How Do Black Female Faculty Define Success in Higher Education?

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FACTS

• 1862 Mary Jane Patterson
• 1866 Sarah Jane Woodson

• 2016 – 4.6% of earned doctorates

• 2015 – 1.5% of Full Professors, 3% of Associate Professors and, 3.9% of Assistant Professor

• Lack of promotion and tenure

• Success in doctoral attainment and representation

• Lack of success with rank acquisition
PURPOSE

• How is success defined?
• What does it mean?
• Are you successful?
• How does one become a success?
• Who defines success?
STUDY

- Snowball sampling
- Six participants
- Tenure-earning/tenured professors
- IRB
- Research one institution in the SE USA
DATA COLLECTION & ANALYSIS

- Face-to-face interviews: 90-120 mins.
- Email contact
- Transcription
- Theme observation
- Peer debriefing
- Inductive data analyses
FINDINGS

• Success – publishing, giving back, & a journey
• Are you a Successful Black Female Professor
  • “I think so. Yes!”
  • “Yes, I’ve survived. I’ve been able to get through”
  • “Simply depends upon the day”
  • “I have achieved but I have miles to go”
  • “I will never become complacent”
HOW DO PARTICIPANTS DEFINE SUCCESS?

• [Having] tenure at a PWI [Predominately White Institution] or mostly white school; that’s success. Being able to publish in a top journal…Success for me is also being able to do research in areas that involve Africans; People of [the] African Diaspora.

• Success is not necessarily attaining all satisfactory or outstanding but it’s just feeling that you make the difference in at least one student’s life. Of course it’s in diversity and multicultural [issues]. It’s also mentoring junior faculty to ensure that we are honoring our promise to the next generation of learners.
DO YOU BELIEVE YOU ARE A SUCCESSFUL BLACK FEMALE PROFESSOR?

- I believe I have had some successes. No matter what you do, you can always do a little bit better, success is like a moving target. I prefer to think of it as a means of accomplishing goals I set for myself and I can check them off as done or not done. Success is relative. One person may see your success as not successful. It’s like measuring yourself against someone else. As opposed to a goal, you’re not measuring yourself against others. It’s your different goals being achieved and you feel good about it.
OUR STORIES

• Ann Shillingford
  • Second Year at UCF

• Joy Mwendwa
  • Fourth year at LU

• Arleezah Marrah
  • First year at LU

• Nivischi N. Edwards
  • Sixth year at LU
RESOURCES

- [http://theprofessorisin.com/](http://theprofessorisin.com/)
- [http://www.facultydiversity.org/](http://www.facultydiversity.org/)
- [http://www.aera.net/Professional-Opportunities-Funding/Virtual-Research-Learning-Center](http://www.aera.net/Professional-Opportunities-Funding/Virtual-Research-Learning-Center)
- RABYAB – Receiving and Becoming Your Absolute Best – Group Support
CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

- Success varies from professor-to-professor
- Upbringing impacts view of success
- Institution impacts view of success
REFERENCES


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THANK YOU!

- Questions?
- Comments?
- Concerns?