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SUSTAINING THE ACADEMIC PIPELINE: A PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP SERIES FOR ACADEMICS OF COLOR

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Sustaining the Academic Pipeline: A Professional Development Workshop Series for Academics of Color

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Land-grant institutions were designed to improve the lives of individuals and communities by removing barriers to education. However, despite years of effort to address the lack of scholars of color at these institutions, disparities have persisted. Many graduate students and faculty of color have reported that the workshops meant to diversify academia at their institutions did not speak to their unique experiences or challenges. Ultimately, this contributed to their decision to be less engaged in their institutions or leave academia. Using components of the Kirkpatrick model of evaluation (Kirkpatrick, 2007), the authors evaluate a professional development workshop series created by an interdisciplinary team of Black women faculty and staff at a historically white, land-grant, research 1 (R1) university in the Midwest. This series was designed to address the unique experiences of scholars of color. Six graduate students and two faculty members evaluated the workshop series through semi-structured qualitative interviews. Participants describe their decision-making processes to come to a historically white institution, their mentoring experiences, and the impact of a lack of diverse peers and feelings of isolation. Implications for evaluation and practice are discussed.

Racial and ethnic disparities in the number of graduate students, faculty members, and administrators are commonly reported in higher education. This is particularly true at land-grant universities. A large part of these disparities is due to the experience of cultural taxation (Alexander & Moore, 2008; Kennelly et al., 1999; Laden & Hagedorn, 2000; Pollak & Neimann, 1998; Salinas et al., 2020) and the pervasive experience of racism (McGowan, 2000; Okello et al., 2020; Quaye et al, 2020; Wright-

Mair & Pulido, 2021). These experiences lead to reduced opportunities for effective mentoring (Alexander & Moore, 2008; Fries-Britt & Turner Kelly, 2005), decreased morale, and subsequent departures of scholars of color before being awarded tenure or advancing into administrative positions (Arnold et al., 2016). As a result, the scholarly ranks of academia continue to lack diversity (Okello et al., 2020).

Universities have sought to reduce these disparities by providing professional development programming geared toward helping scholars of color navigate these institutions. However, the disparities persist. The failure to provide professional development that addresses the unique challenges that scholars of color face in predominantly white spaces has been documented for years (Alfred, 2001; Kerka, 2003; Walsh et al., 2000). Professional development that fails to acknowledge the racism, sexism, and other oppressive systems faced by scholars of color has led some to create their own professional development opportunities.

In this paper, the authors review a five-part professional development workshop series created by an interdisciplinary team of Black women faculty and staff at a historically white, land-grant, research 1 (R1) university in the Midwest. The professional development workshop series entitled Sustaining the academic pipeline for graduate students and faculty of color: A workshop series to launch the trajectory from graduate student to administrator began in 2016 and ended in 2017. Workshops were designed to address the challenges that scholars of color encounter in academia and focused on: (a) transitioning from graduate student to faculty member, (b) promotion and tenure, (c) moving to professor, (d) becoming an administrator, and (f) other challenges graduate students and faculty of color experience in higher education.

The purpose of this paper is to document the experiences of graduate students and faculty of color who participated in a professional development workshop series created by an interdisciplinary team of Black women faculty and staff at R1, historically white and land-grant university. This research seeks to answer the question: how do graduate students and faculty of color react to, learn from, and apply information from a professional development program designed to address barriers they face at a land-grant, R1 university?

Diversity in Academia

Since their founding, colleges and universities have had few faculty of color (Myers, 2002; Wilson, 2002). According to the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES; n.d.), 1.5 million people were employed as faculty members at colleges and universities in the United States in the fall of 2018. Of those considered to be full-time employees, 75% were white, 12% were Asian/Pacific Islander, 6% were Black, 6% were Latino, and 1% identified as American Indian/Alaska Native or two or more races (NCES, n.d.). Once at higher education institutions, the professional journeys of faculty of color mirrored the disparities outlined above and became exaggerated over time, with white faculty comprising 65% of Assistant Professors, 73% of Associate Professors, and over 80% of Professors (Alexander & Moore, 2008, Fries-Britt & Turner Kelly, 2005). This gap widened again at the administrative level, with white administrators holding the vast majority of these positions across all colleges and universities in the United States (Espinosa et al., 2019).

Faculty of color reported encountering many forms of racism across all aspects of their institutions that negatively impacted their morale, job satisfaction, lack of

mentorship, and tenure processes (Burden et al., 2005; Diggs et al., 2009; Fenelon, 2003; Haynes et al., 2020; Joseph & Hirshfield, 2011; Okello et al., 2020; Salinas et al., 2020). These experiences contribute to the lack of diversity at colleges and universities.

Disparities at Land-Grant Institutions

The presence of racial disparities should be of concern in any setting but is especially concerning at land-grant institutions. These are institutions created with the passage of the Morrill Act in 1862 with the explicit mission to ensure that "members of the working classes could obtain a liberal, practical education" (APLU, n.d., para. 2). Their very existence is meant to equalize access to resources and opportunities for those who would otherwise be denied to them because of policies and practices that prioritize exclusivity and favor the privileged.

Research on faculty of color at land-grant universities is an under-researched area. This review addresses this gap. The available research on faculty at land-grant institutions show unequal experiences of faculty of color compared to their white peers with particular variability by field. In fields like business, education, and health sciences, associate-level faculty of color were less likely to be promoted or promoted at slower rates than white faculty (Durodoye et al., 2019). Faculty of color were also more likely to leave a land-grant university without tenure than white faculty in fields like engineering, family studies, architecture, social work, and public administration (Durodoye et al., 2019). This, in part, explains the particular lack of diversity at land-grant institutions.

Cultural Taxation

When colleges and universities have so few scholars of color on staff, researchers have shown they begin to experience cultural taxation in the workplace.

First articulated by Amado Padilla (1994), cultural taxation describes the unique burdens that faculty of color face at historically white institutions that their white peers do not. This “tax” usually takes the shape of faculty of color being asked to take on onerous and disproportionate amounts of diversity-related service (Reddick et al., 2021). In doing so, these faculty members are overwhelmed by the additional time commitments, emotional burdens, and political perils associated with doing diversity-related work (Arnold et al., 2016, Guillaume & Apodaca, 2020).

By overly taxing the time and energy of faculty of color on non-tenure earning tasks, cultural taxation holds that historically white institutions build structural barriers to tenure and promotion for faculty of color by regularly asking them to take on these tasks, not rewarding them for this labor, not counting this labor towards promotion and tenure, and then holding these efforts against them at the time that their promotion or advancement case is being reviewed (Alexander & Moore, 2008; Arnold et al., 2016; Diggs et al., 2009; Quayle et al., 2020; Rodríguez et al., 2015). Therefore, cultural taxation contributes to the disparities between tenure and promotion rates of white faculty in comparison to faculty members of color (Gewin, 2020; Salinas et al., 2020).

Impacts of the Pervasive Experience of Racism

Scholars of color regularly reported challenging experiences working in predominantly white colleges and universities (McGowan, 2000). Many scholars of color discussed instances of discrimination and racism with their students (Haynes et al., 2020; McGowan, 2000; Sembiante et al., 2020), colleagues (Wright-Mair & Pulido, 2021), and in the workplace generally, that impacted their morale and desire to remain in academia. It is these experiences that primarily drive faculty of color to leave

academia at higher rates than their white peers (McGowan, 2000; Okello et al., 2020; Quaye et al, 2020; Wright-Mair & Pulido, 2021).

Effective Professional Development

Researchers have identified protective factors that can help scholars of color persist in these environments. They point to the importance of effective professional development that prioritizes access to quality mentoring and creating support systems that provide intellectual as well as social support for scholars of color. These tools can serve as protective factors for scholars of color who often feel isolated and unwanted in their work environments (Damasco & Hodges, 2012; Hassouneh et al., 2014; Moreira et al., 2019; West, 2017).

Researchers who have studied effective career-focused professional development often overlook the racism that faculty of color experience at predominantly white institutions (Kerka, 2003; Walsh et al., 2000). However, available research suggests that identity, values, and context play meaningful roles in how people experience their work environments and prepare them for success within those environments (Alfred, 2001; Kerka, 2003).

Access to quality mentoring is repeatedly identified as the most important factor in the retention and success of faculty of color (Carson et al., 2019; Cyrus, 2017; Damasco & Hodges, 2012; Hassouneh et al., 2014; Salinas et al., 2020). Mentoring is integral in the progression from graduate student to faculty member and then to administrator (Anthym & Tuitt, 2019; Fries-Britt & Turner Kelly, 2005; Grant, 2012; Patton, 2009). Mentoring has been shown to help people build professional skill sets as well as learn how to navigate the structures of their institutions (Torrens et al., 2017).

Quality mentoring also plays an essential role in preparing graduate students for the challenges they will face once they enter academia (Damasco & Hodges, 2012; Fries-Britt & Snider, 2015; Reddick et al., 2021; Salinas et al., 2020). However, scholars of color frequently reported dissatisfaction with their university-provided mentoring or reported that they were not receiving any mentoring from their institutions (Padilla, 1994; Stanley, 2006; Torrens et al., 2017).

Professional development opportunities that create peer support systems with other scholars of color and provide intellectual as well as social camaraderie also help scholars of color persist in academia. A lack of community has been shown to be a significant contributor to faculty deciding to leave an institution (Barnes et al., 1998). This is especially true among Black women (Alfred, 2001; Shavers & Moore, 2019). Professional development opportunities that are effective in cultivating relationships among marginalized scholars on campus are important because they help to create a feeling of community by facilitating discussions of shared interests and experiences (Moreira et al., 2019; Salinas & Rodríguez, 2023; West, 2017). Many scholars of color cite these types of community-building professional development opportunities as rare but also vital to their success at academic institutions (Diggs et al., 2009; Wright-Mair, 2020).

Evaluation Approach

Kirkpatrick's four-level model of evaluation is a multi-tiered approach and it was used to evaluate the workshop series (Kirkpatrick, 2007; Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2006). This evaluation tool has been adapted for use in higher education and other disciplinary areas (Kopansky-Giles, 2017; Praslova, 2010). The four levels of evaluation

are: (1) a reaction level, (2) a learning level, (3) a behavioral level, and (4) a results level (Kirkpatrick, 2007; Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2006). The reaction level of evaluation focuses on participants' subjective feelings about the workshops. For example, this level asks questions such as whether or not the workshops were a good investment of the participant's time. Consistent with the second level of the Kirkpatrick model, participants reflect on what they learned in the sessions. Participants are also asked whether or not they would be able to apply material from the workshops to their work, which constitutes a third level referred to as behavior. We did not consider the results level of the model because we were unable to follow participants after the workshop series and, therefore we were unable to assess long-term change.

The workshop series was designed by a group of Black women who have each been at this historically white, land-grant institution for several years, spanning all together more than 100 years of employment between them. The workshop designers decided that they could leverage their unique and shared institutional experiences to craft a professional development workshop that would meaningfully address some of the barriers to advancement that have happened to them or people the designers were connected with – topics that none of them had encountered in any workshop offered by the institution to date. This evaluation contributes to sociological conceptualizations of academic professional development by using elements of the Kirkpatrick evaluation approach to document how participants react to, learn from, and apply information from professional development workshops designed specifically for scholars of color at a land-grant university.

Six graduate students and two faculty members participated in semi-structured, qualitative interviews and provided feedback on the workshop series, thereby offering guidance on how to improve the usefulness of such programming for scholars of color. By meeting these goals, the authors aim to ultimately contribute to increasing diversity in academia.

Methods

Participants completed a qualitative interview to evaluate the workshop series. These were semi-structured interviews in which participants were asked a standard interview protocol, but were also allowed to expand on their thoughts, perspectives, and opinions when relevant. This research approach provided the best opportunity to learn about the participants' unique beliefs, perspectives, and experiences while also yielding the data best-suited to respond to the research question. The protocol for this evaluation was approved by the university's Institutional Review Board. The authors adhered to principles of ethics in conducting this evaluation.

Sample and Recruitment

The sample was recruited by circulating a flyer advertising the workshop series and the evaluation to faculty and staff associations, campus media outlets, college-level communications offices, and various newsletters. The authors also publicized this opportunity through verbal announcements and informal personal communications. To better understand the value of the workshop series, the authors conducted an evaluation and employed semi-structured, qualitative interviews to explore the participants' experiences before and after their participation in this professional development series. To qualify for the evaluation, participants must have been at least

18 years of age, self-identified as a person of color, and affiliated with the university as either a faculty member or a graduate student. Participants expressed their interest by sending a message to the workshop series email account. Graduate student research interns also recruited and enrolled participants.

Table 1. *Sample Characteristics*

Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Race	Degrees	Classification
Charlotte	50	Female	Black	Advanced Degree	Tenured Faculty
Adam	22	Male	Black	Some Graduate School	Graduate Student
Belle	32	Female	Asian	Advanced Degree	Graduate Student
Charles	26	Male	Black	Advanced Degree	Graduate Student
Genevieve	31	Female	Black	Advanced Degree	Tenure-Track Faculty
Faye	33	Female	Black	College Degree	Graduate Student
Elle	25	Female	Asian	Advanced Degree	Graduate Student
Donald	27	Male	Latino	Some Graduate School	Graduate Student

Seven graduate students and two faculty members signed an informed consent document to ensure their understanding of the project and confirm their participation. However, one graduate student completed a pre-workshop series interview but declined to be interviewed for the post-workshop series interview. Their data were not included in these analyses because we could not discern their evaluation of the workshop series. Faculty participants (n=2) identified as Black and female. Graduate student participants were 3 females and 3 males identifying as Black (n=3), Latino (n=1), and Asian (n=2). Faculty were older than graduate students (mean age 41 (range 31-50) versus mean age 27.5 (range 22-33)), more educated (mean education advanced degree versus some graduate school), and economically privileged (mean household and personal

incomes of $100,000-$124,999 (range $75,000-$99,999 to $125,000 to $149,999) versus $25,000-$49,000 (range $5,000-$24,999 to $75,000-$99,999)) than graduate students. Table 1 shows participants' characteristics. Participants were assigned pseudonyms to ensure the confidentiality of their responses. Participants' names, department and academic college affiliations, and year began at the institution were kept confidential to protect their identities.

Data Collection

In addition to agreeing to complete two semi-structured qualitative interviews, participants also consented to participate in the aforementioned workshop series. Through the interviews, they reflected on how these workshops benefited their professional and scholarly goals. Trained research assistants conducted the semi-structured interviews. All research assistants identified as women of color (e.g., Black, biracial, Latina).

Each interviewer was paired with a participant. During initial interviews, which were conducted in private offices or conference rooms on campus, the interviewer explored reasons for deciding to come to the institution, professional successes, barriers to advancement, and professional development needs. Participation was voluntary, and participants could choose not to take part in the evaluation or to stop participating at any time without penalty or negative consequences. Interviews lasted approximately an hour and the interviewers saved the interview content on digital recorders. A professional transcriber, who signed a confidentiality agreement, transcribed all recordings. Participants did not have any costs from participating in this evaluation nor were they compensated for their participation in any way.

After the workshop series, interviewers conducted one follow-up interview. Participants evaluated the sessions, discussed the strengths and limitations of each session, and described how they reacted to, learned from, and applied information from the sessions. Post-workshop interviews averaged an hour and were audio-recorded using digital recorders and transcribed by a professional transcriber.

Data Analyses

To ensure confidentiality to the extent permitted by law, digital audiorecordings and transcripts were stored on a password-protected, university-monitored, cloud-based computer server that only research team members could access. After the interviews were conducted and transcribed, each interviewer summarized the information in the form of case profiles.

The authors worked on the data analyses intermittently over a five-year period. Over this time span, the second and third authors held data retreats to discuss the information collected and themes derived from the participants' interviews. No qualitative software was used for the analyses; rather, analysts utilized Microsoft Word and Microsoft Excel, as well as their own strategies (e.g., making notes on hard copy, using index cards, keeping a running summary in a Word document) to review the data, document their impressions on hard copies of the transcripts and case profiles, and explore variability in the data. The authors utilized content-analytic summary tables to organize the interview data (Miles et al., 2020).

The research team identified key themes. The second and third authors focused on the main data themes across cases (Miles et al., 2020) and cycled through iterative sequences of reviewing, categorizing, verifying, and drawing conclusions from the data

(Miles et al., 2020; Tong et al., 2007). Interrater reliability was not computed; the authors focused on reaching a consensus about the themes. There were no unresolved differences among data analysts. The second and third authors participated in these meetings adding credibility to the findings through collaboration and confirmability and assurance that the findings reflected the participants' experiences and comments without the authors' special interests (Miles et al., 2020). Given time between the interviews and the completion of the data analyses, the authors did not ask the participants to provide feedback on the findings.

Findings

Our findings distill how graduate students and faculty of color react to, learn from, and apply information from a professional development series designed to help scholars of color address the challenges they face at a land-grant, R1 university. Three themes emerged from the analyses: (1) decision to come to study or work at a historically white institution; (2) mentoring; and (3) the impact of a lack of diverse peers and feelings of isolation.

Decision to Come to a Historically White Institution

Participating graduate students reported enrolling in this midwestern land-grant university primarily because of their interest in program offerings (n=5), connections with their major professors (n=5), and availability of funding upon acceptance (n=2). One student, Faye, was committed to working with her major professor but conceded that her degree program was not the best fit for her research interests and that the available courses were not well-suited to her academic needs. In another case, Belle only learned that her major professor left the program after she arrived on campus. Belle stated that

she would have left the institution if she were not concerned about her credits transferring. Belle said:

> I got all the procedures done...ready to come, and then the professor just moved to another university one week before my [arrival]. I [learned] that he moved on, so I came here without an advisor…To be honest, I thought about leaving and going to another program, and I actually contacted several other programs.

However, Belle ultimately asked another professor for guidance and built a mentoring relationship with that person solidifying her decision to remain at the institution. Faculty of color reported that they accepted positions at this institution based on the encouragement of trusted colleagues and family members. Genevieve shared that she also believed that she had a relevant experience that made her a good fit for the available position:

> I showed all of my committee members the announcement, and two of them were like, “Yeah, you're applying for this.” And I met with the third person that was on campus later, and he's like, “If you don't apply for this, we are going to be mad at you,” because the position asked for somebody who had a food science background and an animal science background who also worked with horticulture. So if you look at what I've done in school, it’s like, hey, that's all the things that I've done so far.

Overall, participants shared that they chose to come to a historically white institution because they were attracted to the potential for professional growth and advancement. Participants also cited the institution’s program offerings, funding opportunities, and relationships with major professors and mentors as reasons they came to this type of institution. In addition, faculty and graduate students shared that they relied upon mentoring relationships to navigate challenges they encountered upon arriving at the institution.

Mentoring

Graduate student participants reflected on a range of mentoring experiences. Most students shared that they actively sought out mentors from faculty members, more senior graduate students, and other professional development and networking groups (e.g., Preparing Future Faculty, Black Graduate Student Association, Latino Graduate Student Association) to cultivate connections and build community. They also shared that the workshop series was an outlet to seek mentors and provided them with an opportunity to learn from scholars and university leaders of color.

For example, Adam, a graduate student, reported that meeting with other scholars and administrators of color in this workshop series was better than many previous professional development workshops he had attended in the past. In reflecting on how other prior workshop experiences did not offer opportunities for meaningful engagement, Adam shared:

> I don’t know if [those other formats] can be as helpful as meeting someone who is a leader and getting to know them on a personal level. [Here], they give you some knowledge about how they got to where they are, which is why I joined the first workshop - because we were talking to leaders and professors about how they got to where they are. I think that’s more powerful than just someone telling you how to do it, it’s like [the other workshops give] you a bunch of tools instead of giving you the background to utilize those tools.

As shown by Adams' comments, participants gave positive feedback about the value of being mentored by more senior faculty and administrators of color in an intimate setting. These engagement opportunities can help scholars of color develop meaningful and relevant strategies to sustain and thrive in historically white institutions.

Graduate students Charles and Belle described how their understanding of mentorship was enhanced through participating in the workshop series and how they

learned to embrace other ways of connecting with mentors. Donald, Elle, and Faye reported that they already enjoyed supportive mentoring relationships with their major professors and other faculty members. In particular, these students praised their faculty mentors for demonstrating empathy, supporting their interests, helping them matriculate through the institution, and preparing them for careers after graduation. Faye offered:

> I get a lot of attention. I probably get more attention than I need to get, and that's fine. [My mentor] helped me out of sticky social situations in academia, even in situations where I didn't think there was even a chance of anything discriminatory. I mean, she seems like she watches my back door with that stuff more than even I do. She's wonderful.

Faye recognized the significance of mentors in promoting feelings of safety and engagement among graduate students of color at a land-grant, R1 university. Donald shared that he utilized the workshop information to cultivate a closer relationship with his faculty mentor. Donald also stated that the workshops helped him realize that he had benefitted from his faculty mentor's practical strategies for grant writing and techniques for promoting inclusivity in science:

> [My mentor] kind of helped me… learn a little bit more about what the [grant] application process was like and what it was like to write a grant... He also has, in a sense, restructured his classes to encourage students from different backgrounds to be interested in science and feel like they belong.

Donald's comments demonstrate the specific skills that graduate students can learn from mentors. His comments support previous research findings that mentors play a vital role in promoting success and a sense of belonging among graduate students of color.

Faculty participants also reflected on a range of mentoring experiences. For example, faculty commented about the tension between knowing their informal mentorship efforts were not counted in the promotion and tenure decisions while also

understanding that their mentorship played a vital role in the success of students of color. Genevieve shared:

> For faculty of color, they're so few and far between, and some of them are to the point where they're protecting themselves. When I say, "Oh, I'm helping this student," [they'll respond], "Well, why?" And I'm like, "'Cause somebody helped me," and they'll say, "No. You know my time is precious." It is precious, and it's precious to me because I want to see the next generation move forward.… You have to [mentor students] out of the goodness of your heart 'cause you won't get credit for it.

Genevieve expressed the tension of wanting to mentor students of color from other units while acknowledging the risks associated with taking on non-tenure earning tasks. Institutional pressures to not help students of color leave her feeling like she is not doing enough to help the next generation of scholars of color advance through academia.

Faculty participants also shared mixed experiences with their own mentoring, citing positive mentoring experiences and some that included microaggressions. The faculty participants also cited a general need for more role models of color in higher positions to turn to for guidance throughout their academic journeys. Faculty participants reported benefitting most from having a team of mentors who could provide different types of support and were readily accessible for guidance when needed. As Charlotte shared, "I have a variety of mentors for a variety of things. When I was negotiating for this position, I had my mentors on speed dial. I had some that were research-related, some creative scholarship-related, administrative-related, things like that." Charlotte's reflection underscores how having a network with mentors from varying areas of expertise can improve the ability of scholars of color to navigate a land-grant, R1 university.

This workshop series also provided real-life examples of the challenges that faculty of color face and how to respond to them. Charlotte recalled when a faculty member of color was challenged while presenting during a workshop and how it served as a mentoring moment for all scholars of color in attendance. In the session, Charlotte recalls that a white woman challenged the perceptions of a presenter of color and reflected on the situation by stating:

> I felt the gall of that woman to come into a space that was for faculty of color and not be a faculty member of color and then challenge a presenter that was a faculty member of color as that woman did. I think it was also an opportunity for the other women of color in the room to say, 'okay, this is how you deal with a confrontation like that,' because, I mean… I've had confrontations similar to that my whole career, and [these graduate students] are going to, too.

This scenario demonstrates how the workshop series created opportunities for participants to react to, learn from, and apply the information they learned from the sessions as they progress through a land-grant, R1 university.

Overall, these reflections reveal the many benefits of effective mentoring to scholars of color. This is important because, as discussed in the literature review, access to quality mentoring is known to greatly influence the success of academics of color. Additionally, these reflections highlight the role that mentoring has in creating peer support systems and camaraderie among scholars of color, both of which have also been shown to enhance the retention and succuss of scholars of color in academia.

Lack of Diverse Peers and Feelings of Isolation

A theme emerged in our workshop feedback about the impact of a lack of diverse peers and resulting feelings of isolation. This experience undermines feelings of inclusion and belonging that negatively impact their retention at the institution. Some

graduate students suggested that if the university was perceived as more inclusive of scholars with varying skills, strengths, and talents, the institution might have had more people of color. Other graduate students shared concerns about budget cuts for diversity programs, tuition costs, a lack of social activities, and how feelings of isolation negatively impact diversity at the institution.

In addition to these concerns, three graduate students shared that they considered discontinuing their educations at the institution due to feeling isolated. However, they decided against doing so out of concern over how many of their credits would transfer to another program. In sharing what would make her more comfortable at the institution, Faye shared:

> I would say just making sure we keep increasing diversity and raising the awareness of subtle racism that still exists. And I would say continue to actively recruit a diverse faculty and body of students as well. I still think we have a lot of work to do.

Faye's statements illustrate the importance of a diverse representation of scholars and how a community of diverse peers can make students feel comfortable and contribute to their ability to thrive academically at a land-grant, R1 university. Graduate student participant Belle summed up how a lack of connection with diverse peers and feelings of isolation caused stress about her academic career:

> My main concern is to figure out my [graduate committee] and my major professor. What I'm going to do and how I can graduate, so it's not like a major stressful thing. It's just that I didn't have people to talk to or ask. If I knew my academic sisters earlier and reached out to them, I now know they would have helped me.

Belle's experience emphasizes the importance of connection to a mentoring community and peer groups for students of color. Her comments indicate how students can rely on

these networks to gain information and strategies about how to matriculate through a land-grant, R1 university.

Similarly, faculty member participants commented on the lack of diverse peers and feelings of isolation. Charlotte shared, “It was determined that, for about a ten-year period, that I was the only African American female tenured professor. I needed some other colleagues that look like me. I was lonely.” While Genevieve shared that even though there were not many faculty of color at the institution, she perceived there were more faculty of color here than at her previous institution, “Not only are there more [faculty of color], it feels like there's more of them in administration, so that was enlightening for me. It’s one of the reasons I think I made the right decision coming here.”

The data of this study illustrate how being ‘the only one’ can be a lonely experience that negatively impacts scholars. These comments reinforce previous research findings that having diverse peers impacts morale, can be a factor in retention and can demonstrate that there is a path to success at a historically white, land-grant, R1 university.

Discussion and Recommendations

The Sustaining the Academic Pipeline workshop series was created to address the specific challenges that scholars of color face at a historically white, land-grant institution. The workshops focused on networking, skill-building, and future planning. Participants were graduate students and faculty members at a land-grant, R1 university in the Midwest. The workshop series is evaluated here using three levels of Kirkpatrick’s

evaluation model, focusing on the participants' reactions, what they learned, and how they will apply the information.

Workshop participants shared their reasons for coming to a historically white, land-grant institution, something not explored in previous research. However, similar to previous research findings, participants shared about the toll that a lack of diversity and feelings of isolation takes on them (Espinosa et al., 2019; Joseph & Hirshfield, 2011) and how mentoring helped them survive and thrive in a predominately white environment (Carson et al., 2019; Salinas et al., 2020). These sentiments echo findings by other scholars who note how a lack of diversity at colleges and universities negatively impacts scholars of color in various ways (Burden et al., 2005; Myers, 2002; Wilson, 2002). Participant feedback revealed the value of the community-building aspect of this professional development opportunity. Participants noted the importance of hearing from senior faculty members and administrators of color who described how they navigated some of the situations that participants were currently experiencing. Participants also noted the value of networking with other scholars of color from across campus.

Unlike previous research, faculty participants did not discuss experiencing cultural taxation related to diversity-related committee service (Arnold et al., 2016; Diggs et al., 2009; Gerwin, 2020; Padilla, 1994; Rodríguez et al., 2015) but instead spoke about feeling obligated to take on informal mentoring duties for other scholars of color despite the impact that might have on their own advancement opportunities. Although the experience of cultural taxation may manifest differently at this institution than in the literature at large, it is a serious stressor for faculty of color at this land-grant institution.

This type of time-related stress is not made equally on white faculty members and has been found to be one of the reasons faculty of color leave academia (Quaye et al., 2020; McGowan, 2000; Okello et al., 2020; Wright-Mair & Pulido, 2021).

This evaluation expands the literature by providing a blueprint for professional development opportunities that address the concerns of scholars of color in academia, particularly those at land-grant institutions. This evaluation allows administrators and senior faculty to revise how they are developing faculty of color to navigate predominantly white institutions successfully. This evaluation also highlights the importance of taking active steps to buffer the negative experiences that these scholars face in academia to ensure that they thrive in the profession and ultimately pursue administrative positions.

This study's findings bring into stark relief the need for academic departments to ensure that graduate students of color have an identified mentor before arriving on campus and to ensure that these students are connected to a support group soon after arrival. This could be done by the department chair, graduate student admissions committee, or some similar group with knowledge about the department's faculty and the incoming group of students. This would ensure that students have access to mentoring which has been shown to be an invaluable component of graduate student success.

Additionally, these findings underscore the need for colleges and universities to create a feeling of community and camaraderie for scholars of color more broadly. Administrators can do this by making intentional efforts to offer professional development opportunities that cultivate academic skills, focus on developing agency,

and promote networking among faculty and graduate students of color. Institutions can also invest in evidence-based mentoring programs that will help senior-level faculty mentor both junior faculty and graduate students of color better. This can create an environment more conducive to the retention and advancement of graduate students and faculty of color.

Future research focusing on professional development that addresses the specific challenges experienced by scholars of color could impact their rates of retention and advancement at historically white, land-grant, R1 universities. If colleges and universities adjust their professional development offerings to focus on these unique challenges, these professional development opportunities might yield improved retention and opportunities for collaboration between students, faculty, and administration. Future research that focuses on the planning, development, implementation, and long-term outcomes of professional development opportunities designed to address these unique challenges would benefit colleges and universities across the country.

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