring patterns began to change. During this period 18 African Americans joined the faculty and only four were hired in Extension. Two faculty in Extension and one collegiate faculty departed the institution and did not have tenure at the time of their departure. It is unclear if these faculty left the institution before they had the opportunity to be granted tenure or whether they were denied tenure.

From 1970 through 1984 another hiring pattern appears to have emerged. African American males were more likely to be hired in collegiate faculty positions (27), than African American females (9). Additionally, of the nine females hired in collegiate faculty positions three were granted tenure and nineteen (19) males were granted tenure. More females were hired in Extension (4) than males (1) during this same time period.

All African American faculty hired from 1984 through 1994 were hired in teaching collegiate faculty positions. Although, an equal number of African American males (17) and females (17) were hired from 1984 through 1994, most of the African American females were hired in 1987 (4), 1991 (3) and in 1992 (5). No African American females or males were hired in 1988. In 1989, two males, in 1993 one male, and in 1994 one African American male was hired at VPI. No African American females were hired in 1989, 1993, and 1994. Of the seventeen (17) African American females hired between 1984 and 1994,

three were granted tenure in comparison to the number of males who were granted tenure, which is eight (8).

A study was conducted by the Office of Institutional Research and Planning at Virginia Tech in May 1995, to determine if significant differences existed in the tenure decisions granted for assistant professors and promotion of professors to full professorship. Data regarding tenure decisions for men and women for a three year period (1993-1995) were analyzed. The results suggests that females and males have “experienced a comparable level of success at obtaining tenure over the last three years” (IRPA 94-95). Two African American males were promoted between 1993 and Spring 1995; and one of these men was granted tenure. No African American female was eligible for tenure consideration during this period. Therefore, only three African American faculty are represented in this study.

According to the annual demographic profile report of all faculty disseminated by the Office of the Provost, as of Fall 1994, “women and African Americans are better represented among other faculty categories than tenure track faculty” (Schnure, 1995, p. 2). There are 79 African Americans in administrative and professional faculty positions, which includes extension agents, student and academic affairs, librarians and university level administrators. Of the 79 African Americans in these positions 47 are African American women.

According to this report, 39 new tenure-track faculty members were hired during the Fall of 1994. Women represented 33.3% (13) of the new hires. However, none were African American women. Only one African

American male was among these new hires. African American females remain sparsely represented among the collegiate faculty eligible for tenure or tenured at VPI. As of Fall 1995, one tenured African American female is in a full-time collegiate faculty teaching position.

Since its inception as a public institution of higher education only 81 African American collegiate faculty have been hired at VPI. The review of VPI's hiring and tenure patterns reveals that African American faculty have been sparsely represented on its campus. The number of tenurable African American collegiate faculty continues to diminish. In 1994, African American faculty only represented 2.2% of the faculty eligible for tenure (see Table 1). As of Fall 1995, there were 11 African American tenured collegiate faculty, 14 in tenure-track positions and four instructors. Non-tenure track faculty also included research associates and visiting professors, of which no African American faculty are represented. Data concerning the rate at which African American faculty have been granted or denied tenure was not available.

In summary, more African Americans are represented in non-instructional academic positions than in instructional faculty positions. They represent 9.4% of all administrative and professional faculty, which include extension agents, student and academic affairs personnel, librarians and university level administrators. As of Fall 1994, African Americans held seventy-nine (79) of these positions, forty-seven 47 or (60%) are African American females.

Table 1

Racial and Ethnic Profile of Full-Time Tenure-Track Faculty at
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
Fall, 1994

Group	Number	Percentage
White	1,239	90.4
African-American	30	2.2
Asian	70	5.1
Hispanic	13	0.9
American Indian	1	0.1
Non-Resident Alien	18	1.3
TOTAL	1,371	100.0

Source: Office of the Provost, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, September, 1994.

Old Dominion University (ODU)

Old Dominion University began as a division of the College of William and Mary in 1930 and gained its independence in 1962. ODU is classified as a Doctoral University I by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. The university offers a full range of baccalaureate programs and graduate education through the doctorate and has 622 full-time instructional/collegiate faculty.

According to the ODU faculty handbook, faculty holding rank as assistant professor through full professor are tenurable. Instructors, visiting professors, lecturers, professors-in-residence, research professors,

and adjunct professors are ineligible for tenure. The focus of this study is on the full-time instructional/collegiate African American faculty, who hold tenurable positions in the Colleges of Arts and Letters, Business and Public Administration, Education, Engineering and Technology, Health Sciences, and Sciences at ODU.

According to the Office of University Planning and Institutional Research, ODU has traditionally maintained a practice of tenuring up to sixty-five percent (65%) of its faculty. However, as of Fall 1995, fifty-eight percent (58%) of its faculty are tenured and twenty-six percent (26%) are eligible for tenure (see Table 2).

Data were not available on the hiring and tenure patterns of all faculty prior to 1988, because ODU's employee data base begins as of 1988. However, data on African American faculty indicates that sixty-nine (69) African American faculty have been hired at ODU since its inception as a public institution of higher education. Retaining African American faculty has been difficult for ODU. Of the sixty-nine African American faculty hired, twenty (20) females and ten (10) males have left the institution. One of the females left the institution after being denied tenure. Like, VPI African American females tend to leave the institution.

Of the thirty-nine (39) African American instructional faculty who have remained at ODU, nine (9) are not eligible for tenure because they are in a position which render them ineligible for tenure. Thus, only thirty (30) African American faculty are tenurable. Of those, thirteen (13) are tenured and seventeen (17) are in tenure track positions (see Table 3).

Table 2
ODU Tenure Eligibility

Tenure Eligibility					
	Tenured	Tenure Track	Non-Tenured	Ineligible	All
College or Division	N	N	N	N	N
A & L	78	46	15	24	163
Business	50	21	5	11	87
Education	45	26	2	12	85
Engineering	51	27	2	6	86
Sciences	119	30	2	7	158
Health Sci.	20	11	5	7	43
VP Stud. Serv.	—	—	—	—	—
VP Acac. Affairs	—	—	—	—	—
President	—	—	—	—	—
ALL	363	161	31	67	622
Percentage	58%	26%	5%	11%	100%

Source: ODU Office of University Planning and Institutional Research, September 21, 1995.

Table 3

Status of ODU African American Faculty by Gender as of Spring, 1995

	Males	Females	Total
Tenure Track	10	7	17
Ineligible	2	7	9
Tenured	8	5	13
Departed Institution	10	20	30
TOTAL	30	39	69

Source: Office of University Planning and Institutional Research, Spring, 1995.

Between 1988 and Spring 1995, thirteen African American instructional faculty were granted tenure and two applied, but were not approved. During this same time period 123 others were granted tenure and 18 were denied (see Table 4).

In summary, ODU's hiring or tenuring practices do not show any disparity in hiring or tenuring of African American men and women. African Americans are more likely to be hired in tenurable collegiate faculty positions, than in non-tenurable collegiate faculty positions. Of the 69 African Americans hired between 1988 and 1995, only 15 were hired in non-tenurable collegiate positions.

Table 4

ODU Tenure Review by Race
1988 - 1995

	White	African-American	Asian	Hispanic	TOTAL
Approved	89	11	15	1	116
Not Granted	16	2	2	—	20
TOTAL	105	13	17	1	136

Source: Office of University Planning and Institutional Research, Spring, 1995.

Attitudes Concerning Scholarship

Considering that there are about 114 historically black colleges and universities, there are approximately 3,000 other institutions that can be considered “historically white” (Hacker, 1993, p. 32). Although this notion is often refuted, Hacker (1993) argues that these institutions are white “in identity and culture, in logic and learning, in their conceptions of scholarly knowledge and demeanor” (p. 32). The work of black scholars are less likely to be deemed scientific or scholarly because “what is deemed suitable academic knowledge has a historically white cast” (Hacker, 1993; p. 34).

Hacker (1993) asserts that this is not merely that subject matter has European antecedents, but that standards for intellectual analysis, writing style, and modes of exposition and reasoning, are set within the institutional context before one is judged for tenure or promotion.

It is difficult to separate institutional values from the values of merit when assessing scholarship. Hacker (1993) asserts that African American faculty are judged differently. According to Hacker (1993), even when African Americans hold the Ph.D. and are available for positions and promotions, they are judged on whether they are qualified. The judgment of whether they are qualified is based on whether, “one has produced the kind of research and writing deemed appropriate by those who decide on hiring and tenure within the academic world” (p. 43). According to Hacker (1993), “black academics are seen as failing to internalize and adapt to white mental ways” (p. 33).

Menges & Exum (1983) support the notion that since higher education has been dominated by white males, it is “their definitions of learning and of scholarship” that prevail (p. 134). They argue that as a result women and minorities often redefine scholarship in their research paradigms and the way they approach teaching. They contend that “the models of history, culture, and society inherent in existing scholarship do not simply leave women out; they do not permit satisfactory explanations of women’s experiences. The problem with how the work of women and minorities is viewed, stems from the fact that, it is believed that just adding women and minorities to the disciplines is sufficient.

A record of scholarly activity, primarily defined as a publication record, is generally considered to be the decisive criteria for achieving promotion and tenure (Boyer, 1990; Sudarkasa, 1987). The balance

emphasized in the criteria for promotion and tenure is largely determined by institutional type. According to Boyer (1990), faculty at research universities can be distinguished from others because they typically support research more than teaching.

Finkelstein (1984) reports that previous studies (Blau, 1973; Behymer, 1974), which examined the influence of the pressure to publish for promotion and tenure conclude that the pressure to publish affected the extent to which faculty engaged in research, indirectly. That is, when controlling for an individual's research interest, pressure to publish had no effect on research productivity.

Finkelstein (1984) contends that these studies (Behymer, 1974; Blau, 1973) support other studies which contend that the most salient predictors of research productivity are: a) intrinsic factors, such as research interest and interaction with colleagues, b) institutional type (university which is research oriented or a college which is teaching oriented), and c) prestige (assessed as the institution's reputation, ratings of graduate programs, or faculty qualifications and selective student body). Finkelstein (1984) does not provide information on how these studies were conducted nor on the characteristics of the participants or institutional type.

Intrinsic factors also influence research or scholarly productivity prior to entering the faculty pipeline. Professional activities and relationships established during graduate school influences an individual's research and publishing career (Defour & Hirsch, 1990). Finkelstein (1984) suggest that his review of the literature supports the

notion that graduate students who are engaged in research and publication activities with a professor, who sponsored and mentored the student, were more likely to become publishing professors. He also contends that graduate students attending graduate school at a prestigious institution or at an institution with prestigious faculty in their field, who provided a supportive climate and visibility of one's work, had a formative influence in the early stages of one's scholarly and publishing career.

Finkelstein (1984) states that the most active faculty publishers are faculty who established anchored collegial relationships in their departments. These factors are attributable more to the environment than institutional incentives.

Finkelstein (1984), reports that Crane (1964) examined the manner in which natural and social scientists established their research agendas early in their careers. He found that they usually continued their research in areas developed as graduate students, developed new interests with older faculty in their departments, and developed research in accordance with interest already established in their departments.

Thus, differences in research productivity can be explained by differences in early academic socialization patterns, which are attributable to educational background and training. Subtle patterns of discrimination are attributable to differences in scholarly and research productivity because African Americans have been subjected to training which differs from their white counterparts, in part due to race, gender

or socioeconomic status, and socialization (Anderson, 1988; Finkelstein, 1984; Greenhaus, Parasuraman, & Wormley, 1990).

Finkelstein (1984) supports Middleton's (1978) view that the institutional culture within which African Americans pursue their academic careers is a contributing factor to the differential treatment they are subjected to versus others in the institution. Middleton's (1978) conclusions were based on a multi-institutional interview study of black faculty. African American faculty face social and cultural constraints unlike their counterparts and are subjected to the token status, that is, being different in a majority white male dominant culture (Moses, 1989; Sutherland, 1990).

In addition, Finkelstein (1984) reviewed the study conducted by Anderson et al. (1979), of which forty-two African American faculty were surveyed concerning their participation in institutional and departmental governance at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. Finkelstein (1984) states that Anderson et al. (1979) discovered that the black faculty surveyed feel a sense of isolation in their departments, were likely to be the only black person in the department, and did not feel close to their white colleagues or a member of the team in their department.

Harvey & Scott-Jones (1985) after examining national statistical data of full-time faculty in institutions of higher education from 1975-1979, argue that the problems with scholarship for African American faculty in the tenure process is manifested in the "bottom up approach" in hiring faculty (p. 71). They contend that the faculty are the

gatekeepers and decide who gets hired and moves up the ranks, where often these faculty are white males. African American faculty may publish, but also perish, because the faculty decide the significance of one's work and value to the academic department and university. Sustaining an academic career is more than just having the intelligence and the ability to do scholarly work. The institutional culture must foster an acceptance of minorities as scholars.

Affirmative Action

Menges and Exum (1983) examined the progress of women and African Americans in higher education. They state that during the 1960's and 1970's when higher education had its most rapid growth period and at same time affirmative action and equal rights polices coincided with this growth period, the expectation was that the proportion of women and African American academics would increase. They state that the proportion of women and African Americans did not increase significantly in comparison to all academics. Three possible explanations cited were: 1) the small pool of women and African Americans, 2) the ineffectiveness of affirmative action programs, and 3) that there are a distinct set of problems that women and African Americans face during the tenure and promotion process.

Astin, 1992; Brown, 1988; Menges & Exum, 1983; and Harvey & Scott-Jones, 1985, contend that the lack of African Americans and women in academe is due to a small graduate pool of African Americans and women. However, the pool has allowed more women and African

Americans to enter the lower ranks. There remains some discrepancies regarding the number of qualified candidates available and the number that are actually hired (Harvey & Scott-Jones, 1985). In order to explain the discrepancy, Menges & Exum (1983) state that it is important to look elsewhere. The role affirmative action has had on increasing the opportunities for women and African Americans must be explored.

Affirmative action programs have been utilized by institutions of higher education to comply with the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination and includes provisions for equal employment opportunities (Exum, 1983; Menges & Exum, 1983; Smith & Witt, 1990; Steele & Green, 1976). Colleges and universities receiving federal funds are required to set goals for increasing the number of African Americans and women. Menges & Exum (1983) state that developing affirmative action goals has not been a problem, but the implementation of these goals do not create the conditions necessary for massive entry of African Americans and women. They identify the following implementation issues (p. 129):

- (1) how estimates are made of availability of minorities and women candidates;
- (2) how hiring goals are set, at what levels, and whether they are seen as minimum or maximum goals;
- (3) the tendency for hiring goals to be set on an institution-wide rather than departmental basis, and how departments define their responsibilities in meeting these institutional goals;
- (4) the kind of advertising and recruitment used for available positions;
- (5) the criteria for evaluating minorities and women candidates;

- (6) whether minorities and women are “played off” against each other in the hiring competition;
- (7) how objective and conscientious the institution is in meeting its goals and monitoring its performance;
- (8) whether there is positive leadership, that is, persuasion and pressure from chief academic officers for departments and programs to hire minorities and women;
- (9) whether campus offices for affirmative action/equal opportunity have sufficient funding, staff, and power to be effective; and
- (10) the extent of government inefficiency, ineptitude, and/or lack of will to enforce compliance.

These implementation problems along with internal resistance to affirmative action goals, effect the extent to which the proportion of minorities and women have entered academe. Affirmative action programs facilitated the hiring of women and African Americans. As a result, the pool eligible for promotion and tenure was enlarged, but affirmative action does not ensure equity in the review process (Harvey & Scott-Jones, 1985; Menges & Exum, 1983; Moses, 1989).

Hitt, Keats, and Purdum (1983) seeking to identify criteria for assessing the effectiveness of affirmative action programs in institutions of higher education, concluded that attitudinal criteria may be the most important factor in assessing effectiveness. They developed a set of 30 simulated affirmative action programs which were mailed to 55 Affirmative Action officers who were members of an Association for Affirmative Action. The participants were from institutions of higher education in one southwestern state. The participants were required to

read and rate the effectiveness of each simulated Affirmative action program on a likert style point scale ranging from very ineffective (1) to very effective (7). They found that the respondents identified, “commitment from higher administration” and “a receptive attitude on the part of key university personnel” as the most important criteria for affirmative action effectiveness (p. 400).

Hitt, Keats, and Purdum (1983) contend that the results of this study “support the notion that general attitudes rather than specific attitudinal factors” are important because “commitment and a receptive attitude may be hard to obtain if people feel coerced into engaging in nondiscriminatory behavior” (p. 402). Hitt, Keats, and Purdum (1983) support the contention that the general attitude of university faculty, staff, and administrators must be positive to provide a support and conducive environment for affirmative action programs to be effective.

Inequity in Promotion and Tenure

Promotion and tenure review processes are costly in time and effort, to both the faculty and the institution. Few studies have been conducted on the promotion and tenure review processes. Faculty surveys have been one method for investigating the review process.

Menges & Exum (1983) cite that one problem with survey studies is that the results are often combined. Therefore, data by race and gender are not commonly available. In addition, research on faculty is sparse by ethnicity and race because the number of faculty racial groups are

small on predominantly white campuses. Thus, the aggregate of data often created as a minority group across gender, race, and ethnicity obscures differences (Johsrud & DesJarlais, 1994).

Case studies have been another method for investigating the review process. Because of the nature of case studies, there are insufficient numbers of participants to make generalization about the results. While, Blackwell, 1983; Brown, 1988; Logan, 1990; Silver et. al. , 1988 and; Tack & Patitu, 1992, contend that African American faculty are the least likely to be tenured of all faculty, this researcher did not discover any studies that specifically examined the tenuring of African American faculty.

Menges & Exum (1983) conclude that there are alternative explanations for why the progression of African Americans and women in institutions of higher education has been slow. Neither, failing affirmative action programs nor a small graduate pool explained their situation. Surviving promotion and tenure processes are important. The professional work environment, where the prospects for tenure and promotion are made, must be examined.

Barriers Unique to Women and African Americans

There are factors that are unique to women and African Americans that may be barriers to their progress during the tenure review process. One problem identified is that retrenchment and layoff structures are seniority based not merit based, which leaves women and African Americans vulnerable because they have been the last hired and are over

represented in the lower ranks (Blackwell, 1983; Harvey & Scott-Jones, 1985; Sandler, 1986).

In many departments African American faculty are sparsely represented. Many are the only person of color. They become overburdened with serving in a service or administrative role on committees, and especially serving as the minority representative to promote cultural diversity. They are often heavily burdened in advising activities, because minority students tend to seek them out more readily and advising is not generally considered to be a major contributor to tenure or retention in the system (Blackwell, 1983; Johnsrud & DesJarlais, 1994; Menges & Exum, 1983; Moses, 1989; Sandler 1986). Because African Americans are often in the lower ranks, they tend to teach more undergraduate courses, especially introductory courses that often have higher enrollments and are assigned heavier teaching loads.

Choice of pedagogical practices may be an additional barrier. Some practices are seen as lacking rigor and a product of incompetence. Some (Johnsrud & DeJarlais, 1994; Greenhaus, Parasuraman, & Wormley; Smith & Witt, 1990; Sulton, Jr., 1990) contend that students are also skeptical of the authority of women and minorities and of their abilities to teach them. Women and minorities often receive lower teaching evaluations, which they believe their colleagues view as incompetence.

Joint appointment may be an additional barrier (Johnsrud & DesJarlais, 1994). Women and minorities often hold joint appointments in Women's Studies and Black Studies programs. While a joint appointment offers more visibility and anchors a faculty member in the

institution, there is an extra burden to manage possible competing programs and demands.

Self-Perception of Discrimination Among Minorities

Few studies have been conducted that directly examine the perception of discrimination among minorities. Studies, including those cited in this study regarding the progress of women and minorities in academe, demonstrate that women and minorities believe there are subtle biases.

Sulton, Jr. (1990) contends that women and minorities “initially deny the possibility of discrimination” (p. 9). He further argues that when women and minorities attend to problems that they perceive are discriminatory in nature, they tend to find these responses (p. 9) :

- (1) they are perceived as the problem;
- (2) that they are told they are imagining the problem and should try harder;
- (3) the problem is a failure to communicate meaningfully and;
- (4) they are promised help or support that never materializes or nothing is done to get at the root of the problem.

Sulton, Jr. (1990) argues that these responses contribute to the reasons women and minorities leave an institution prematurely. They tend to leave rather than fight the system based on the judgment of prevailing odds. They would rather not take the risks of being labeled a

trouble maker and too sensitive, which can be detrimental to their prospects of achieving tenure and other rewards.

He further asserts that there are those who stay and fight, but often go outside of their departments for support. They tend to perceive that administrators acknowledge that their concerns have merit, but receive little assistance and support, except orally. Also, women and minorities do not perceive that affirmative action officers have much clout, although they are supportive. It is further perceived that each case experienced by women and minorities is an isolated incident, however, collectively it shows that a problem exist.

Sulton, Jr. (1990) found that institutions of higher education that were successful at retaining women and minority faculty not only created programs to sensitize others to the problems of subtle biases underlying discrimination, but also created systematic assessments of gender and ethnic equity in performance areas. These assessments included tracking their career progress in cohort groups, reviewing applications of tenure standards for consistency, and analyzing tenure outcomes, teaching loads, and salaries.

He also found that supportive climates were characterized as “committed” and “supportive” (p. 10). The retention efforts of these institutions were based on their “belief that hiring and retaining of minorities is indispensable to achieving excellence in the production of scholarship, teaching and service” (p. 10). In addition, Sulton, Jr. (1990) contends that these institutions were successful because they provided (p. 10): (1) a generous array of support services; (2) application

resources for recruitment and retention, and; (3) clearly recognized the relationship between hiring and retention. In summary, Sulton, Jr. (1990) states that retention is an issue of sharing power. That it is about “real integration, not just assimilating” (p. 14).

Johnsrud & DesJarlais (1994) after reviewing the literature regarding the experiences of faculty members in the tenure review process developed a survey instrument designed to (p. 341): (1) identify the underlying dimensions of faculty perceptions of faculty about organizational, professional, and personal barriers to tenure and retention at one major research university, and (2) determine whether the process is experienced differently by sex and minority/majority status. Ethnic and racial minority faculty included in the study were African Americans, Chinese, Hispanic, Japanese, Korean and Pacific Islanders. African Americans were remotely represented in this study.

There were two African American faculty respondents. Johnsrud & DesJarlais (1994) contend that this was due to the location of the institution and the student population served. They did not identify where the institution was located. Their findings are significant however, to understanding the barriers to retention and tenure as perceived by minority faculty, despite the fact that only two African American faculty are included in the study.

Johnsrud & DesJarlais (1994) found that women perceived a more negative campus climate. They found that:

Structural discrimination (e.g., lack of support for gender- and ethnic- related research, lack of support for alternative research methodologies, and sick and maternity leave policies) and personal discrimination (e.g., sexual and racial harassment, sexual

and racial stereotyping and tokenism) are perceived by women faculty as barriers to their progress. (p. 350)

In addition, Johnsrud & DesJarlais (1994), found that women perceive that their teaching and advising loads are heavier than those of the majority male and that they receive less institutional and departmental support. They state that this is critical to the issue of retention and diversity, because “women act on these perceptions: women leave the institution in significantly disproportionate numbers”. (p. 348)

They found that minorities tend to feel more anxiety concerning the achievement of tenure and have concerns that their doctoral training for a faculty role is a barrier to their professional progress. They conclude that there is more than one possible explanation for the experiences of women and minorities in academe and therefore, more than one approach is critical to enabling them to succeed.

Logan (1990), conducted a study to determine the level of job satisfaction in the areas of work, opportunities for promotion, pay, supervision, coworkers, and the job in general among African American faculty at predominantly white (PWI) and predominantly black (PBI) four-year state assisted institutions of higher education in the south. A total of 129 African American faculty at PBIs and 116 African American faculty at PWIs in the south participated in the study. After administering the Job Descriptive Index survey, she concluded that African American faculty at predominantly white institutions were more satisfied with opportunities for promotion and supervision than African

American faculty at predominantly black institutions. However, perceptions regarding the opportunities for promotion was affected by tenure status. The results of a two-way Anova test revealed that differences existed by tenure status. That is, that tenured faculty at PBIs were more satisfied with promotion opportunities than non-tenured faculty at PBIs; and that non-tenured faculty at PWIs were more satisfied with promotion opportunities than non-tenured faculty at PBIs.

It is important to note that more tenured African American faculty at PBIs (64.3 %) participated in this study, than participants at PWIs (29.3%). This is understandable considering that most African American faculty are employed at predominantly black institutions than predominantly white institutions. In addition, Logan (1990) found that faculty with higher rank and salary at both institutions reported higher levels of satisfaction with their jobs than those with lower salaries.

Logan's study significantly contributes to the body of literature regarding job satisfaction, because no other casual-comparative study of African American faculty at PWIs and PBIs had been conducted. However, the Job Descriptive Index does not include a component that specifically examines satisfaction with teaching, research, and service. Among the recommendations for further research, Logan (1990) recommended further research be conducted to examine the perceptions of African American faculty regarding research, and specifically "the degree to which they value research in comparison to teaching and service" (p. 171). This is important because Wilson (1987) contends that

the primary reason minority faculty are not successful in faculty positions is related to scholarly productivity.

A study was conducted by Robinson, Singh, Ferguson, & Williams-Green (1992) on the perceptions of black faculty and administrators regarding tenure and promotion. This study emanated from examining the preliminary data of a survey prepared by the members of the Virginia Association of Black Faculty and Administrators (VABFA). The survey was designed to assess the perceptions of black faculty and administrators about retention and recruitment activities, affirmative action efforts, promotion and tenure, and city and community environments in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The purpose of the survey was to define and address the purpose of VABFA. The survey was mailed to 1054 African American faculty and administrators at institutions of higher education in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Data analysis were based on a return of 413 usable surveys. The data were analyzed using t-test and one-way Anova to determine significant differences in the means of respondents based on duration of employment/work and institutional type.

Robinson et. al (1992), found that respondents with less than six years of employment were less likely to agree that promotion and tenure requirements were clear, than those with six or more years of employment. Respondents at doctoral granting institutions were more likely to perceive that research is a major activity and component of the university professoriate for the purpose of promotion and tenure.

Professionals at other institutional types perceived that research was not a primary component for tenure and promotion.

The most significant difference in the findings of this study regarding promotion and tenure, suggest that conducting research and publishing research may be areas of concern for a substantial portion of African American faculty and administrators surveyed. The data show that while 75% of the respondents agreed with the statement “avenues to publish journal articles are adequate”, 44% of the respondents indicated that they experienced problems in publishing research that reflects black perspectives. While this study is important to understanding the perceptions of African American faculty, the results are combined with the perceptions of administrators. African American faculty and administrators and faculty may view research and publishing differently, but this conclusion cannot be drawn because of the combined data analysis.

Conclusion

Institutions of higher education continue to struggle with recruiting and retaining African American faculty, particularly at predominantly white institutions. A review of the literature reveals that African American faculty are sparsely represented on predominantly white campuses for complex reasons. Several plausible explanations include: a) the lack of a minority graduate pool, b) choice of careers outside of academe where salaries are more attractive, c) discriminatory hiring practices, and d) the ineffectiveness of Affirmative Action plans

and programs (Blackwell, 1983; Brown, 1988; Moore, Jr. 1988; Wilson & Melendez, 1985). While these factors explain part of the problems associated with the recruitment and retention of African American faculty, they do little to explain factors associated the achievement of tenure.

Some studies (Blackwell, 1983; Harvey & Scott-Jones, 1985; Sandler, 1986), related to the retention of African American faculty provide an explanation of the barriers that African American faculty face. Other studies primarily focus on retention factors related to job satisfaction (Logan, 1990), which include for example, satisfaction with pay and opportunities for promotion, affirmative action initiatives (Hitt, Keats & Purdum, 1983; Menges & Exum, 1983), performance related rewards and incentives, and job performance in general (Blackwell, 1983; Finkelstein, 1984).

A review of the literature also reveals that African American faculty rarely stay at predominantly white institutions (Brown, 1988; Carter & O'Brien, 1993; Sutherland, 1990). The literature however, fails to explain whether their departure is due to retention factors specifically related to the attainment of tenure or a denial of tenure. This researcher found no studies which support or negate whether African American faculty depart the institution because they are denied tenure. Some studies (Menges & Exum, 1983; Robinson, et. al., 1992; Wilson, 1987), do allude to the notion that African American faculty experience difficulty with research and scholarship, and perceive that attaining tenure is not possible.

This review of the literature reveals that the academic climate and institutional values may be related to the attainment of tenure for African American faculty. This perspective is grounded in the perceptions that influence the assessment of scholarship and other performance factors for African American faculty; and in the attitudes that pervade regarding the purpose of affirmative action and hiring practices, and issues related to retention. Those who hold this view argue that for African American faculty to succeed on predominantly white campuses, the academic culture and values must change.

On the other hand, because African American faculty are newcomers to the academy, others would argue that they must adapt to the prevailing norms in order to succeed; and that once they have been socialized, they would be able to compete, like their counterparts. While both views are plausible, the collective perceptions of the experiences of African American faculty on predominantly white campuses should be further explored to learn more about how they progress through the academy and to identify mechanisms to enhance their success.

Chapter III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to discover and gain an understanding of the perceptions of the tenure process that influence the achievement of tenure for African American faculty at two predominantly white institutions of higher education. This topic was examined from a phenomenological perspective by employing qualitative methodology. The focus of this approach is on understanding people's behaviors, based on to their realities and perceptions in relationship to tenure. The data were collected through conducting focus group interviews and analyzed through using a computer program, Ethnograph, the constant comparative method, proposed by Glasser and Strauss (1967), and the axial coding method proposed by Strauss and Corbin (1990).

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the methodology and procedures of this study. This chapter includes an overview of : (a) the research method; (b) the participants; (c) data collection procedures; and (d) coding and analysis of data.

Qualitative Research Design

A qualitative methodological approach was appropriate for this study because of the focus on the perceptions and experiences of the participants. People make sense of their own experiences and create their own realities. Therefore, this methodological approach was especially helpful because “what the participants say they believe, the

feelings they express and explanations they give are treated as significant realities” (Locke, Spirduso & Silverman, 1993; p. 99).

This qualitative methodological approach using focus group interviews allowed African American faculty to speak from their own experiences, language, and value and belief frameworks. This allowed the researcher to gather information about their perceptions of the tenure process, that cannot be observed directly.

Population and Sampling Frame

The purpose of sampling in qualitative research is to gain as much information as possible about a specific area of interest. The goal of this study was to discover and gain an understanding of perceptions and experiences, rather than making generalizations about a population. Therefore, a theoretical sampling approach was employed.

The thrust of theoretical sampling is in sampling events and incidents that reveal categories, their properties, and dimensions in order to develop and conceptually relate them (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). This is appropriate according to Strauss & Corbin (1990) because: “we want to know what people do in terms of action/interaction; the range of conditions that give rise to that action/interaction and its variations; how conditions change or stay the same over time with what impact; also the consequences of either actual or failed action/interaction or of strategies never acted on” (p. 177).

African American faculty who hold full-time instructional positions at Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University and Old

Dominion University were identified and invited to participate in this study. African American faculty from these two institutions were invited to participate in this study because of the similarities and differences in the characteristics of these institutions and their surrounding communities. VPI and ODU are both predominantly white institutions in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

VPI is classified as a Research University I by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. In addition to offering a full range of baccalaureate programs and graduate education through the doctorate, high priority is given to research. VPI is located in a rural area, central to the surrounding community(s). Additionally, there is no dominant black community.

Old Dominion University is located in an urban location, with a dominant black community outside of the institutional community. ODU is classified as a Doctoral University I by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. ODU offers a full range of baccalaureate programs and graduate education through the doctorate.

Participants

Focus group interviews are often conducted with participants that are selected from one limited source. One assumption about focus group interviews is that data are best gathered from participants who are strangers. Stewart and Shamdasani (1990) report that Fern (1982) tested the acquaintanceship assumption and concluded that ideas generated from focus groups are just as effective as “the aggregation of the

independent responses of individuals who are unknown to one another and who do not meet as a group” (p. 34). The quality and quantity of information, has a modest influence on the independent responses of individuals in focus groups where the participants were not strangers.

The Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action at ODU was contacted to obtain a list of African American instructional faculty. A letter was sent to all African American instructional faculty by the Associate Director of the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action advising them of this research project and to obtain permission to include their names on a list of potential participants. A list of African American instructional faculty was obtained from the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action at VPI.

The participants were contacted by telephone to explain the purpose of this study and screened for interest in participating. Participants were asked questions to determine their willingness to share their experiences and perceptions in a group setting (see Appendixes A and B for screening survey). Because of the sensitivity and nature of the topic, participants were advised that they would be in groups with acquaintances. This was important because of the potential sensitivity of the topic and confidentiality.

Although, it is not unusual to offer incentives to participants in the form of a monetary allowance or a gift certificate, incentives were not offered to participants in this study.

Old Dominion University Participants

Twenty-four of the 28 African American instructional faculty identified at ODU in Spring 1995 agreed to have their names placed on the list. There were sixteen faculty in tenure-track positions and eight with tenure. Although, 24 African American faculty agreed to be placed on the list of potential participants, four tenured faculty and five faculty in tenure-track positions participated in the focus group interviews.

Two faculty declined the invitation to participate because of time constraints with project deadlines and research activities. The researcher was unable to reach seven faculty who were on the list provided. These faculty did not respond to telephone calls or written correspondence. Two faculty who were contacted declined to participate citing that they were not ready to discuss tenure issues at this time in their careers. Two other faculty contacted declined to participate because they felt that the results would not affect or influence the tenure process at their institution. Two other faculty agreed to participate but did not show up for the focus group interview.

Virginia Tech Participants

After obtaining a list of African American faculty from the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action, the researcher contacted the faculty by phone to invite each to participate in this study. Twenty four African American faculty were identified to participate in this study. Twelve (12) were in tenure track positions and twelve (12) were tenured. Of the 12 African tenure track faculty identified, eight (8) faculty

participated. Two tenure track faculty agreed to participated in the pilot study. One tenure track faculty member declined to participate and one agreed to participate, but was unable to due to a family emergency.

Of the twelve (12) tenured African American faculty identified five (5) participated in this study. Two agreed to participate in the pilot study, three were not available (out of town when scheduled), one tenured members did not respond to correspondence, and one no-show.

Each participant was sent a confirmation letter with details regarding the date, time, place, and format for the focus group interview (see Appendix C for letter). In addition participants were sent a Participant's Informed Consent form for their review (see Appendix D). Approval for participants to be studied and the Participant Informed Consent form was approved by the Institutional Review Board for projects involving human subjects (see Appendix E).

Setting

Old Dominion University

The focus group interviews for the tenured and tenure -track faculty were held in the Student Union at Old Dominion University in June 1995. This site was chosen for accessibility and availability. The room selected was a small conference room. A buffet style continental breakfast was available upon arrival for participants to allow interaction before proceeding with the interview.

Virginia Tech

The focus group interview for tenured faculty was held at the Donaldson Brown Conference Center at Virginia Tech in September 1995 in a small conference style room. The tenure-track faculty group interview was held in the Black Cultural Center at Virginia Tech in October 1995. These sites were chosen for accessibility and availability. Light refreshments were available at both interview sessions, which allowed for interaction among participants prior to the interview.

DATA COLLECTION

Focus Group Interviews

Focus group interviews were the strategy employed for collecting data. Focus group interviews as a method of data collection are well suited for qualitative research when factors such as language and culture are involved between professionals and their target audience (Morgan & Krueger, 1993). According to Morgan and Krueger (1993), the interaction that occurs in focus groups provides a clear view of how participants think and communicate.

This study involved conducting two focus group interviews at VPI and at ODU. At each institution one focus group interview was conducted with African American faculty in a tenure-track position and another was conducted with faculty who have tenure at their respective institutions. The number of focus groups needed is determined by the purpose of the study. Because the intent of a focus group is not to make inferences, but to gain insight about how people perceive a situation, a

focus group methodological design must be flexible. Two groups with similar backgrounds and exposure to similar experiences can provide sufficient information (Krueger, 1988). Additional groups may provide limited new information, beyond what may already be revealed.

The interviewer or moderator is the primary instrument in focus group interviews. The limitations of using focus group interviews deal with group interaction and interviewer bias. Focus groups conducted within organizations can be productive. The key is to focus attention on providing a nonthreatening and permissive environment (Krueger, 1988).

A focus group interview is a specific interview technique to collect qualitative data. The interview is conducted with a group of people, led by a moderator or interviewer for the purpose of participating in a focused discussion to collect data on a particular phenomenon (Morgan, 1988; Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990). The discussion can last one to two hours. The discussion groups for this study lasted about two hours.

The number of participants can range from four to twelve (Kreuger, 1988; Morgan, 1988; Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990). A group of six or seven are considered a moderately sized group (Morgan, 1988). Several factors are considered in determining group size, which include: availability of participants, manageability of the group, time, space, resources, and the type and depth of data needed. For the purpose of this study, the number of participants involved in each focus group interview was determined by willingness to participate, interest in research topic, and availability.

Part II of the data collection involved faculty completing a short questionnaire, a Participant Information Form (See Appendix F). This instrument allowed the researcher to solicit general information to gain an understanding of the participants expectations and understanding of the value assigned to teaching, research, and service for the purpose of achieving tenure at their respective institution. Participants also had the opportunity to expand on and identify issues they deemed important in the tenure process, that may or may not have been discussed during the focus group session.

Pilot Testing

Pretesting of an interview question guide is an appropriate step in conducting focus group interviews. The purpose of pretesting is to check for appropriate wording of questions, determine whether questions elicit discussion, , and to check for logical flow and sequence.

This step can be handled in several ways: by hosting a mock focus group interview, asking several individuals who are representative of the participants to answer developed questions (Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990), and to have experts review the focus group questions prior to hosting the group interviews (Krueger, 1988). A mock focus group interview was held at VPI, Summer 1995 with individuals who are representative of the participants (Krueger, 1988). Four Virginia Tech faculty who would not be available for the focus group interview for this study participated. Two of the four were tenured and two were in tenure track position. One instructor and one administrator, who teach one

class per academic term also participated in the pilot focus group interview. Additionally, for the purpose of this study, a focus group expert was consulted about protocol before the pilot study was conducted.

The participants in the pilot study were asked several open-ended questions related to their experiences and perceptions concerning the achievement of tenure. Several themes emerged from this interview that relate to factors that influence the achievement of tenure for African American faculty. This group identified two factors necessary for achievement of tenure, they were: (a) importance of a mentor, and (b) the need to develop alternative avenues of power to effect change.

They also identified several factors that impede the achievement of tenure. They were: (a) lack of university connection to the larger community and the black community, (b) lack of opportunity to cultivate relationships, (c) lack of power to affect change, (d) lack of recognition and rewards for community service and service to students, (e) lack of understanding diversity by the larger university community (i.e. faculty and administrators), (f) bottom line publish or perish attitude, (g) African Americans are subjected to higher standards and scrutiny than others in the university community, and (h) teaching is undervalued in the tenure process.

Protocol

The focus group interviews were conducted by the researcher and a co-moderator. Focus group structures utilizing complementary

moderators serve to mediate group interaction and interviewer bias. Utilizing this approach allows for one person with focus group experience and the other person with knowledge of the research topic to compliment each other throughout the focus group interview process (Krueger, 1988).

Participants and their responses must be accurately recorded and represented for credibility. A tape recorder was used with permission from the participants to accurately record group discussions. Each participant reviewed and signed a consent form prior to the group interview (see Appendix D). The co-moderator used a flip chart or a chalk board to record and summarize discussions.

Prior to actual data collection, the researcher provided the participants with an overview of the study, and discussed general guidelines and procedures for data collection. Although, the results of the pilot study focus group protocol yielded several themes that relate to factors that influence the achievement of tenure for African American faculty, one aspect of the protocol procedure was changed for the purpose of this study. Because of the exploratory nature of this study, the researcher decided not to use an interview question guide, but provided the participants an opportunity to list factors that they perceived influences the achievement of tenure for African American faculty.

Part I of the data collection involved participants listing factors that would describe their perceptions of and experiences with the tenure process in order to provide stimulus for generating discussion.

Participants were then asked to voluntarily discuss any of the words generated by the group. Narrowly focused questions were utilized as probes or prompts for clarification, to redirect the participants, and to generate discussion on words not addressed.

The first focus group also served as a pilot test procedure (Krueger, 1988). After the first focus group interview, this researcher reflected on the capacity to elicit discussion. Utilizing the protocol to generate a list of words from the participants about their perceptions of the tenure process proved very effective. There were no problems generating a list or discussion. Comments were also sought from participants at the end of the first focus group interview. A minor change was then made to the follow-up questionnaire given to all participants at the end of each focus group interview. Another category for assigning value to teaching, research, and service for the purpose of achieving tenure was added to the questionnaire (see Appendix F).

To improve credibility and guard against researcher bias, the researcher met with the co-moderator to discuss the findings and check the accuracy of the researcher's perceptions (Krueger, 1988; Morgan, 1988; Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990). This process is called debriefing. The purpose of debriefing was to compare notes, share observations, and served to objectively differentiate between the perceptions expressed by the participants and the researcher.

Data Analysis

While data analysis in qualitative research is an evolving activity, the first step in data analysis is transcribing interview tapes. The tapes were transcribed by the researcher and an outside party. The transcripts then served as the basis for further analysis. Data analysis were approached using the constant comparative method, a computer program designed for the analysis of text based data, called The Ethnograph v4.0 (1995), and the axial coding method proposed by Strauss & Corbin (1990). Data were first coded utilizing The Ethnograph program. This involved reading and rereading the transcripts line by line and marking passages in margins directly on the computer screen next to the raw data for the purpose of naming and categorizing discoveries, and searching for patterns and relationships in the data.

The next step involved organizing data by codes to generate categories and themes. This process is called sorting and sifting, which allows comparison and contrast of data to be made. A search for patterns within and between groups were then made, in order to draw meaningful conclusions. After identifying themes by similarities and overlaps, within and between data, themes were collapsed for the purpose of broadening and inclusiveness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Contradictions in information were examined to ensure unbiased conclusions.

The final analysis of data involved using the axial coding method. This approach allowed the research to examine conditions that give rise to perceptions regarding the phenomenon of interest, which is

achievement of tenure. Final analysis of data involved examining the context in which interactions with the perceived structural conditions of the tenure process and criteria, examining the strategies by which they are handled and managed, and examining the consequences of those interactions and strategies.

An important part of the analysis included examining differences and similarities between groups. A break characteristic differentiates groups from each other. Break characteristics incorporated in the design of this study enabled the researcher to make comparisons among groups, and to explore similarities that are likely to be “common to a shared underlying culture within the broader population” (Knodel, 1993; p. 49). The break characteristics in this design included: tenure vs. tenure-track status and rural vs. urban institutional setting. This was useful because it allowed the researcher to distinguish between group differences and differences that may be due to the circumstances under which the groups took place.

More importantly, according to Knodel (1993) “ when similar opinions are expressed by different subsets, despite the many differences that characterize the conduction of any two sessions, it is likely that views or experiences are being tapped that are common to a shared underlying culture within the broader population” (p. 49). The findings important to this study are derived from factors that were commonly shared by both the tenured and tenure track groups at both institutions.

The methodology was appropriate for this study because of the focus on the perceptions and experiences of the participants. The focus group approach was especially helpful, because participants were allowed to speak from their own experiences, language, and value and belief frameworks.

The focus of this study was to discover and explain the perceived factors that influence the achievement of tenure for African American faculty at two predominantly white institutions. The following research questions were answered by what was discovered in the interview process:

1. What factors do African American faculty perceive influence the achievement of tenure at Virginia Tech and Old Dominion Universities?
2. What factors influence African American faculty decisions to stay at Virginia Tech and Old Dominion Universities to be considered for tenure?
3. How do African American faculty at Virginia Tech and ODU define a black community?
4. How does the presence of a black community within and /or outside of the universities influence African American faculty decisions to stay at Virginia Tech and Old Dominion Universities?

Trustworthiness of Study

Trustworthiness deals with the extent to which researcher can persuade their audience that the findings of a study are worthy of

attention (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Trustworthiness can be established through credibility.

Credibility in qualitative research can be assessed by comparing statements within and between groups. Consensus about the perceptions between and within groups, can indicate credibility of data (Morgan, 1993). For this study to be credible, the participants responses must be accurately reported and represented in the data. For this study each focus group interview was audio taped and a co-moderator utilized a flip chart or chalk board to record and summarize the discussions. The researcher and the co-moderator also engaged in debriefing sessions.

The data collected for this study through focus group interviews are considered to have face validity (Krueger, 1988). Focus groups are valid to the extent that the topic of inquiry is suitable for this methodology and when the procedures of the focus group interviews are conducted as established in the research design. Qualitative methodology was appropriate because of the exploratory nature of this study and topic of interest.

Chapter IV

RESULTS OF STUDY

This chapter presents an overview of data collection, data analysis, and summary of findings. Presentation of data will be in Chapter V. Some participants in this study are the only African American or are one of two in their department or college. Therefore, descriptive data for the participants is not provided to protect their identity and confidentiality. Throughout this chapter, the terms “faculty” and “participants” will be used interchangeably.

General group observations

Nine African American faculty from ODU participated in this study. Four were tenured faculty and five were in tenure track positions. Separate focus group interviews were held for tenured and tenure track faculty. Data collection began with asking the faculty to identify factors, that can be listed on a flip chart or black board, that influence the achievement of tenure for African American faculty. For the purpose of this study faculty in tenure track positions will be referred to as tenure track group and those who are tenured will be referred to as tenured group.

Tenured Groups

ODU

Four tenured African American faculty from ODU participated in this study. The four participants in this group were responsive to the task of listing factors they believe influence the achievement of tenure

for African American faculty. Participants remained focused and willingly discussed the factors they identified. Each participant had unique experiences with the tenure process.

Nonverbal communications and body language are important observations when collecting qualitative data. These were important factors in this study. Body language, such as shifting in chairs, leaning forward on the table, and verbal responses from members may have influenced group dynamics. It is important to note that on several occasions it was observed that other members of the group felt that the responses of one faculty member were unique to their experience in a particular college. Participants expressed that this college provided a more positive environment and experience for faculty members. As a result, the faculty member's body language appeared guarded and it appeared that the responses of this faculty member were also guarded at times. The interaction between the group members were collegial, respectful, and positive. Overall, the data collection was effective.

Data collection began with the researcher asking the faculty to identify factors that can be listed on a flip chart or black board, that they believe influence the achievement of tenure for African American faculty. The 12 factors they identified were: 1) politicking, 2) collegial support, 3) teaching, 4) value to the department, 5) student's evaluative comments, 6) scholarship, 7) ethnicity, 8) service, 9) early teaching performance, 10) personality, 11) grantsmanship, and 12) publicity.

VPI

Five African American tenured faculty from VPI participated in this study. Participants were not entirely responsive to the task of listing factors they believed influences the achievement of tenure for African American faculty. This group appeared more anxious to discuss issues rather than generating a list of factors. Various themes arose from the group discussion, although not in list form. The participants listed four factors: 1) preparing the document was very tedious, 2) double standards, 3) discomfort, and 4) fear.

Once the focus group discussion began, the participants willingly shared their experiences. Nonverbals were expressed mostly in the form of head nods, expressing agreement with statements made by the participants. The group dynamics had a positive influence on members of this group. Whereas, some faculty members who did not identify a word to list as a factor that influenced the achievement of tenure for African American faculty at the beginning of the data collection process, often entered the discussion stating, "Oh! while you were saying that I thought of".

The participants stated at the end of the session that they really enjoyed discussing the issues because this opportunity did not come often. Many of the participants in this group and in the other groups stayed around and conversed with one another after the focus group discussion ended. Overall, data collection was effective.

Tenure-Track Groups

ODU

The five participants in this group were very responsive to the task of listing factors they believed influenced tenure for African American faculty. Participants willingly discussed the factors they listed, although there was a tendency among some members to stray from the subject. On occasion it was necessary to redirect the discussion by asking, “so how does this relate to the achievement of tenure for African American faculty?”. A few individuals dominated the discussion on occasion. However, the group dynamics did not appear to have been negatively influenced by those who dominated the discussion at times. To handle this problem, the researcher invited someone who hadn’t spoken if they would like to add something to the discussion topic. Additionally, other members of the group politely intervened and added to the discussion without being prompted.

The group dynamics were challenging due to varying perspectives about the experiences of African American faculty. The experiences of one participant appeared to be more positive than the others and this participant tended to respond to issues during the discuss from the perspective of what he knew about the experiences of other African American faculty. Overall, the participants in this group were very open and willingly participated in the group discussion. The data collection was effective. This group listed the following factors they believe influence the achievement of tenure for African American faculty: 1) political climate, 2) publishing, 3) research, 4) departmental support,

5) personality, 6) fit, 7) service, 8) teaching, 9) student evaluations, 10) grant money, 11) respect by colleagues, and 12) if you are known outside the department.

VPI

There were eight African American tenure track faculty who participated in this focus group discussion. After the researcher provided an overview of the study, and discussed general guidelines and procedures for data collection, some participants were still concerned about how the data would be used in the dissertation and beyond for further research or publications. Ultimately, those expressing concern wanted to be assured complete anonymity. The researcher assured them that all measures would be taken to ensure their anonymity and confidentiality.

The researcher further explained that the transcripts for this group discussion would be transcribed only by the researcher and no one would be privy to the transcript except for the co-moderator, who was present, for the purpose of debriefing. This appeared to satisfy all participants, except one. One participant was reserved in his comments until about half way through the interview.

The participants were very receptive to producing a list of factors that they believe influenced the achievement of tenure for African American faculty. The group dynamics were cordial, collegial, and respectful. The participants provided very open responses. These dynamics were an asset. Once others responded candidly and openly,

the one faculty member who had been reserved began to openly discuss topics and added to the discussion.

Nonverbal body language was expressed mostly in the form of head nodding, which expressed agreement with statements. The discussion group was effective. Again participants expressed an appreciation for participating, stating that they enjoyed the opportunity to hear about the experiences of others and discussing the issues in this format. They also indicated that this opportunity did not present itself often.

This group identified 20 factors they believe influence tenure for African American faculty. They were: 1) ambiguity, 2) colorblind, 3) assimilationist, 4) alignment, 5) subjective, 6) inequitable, 7) elusive, 8) affirmative racism, 9) inconsistent, 10) unstructured, 11) outdated, 12) stressful, 13) challenging, 14) self-reflective, 15) reaffirming, 16) political, 17) mentorship, 18) lack of mentors, 19) superficial, and 20) short-lived.

Discovering Themes

Data collection and analysis occurred throughout the research project. Issues identified from the faculty responses in the discussions, were derived by discussion with the co-moderator after each discussion, the review of the literature, and from the researcher's judgment. To check for reliability of coding, the co-moderator read portions of the data transcripts and coded them. A comparison of the codings of the moderator with the codings of the researcher, were then made. Only one difference appeared in the coding. The data this researcher coded as

reflecting trust, the co-moderator coded this data as reflecting dishonesty and ethics.

Data were coded using Ethnograph, the constant comparative analysis, and axial coding method. Final coding of data yielded 20 themes. They were: (1) institutional culture, (2) fit, (3) playing the game, (4) value to the department, (5) affirmative action issues, (6) double standards, (7) higher expectations and scrutiny, (8) racism and prejudicial attitudes and perceptions, (9) research, grants, and scholarship, (10) teaching, (11) students and student evaluations, (12) classroom climate, (13) collaborative opportunities, (14) mentoring, (15) importance of the black community and community at large, (16) service, (17) trust and dishonesty, (18) diversity, (19) politics, (20) and tenure in general.

Since themes should be broad and inclusive, the researcher collapsed themes by identifying similarities, how they overlapped and their connectedness. This was a continual task that resulted in three major themes that characterized the experiences and perceptions of the participants which they perceive influence the achievement of tenure. These themes are related to the institutional environment and structure of the tenure process. The three themes are: (a) issues related to traditional criteria for tenure: teaching, service, and research, (b) the value of tenure, and (c) institutional culture, that is, how they experience the academic environment. The following are common threads underpinning all issues identified: institutional fit, double

standards, racism, prejudicial attitudes and perceptions, trust and dishonesty.

An important part of analysis included the ability to make intergroup comparisons. Break characteristics were used in the design of this study to enable intergroup comparisons. The break characteristics incorporated in the design of this study were: tenure v. tenure-track faculty and urban vs. rural institutional setting. This was useful because it allowed the researcher to distinguish between group differences and differences that may be due to the circumstances under which the groups took place.

More importantly according to Knodel (1993), “ when similar opinions are expressed by different subsets, despite the many differences that characterize the conduction of any two sessions, it is likely that views or experiences are being tapped that are common to a shared underlying culture within the broader population” (p. 49). The findings important to this study are derived from factors that were commonly shared by both the tenured and tenure track groups at both institutions.

This is especially important to the findings in this study because the faculty who have already attained tenure, find that the factors identified still affect them in different and in similar ways that they affect untenured faculty. For example, the tenured and tenure-track faculty explained that African American faculty are constantly having to “prove that they deserve tenure” based upon how the dominant culture determines their intellectual ability. The tenured group participants

further explained that they are still having to “prove themselves,” but not for the purpose of attaining tenure. However, based on their experience going through the tenure process, the tenured group participants believe that the factors identified may have a greater impact on African American faculty while attempting to achieve tenure status. These findings add credence to the contention that the factors identified may be distinctive to the African American faculty experience at ODU and VPI.

Summary of Findings

The purpose of this study was to discover and gain an understanding of the perceived factors that influence the achievement of tenure for African American faculty at two predominantly white institutions. These factors can be explained through an understanding of the issues African American faculty identified that they perceive have an impact on their progression towards achieving tenure. Achieving tenure is a matter of negotiating the tenets of the structure of the tenure system to overcome the obstacles inherent in the institutional culture, that is, “playing the game”.

The findings indicate that the progression towards tenure for the African American faculty in this study is related to how they experience the institutional environment and to structural factors related to the tenure process. Three major themes characterize their interaction with the institutional environment and the structural factors of the tenure process that influence their progression. They are: (a) issues related to

the traditional criteria for tenure, (i. e. teaching, research, and service), (b) the value of tenure, and (c) the institutional culture, that is, how they experience the academic environment. The following are common threads underpinning all issues and factors identified: (a) institutional fit, (b) double standards, (c) racism, (d) prejudicial attitudes and perceptions, and (e) trust and dishonesty. The participants viewed the issues identified as impediments or obstacles to the progress of achieving tenure.

The participants do not value tenure the same as the dominant culture or institution. They indicated that the dominant culture created the tenure system and process around their culture and values, which does not reflect the values and culture of African Americans. The academic profession itself is important to African American faculty in this study. The participants primarily value teaching, but enjoy scholarly inquiry and service.

For the participants, achieving tenure is a professional goal only because it is required and because the attainment of tenure is perceived to be the measure which determines if one is “successful” in the academic profession in higher education. The challenge to attain tenure, despite the obstacles are viewed by the participants in this study as an intrinsic motivation to stay and “play the game”. The following discussion vividly illustrates how African American faculty in this study view the tenure process:

And I felt that if I am to become a member of the fraternity, then I have to imitate these folks to a certain extent, which we do by the way, whether we like it or not; whether we think we are doing it or not, we are, and I thought I was selling just a little bit of my soul.

I still feel that way, somewhat. But when I embarked on this road to professional success, you have to play by the rules.... I didn't necessarily have to like them or be comfortable with them, I knew I had to do some of them, but I didn't feel comfortable with it. And I still don't!

I can empathize with your feelings, I have the same feelings in that regard. I wonder if this is a personality problem or if it's an Afro-American thing versus them to a point?

Good question! You know, I don't know. In terms of our personality, aren't we a product of our ethnicity? Are we a product of the historical impact that living in a place like this has had on us, even in a subliminal way? I don't know.

A summary of the findings in response to the primary question of inquiry, "What factors influence the achievement of tenure for African American faculty at VPI and ODU?" are presented in the following chapter. A summary of the results of the secondary questions of inquiry are also presented.

Chapter V

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

This chapter presents an overview of the study and presentation of data. A summary of the findings to the primary question of inquiry, “What factors influence the achievement of tenure for African American faculty at VPI and ODU?” are presented. A summary of the results of the secondary questions of inquiry are also presented. Throughout this chapter, the terms “faculty” and “participants” are used interchangeably.

Overview of Study

The purpose of this study was to discover and gain an understanding of the perceived factors that influence the achievement of tenure for African American faculty at two predominantly white institutions. These factors can be explained through an understanding of the issues African American faculty identified that they perceive have an impact on their progression towards achieving tenure. Achieving tenure is a matter of negotiating the tenets of the structure of the tenure system to overcome the obstacles inherent in the institutional culture, that is “playing the game”.

The findings of this study indicate that the progression towards tenure for the African American faculty in this study is related to how they experience the institutional environment and to structural factors related to the tenure process. Three major themes characterizes their experience with the institutional environment and the structural factors

of the tenure process that influence their progression. They are: (a) issues related to the traditional criteria for tenure, (i. e. teaching, research, and service), (b) the value of tenure, and (c) the institutional culture, that is, their experience with the academic environment. The following are common threads underpinning all issues and factors identified: (a) institutional fit, (b) double standards, (c) racism, (d) prejudicial attitudes and perceptions, and (e) trust and dishonesty.

Presentation of Findings

The findings of this study are exemplified best through quotes that describe the experiences, beliefs, and perceptions of African American faculty. Therefore, quotes are included.

Traditional Criteria for Tenure

Teaching

The most salient issue regarding teaching that emerged, concerned how teaching is assessed through student evaluations and the impact they have on determining teaching ability for the purpose of meeting tenure requirements. Factors that are believed to influence teaching evaluations are vividly illuminated in the words of one participant,

What that is, is that when you come into the classroom, the two things that come out and come in, one is the “start proving”, there’s a challenge, teach me something N_____, and I won’t complete it [referring to the blank] ; and there is an attitude about “why are you here”, that is, your the affirmative action person and you don’t know anything; then if you in fact counter that by saying, “look I will teach you something”, then you get low evaluations because when you try to teach someone something, if they are not ready to learn, then they will act negatively to you

pushing them. And if they go into another class with a white faculty member, there is not that pressure to teach me something with an attitude about, “you have to spoon feed it to me, I am not going to learn it, or be willing to learn it from you”.

Participants agreed that a teaching record is established primarily through teaching evaluations which are conducted by students. Concern was expressed that the quantitative measure they produce and the qualitative comments that are included can be a biased indication of the quality of the instruction they provide. Several factors were identified that influence teaching evaluations. They were popularity, high expectations, evaluative comments and student perceptions or misconceptions concerning affirmative action, prejudicial and racist attitudes, course materials, and classroom climate, that is, interactions with students in the classroom. Consider the following quotes:

I found out later that he [department head] didn't get tenure based on his exhibition record, because he virtually had no exhibition record. That is what is meant by double standard. He got tenure because everybody thought he as a nice guy and of course he was a good teacher.

I think how your students like you personally will be a reflection on how they evaluate you in the course you teach. Anybody who says no, I think are missing the point. If your students like you I think they will be more prone to give you positive evaluations, even though you might be a mediocre teacher. I don't know how to assess teaching in that regard.

... I think there are assumptions that are made about African Americans if they come into a situation, especially if they don't come with a big name.

I get comments every so often about affirmative action and I know they're somewhat directed at me.

Participants believe that if you are well liked and a popular teacher then you are more likely to receive higher ratings, regardless of how much learning actually takes place. Popularity was viewed as problematic for African American faculty for two reasons. One, because some students have stereotypical perceptions of African Americans, they simply do not like them just because they are African American. The following quotes suggest that regardless of how much learning takes place students do not like the “idea” that an African American is teaching them,

... when I first came here I was an unknown quantity, I was the first black in my department, some of the students really didn't like me. They resented me teaching. I know that that's true, and I could see that in their evaluations because they would actually lie and misrepresent.

I've actually come across students that have never had an African American teach them anything. And their whole mind-set is “how can you teach me anything?” and will challenge me all the way through the course. And they have a major psychological problem with you instructing them and determining their grade.

Second, the participants believe that students feel that an African American is not knowledgeable or capable of teaching them. One of the concerns that continually emerged throughout discussions, was that students tend to believe that the only reason African American faculty are teaching at predominantly white institutions is because of affirmative action programs or policies, not because they are “qualified” or “knowledgeable”. One participant indicated that he actually received a letter from a student he had failed and the student stated he

was writing to let him know that the only reason he was teaching at the institution is because of affirmative action. Another participant who teaches older students in his evening class adds,

... I recall returning a paper to a more senior majority member and he wanted to challenge the grade at every turn. So I sat down with the student and just pointed out to him where he was wrong, in his paper.... But until I was able to sit down with that student and say, show why, and demonstrate that yes, I do know my stuff, they don't believe it....

The participants believe that this has emerged from the perceptions and misconceptions some students have regarding African Americans and affirmative action programs. According to the participants, the perception from most students is that standards of knowledge or ability were lowered for African Americans, so that predominantly white institutions of higher education can meet affirmative action requirements.

The assessment of teaching ability through student evaluations is of particular importance for African American faculty who teach at predominantly white institutions. The majority of the students they teach are white. Some participants indicated that often 95% of their students are white. They believe that because the majority of these students have never had an African American teach them, these students enter the classroom with preconceived expectations and stereotypical perceptions, which according to the participants in this study influences their evaluations.

Concern was expressed by all participants that explaining the impact racism and prejudicial attitudes have on teachings evaluations

for African Americans is problematic. They explained that it is difficult to explain that racism is a factor when many of the department heads, faculty, and others are in denial that racism exists. The passion of their concern are highlighted in the following,

... for many of the administrators, to have a discussion with someone regarding racism, especially when it's on the part of students, is to admit that, it is rampant in the environment. And many of them simply refuse to do that. So how can you have a discussion regarding a problem when the other person is in a state of denial regarding that problem, because of course they realize that some of these attitudes on the part of students are reflected in themselves as well. I mean, not in a crude way, perhaps subtly, perhaps with good intention. But they're certainly there. This trying to talk about something that you can't talk about is difficult.

Another participant states in defining the term "colorblind",

Colorblind, there is an assumption that we do not have unique circumstances. That what we do and how we do it, is not presented with any unique challenges. For example, if I walk into my department head's office to discuss issues that I am dealing with in the classroom, that may be reflected in teaching evaluations, the need to couch race as a possible explanation is not acceptable. So, there is this assumption of colorblindness in the process that certainly lends itself to higher failure rates. The elusiveness of it, we can go on and on with that assumption alone.

Another adds,

... since [the institution] was told that they weren't in compliance, then the people here automatically assumed that any people of color that they would hire would be Afro-American, with the assumption that they are not up to our level.

The extent to which teaching is assessed through student evaluations and the lack of recognition that prejudicial and racist

attitudes can impact evaluations, the participants feel, can adversely impact African American faculty. One faculty recalled,

... I clearly remember the dean citing things from my student evaluations to support anything he wanted to say, be it a good thing or a bad thing.

The assessment of teaching through student evaluations is a problem for African American faculty, particularly, if promotion and tenure committees utilize student evaluations as the primary criteria for assessing teaching ability. It was noted by the participants in this study that members of promotion and tenure committees do not acknowledge the fact that the classroom climate could be very different for African American faculty, because race is not an issue for a majority white administration and faculty.

Participants also expressed concern that members of tenure and promotion committees rarely, if at all, visit their classroom and do not really know what they do in the classroom. One participant mentioned that this was precisely his problem. He indicated that he continuously received low student evaluations. He then asked his department head to attend his classroom to observe his teaching style. After observing his class, the department head agreed, that his student evaluations were not reflective of his teaching ability or style.

Two participants indicated that having a chair or dean that was aware of the challenges African Americans face in the classroom because of race is essential through the tenure review period. They indicated that the impact of race related issues on evaluations were discussed with

their chair and/or dean, who they felt were very receptive to their concerns regarding the influence of race in the classroom. They felt that this made a difference in the evaluation of their teaching ability when their tenure portfolio went before the departmental tenure and promotion review committee.

Addressing the classroom climate, one participant offered the following,

I've certainly been challenged! ... I think of one young man who I think challenged me the entire semester and I think I control my temper very well and I'm not one to get upset, but this was a student who took me to the brink! And unfortunately it became too obvious for the class. When that student was not there, the class was wonderful. We all laughed, we learned, everyone did what they needed to do. He could walk in fifteen minutes late, which he often did, and you'd see the whole tone of the class take a nose dive.

Interactions with students in the classroom present a challenge for African American faculty because they have to deal with racist and prejudicial attitudes some white students bring to the classroom. The added stress of having to “defend their presence” and “prove they are knowledgeable” emerged in discussions as an added burden.

In addition, participants feel that black students present another challenge. Whereas, a majority of white students have never been taught by an African American, black students have difficulty adjusting to a predominantly white environment. Participants expressed that they are not only teaching course content, but are also compelled to teach African American students how to survive at a predominantly white institution. As of result, they are sought out more often to assist,

mentor, and be a listening ear for black students who are attempting to adjust and deal with a predominantly white environment.

In addition, the participants believe that the few African American students that take classes under an African American faculty member, do so to get a break. That is, they believe that African American students enter their classes with the expectation that they will not evaluate their work, critically, because they will be sensitive to their struggle in a predominantly white environment. One participant described this experience as “engaging in affirmative racism”. Some faculty believe that African American students choose not to take their classes, because they will not “engage in affirmative racism”. This was quite disturbing to most faculty, one participant stated,

When I get my students of color and try to assist them in their learning above and beyond the call of duty, and they violate that trust in one form or another.... I am here as opposed to a historically black college, because if I weren't here they would never have access to someone like me. So I am here to provide that opportunity.... When they consciously or strategically choose to not take my class, because I will not engage in affirmative racism, lower my standards, because I demand excellence, that bothers me. ...So I need to get a sense of this, it's a unique experience number one, and number two, how to cope with it.

Another challenge that emerged concerning the classroom climate deals with course materials. The following quote is an example of how choice in materials which concern African Americans, become a point of contention with some non-black and white students:

... I was doing what students perceive as a traditional, American literature course, whatever that means. And I had a certain number of black authors in this “traditional American lit course”,

and comments showed up [on evaluations] like, “Why are we having to read these black authors in an American lit course?”

The participant in this study responded to the group saying,

“They are American too!”

The quote above indicates that one student did not understand how African Americans “fit” within the fabric of American literature. Other participants contend that racial comments show up on evaluations even when no race related materials are presented in the classroom, for example, in an engineering or math course.

In conclusion, the participants feel that teaching is not valued nor rewarded in the tenure process. However, they believe that teaching evaluations have the potential to affect the review for tenure, if they are used as a primary criteria for assessment of teaching. This is important for African American faculty and can certainly be problematic in relationship to achieving tenure.

Service

Service issues that emerged concerned how service is defined by the institution. The participants expressed concern that traditional measures which define service criteria for the purpose of attaining tenure do not allow connections to the black community or community at large. Therefore, they limit the types of service they provide and connections that they make with the black community and larger community. The following quotes illustrates that the defined service requirements are confining,

In order to increase the number of blacks, diversity on campus, maybe I should be going out into the community, to schools and and try to show them [black students] that there is at least one of us here on campus and maybe that may have them learn more [about] coming here. Again that takes a lot of time and you don't get any reward for that kind of activity, so I have to put it on the back burner until the time comes.

Well the way service is interpreted in my college, does not tie itself to the community at large, that includes the black component of the community at large. That is what is meant by service. Service is defined as committee, within the university boundary. Not community outside.

Faculty at both institutions value their connections, service to, and participation in the black faculty and staff organization at their respective institutions. These organizations serve as a support group where they can develop personal and professional relationships and form allies. The participants expressed that their service to these organizations are recognized as service to the university and count toward tenure to the extent that the organizations are "visible, active, and respected" by the university community.

ODU participants expressed disappointment in the fact that the university community makes no academic connections with the surrounding historically black institutions, like Hampton University and Norfolk State. They felt that the responsibility to connect with these institutions lay with both the faculty and each university community. They were not sure why no connections had been made, nor how to rectify the situation.

VPI participants also expressed that connections with the larger community and the institution does not appear to be important to the institution because of the manner in which service is defined for the purpose of meeting tenure requirements.

In relationship to how service is defined for the purpose of tenure, understanding diversity emerged as a salient factor. Participants expressed concern about how the university community defines and understands diversity. Participants felt that they are often “tokens” in service on departmental and university committees. They feel “used” to the extent that many times they are asked to serve on committees, so that it can be said that the committee was “diverse”. They usually find no evidence that their contributions make a difference. Several participants commented,

... they view you as a source for serving their own objectives in that they're coming to you because they NEED this representative on this committee, so they can say well we did have a black person on this committee.

... I am not sure they want us to change the system. They want to say that we are on the committee and someone had the opportunity; “oh well, we had a black person, we had representation”. So yes the system has remained the same, but we had black representation.

I think that people on the committee heard a perspective. Did it result in some kind of tangible difference? No.

Combined with feeling “used” for the purpose of “diversifying” committee membership and serving the university community, other participants were concerned with the difficulty to ascertain whether or

not the lack of evidence in the results of their participation on committees is due to “tokenism” or being the “new kid on the block”.

One participant noted in agreement,

... I am not sure that if it's because of my blackness, as much as, it's a cause of my inexperience or perceived inexperience. It's the new kid on the block. Although, I suppose I felt like personally I made a contribution, I can see no evidence of that afterwards. I think it was a double tokenism in a sense, you're the new kid on the block, plus you're black. Never intended to respect my ideas. It is difficult to separate the two. I am not sure which one happens most of the time.

According to the participants, serving on committees for the sake of diversity can adversely affect them. They feel that without their representation, they cannot be heard. However, when they are the only African American in the department, it is difficult to serve on every committee. They contend that this is not a problem for their white counterparts because there are more of them who can serve on committees. The following quotes illustrate their frustration with this dilemma and concern with meeting tenure requirements:

... they call on us to do everything to transform this massive system. It's like there is that minority person, go and recruit him or her to do this work, and that's okay. It's back to the superwomen and superman.

The work of changing the system, we're always on the defensive, I mean always trying to clean up the big monster or to do work to change it. And then they still tell you, no, no, we've heard it; it's all superficial; you're there trying to be, so called hear the voice, but how much really gets changed. “Oh you've had your chance, we set up that committee and you know.... ”

To follow along with that, while they have you out changing the system, your white colleague is sitting there writing an article.

They are publishing and moving ahead. So it [committee service] distracts you from what you need to be doing or from what they say you need to be doing to get tenure.

There was disagreement concerning the extent to which the participants felt that they can say “no” to serving on committees. Many expressed that it is more difficult to say “no” to serving on a committee when approached by the dean of their college or another top administrator. Others indicated that they had no problem saying “no” regardless of who is asking. They felt it was their right and obligation to say no and to protect themselves from attending to too much service which would put limitation on their time. Some participants expressed a concern that turning down assignments may impact tenure decisions. According to one participant he was not asked to serve on a committee, but says he was “thrown upon” the committee,

You know in my case, I ought to get the option of making a choice, I’m just assigned to the committee. Can I turn it down? Maybe I can, but it’s probably a strike against me. Sometimes I wonder that it may be something against you down the road.

Research

Superficial, I read the journals in my discipline and other disciplines in the research area and I mean if we are talking about the research element of tenure, and I read them and I say “what is this”. What does this mean to anybody? I know what it means in terms of the discipline and what’s required. But what does it mean to people, everyday people.

Why am I struggling, busting my butt to get, produce articles and people are out dying on the streets in our community. I said does this have anything to do with the reality, what’s going on.

We are trained to interpret and have all of these ideas that have, for me in my discipline, have little to do with direct action. Those journal articles have to be written a certain way, they have to have theory, contributions to knowledge and they are not in my own feelings and thinking they're not in my ontology, my way of being in my spirit, it's against my spirit.

Yes, paradigms are constructed along rational empirical lines and the traditional black community is spiritual, it is ontological rather than epistemological and given that distinction, you know, only now with post-modernism is there even reconsideration of what they built up, oh this rational school. But the journals have not quite caught up, they are still operating out of that same model.

... let's come up with an idea, let's get it in a journal, and that's it. I am not pleased with that being an end and of itself, ... that's the reality that I have to deal with. And it's still a struggle.

Issues regarding research are expressed primarily in terms of “fit”. The participants felt that the rational empirical research paradigms are not congruent with how they view the world. The above quotes vividly explain how three participants expressed this perspective. Their view of the world is ontological, which embraces a spiritual connection, rather than epistemological, which embraces a philosophical approach to investigate the origin, method, and limitations of human knowledge.

The quotes above illustrate that the African American faculty in this study feel confined to adhere to the traditional research paradigms. However, some participants viewed this situation as an opportunity to “play the game”.

Now with regard to the paradigms that are most popular in research, they tend to work for me. And if I can be inspired by anything, it is the very fact that those same paradigms can be used against the opposition to beat them at their own game. And it's my opinion that if I master those paradigms, then I am in a better position to use them objectively. My experience suggests that it is the objective presentation of those ideas, thoughts, and research based evidence that the opposition tends to listen to. Now whether they are moved by it, one might not be able to say in all cases. But, it's a matter of picking those strategies and being able to use them at their own game.

You have to understand how the game is played though, that's the way it is. And by the way you don't have to like it or dislike it, because you want to survive.

The above comments illuminate the perspective that African Americans can utilize the research paradigms to fit their needs, that is, to play the game in order to gain entrance into the fraternity. Even if their research goes unnoticed they feel compelled to "play the game" in order to survive in the institution. This provides an understanding of why the participants question the importance of having journal articles sitting in the library on shelves that mean nothing to the black or larger community. The participants felt that the purpose of publishing and adding to bodies of knowledge, seem to have no practical utility beyond fulfilling tenure criteria.

For the faculty in this study, research that is in the interest of the African American community is important. The following quotes reflect the importance they attach to conducting research that is in the interest of the African American community:

I have some question about some of the benefits of this to the

African American culture, because it is designed for them and it probably serves them, and I don't see, at least what I am interested in, I just don't see that it's going to ultimately benefit African Americans the way I want it to. Because it has to be filtered through all these cultural hoops and rings etc.

I think about a number of African Americans who wanted to pursue a dissertation topic that was related to the African American community and how they were told or discouraged from doing so because it wasn't aligned with their value system.

I want to write these articles and get to people, and use the terminology that I feel will result in some kind of action that will make a difference, but when it's crouched in this language I see another journal, I see this in another dusty journal, on a dusty shelf, in a dusty library, and I get frustrated.

Another concern related to research that emerged was that research directly related to African American culture is not valued by the journal editors, boards, and publishers of mainstream journals. Some participants noted that in their disciplines if you are "trail blazing" on a particular paradigm or "coming up against" a particular paradigm, then it is more likely that research concerning African American culture will be valued and accepted. It was also noted that "the other way it is accepted, is if you are doing it with a white scholar. They then say, ah ha! They validate it". Participants agreed that this is a problem, one participant adds,

It would be the same in my field. "C level" journals would accept something on diversity. Beyond that if it was part of a more central research question, that was mainstream and we happen to talk about diversity issues and how it affects this mainstream, then there is a possibility of it getting into an "A or B level" journal.

According to the participants, the perceived value of research concerning African American culture or community, by the dominant culture, influences the opportunities for collaborating with colleagues. Some participants explained that because research interests are so different it is “difficult to collaborate on mutual interest”. It was stated that this is especially true when you are doing something that is culturally related. On the other hand, there is a perspective that collaborative opportunities are possible. One participant offers a solution,

One strategy that has worked on occasion for me is to collaborate with persons outside of my college and capitalize on their journals which happen to focus more on diversity.

It was acknowledged that at Virginia Tech collaborative efforts were far and few between for all faculty, far more so, than at other institutions. However, participants at both institutions believe that there are circumstances which particularly affect the collaborative opportunities for African American faculty. The participants believe that because most African American faculty are essentially newcomers in academia, they are not known and therefore, lack the ability to influence research dollars in and outside of the university. A participant who previously sat on a panel review committee for a foundation that sponsors research projects, stated,

Historically black folks have not had that kind of inside influence.... So why is it that somebody is going to join you [to collaborate on a research project], when the perception is that you

can't bring anything either, from a knowledge base or from an influence base.

... the people who are evaluating it [a proposal], are evaluating it on the basis of who you are, what you have done in the past, and not on the specific thing that you are doing, because they don't know about it [your research area]. It's your reputation.

Participants also agreed that the perceived value of the research African American faculty conduct, whether it's dealing with African Americans or not, is valued more when grant money is attached. There was agreement that members of the university community no longer see ethnicity when grant money is attached to their research. For example, the following conversation that continued after discussing the impact of the African American presence on committees, captures this perspective:

when you only have a tack hammer, ... you are going to hear this little tap, okay, but my point is that part of getting a bigger hammer, is getting tenure. But that's not saying that your going to put a dent in the wall, but you're making a louder tap. I think it goes back to....

I also think the color of that hammer is green. And also if you control dollars and cents, suddenly your ethnic origin becomes a secondary issue. If you have a multi-million dollar grant people take notice.

VPI participants felt that research is valued more in the tenure process at Virginia Tech, whereas the ODU participants were divided. Some felt that ODU administrators valued research, while others felt that teaching was valued more at ODU. These perspectives were reflected in the participant questionnaire, which required the participants to assign a value, they believe administrators at their institution would assign to

teaching, research, and service, for the purpose of achieving tenure, on a 100 % percentage scale. The following quotes also capture this perspective,

I was in a teaching workshop sponsored by NSF [National Science Foundation] this summer. And they tell us that this workshop will basically help junior faculty move to more permanent faculty, and put more focus on teaching.... I came up with all these ideas and talked to my boss and he says, well, you have to publish, you have to publish a paper, teaching well, you have to write and publish. So all the things I had [done, I had to], just put them off to the side again....

In response to negative student evaluations, one participant said,

I realized that, hey, look, this could really be a determining factor here if I don't do something to change this, then I'm going to have a problem, because I know that the provost likes the student evaluations and the dean likes the student evaluations.

In concluding, the participants at both institutions feel that the research paradigms and culture are changing. There was little elaboration on how the research paradigms and culture are changing. However, participants at both institutions believe that the scrutiny higher education has been under in regards to the value of teaching, and the contention that faculty spend more time doing research, instead of teaching, will influence how research activities are weighed in the tenure process in the near future. Some participants believe that tenure is losing it's favor in the public arena.

The Value of Tenure

I think it's a system that was designed by white America and this is their culture and we are fitting in, as XXX mentioned to get that ticket, so that we can do some other things. And it's designed around their value system not ours.

I've seen the effects, it's a two edged sword. It goes back to the assimilation issue, I have seen individuals give up their identity to be accepted in this colorblind system or diversity blind system. So when I talk about assumptions and philosophies, it frightens me the number of individuals who choose to assimilate, align themselves....

... it [tenure process]has the potential of being extremely divisive. Faculty within units, departments, colleges.... because there is this sense of intense competition within.

Institutional Fit

Issues regarding tenure in general were expressed in terms of the structure of the tenure system and its value to dominant culture. Most of the participants expressed that the tenure system was created by the dominant culture, white males, and is structured around their values. There was consensus that African Americans must "fit" into this system that has been created. Achieving tenure was compared to joining the "good old boys fraternity". They feel they must "play the game" in order to gain entrance into the fraternity.

Participants expressed concern that because they must "fit in", they become divided. That is, they sense that some African American faculty feel they have to give up their ethnic identity, in order to "align" or "assimilate" with the dominant culture. As a result, African Americans themselves become divided over how to succeed without

giving up their identity. This perspective is illuminated in the following comment,

I thought of another term when I heard the discussions about assimilation and alignment, and this example that you gave, [referring to another participant] and that is divisiveness, because it can be I have seen it XXX indicated that she had observed how frightening it can be sometimes to see individuals foster, assimilate to the extent that they do, because perhaps they feel that they have to do that in order to survive.

Concern was expressed by all participants that the requirements for tenure varied and that the standards are different for African Americans, in comparison to their white counterparts. They felt that they had to do more than the average faculty member to “prove” that they belong and should be given membership in the fraternity. For one faculty member, having to “prove yourself ” is frustrating, but has become a part of life.

... I know my personal experience has been one that I have been called a pioneer so many times till I just hate that word. I hate it. But all through my pioneering career, I’ve always had to prove myself well above and beyond [others] that I’ve worked with.... I’ve been through so much of this type of experience till it’s just sort of common place for me.

Another adds,

... we have to prove ourselves over and over again, I heard and I am sure this is true, that even after we are fortunate enough to get tenure, that it’s still going to be a factor. An you know I have heard this over and over again. And that too is a frustrating thing to have to contend with. Yes, even though we achieve, we’ve proven that we can achieve a certain level, it’s not going to stop with tenure for African Americans. It isn’t.

Additionally, they feel that they are scrutinized much more closely than other faculty. This perspective is captured by the following quotes:

... there is going to be a closer scrutiny for African American faculty. There's a certain kind of proof that you have to offer when it comes to your abilities and your "fitting in".

...we have to be some super-hero.... I resent my colleagues being able to do something at a very shallow level and get more credit than I do and I have to work the thing out five or six times more in depth and get less recognition. That's the part I resent. And that happens I think a lot.

Anything that you do wrong, we'll call that a red mark rather than a black mark, it's brought out and expounded upon, as opposed to that which we do positively. So your negatives are enhanced; whereas your positives are downplayed. When you look at a European colleague, it seems to be the other way around. Their negatives are downplayed and their positives are accentuated.

I think there is a degree of higher expectations. They measure you much higher than the general norm in the department. It does appear that you have to prove yourself over and over again. If I get in the door, that is no answer "that you have demonstrated that you have knowledge to do or to think for yourself, basically.

Not only did the participants feel they have to work harder than their counterparts, but when they do, they feel it is held against them as well. One participant vividly expresses the frustration with having to "prove yourself" and then having it thrown back at you, he stated,

I have a term that I apply to it. I refer to it as the superman syndrome. Where essentially you have to do twice or three times the work in order to receive half or a third of the credit. Ten times perhaps. [someone in the group responds you're getting close] It's an interesting phenomena, that in itself can backfire, particularly when that individual is viewed as being over zealous.

They worked too much and it brings pressure to bear on those who are more seasoned, veteran, who don't want to put in the long hours. And now "your making us look bad". It's sort of a no win situation for those who are caught in the trap, so to speak.

In general, the participants agreed that the criteria for attaining tenure are not always clear. There was concern about the "unwritten rules". They felt that there were unwritten rules related to "fit" that could impede the attainment of tenure. "Fit" and "how well they like you" according to participants translates into how the "unwritten rules" are utilized. The following illuminates how the participants see this playing out:

... when it comes to publishing and scholarly productivity, if they do not like you, do not want you, the number of refereed articles becomes important, not number of articles, refereed vs. non-refereed, but refereed articles. If you have a large number of refereed articles, then we look at numbers of books published, okay. So it's always something. And then if you have books published ... then we start looking at the number of pages....

I say elusive, because the rules seem to change from year to year It's more, so the people who are evaluating you did not do what you're doing, did not have to do what you did to get tenure. And it makes you wonder, "why", how can they judge me, when they didn't have to go through this, and the rules just seem to change.

You get different feedback from different people. Even people who are suppose to help you, they are giving you bad information or wrong information. So you don't know where to turn to get the right information in order to get your credentials together.

Of the 22 participants, only six felt they clearly knew the requirements for tenure. These participants indicated that the

requirements had been clearly laid out for them and others at least at the department level.

Participants explained that “being liked” also influenced the activities they might engage in with colleagues and ultimately the collegial relationships they develop. They explained that if you are not liked, you are not privy to the kinds of interactions that can lead to tangible endeavors that may enhance your opportunities to attain tenure. For example, being asked to collaborate on a research project.

Networking types of activities, such as receiving an invitation to an informal dinner at someone’s house, or simply going to lunch with colleagues were regarded as critical. The participants believe decisions are made and important information is exchanged concerning the “unwritten rules” during these social activities. Some participants believe that even if you are liked, you may not be privy to the social networks that take place. It was explained that African American faculty are not invited to these social events because their colleagues really do not know them on a personal level.

The extent to which you are aware of the unwritten rules and considered to “fit in” was viewed by some participants to even affect the way you dress. One participant shared that he got word through his wife that the faculty in his department deemed it appropriate for all faculty to wear a tie and he therefore, needed to wear one. He stated that he was glad to get this information, because it wasn’t one of those written rules he would have known about. None of his colleagues bothered to share this with him.

There was agreement from the participants responding to this situation, that refusing to wear a tie, would probably be held against him at tenure review time, because the faculty member would be seen as not “fitting in” because he did not obey the “unwritten rules”.

The term, “colorblind” was explained in different ways. The faculty perceive that the dominant culture at their institution assume that African Americans, are just like them, whereas, there is no recognition of their culture and ethnicity. This assumption of “colorblindness”, the participants feel is an underpinning ideology within the institution that demands that African Americans put their ethnicity on the back burner so to speak, until they have achieved tenure. This supports the contention that African Americans and the dominant institutional culture, value tenure differently, whereas, tenure is more important than being “black”. This perception is illuminated in the following conversation between participants.

In terms of the black community, I find that, it’s important for me to remain active to a certain degree, not as much as maybe I would like to be. I do like to make contributions, but as one of my colleagues told me “you need to save your black stuff for just black history month, do one thing”. Well I do a lot more than that, well I thought my Lord, I have to be black everyday!

Another participant responds,

You mean it isn’t a choice!

Well, she thought it was.

Another participant adds,

But the personal challenge for me is how I can become accepted

and how much of my own personal blackness can I retain with that acceptance.

This issue of the “assumptions of colorblindness” was also associated with “fitting in” and “double standards”. Whereas, the participants believe that how the dominant culture understands their culture and ethnicity, is also used against them. The tenured faculty felt strongly that African Americans could not show emotion or handle confrontational situations with students like other colleagues. They felt this was especially true while going through the tenure process. For example, to show any kind of anger, they believe they would be labeled a violent or angry black person. A participant shared the following,

The department head who hired me, so much as told me, he understands that I can only go so far in terms of my behavior and so forth, that it would be detrimental to me much more than my colleagues with another skin color. It’s interesting that he was perceptive enough to recognize that and give me some advice on that. I didn’t need his advice, I know it anyway.

Consider the following discussion between participants,

We had an incident ... where one of our faculty members lost control with a graduate student and created a scene, a confrontation, screaming and so forth. I think that if that had happened with me I would have been doomed, I think that would have been the kiss of death.

What happened to him?

Nothing! I think you can’t show sometimes genuine emotion under this climate and expect not to pay a price.

Why?

Because they are looking at you with the microscope, and if you did show some natural kind of anger that all of us manifest in some way, that reinforces in their minds, the fact that you are just an angry, violent black person.

Especially if you are going through the tenure track, because that's where the double standards come into play, where they're looking at you with a microscope....

You see they put a racial tag on the thing, in other words, now we have black violence. I thought violence was violence. I never knew that there was red violence, purple violence, black violence, you know yellow violence, and so forth. I just thought violence was violence. But they don't. They tag you with these names.

It is important to note that the male participants in this study believed that showing emotion was more problematic for black males than black females. In one group interview, disagreement and discussion evolved concerning how and the degree to which this perspective differed for black men and women. However, the participants did not clearly identify how and the degree to which showing emotion was more problematic for black males than black females. The black women who participated in this study did not address this as a separate issue for black women.

In concluding, some participants shared that there were some people who would never accept you just because you are African American. They believed that this could be problematic especially, if a person with this attitude was on a tenure committee at any level (i. e. department, college, or university committee). One participant shared that people who have served on promotion and tenure committees have shared with him that a particular person never votes positively for a

women or minority to get tenure. He noted that this was a known fact around campus.

Institutional Culture

My first incarnation here. I went to do some copying, and several faculty members, two who I don't believe are retired..., but one other who is still certainly here and I have to deal with on an individual personal basis every now and then -- standing around discussing what they thought was an important topic and that was "black people are okay, but they don't know their place". Now these were faculty members, one of whom has become a chair ... Though that particular person did not say it, by participating in that kind of conversation, that creates the climate that African American faculty have to deal with. I'm in standing there copying and they're in the other room discussing this very openly.

Despite the gains African Americans have made in terms of their presence on the campuses of predominantly white institutions, the above quote illustrates that racism and prejudicial attitudes and perceptions still permeate the culture at predominantly white institutions of higher education.

Again, "fit" was identified as problematic for African American faculty. There was consensus that how well African Americans "align" themselves with the dominant culture or "assimilate" with the dominant culture has an impact on whether you can be accepted into the fraternity, that is, attain tenure.

The participants believe that affirmative action has become a double edged sword. They expressed concern that there is a

misconception about the purpose of affirmative action programs and how they are implemented. As a result, the participants feel that students, staff, faculty, and administrators believe the presence of all African American faculty is due strictly to affirmative action initiatives.

While affirmative action initiatives have enhanced employment opportunities for African American faculty at predominantly white institutions, the presence of African American faculty is stigmatized whether they were hired or not hired under affirmative action initiatives. The following quote illustrates this perspective.

I guess it's the fact that you have this gauntlet, a set of hoops and people, that you have got to get through in order to even be seen by the upper level, and that group certainly isn't us and therefore, there is at least from my perspective a certain degree of antagonism even for us as minorities. Because I think there's still this perception that the reason you are hired is not because you were the best person for the job, but you are an affirmative action person.

Value to the department

Value to the department emerged as a salient factor in discussions regarding the institutional culture. Participants agreed that a person's "value to the department" is determined prior to hiring. This may be an undermining factor that influences the perceptions that African American faculty are only present because of affirmative action.

The participants defined "value to the department" as an assessment which is based on instructional capabilities, number and kinds of courses one can teach, research potential and departmental needs (i. e. an added expertise or how one's research can compliment the

research initiatives already present in the department). The participants believe that this assessment can hinder progression within the institution because this assessment of “value to the department” is part of what determines whether you get tenure, in the long run. The following captures this perspective,

... one of the phenomena that I've studied, is that the evaluation of African American faculty tends to be bipolar. That is, that you have this very high standard from some individuals, ... but going back to this whole concept of “affirmative racism” and that is, that individuals frequently have very low expectations of you because of [who] you are. Some are very impressed by what you have presented. So you have this individual that is giving you a max here and you have this individual that says you've only come to a level 2 out of 7. So when you get this bipolar kind of response to your work, well, you're “schizophrenic” because you have no clue as to whether or not you're good. And so you end up with this feeling that, I really have no authentic feedback to the pervasive question that we all ask, “how am I doing or how good am I?”. And when I put that kind of power into the hands of individuals that are biased in one way or another, then I get frightened again and I want to stop playing. Because I don't want to put that much of my well being, my mental and spiritual health in the hands of demented kinds of folks.

As the above quote illustrates it can be quite frustrating for African Americans in regards to the feedback they receive in terms of their performance. In addition, the participants indicated that they are also concerned about how their performance will be measured for tenure, when for some, there are no clear cut guidelines by which everyone is measured. Consider the experience of one participant who attempted to find out from his colleagues what was required for tenure in his department.

I remember last year that I had invited a couple of faculty members who do research in the areas that I am interested in to go out to lunch with me to just talk about the promotion and tenure process. I wanted to get an idea of what sorts of things they could suggest to me that would lead to me being successful at this. And I could recall that as we were talking they suggested that I go down stairs [in the department] where the senior faculty members are and get to know them and perhaps pursue collaborative work with them and from that then they could get an idea of “how smart” I am. Well, I am wondering whose “barometer of smartness” are we going to use. For me, that really sent a strong signal that I’m still going to have to measure up according to their measures and however smart I considered myself, I think I just sort of just had to throw that out the window and try to refine my smartness in their terms.

Although, this assessment of one’s “value to the department” appears to pertain mainly to those attempting to achieve tenure, it emerged as a concern among faculty who already have tenure. They contend that this assessment can also hinder the entrance of African Americans in the institution. For example, one faculty member indicated that he held tenure status for several years before coming to his current institution. He indicated that he was not looking for a position, but was approached about a position. Upon considering the position, he was told that he would have to be observed for a year, before he would be granted tenure. He questioned whether tenured faculty who were not black from other institutions were asked to do the same thing. This faculty member did not accept the position under these terms, but was ultimately offered the position with tenure status and then he accepted.

The same faculty member indicated that a black female with a doctoral degree, with teaching and research experience, took a position at another institution in the Fall of 1995, because of the same thing. He indicated that this female was asked to take a position as an instructor for a year to allow the faculty to evaluate her and then they would determine if she could be considered for a tenure-track position. She decided it was better to go elsewhere.

Another participant had a similar experience, he stated,

... in my interview, [he] in so much as said , are you capable of teaching smart white kids, in so many words. They called me in for the interview, I didn't look for this job here... I was at the university of X and I was doing well, So I so much as said to him and never lost my temper, hey I don't need this, what do you mean can I teach these kids, of course I can teach these kids, I've taught the white kids back at the university of X and I can teach these well aware higher level university [kids].

Experiences like the above lead African American faculty to believe that the standards are different for them and that they are scrutinized much more closely as to whether they can fit in the department, in comparison to others.

Participants felt that African American faculty who are asked to accept a position under these circumstances are at risk of not being considered for a tenure track appointment, because it can very easily be decided that the faculty member didn't meet the needs of the department at the end of the observational period. This situation they believe is contradictory to the purpose of a tenure track position,

because a tenure track position provides a probationary period for evaluating a person's value to the department and institution.

Again, how the institution defines and understand diversity and ethnicity emerged. The participants believe that "value to the department" in this regard can hamper the presence of African American faculty. One participant noted that because his department wants a diverse faculty membership, they try to balance the number of faculty members considered for positions based on the ethnic make up of the present faculty. He noted that there were three or four Asians, Caucasians, and African Americans. There was an opportunity to hire two more African Americans in tenure track positions and the faculty challenged the necessity to do so, because adding them to the department would make it majority black. Consider the following:

People don't want to be frightened by large numbers. The group then becomes the majority. Because they sense that the culture of the department will change. It's very political at times. And so, they're concerned about control. "Who's going to have control? Who's going to be easily affected by dominant personalities?"

Although, there was a consensus by participants that the dominant culture is frightened by numbers because it is perceived that departmental control and culture will be threatened, the participants shared the contention that the threat of numbers is a primary reason the presence of African Americans on predominantly white campuses is lacking. One participant explained,

In other words, I've not known anyplace ... where there is enough of any kind of diversity,... for that problem to arise. To me, the

number that matters is what I would call, critical mass of tenured black faculty in the university, which is critical for what, critical for being able to affect change as a group.

Participants expressed that in order to change the institutional culture a permanent black presence is necessary. They contend that a permanent black presence is achieved through acquiring tenure. They compared this to the fact that more African Americans are in non-tenure track positions, which do not render them eligible for tenure and doesn't assure a permanent black presence. For example, one participant said,

And you look on the teaching side, and then there are more people who either haven't gained tenure, or aren't even tenure track, than there are tenured. And really in any university environment, the deans could come and go, the president could come and go, but the tenured faculty are still here, day after day, month after month. And then you ask the question, "How many black people are permanent here, where they can do their thing?" .

Trust and Dishonesty

For African American faculty trust is very important. According to one participant, this lack of trust then "hampers your development. Because you end up being isolated, ... you can't trust any one". Trust evolved as a factor in many areas of concern. One was related to collaborative opportunities for African American faculty. The following quotes illuminate how trust evolved as a factor in this area:

I came in with some background experience and my area is so broad, people work in all kinds of areas.... So I came with some experience that I shared with people who are in entirely different areas, and this thing was applicable sort of in those areas, so we

started working together. This particular guy, he would go out and do stuff and cross my name out, basically. [He got] a grant from a company on the same idea and I didn't know about it, until I saw it in the XXX [school newspaper]. So now I don't trust.

... this new emphasis on collaboration is very scary because you meet and generate these ideas and then find out you have been left out. After sharing your ideas and your ideas are being used, but you haven't been invited to any more meetings. You have to go back to the drawing board and come up with new ideas and try to work by yourself, and there is very little you can get done by yourself. It's better when you have more than one working on something.

A participant addressed a related concern that having to work by yourself hampers your development, "because they know the rules and you don't. They know the game, they created it".

As the above quotes illustrate the inability to trust colleagues forces African Americans to become isolated and hampers the establishing of collegial relationships, which the participants view as important for their success. This lack of trust is due to their experience with the dishonest and the unethical behaviors of their colleagues.

Consider the following:

When I came here, somewhat novice, as a new kid on the block, but not a rookie, I was awarded a grant from the state department, the amount of work attached to the grant was such that, there was a lot of surplus at the end, after I completed the work. There had been a precedence set in place, where grants were awarded by the state, the surplus was divided up among persons in the department. So I bought into that somewhat naively, thinking that my turn would come too, but my turn hasn't come.... It was interesting how during the term of the contract, the people who ultimately stood in line with their hands extended were never present to assist with the work.... I think I was "smoked" to be quite honest with you. And I learned a hard lesson there. Was

that tied my blackness? No I don't' think so. New kid on the block? Yes.

As this participant explains the dishonest and unethical behaviors of colleagues lead to a lack of trust, and this transcends race. He explained that he was advised that a precedence was set where surplus grant money is shared with department colleagues. However, in the four years he has been at the institution, surplus grant money comes and goes and has never been shared with him.

A trusting and collegial relationship is necessary to foster mentoring relationships. Mentoring evolved as a factor that influences the achievement of tenure for African American faculty. The participants agreed that a mentor is critical. One participant explained that it isn't important to like the person, but a mentoring relationship is based on "just mutual respect". The concern with mentoring was discussed in terms of whether African Americans could trust a mentoring relationship with their colleagues. The following conversation between two participants illuminates this perspective:

I had a member of our college faculty approach me and offer himself as my mentor.

Oh that's scary !

It proved just that. Interestingly enough this lack of trust is largely a result of that mentoring relationship. He's not in my department, he's not in my immediate program area, but in the college. I had an occasion to be at a couple of conferences where he was also in attendance... It was interesting during those times he started to confide in me and he would always preface his remarks by saying, " I'm really not suppose to tell you this". And

then tell me. I gave him an occasion to turn it around. So I planted a seed to see if he would blab to other people as well, and he was true to his heart, and yet my mentor. So I am very leery of those relationships.

Most of the participants indicated that they seek mentoring relationships outside of their department or academic college, but primarily outside of the institution. This they explained is because they are not sure they can trust their colleagues at the institution, or if the guidance they will be given will be accurate, or whether the relationships can be genuine. One participant shared the following experience,

When I came here... , the spring semester of my first year, the tentative fall schedule came out and I went down and compared my load with everybody else's load, tenure track [faculty]. I mean I was the only black [person] in the department. And everyone else had the three-three that I did, but everyone else had either a two or three day schedule. I had a five day schedule. Of course, when you look back you think, "okay, I'm the only black in the department; why do I have the five day schedule and everybody else has a two [or three day schedule]. So I go down to my chair,... and I said, what's the deal here? What's going on? I don't have tenure. I know I have research expectations. Why do I have a five day [schedule] when everybody else has a two. The response was, "Well, I'm looking out for you. I didn't want to give you such a heavy load on one day, so I gave you a lighter load over five days so you would have time to do your research".

This did not help at all according to the participant because,

I had two classes on Tuesday/Thursday and one on Monday/Wednesday/ Friday. The one on MWF met at noon, which of course takes up the whole day. And, so the idea here is that you have to really be aware. Don't tell me you're helping me when you are not. Don't expect me to believe you.

The participant adds,

And you really have to be aware of when people are telling you that they're helping you, and they're really not helping you. Because during that same two week span when I was going back and forth over the schedule, this same chair made me chair of a committee of which I had never sat as a member. So how, can you then come in and be a chair of a committee, when you don't even know what the committee is doing. But still having to deal with that; taking up energy to confront that, even after you are aware. Imagine when you're not even aware that this is going on.

There was general agreement that because the tenure process starts at the department level, department heads should be held accountable to some degree for the mentoring of their faculty members. It was also stated that college deans should evaluate how well chairs are doing in guiding new faculty "through all the hoops and over all the hurdles". The faculty believe that holding department heads and deans accountable for mentoring is a problem because there are no rewards for mentoring and there is no uniform structure for mentoring.

Mentoring was viewed as an element that fosters a supportive departmental environment. A supportive department was defined, as a department that values an environment which views the success of each person in the department as reflecting the success of the entire department; and that a supportive department head would view the failure of a faculty member, as a reflection on the department and his ability to mentor. They felt that then mentoring would be valued and rewarded.

They contend that the institutional culture and tenure structure fosters an individualistic attitude. Consider the words of one participant,

... one of my concerns is higher ed in general, but I see it translated easily into the tenure question. And by that I mean, scholarship and publishing and all those kinds of things. One of the surprising things for me is, that I assumed that persons who reached a certain high goal or plateau, that once they did, they'd kind of look back and reach back and assist. That has been a frustrating experience. That is, that when people who have published and have the books and have the articles,... they really don't look back and help.... So when I think of that problem in academe in general, then I think when we're in this position, ... we can kind of spare a little time, spare a little space, spare a little whatever.... but put ourselves in a position to help.

The participants feel that genuine and appropriate mentoring and guidance is especially important for African Americans because,

... we're so frequently alone in the department, that psychologically, we know we're not getting any support and obviously the first thing you think about, maybe [being the only black person in the department] that's part of the reason. Whether it's true or not, it doesn't make any difference. It's still an unfortunate perception.

A few participants explained that they entered higher education after working in the corporate world. They expressed general disappointment with the politics of the institutional environment. One participant said,

I worked for IBM and AT & T and I thought that when I did this I would be through with the kind of politics, all that kind of stuff, but this is absolutely the most shocking thing for me. People will fight over a doughnut.

He further states,

The first time I sat around the table with these other faculty members, I was expecting intellectual discourse and thoughtful kinds of things and living the life of the mind. All these things I imagined. That's been the most terrible disappointment. They will fight over the slightest thing. And miss a meeting. I've never missed a meeting because I've seen people miss a meeting and they were the subject of the whole meeting. So I am sure I am there so they can't talk about me. It's the political level, it's something that is just amazing. I had no idea.

Participants all agreed that the leadership at the top sets the tone for fostering a positive environment. However, there was consensus that the president and upper level administrators do not influence the tenure process to some degree. Participants contend that external funding, a strong alumni base, and other sources of support influence how a department responds to the leadership and in turn influences departmental conduct. The participants contend that achieving tenure is a bottom up approach, which starts at the departmental level, which is not congruent with a governance structure that is top down.

The following quote summarizes vividly why the tenets of the structure of the tenure system are uniquely problematic for African American faculty and influence their achievement of tenure:

I was sitting here trying to think if some of the comments that we are sitting here making were **unique to blacks in the tenure and promotion process**, and I think that for the most part they are. I was trying to figure out **why**, and one thing that came to mind was **the level of fear or trust that we have in the system that tends to be dominated by white male mentality and thought**. Whereas, our contemporaries who

are not black are faced with a lot of similar types of concerns, I think they're inclined to trust the system more in that they are not necessarily fearful of how this subjectivity or discussion will turned against them, merely because of their color, because that is not an issue...

Overview of Secondary Research Questions

The scope of this study is on the perceived factors that influence the achievement of tenure for African American faculty. The findings of the secondary questions are primarily reflected in the findings of the primary question of inquiry and through an examination of the follow-up questionnaire included in the data collection process. Quotes are used to exemplify the findings. The secondary research questions included:

1. What factors influence the decision of African American faculty to stay at VPI and ODU for the required time necessary to be considered for tenure?
2. How do African American faculty at VPI and ODU define a black community?
3. How does the presence of a black community within and/or outside of the universities influence the decision of African American faculty to stay at VPI and ODU for the required time necessary to be considered for tenure?

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

Why they stay?

Several reasons evolved as to why African American faculty stay at ODU and VPI for the required time necessary to be considered for tenure. They are associated with how they view the world and the value they

place on tenure. The participants view the tenure process as a short term commitment to “play the game”. It is not viewed as an end result to their success in the profession, but rather a “new beginning” once they have attained tenure. Several participants explained,

... this is one of the tickets that I need to function, to become a full fledged soldier to fight the battles that I really want to fight. And this was the only way I could add meaningfulness to this rat race, to simply say this is one of those temporary games that I needed to play, and it is not a life long commitment.

... the tenure thing sort of fell in my lap. It’s not one of those things that I dreamed of or grew up wanting to be a university professor with tenure. I wanted to teach. I love teaching. I really love teaching. And that’s where this value system conflict, it represents a big conflict in my value system.

... this is their culture and we are fitting in, as X mentioned to get that ticket, so that we can do some other things....

Participants alluded to the need to “play the game” and acquiring tenure is a “ticket” in order to do other things. These other things include teaching, for professional mobility, the opportunity to be a role model, to make contributions to the black and university communities, and the opportunity to effect change. Despite the obstacles and the challenges they face in the classroom and within the institution, these faculty expressed that they love teaching. They find teaching fulfilling at these institutions. Several faculty expressed this perspective,

I have to devalue scholarship, but value scholarly inquiry, it’s important to me. I value good pedagogy, good instructional practice. And I see that there are numerous opportunities at this institution to do that.

You know I taught at black institutions before coming here, and I

enjoyed it, it was particularly challenging. I found that teaching is much easier here than it was there. But I've always loved teaching. But then you know coming here, it's you have to get tenure if you want to stay.

The challenge to “play the game” was inherent throughout the focus group discussions. The reward is in “proving them wrong” by overcoming the obstacles and gaining tenure. In tandem, mobility emerged as a factor for why some stay, in relationship to the reputation of the institution. Participants recognize that on national and regional levels, most of the faculty in their departments or academic colleges are well respected and recognized within their disciplines. The following quote captures this perspective,

I tend to associate rewards with challenges, because the bigger the challenge, the bigger the reward. So then I ask myself, well given all of these negatives, what motivates me to pursue tenure here at... And I guess, in answering that question, well one thing about my blackness, the mind set it has created for me personally, is that, I know without any doubt that I am better than the average white boy, so for me it's a challenge for me to prove that. And because my department is well respected within my field, I think that if I can prove that here, my reward will be bigger, than say if I got tenure at one of the historically black colleges.

While, achieving tenure at their respective institutions is perceived as a “door of opportunity”, only one participant associated it with a monetary reward, the participant stated,

If I think about monetary rewards, one thing I do feel, is that if I get tenure here at..., then that would open up for me to go to practically any other institution in the country, I'd say and be perceived as being someone whose proven and tested, and carries a good bit of this smartness that they are attached to. So I think getting tenure here ... is very rewarding and there are a lot of good things associated with it from that standpoint.

The participants also stay because their presence is important. They view their presence as an opportunity to serve as a role model for students, and to make contributions to the black community and community at large, as well as the university community. Consider the following,

I really want to make an impact, in terms of the number of minorities getting into engineering and getting into education.... I am hoping that this tenure process [works out]... at least for the students here, so we can have large enough numbers to make students more comfortable in the classroom. I have black students tell me that that really makes a difference.

... if you ask me "why am I here" I am here as opposed to a historically black college, because if I weren't here they [students] would never have access to someone like me.... So I am here to provide them with that opportunity.

... if I am accepted then how can I use that then as a vehicle to bring other African Americans through the pipeline to get them into the fraternity. But it is still a fraternity. But, as far as, the black community is concerned, I think that getting tenure here, will mean I can be a role model, that can be my only contribution to the black community, outside of this university.

... on a personal level, when I think about my daughters.... they tell me a lot of times when they share with their friends and other students that their father teaches at this institution, that it's hard for them to accept that as being a true thing.... So, I think that

being tenured here would just be that I can be a better role model for other young African American kids.

Since the participants, view their presence as important in order to be a role model, it is not difficult to understand why a permanent black presence is important. A permanent black presence is achieved according to the participants, by attaining tenure, which is why they stay despite the obstacles. In addition, a permanent black presence is important to effect change. This perspective is captured in the following,

To me, the number that matters is what I would call, critical mass of tenured black faculty in the university, which is critical for what, critical for being able to effect change as a group.

Unless the whole process changes, if you want to be in position to make a contribution to your people; this is a system, ... you have to at least become a part of it to be in a position to make a difference or change.

It is clear that the presence of African American faculty within the institution and the opportunity to make contributions as a role model are important factors that influence the decision of African Americans to stay for the required time necessary to be considered for tenure. But it is not clear, how the presence of a black community outside of the institution influences their decision to stay. This remains unanswered.

Although, the importance of a permanent black presence can be explained in terms of quantity, how the participants in this study define a black community beyond numbers remains unanswered.

Chapter VI

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

An overview of the study, discussion of the results, implications, and recommendations for further research emanating from this study of the perceived factors that influence the achievement of tenure for African American faculty at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University and Old Dominion University are presented in this chapter.

Overview of the Study

Purpose of the study

This study was conducted to discover and gain an understanding of the perceived factors that influence the achievement of tenure for African American faculty at two predominantly white institutions of higher education in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

The study was designed to investigate the following research questions:

1. What factors do African American faculty perceive influence the achievement of tenure at Virginia Tech and Old Dominion Universities?
2. What factors influence the decision of African American faculty to stay at Virginia Tech and Old Dominion Universities for the required time necessary to be considered for tenure?

3. How do African American faculty at Virginia Tech and Old Dominion Universities define a black community?
4. How does the presence of a black community within and/or outside of the universities influence the decision of African American faculty to stay at Virginia Tech and Old Dominion Universities for the required time necessary to be considered for tenure?

Methodology

Data for this study were collected by conducting focus group interviews with tenured and tenure track African American faculty at Virginia Tech and Old Dominion University. A total of 22 faculty participated in one of four focus group interviews. Data collection began with the researcher asking participants to identify factors that could be listed on a black board or flip chart, that they perceived influenced the achievement of tenure for African American faculty.

The methodology was appropriate for this study because of the focus on the perceptions and experiences of the participants. The focus group approach was especially helpful, because participants were allowed to speak from their own experiences, language, and value and belief frameworks.

Data Analysis

Transcripts were developed from audio taped focus group interviews. Data were then coded and analyzed by the constant

comparative method of analysis, axial coding, and with the utilization of a computer program. Data analysis were an evolving process which included a combination of: (a) reviewing and rereading interview transcripts and data output from Ethnograph, (b) review of participant information questionnaire, (c) debriefings with co-moderator, (e) review of the factors participants listed and discussed in the interviews, (f) coding and clustering of factors identified, (g) comparing factors between and within groups, (h) identifying similarities and overlaps, (i) identifying initial themes, and (j) broadening initial themes.

This study discovered the perceived factors that influence the achievement of tenure for African American faculty at two predominantly white institutions. These factors can be explained through an understanding of the issues African American faculty identified that they perceive have an influence on their progression towards achieving tenure.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Institutions of higher education continue to struggle with recruiting and retaining African American faculty, particularly at predominantly white institutions. A review of the literature reveals that African American faculty are sparsely represented on predominantly white campuses for complex reasons. Several plausible explanations include: a) the lack of a minority graduate pool, b) choice of careers outside of academe where salaries are more attractive, c) discriminatory hiring practices, and d) the ineffectiveness of affirmative action plans

and programs (Blackwell, 1983; Brown, 1988; Moore, Jr., 1988; Wilson & Melendez, 1985). While these factors explain part of the problems associated with the recruitment and retention of African American faculty, they do little to explain factors associated the achievement of tenure.

Some studies (Blackwell, 1983; Harvey & Scott-Jones, 1985; Sandler, 1986), related to the retention of African American faculty provide an explanation of the barriers that African American faculty face. Other studies primarily focus on retention factors related to job satisfaction (Logan, 1990), which include for example, satisfaction with pay and opportunities for promotion, affirmative action initiatives (Hitt, Keats & Purdum, 1983; Menges & Exum, 1983), performance related rewards and incentives, and job performance in general (Blackwell, 1983; Finkelstein, 1984).

A review of the literature also reveals that African American faculty rarely stay at predominantly white institutions (Brown, 1988; Carter & O'Brien, 1993; Sutherland, 1990). The literature however, fails to explain whether their departure is due to retention factors specifically related to the attainment of tenure or a denial of tenure. This researcher found no studies which support or negate whether African American faculty depart the institution because they are denied tenure or fear that they will be denied tenure. Some studies (Menges & Exum, 1983; Robinson, et. al., 1992; Wilson, 1987), do allude to the notion that African American faculty experience difficulty with research and scholarship, and perceive that attaining tenure is not possible.

The results of this study contribute to the literature. This study discovered and provides an explanation of the perceived factors that influence the attainment of tenure for African American faculty. The scope of this study was on the factors that are perceived to influence the achievement of tenure for African American faculty. Therefore, why African American faculty depart from predominantly white institutions cannot be fully explained from the findings. However, the findings do support the postulate that African American faculty may leave because they become “burned-out” dealing with perceived racism, prejudicial attitudes, and dealing with a negative environment.

The findings of this study indicate that the progression towards tenure for the African American faculty is related to how they experience the institutional environment and to structural factors related to the tenure process. Three major themes characterize their interaction with the institutional environment and the structure of the tenure process. They are: (a) issues related to the traditional criteria for tenure, (i. e. teaching, research, and service), (b) the value of tenure, and (c) the institutional culture, that is, how they experience the academic environment. The following are common threads underpinning all issues and factors identified: (a) institutional fit, (b) double standards, (c) racism, (d) prejudicial attitudes and perceptions, and (e) trust and dishonesty.

Traditional Criteria for Tenure

Teaching

The most salient factor regarding tenure that emerged concerned how teaching is assessed through student evaluations. All participants agreed that the assessment of teaching through student evaluations and the impact they may have on determining teaching ability can be problematic for African American faculty at predominantly white institutions. The experiences of the participants in this study with the majority of students, lead them to believe that most students are racist and have stereotypical perceptions of African Americans. They believe this is a result of the misconceptions and perceptions concerning affirmative action initiatives.

In addition, the participants believe that faculty and administrators are in denial that racism exists and as a result, African American faculty find it difficult to explain that racism could be a likely explanation for low scores on teaching evaluations. It is important to the African American faculty in this study, that department chairs and members of tenure review committees, recognize that the classroom climate could be and often is very different for African American faculty than it is for the majority faculty.

Concern was expressed by all participants that because race is not an issue personally and professionally for the majority white administrators and faculty, that this issue is not important to them. If student evaluations are biased because of racial and prejudicial

attitudes, and do not reflect teaching ability, and if they are a primary measure for assessing teaching in the tenure process, they can have a detrimental influence.

Service

The service criteria for tenure is confining for African American faculty. The traditional measures which define service activities, they find, are limited to the university community. As a result, they find that they must limit the connections they make with the larger community and especially, the African American community. While it is important for most people to connect to the larger community, it is especially important that people connect with those who share common civil, political, social, and cultural interests. This is especially important in order to retain African American faculty at predominantly white institutions, where they already feel unconnected.

In addition, the African American faculty in this study, shared common concerns about serving on university committees. The most salient concern stems from their belief in the shortcomings of how the university community defines and understands “diversity”. They believe, that there is a perception on the part of the university community, that adding an African American or another person of color “diversifies” a committee; and that the results of that committee’s work thus, reflects diversified cultures and interests. As a result, these faculty feel they are often “tokens” on committees, because they often find no evidence that their contributions make a difference.

While the participants expressed frustration with feeling that they are serving on committees as tokens, for diversity sake, they are also torn between deciding to serve or not to serve. They recognize that their ideas and interests cannot be represented if they do not serve. Ultimately, the decision to serve on what and which committees is an individual judgment call, which requires them to decipher if their participation will make a difference or if they will be a “token” and use the opportunity to fulfill the service requirement for tenure.

Research

The participants in this study feel confined to the traditional research paradigms, in order to achieve tenure. Their concerns were expressed in terms of “fit”. They feel that the empirical research paradigms are not congruent with how they view the world. This was especially important to the participants, because they do not perceive that the end results of their research benefits the African American community. One factor that contributes to this view is the belief that research which directly relates to the African American community is not valued and is often discouraged. The participants indicated that they still have difficulty getting articles that are cultural based, accepted by mainstream journals.

It is also important to note that the faculty in this study believe that the acceptance of research, that is culturally based, does effect their opportunities for collegial activities. That is, because their interests differ, they are less likely to be invited to engage in collegial research

activities. They often work by themselves or with others outside of their departments or the institution.

Value of Tenure

The most interesting phenomena discovered was that participants perceive that they do not value tenure the same as the dominant culture or institution. They indicated that the dominant culture created the tenure system and process around their culture and values, which does not reflect the values and culture of African Americans. The academic profession itself is important to African American faculty in this study. The participants primarily value teaching, but enjoy scholarly inquiry and service.

For the participants, achieving tenure is a professional goal only because it is required and because the attainment of tenure is perceived to be the measure which determines if one is “successful” in the academic profession in higher education. The institutional culture supports this contention by espousing to a tenure system. No faculty member can continue employment in the academic profession teaching at an institution of higher education, which has a tenure system, without attaining tenure.

In addition, it is important to note that the term “colorblind” was explained in many ways, one of which is related to understanding diversity. African American faculty perceive that the dominant culture makes an assumption that African Americans are just like them, in that, there is no recognition of their culture and ethnicity. The participants

feel that this “colorblindness” is an underpinning ideology within the institution that demands that African Americans put their ethnicity on the back burner, so to speak, until they have attained tenure. This supports the contention that African Americans and the dominant culture, may value tenure differently.

Institutional Culture

The participants in this study believe that racism and prejudicial attitudes still permeate the institutional culture. African American faculty describe the institutional culture as one that is dominated by the values, culture, and ideas of white males. They feel that how well they “align” themselves with the dominant culture and assimilate with their values and culture, can determine whether they are accepted into the fraternity, that is, attain tenure. African American faculty feel forced to decide, to what extent and to what degree are they willing to lose part, if not all, of their ethnic and cultural identity in order to attain tenure.

The African American faculty in this study find they cannot trust their colleagues. This emanated from their experiences with the dishonest and unethical behaviors of colleagues. As a result, they limit the exchange of ideas they share and seek mentoring relationships outside of the institution, which in turn leaves them isolated. They find that this feeling that they cannot trust, hampers their professional development.

Why They Stay

Several reasons evolved as to why African American faculty stay at ODU and VPI for the required time necessary to be considered for tenure. They are associated with how they view the world and the value they place on tenure. The participants view the tenure process as a short term commitment to “play the game”. It is not view as an end result to their success in the profession, but rather a “new beginning” once they have attained tenure.

Participants discussed that the need to “play the game” and acquiring tenure is a “ticket” in order to do other things. These other things include teaching, professional mobility, the opportunity to be a role model, to make contributions to the black and university communities, and the opportunity to effect change. Despite the obstacles and the challenges they face in the classroom and within the institution, these faculty expressed that they love teaching. They find teaching fulfilling at these institutions.

Since the participants, view their presence as important in order to be a role model, it is not difficult to understand why a permanent black presence is important. A permanent black presence is achieved according to the participants, by acquiring tenure, which is one of the reasons why they stay, despite the obstacles.

It is clear, that the presence of African American faculty within the institution and the opportunity to make contributions as a role model are important factors, that influence the decision of African Americans to stay for the required time necessary to be considered for tenure. But

it is not clear, how the presence of a black community outside of the institution influences their decision to stay. This remains unanswered. Although, the importance of a permanent black presence can be explained in terms of quantity, how African Americans at VPI and ODU define a black community beyond numbers also remains unanswered.

The findings of this study indicate that achieving tenure for African American faculty is a matter of negotiating the tenets of the structure of the tenure system to overcome the obstacles inherent in the institutional culture, that is, “playing the game”. Whether the perceptions that these participants share are true or not, does not matter. What matters is that they are a reflection of how these participants experience the institutional culture and is a reflection of their experience with the tenure process.

RESEARCHER’S COMMENTARY

Throughout the process of this study this researcher captured several observations that must be noted. In addition, some inferences can be drawn which this study supports. They are based on the judgment of this researcher.

Methodology

Focus group interviews were appropriate for this study. It is the belief of the researcher that the richness of this data could not have been captured through a survey. Allowing the participants to list factors they perceived influenced the achievement of tenure was effective and

served as an effective guide for generating group discussions. This study could have been enhanced by also asking the participants to rank the list of factors they identified in the order of importance.

While focus group interviews were an appropriate approach to data collection, this researcher believes that it was equally important that the researcher and the co-moderator were African American. Some faculty were hesitant to discuss their potential participation in this study, until they found out that the researcher was an African American. As trust arose as an issue in this study, it is important that African Americans can trust the researcher and how, what they said is represented in the study. It is the belief of the researcher that the richness of the data obtained, may not have been obtained, if the researcher and co-moderator were not African American. In addition, confidentiality and anonymity are essential because of the small number of African American faculty represented on the campuses of Virginia Tech and Old Dominion University.

This researcher would recommend the use of The Ethnograph computer program for Ethnographic studies. However, the program produced volumes of paper to examine in the output of data. This researcher found this to be very cumbersome and found it necessary to repeatedly refer back to original transcripts to capture the context in which statements were made. This researcher found that unless, the researcher directly noted in the text of the transcripts, events that occurred within the context of the group discussions, such as laughter,

you have to repeatedly refer back to audio tapes to capture the total context of the discussions.

Community

This researcher was interested in how African American faculty define a black community. Often higher education administrators, faculty, and others contend that African American faculty do not want to work at a predominantly white institution, especially in a rural area, because there is no sizable black community. This is often cited as a retention issue. While it is important for African Americans to have beauty and barber shops for hair care, places that carry African American skin care and other products, and a place collectively socialize that represents their interests, traditions, and culture, such as a night club, these issues did not arise as important factors that influence achievement of tenure, nor retention.

A black community can be defined beyond spatial proximity, or a place. A community can be a set of cultural interactions among a group of people who share common interests and traditions. It is understandable that when the participants in this study were asked “How would you define a black community?” they indicated that a permanent black presence in terms of quantity is important. Most participants stated, “What black community? There isn’t enough of us here!”. It is therefore, important that university administrators understand how African Americans define a black community and how they define a black community impacts retention, if at all.

Service

Diversity on a committee must be defined beyond ethnic representation. It is critical that the university community recognize, that given the small number of African American faculty on predominantly white campuses, they cannot be asked to serve on every committee for diversification. This limits their time for scholarship, research, and other activities. They also cannot be penalized for not serving on committees and they should be rewarded for serving. Telling African American faculty to just say “no” is not a solution.

In addition, who diversity is understood and defined needs revisited. You cannot have diversity and be colorblind as well.

It is essential that the definition of service be broadened. African American faculty value connections they can make outside of the university borders. This is important to retention. Two participants specifically indicated that they planned to leave academe because they are so limited in their connections outside of the university. They want to be connected to the larger world.

Institutional Culture

Whether or not racism is present or discriminatory practices are inherent in the university structures of ODU and VPI, can be debatable. However, the African American faculty in this study perceive that racism and discriminatory practices exists. Something causes these perceptions and they cannot be ignored.

Many questions arose as to whether some of the concerns that the participants in this study shared are common concerns for others in the institution. What perceptions do others have about the tenure system and process? To what extent do others value teaching, but enjoy research and scholarly activity? To what extent do others believe that student evaluations are biased? Answers to these questions, can be answered by a replication of this study with white faculty and other minorities at ODU and VPI. A replication of this study at two other predominantly white institutions in the northern or western region of the United States, could reveal whether the concerns in this study are unique to VPI or ODU, or if problems with tenure systems are universal. It is this researcher's speculation, that differences in perceptions would indicate that there are problems with the tenure system and institutional culture that are perhaps unique to ODU and VPI. Similarities in perceptions would support the contention that problems with the tenure system could be universal.

Although, women, other minorities and faculty may share common concerns, the concerns identified in this study by the African American faculty must be addressed separately. To often the similar concerns of women and minorities are addressed collectively and unique ethnic based concerns are neglected.

Virginia Tech's Hiring Pattern

This researcher's final reflections concern the hiring practices of Virginia Tech. It is unfortunate that African Americans faculty are

better represented in administrative and professional faculty positions. The annual demographic profile report disseminated by the Office of the Provost, as of Fall 1994 states that “women and African Americans are better represented among other faculty categories than tenure track faculty” (Schnure, 1995, p.2). This perspective is captured in the fact that there are 79 African Americans in administrative and professional faculty positions and 47 of them are African American women. As of 1996, there are less than 35 African American full-time instructional tenured or tenure track faculty at Virginia Tech. This is alarming!

Delimitations and Limitations

These findings may be distinctive to the African American faculty experience at ODU and VPI. Therefore, the delimitations and limitations of this study must be addressed.

1. This study was limited to African American faculty who were tenured or in tenure track, full-time instructional positions at ODU and VPI.
2. The number of faculty who participated in this study was limited due to willingness and availability of African American faculty. As a result, few African American women participated in this study. Many chose not to, citing that they did not believe that their participation would effect change at their institution. In addition, there is only one full-time tenured instructional female faculty member at VPI.

3. One assumption made while designing this study was that African American faculty wanted to begin their careers at predominantly white institutions of higher education. This assumption is not true. Some participants held tenure prior to coming to VPI and ODU; most did not seek to begin their careers at VPI and ODU, they previously held positions at other institutions, particularly, at historically black institutions. Most of the participants were sought out and recruited by someone from VPI and ODU.
4. While the methodology renders data collection in the form of self-report, the perceptions of the factors that influence tenure according to the participants, must be treated as their realities.
5. Data concerning whether the departure of African American faculty at ODU and VPI, were due to a denial of tenure was not available.
6. Descriptive data concerning the participants are not provided in order to assure complete confidentiality and anonymity. This was an important factor in the willingness of the faculty to participate in this study.

IMPLICATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, several implications arise for practice and policy at Virginia Tech and Old Dominion University.

1. The institutional climate is an issue of concern for African American faculty. It is critical that the institutions identify and implement strategies to continually improve the campus climate.
2. The institutional climate must foster an appreciation and respect for African American culture, ethnic identity, values, and customs.
3. How diversity is understood and impacts policy structures needs to be revisited to ensure inclusion and not exclusion.
4. Programs or workshops for students, staff, faculty, and administrators should be conducted to enlighten and dispel the myths associated with affirmative action initiatives.
5. Members of tenure review committees at all levels must consider that the experiences of African American faculty with the campus and classroom climate may differ from the majority.
6. A tenure plan, should be designed by faculty in conjunction with department heads, that clearly identify goals, objectives, and activities that a faculty member must complete in order to meet the requirements of tenure. Planned reviews for assessing progress and revisions to the plan are necessary.
7. The weight assigned to teaching, research, and service should be designed to meet both the needs of the institution and the needs and academic strengths of individual faculty.
8. College deans and department heads should be held accountable for the progress of the faculty and the mentoring of new faculty.
9. Mentoring and other activities which enhance progression towards attainment of tenure should be rewarded.

10. An assessment should be made concerning how teaching is measured and how student evaluations potentially impact the the measure of teaching ability in relationship to meeting the teaching criteria for tenure.
11. An assessment should be made of how service is defined for the purpose of attaining tenure. Service requirements should be redefined to broaden opportunities for contributions and connections to the larger community.
12. Strategies to recruit, retain, and tenure African American faculty are critical and must occur in tandem. African American faculty can be an extremely important resources for the recruitment and retaining of African American students. Their presence is also important to dispel the myths, misconceptions, and perceptions of African American people, thus, improving the campus climate.
13. While African American faculty share common concerns and face problems which are similar for women and other minorities, resolutions to address the concerns and problems African American faculty face, must be addressed separately from other minorities and women.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Too often studies conducted which concern the African American faculty experience are combined under the collective umbrella of “women and minorities”. There is much room for continued research

regarding the experiences of African American faculty alone. Based on the findings of this study, the following are recommendations for further research:

1. This study should be replicated to further explore the perceived factors that influence the achievement of tenure for African American faculty at other predominantly white institutions. Typically, the number of African American faculty employed at predominantly white institutions are small, it is recommended that a replication of this study be conducted state-wide, or regionally, in order to gather a more collective account of the experiences and perceptions of African American faculty.
2. The apprehension of potential African American women participants to participate in this study, suggests that their experiences may be unique and could differ from the experiences of African American men. Thus, further research is needed to explore and explain the experiences of African American women faculty.
3. A study concerning the perceptions of students, faculty, staff, and administrators regarding affirmative action policies and initiatives would help to gain a better understanding of how the majority perceive and interact with African American faculty.
4. This researcher discovered only one difference in the perceptions of factors that influence the achievement of tenure for African American men and women. That is, African American men

perceive that the institutional culture is less receptive to black males. Therefore, a comparative study to discover if differences exist in the perceptions of factors that influence the achievement of tenure between African American men and women; and to fully understand the collective experiences of African American faculty.

5. If and how the presence of a black community influences the decision of African American faculty to stay at predominantly white institutions for the time required to be considered for tenure remains unanswered. This relationship should be explored.
6. How a black community within the institution is defined beyond numbers needs exploring to better understand the relationship and importance of a black community within the institution.
7. A review of the literature alludes to the notion that African American perceive that they will not get tenure at predominantly white institutions, therefore, are more likely to depart before being considered for tenure. A study exploring why African American faculty depart is need to better understand this phenomena.
8. A study is needed to explore why African American faculty are denied tenure to better understand factors and conditions that may contribute to the successful attainment of tenure.
9. A study of the perceptions that influence the achievement of tenure for the dominant culture should be conducted to discover and explain similarities and any differences in the perceptions

regarding the achievement of tenure between African Americans and the dominant culture.

10. A study to examine the relationship between student evaluations and teaching criteria for tenure should be conducted to determine the impact on the achievement of tenure.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Telephone Screening Survey/ODU

Name _____ Phone number _____

Address _____

Hello, may I speak to _____. My name is Adriane Robinson and I am a doctoral student in the College of Education at Virginia Tech. Susan North, in the Equal Opportunity Office at Old Dominion University included your name on a list of African American instructional faculty who might be interested in participating in my research project. The purpose of the research is to gain an understanding of the experiences of African American faculty at Virginia Tech/Old Dominion University.

More specifically, the focus of my study is to explore and gain an understanding of the perceptions of the tenure process that influence the professional activities of African American faculty. Additionally, the influence and importance of the presence of a black community within and outside of the academic institutions, as perceived by African American faculty will also be explored, as they relate to their research interest and activities. Are you still interested in participating? () Yes () No If yes, continue.

The format of this study will be focus group discussions. Two focus group interviews will be held at Old Dominion University. The discussion will last no more than two hours. One group will consist of faculty who are in a tenure track position and one with faculty who hold tenure. May I confirm that you are in a tenure track position () or hold tenure ()?

There is a possibility that you will be acquainted with some of the faculty members in the group. Will you feel comfortable discussing your experiences under this circumstances? () Yes () No

I would like to schedule the focus group discussion in June, would you be available?

() Yes () No? If no, when would you be available? _____

If yes, are there any dates in June when you would not be available? _____

Do you have any questions?

Thank you for taking the time to speak with me. I will confirm your participation by letter indicating the date, time, and place for the discussion group. In the meantime, if you have any questions or concerns, or decide that you do not want to participate, please feel free to contact me at (703) 552-3952. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have. I look forward to seeing you at the focus group interview.

Appendix B

Telephone Screening Survey/VPI

Name _____ Phone number _____

Address _____

Hello, may I speak to _____. My name is Adriane Robinson and I am a doctoral student in the College of Education here at Virginia Tech. I am conducting this phone survey to identify African American instructional faculty who might be interested in participating in my research project. The purpose of the research is to gain an understanding of the experiences of African American faculty at Virginia Tech/Old Dominion University.

More specifically, the focus of my study is to explore and gain an understanding of the perceptions of the tenure process that influence the professional activities of African American faculty. Additionally, the influence and importance of the presence of a black community within and outside of the academic institutions, as perceived by African American faculty will also be explored, as they relate to their research interest and activities. Would you be interested in participating? () Yes () No If yes, continue; if no, thank person and discontinue conversation.

The format of this study will be focus group discussions. Two focus group interviews will be held at Virginia Tech. The discussion will last no more than two hours. One group will consist of faculty who are in a tenure track position and one with faculty who hold tenure.

May I confirm that you are in a tenure track position () or hold tenure ()?

There is a possibility that you will be acquainted with some of the faculty members in the group.

Will you feel comfortable discussing your experiences under this circumstances?

Yes No

I would like to schedule the focus group discussions in September, would you be available?

Yes No?

If no, when would you be available? _____

If yes, are there any dates in September when you would not be available?

Do you have any questions?

Thank you for taking the time to speak with me. I will confirm your participation by letter indicating the date, time, and place for the discussion group. In the meantime, if you have any questions or concerns, or decide that you do not want to participate, please feel free to contact me at (703) 552-3952. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have. I look forward to seeing you at the focus group interview.

Appendix C

Confirmation Letter to Participants

To:

From: Adriane Robinson

Date: September 15, 1995

Re: Focus Group Discussion/Research Project

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my research project. The purpose of the research is to gain an understanding of the experiences of African American faculty at Virginia Tech. More specifically, the focus of my study is to explore and gain an understanding of the perceptions of the tenure process that influence the professional activities of African American faculty at predominantly white institutions. Additionally, the influence and importance of the presence of a black community within and outside of the academic institution, as perceived by African American faculty will also be explored.

A focus group discussion will be the format of this study. The focus group discussion will be held at Virginia Tech on **Friday, September 29, 1995, 2:00 - 3:30 p.m. the Committee Room, Donaldson Brown Center (CEC).** Refreshments will be served.

You will probably be acquainted with some of the faculty members in the group. I hope you will feel comfortable discussing your experiences openly under this circumstance. The discussion session will be strictly confidential. A tape recorder will be used during the discussion in order to accurately record your comments. Enclosed is a

Participant Informed Consent form for your review. Please feel free to contact me at (703) 552-3952, if you have any questions. I will be more than willing to address them.

Appendix D

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University Informed Consent for Participants of Research Projects

Title of Project: Perceived Factors That Influence Achievement of Tenure for African American Faculty at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University and Old Dominion University

Principal Investigator: Adriane Robinson

Purpose of Research

You are invited to participate in this doctoral research project to explore and gain an understanding of the factors that influence achievement of tenure for African American faculty at Virginia Tech and Old Dominion Universities. The study involves participation in a focus group interview, and completion of a participant information questionnaire.

Procedures

You will be interviewed by the principal investigator and, Dr. Delores Scott, Director of Academic Enrichment Programs at Virginia Tech will be an observer and co-moderator. The interview will be a discussion focusing on your perceptions of the tenure process that influence your professional activities and the importance of the presence of a black community within and outside of the academic institution as it relates to your research interest and activities. Two different groups will be conducted, one with African American full-time instructional tenured faculty and one with African American full-time instructional faculty in tenure-track positions. Your tenure status designates the group in which you are a participant.

The focus group interview will involve six to eight faculty in addition to yourself. The time required for you to participate in this project will be approximately 1.5 hours, but no more than 2 hours.

The possible discomfort to you as a participant may be discussion of sensitive topics in the presence of your colleagues.

Risks and Benefits of Participation in This Project

It is anticipated that your participation in this project will be helpful in understanding the factors or conditions that influence the achievement of tenure. There are no known risks involved in this study. The benefit for you will be the intrinsic reward derived from participation in this project. There is no guarantee of benefit.

You may receive a summary of this research when completed upon request.

Confidentiality and Anonymity

The results of this study will be kept confidential. The focus group interview will be taped and notes will be taken for data analysis. The researcher will at no time release names or any other identifiable information regarding participants. Any information released will be through pseudo names. All audio tapes will be erased, and transcripts will be shredded one year after completion of the study. Participants are expected to maintain confidentiality regarding discussion that occurs during the focus group interview.

Freedom to Withdraw

You are free to withdraw from the research at any time during the process.

Approval of Research

The Institutional Review Board for projects involving human subjects at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, and the Division of Administration and Educational Services in the College of Education have approved this study.

Participants Responsibilities

I agree to participate in this study. I understand that complete confidentiality is necessary in order to maintain the integrity of the group, and the respect for other participants.

Participant's Signature

Subject's Permission Form

I have reviewed and understand the informed consent and conditions of this study. I have had all my questions and concerns answered and addressed. I hereby agree to voluntarily participate in this research project.

I understand that I may withdraw from this project at anytime without penalty. I agree to abide by the rules of the project.

Questions and concerns about this research or its conduct should be addressed to:

Adriane Robinson, Investigator (703) 552-3952

Jimmie C. Fortune, Faculty Advisor (703) 231-9731

Ernie Stout, Chair, Research Division (703) 231-6077

Request to Institutional Review Board to Conduct Research Involving Human Subjects

Justification of Project

The purpose of the study is to explore and gain an understanding of factors that are related to the achievement of tenure for African American faculty at Virginia Tech and Old Dominion Universities. The qualitative study will utilize focus group interviews to explore this phenomenon. This study is justified because the information gained will be useful for enhancing achievement of tenure and therefore improving retention of African American faculty at Virginia Tech and Old Dominion Universities.

Procedures

The human subjects will be full-time instructional African American faculty who are tenured and those who are in tenure-track positions at Virginia Tech and Old Dominion Universities. The list of potential participants have been obtained from the Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Offices at Virginia Tech and Old Dominion Universities.

Interviews will be conducted by the principal investigator and Dr. Delores Scott, the Coordinator of the Office of Academic Enrichment Programs, at Virginia Tech. Dr. Scott will serve as a co-moderator during the interviews. She will take notes and assist with analysis of data. The purpose of Dr. Scott's participation is to add objectivity to data analysis. Dr. Scott has experience with conducting focus group interviews.

Two group interviews will be held at Virginia Tech, one with tenure African American faculty and one with African American faculty in tenure-track positions. It is anticipated that the study will require 14 faculty to conduct two focus group interviews (7 per group). Prior to the actual interview, potential participants will be contacted by telephone to request that they participate in the study. Faculty will be sent a follow-up letter and general information regarding the study.

Three group interviews will be conducted at Old Dominion University, one with seven tenured African American faculty and two with seven African American faculty in tenure-track positions, for a total of 21 faculty. Prior to the actual interview, potential participants will be contacted by telephone to request their participation. Faculty will be sent a follow-up letter and general information regarding the study.

Each group interview will be conducted using the same general guidelines unless it is deemed inappropriate to gather desired data based on prior group interviews. The steps involved are below:

1. The interviewer will provide the participants with general professional activity topics and ask the participants to share with the group their experiences in participating in the professional activities.
2. The investigator/co-moderator will use a flip chart to summarize the group's discussion by topic.
3. Each group member will be asked to complete a follow-up participant information questionnaire.
4. Each group interview will be audio taped and transcripts will be produced for data analysis.

Risks and Benefits

No risks are associated with this study. Participants may benefit from this study by the opportunity to share and understand others experiences and by providing insight that may be helpful to improving retention of African American faculty and enhancing their understanding of activities for enhancing the opportunity to achieve tenure. Benefits cannot be guaranteed.

Confidentiality/Anonymity

The investigator will at no time release the names or any other identifiable information regarding the participants. All audio tapes will be erased, and transcripts will be shredded one year from completion of the research project. Participants in the study will be advised of the requirement to maintain confidentiality.

Consent

Consent form is attached.

Original Participant Information Form
(Tenured)

To supplement the information from the focus group discussion, please take a few minutes to complete the following questionnaire. There are two parts. **Part I** is designed to provide general information concerning participants for demographic data and additional information regarding tenure. **Part II** of the questionnaire provides an opportunity for you to list three issues that you feel are especially important that may or may not have been discussed during the discussion. You will also be asked to list any potential solutions that **Old Dominion University** might consider to address the issues identified to more positively enhance the experiences of African American faculty. Any additional comments you wish to make or any comments concerning the focus group discussion process are welcomed.

Part I

Name _____

Academic department _____

Rank/Title _____

Highest degree earned/ Field _____

Year/Semester hired at institution _____

Did you obtain tenure at Old Dominion University? () Yes () No. If **no**, skip to **B**, below.

A . If **Yes**, how long after your hire date did you obtain tenure?

Was tenure granted as a condition of your employment?

B . If **No**, at what institution did you obtain tenure ?

Do you plan to stay at Virginia Tech for the foreseeable future?

If No, what are your future plans? _____

What are your research interest? List topics or explain.

What percentage would you say administrators at Old Dominion University would assign to teaching, research and service, for the purpose of achieving tenure, on a 100% scale at the following levels:

University Level	_____Teaching	_____Research	_____Service
College Level	_____Teaching	_____Research	_____Service
Academic Dept.	_____Teaching	_____Research	_____Service

What percentage would you assign to teaching, research and service, for the purpose of achieving tenure, on a 100% scale at the following levels:

_____Teaching _____Research _____Service

What percentage of your professional/assignment time is actually allocated to each of these areas:

_____Teaching _____Research _____Service

Part II

Directions: Please list any issue or concern that relates to your professional academic experiences that you feel is important that may or may not have been discussed. Then list any solution you believe could address the issue or concern.

ISSUE _____

SOLUTION _____

ISSUE _____

SOLUTION _____

ISSUE _____

SOLUTION _____

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Revised Participant Information Form (Tenured)

To supplement the information from the focus group discussion, please take a few minutes to complete the following questionnaire. There are two parts. **Part I** is designed to provide general information concerning participants for demographic data and additional information regarding tenure. **Part II** of the questionnaire provides an opportunity for you to list three issues that you feel are especially important that may or may not have been discussed during the discussion. You will also be asked to list any potential solutions that **Virginia Tech** might consider to address the issues identified in the discussion to positively enhance the experiences of African American faculty. Any additional comments you wish to make or any comments concerning the focus group discussion process are welcomed.

Part I

Name _____

Academic department _____

Rank/Title _____

Highest degree earned/ Field _____

Year/semester hired at institution _____

Did you obtain tenure at Virginia Tech? () Yes () No. If **no**, skip to **B**, below.

A . If Yes, how long after your hire date did you obtain tenure?

Was tenure granted as a condition of your employment?

B . If No, at what institution did you obtain tenure ?

Do you plan to stay at Virginia Tech for the foreseeable future?

If **No**, what are your future plans? _____

What are your research interest? List topics or explain.

What percentage would you say **administrators** at Virginia Tech would assign to *teaching, research and service*, for the purpose of achieving tenure, on a 100% scale at the following levels:

Provost	_____Teaching	_____Research	_____Service
University Committee	_____Teaching	_____Research	_____Service
College Dean	_____Teaching	_____Research	_____Service
Academic Dept. Head	_____Teaching	_____Research	_____Service

What percentage would **you** assign to *teaching, research and service*, for the purpose of achieving tenure, on a 100% scale:

_____Teaching _____Research _____Service

What percentage of your time is actually allocated to each of these areas:

_____Teaching _____Research _____Service

Part II

Directions: Please list any issue or concern that relates to your professional academic experiences that you feel is important that may or may not have been discussed. Then list any solution you believe could address the issue or concern.

ISSUE _____

SOLUTION _____

ISSUE _____

SOLUTION _____

ISSUE _____

SOLUTION _____

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Curriculum Vita

Adriane Robinson

Office Address:

Center for Interdisciplinary
Studies
Department of Black Studies
252 Lane Hall
Virginia Tech
Blacksburg, VA 24061
(540) 231-9896

Home Address:

1005 University City
Blvd. #E-15
Blacksburg, VA 24060
(540) 552-3952

EDUCATION

**Doctorate of Philosophy, Educational
Research, Evaluation and Policy Studies,**
May 1996, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and
State University, Blacksburg, VA

Master of Education, Counselor Education, May
1985, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA

Bachelor of Arts, Criminology, December 1979,
Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Indiana, PA

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Faculty development and achievement of tenure for
African American faculty; Factors that influence
achievements of women and minorities

Higher education administration issues

Research paradigms that enhance the understanding
of culture, race, and gender issues

College student success

TEACHING INTERESTS

Undergraduate and graduate courses in black studies
and women's studies

Undergraduate courses in educational research and
foundations and graduate courses in higher
education administration

Undergraduate courses in the freshman year experience

EXPERIENCE

Teaching

Instructor, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, VA, August 1994 to present.

Introduction to Black Studies, a course designed to provide a framework for evaluating and analyzing historical, legal, educational, and cultural issues from an Afrocentric perspective. This course is administered through lectures, discussion, and group projects.

Faculty Fellow, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, VA, May 1992 - August 1992.

Taught, Foundations of Educational Research and Evaluation, an introductory research course designed for the masters degree student who is beginning research inquiry.

Instructor, Williamsport Area Community College, Center for Lifelong Learning, Williamsport, PA, May 1987 - August 1988.

Taught, Dealing With Adolescents, a non-credit course designed for personal enrichment.

Advising

Parent Advocate, Represent the interest of special needs students in Montgomery County School District, Blacksburg, VA, September 1994 to present.

Academic Advisor, Liberal Arts and Sciences Center, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, VA, August 1989 - May 1990.

Provided academic and career advising for 300 students in the College of Arts and Science.

Academic Advisor/Coordinator, Virginia Tech Exceptional Admissions Retention Program, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, August 1989 - May 1990.

Provided academic, career, and personal advising for freshmen students with special admissions status. Coordinated tutorials, colloquiums, and other special retention activities.

Parent Supervisor/Community Liaison, Pressley Ridge School, Pittsburgh, PA, March 1985 - January 1986.

Supervised foster parent care and training; and facilitated community services and educational planning.

Administrative

Assistant for Summer Sessions, Office of the Provost, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, VA, August 1993 - August 1994.

Responsible for developing and implementing Summer Session marketing strategies including production and distribution of promotional materials. Coordinated support services for distance learning courses for the initiatives of the Innovative Technologies Program for Off-Campus Undergraduates and off campus courses offered jointly with the University of Virginia.

Administrative Assistant, Office of the Provost, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, VA, January 1991 - August 1993.

Responsible for marketing and implementation of the African American Faculty Mentoring Program and assisted with facilitating a budget of \$72,000 for the program. Developed and implemented Summer Session marketing strategies.

Program Coordinator, Summer Transition Program, Office of the Provost, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, VA, May 1990 - December 1990.

Planned and implemented a summer program for approximately 80 African American entering freshmen, coordinated follow-up activities, and program evaluation. Assisted with facilitating the \$100,000 program budget.

Area Coordinator, Radford University, Radford, VA, September 1988 - July 1989.

Supervised area housing resident directors and resident assistants. Planned and coordinated freshman orientation and training workshops.

Publications and Presentations

- Singh, K., Robinson, A. and Williams-Green, J., ***"Differences in the Perceptions of African American Women and Men Faculty and Administrators"***. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Mid-Atlantic Educational Research Association, Clearwater, Florida, February 1993. Accepted for publication in the ***Journal of Negro Education***.
- American Council on Education, Virginia Identification Program, State Conference, panelist for ***"Hearing African American Women: A Panel Discussion"***. Washington and Lee University, April 1993.
- Summer Transition Program Students, presentation on ***Careers in Research***, Summer 1992.
- Robinson, A., Singh, K., Ferguson, S. E. and Williams-Green, J., ***"Perceptions of Black Faculty and Administrators Regarding Tenure and Promotion"***. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Mid-South Educational Research Association, Knoxville, Tennessee, November 1992.

University Committees

- Administrative Committee for the Center for Interdisciplinary Studies, 1994-95
- Black Studies Program Course Revision Committee, 1994 - Present

- National Science Foundation Proposal for Funds Committee, 1992
- Lloyd D. Andrew Seminar Series on Higher Educational Issues, Policies and Practices Forum, 1991-92
- Summer School Marketing Committee; Co-Chair for On-Campus Activities and Continuing Education Subcommittee, 1991
- University Retention Committee; Subcommittee on Faculty Issues, 1991

Awards

- Certificate of Achievement, Writing Across the Curriculum Faculty Training Workshop Program, Summer 1995.
- African American Faculty Mentoring Program Fellow, Summer 1992.
- Lloyd D. Andrew Scholarship, Fall 1992.
- Educational Leadership Alumni Association Scholarship, Summer 1990.

Professional Affiliations

- Phi Delta Kappa Educational Fraternity
- Mid-South Educational Research Association
- American Educational Research Association
- Association of Institutional Research