

College of Medicine

BLACK WOMEN IN HIGHER EDUCATION: THE HOWARD UNIVERSITY EXPERIENCE



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**HOWARD
UNIVERSITY**

CENTER FOR

**WOMEN,
GENDER
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LEADERSHIP**



The Center for Women, Gender and Global Leadership

The Center is an interdisciplinary program with a vision to be a Center of Excellence for Black women and Black feminist consciousness, activism, and global leadership. The Center aims to meet this vision through programming that promotes transformational leadership, global engagement, research, service learning, and building impactful partnerships. The mission of the Center is to promote global excellence for Black women and gender issues, feminist activism, and transformational leadership through global engagement, research, service learning, and impactful partnerships.

The GWGGL Working Paper Series examines issues related to women, gender, and sexuality with a particular focus on the Black experience. It provides a platform for scholars working on issues from all disciplines to share research on a broad range of topics such as science and technology, health, politics and public policy, law, social justice, business and entrepreneurship, medicine, environmental justice, and climate, diversity and inclusion, arts and the humanities.

Black Women in Higher Education: The Howard University Experience is a special edition of the Working Paper Series (WPS) of the Center for Women, Gender and Global Leadership. The reports in this series form part of the Women in Leadership: A Storytelling Project, which uses oral narratives to document the experiences and journeys of women leaders at Howard University. The storytelling project is available on the Center's YouTube page.



CENTER FOR
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Black Women in Higher Education: The Howard University Experience

A Special Edition of the Working Paper Series by the Center for Women, Gender and Global Leadership

The historic launch of the Howard University Center for Women, Gender and Global Leadership on October 4, 2020, was the culmination of many years of women and feminist organizing and activism at Howard University. The Center stands as an homage to the women and men who have advocated for, advanced, and established programs, initiatives, courses and other forms of activism for women and gender issues in the long history of Howard University.

Howard is known as a place of many firsts, yet the history of women remains largely in the archives. For example, women have established or led seven centers in areas ranging from the Center for Sickle Cell Disease to the Center for Women and Global Leadership. The contributors have also identified notable women faculty, students and staff from the Howard University archives that have not received much attention in existing literature on Howard's history.

Howard's administration has made recent strides in cultivating Black women leaders as deans and leaders in critical administrative positions. Still, there has been little analysis of how gender equity is practiced among faculty, the board of trustees, and executive leadership. The election of Kamala Harris, a Howard alumna, as the first woman vice president of the United States in 2020 reinvigorated Howard University's position as a leading Historically Black College and University (HBCU) in the United States and abroad. Howard University has produced several pioneer Black figures and leaders in the United States, including a Supreme Court judge, members of Congress, leaders of big companies and movie stars. Yet, we know little about the women and men faculty who teach, train and develop these leaders.

Black Women in Higher Education: The Howard University Experience is the culmination of a two-year research project designed by J. Jarpa Dawuni, Ph.D., and Anita Plummer, Ph.D., and carried out by graduate students and faculty that documents the past and present status of women faculty, students, and administrators at Howard University. Each working paper provides historical and contemporary data and case studies of women at the institution in areas ranging from their role in leadership positions, faculty rank, salary, retention, post-graduate work, exposure to violence and discrimination, and more. The data reveal a complex story of individuals and groups of women addressing gender inequity spanning the University's over 150-year history.

As a center focused on global leadership, this project draws on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (goal number five) which calls on nations and institutions to work towards achieving gender equality. Equally, goal number four (#4) calls for quality education. Recent efforts to promote diversity, equity, inclusion and access (DEIA) require data and informed research to provide a baseline for assessing where progress has been made and where more work needs to be done. This Working Paper Series (WPS) provides the needed baseline for further research on the topic of women's representation at institutions of higher education—specifically within HBCUs.

Collectively, the working papers document critical areas of women's experiences in different academic departments, colleges, and schools. In 2022, women students comprised 74% of the student body at Howard. It is well documented that women today have more access to education than at any other point in history. *(Continued)*

PREFACE

Persistent gender inequality and inequity point to institutional failures at Howard and in higher education broadly. In 2019-2020, women comprised 55% of the faculty at Howard; however, when divided by rank, 66.81% of full professors and 53.27% of associate professors are men (College Factual, 2020). Lectureships, assistant professors, instructors, and adjuncts are predominantly held by women. Education is viewed as an equalizer, and this working paper series examines how women at the institution that graduates the highest number of Black professionals in medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, engineering, nursing, law, social work, and education fare in ensuring women are equally represented in those fields at Howard and beyond.

Representation in administrative leadership and faculty is essential in understanding the story of women's evolving roles at Howard University. Each paper focuses on three aspects of women's roles at the institution. It begins with a microhistory of each college or school, followed by an analysis of women's intellectual contributions in their disciplines over the institution's history. The second area focuses on contemporary data (up to the year 2020) on gender in administrative, faculty, and non-faculty teaching positions. The final part of each paper examines the societal and institutional practices and culture contributing to gender inequality and provides policy recommendations that may help address disparities in Black women's representation in higher education leadership.

Significance and Contribution

The role and experiences of Black women in higher education have been documented in the literature, especially in Predominately White Institutions (PWIs).

This WPS extends the literature by highlighting the following areas:

- The historical evolution of Black women faculty, administrators and students at Howard University.
- The formal institutional barriers Black women administrators and faculty encounter and the strategies used to address them.
- The informal cultural challenges faculty and administrators experience.
- Feminist theoretical perspectives that specifically focus on gender and race as critical dimensions to framing Black women in higher education.
- Highlights the broader implications of inequality and inequity on women in underrepresented sectors, especially in science and medicine.

This working paper series is the first project that shines a light on the role of women academics and administrators at Howard University. Each paper provides policy recommendations that can help Howard University and similar institutions advance gender equality and inclusion on campus. This project will contribute to existing scholarship on Black women in higher education by using Howard University as a case study.

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Black Women in Higher Education: The Howard University Experience The College of Medicine¹

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ABSTRACT

The Howard University College of Medicine (HUCM) was founded in 1868 in response to the growing population of Washington (Dyson, 1929). From Howard's founding in the 1860s to the 1960s, Howard and Meharry trained most of the nation's African-American physicians (Flexner, 1910). Howard University has had a strong record of educating women physicians. In recent years, there have been noticeable advancements in increasing the representation of women in leadership positions at HUCM, but there are areas where disparities persist in both highranking administrative positions and promotion and tenure to full professor. Despite this, the increasing representation of women in medicine over the years has been a remarkable achievement, with near parity in the number of male and female faculty.

INTRODUCTION

The Howard University College of Medicine (HUCM) was founded in 1868 in response to the growing population of Washington (Dyson, 1929). From Howard's founding in the 1860s to the 1960s, Howard and Meharry trained most of the nation's African-American physicians (Flexner, 1910). The history of the HUCM is linked closely to that of Freedmen's Hospital. Freedmen's Hospital played a significant role in the training of Howard University medical students and in providing quality health care for the African-American community of Washington. Today, the college offers an M.D. degree; dual degree programs offered jointly with the Graduate School (M.D./Ph.D.) and the College of Arts & Sciences (B.S./M.D.), and six programs that lead an M.S. and/or Ph.D. in anatomy, genetics & human genetics, microbiology, biochemistry, pharmacology, and physiology & biophysics.

The HUCM started as a medical department along with five other foundational departments when Howard University was incorporated on March 2, 1867 (Sterling, 2010). The medical department comprised a medical school, pharmacy school, general hospital, and dispensary (Dyson, 1929). It also became the house of the Freedmen's Hospital, which served as a medical unit during the Civil War in 1869 (Miller, 1916). On November 9, 1868,

classes officially began in the medical department with eight students and five professors. Dr. Silas Loomis, one of the five professors, was appointed as the first dean of the medical department (Sterling, 2006). Four professors joined the department later in that academic year (Dyson, 1929). In its early stages, the medical training operated as an evening program, but mandatory daytime courses were introduced in 1908. Between 1908 and 1910, it evolved into a program that offers both a four-year daytime course and a five-year evening course. Evening courses were subsequently discontinued in 1910 (Dyson, 1929).

High school education was not required for HUCM admission until 1903 (Sterling, 2006). The admission requirement became stricter in 1914 when prospective students were required to have had at least two years of college education (Dyson, 1929). Medical students spent three years at the College before being awarded their degrees (Dyson, 1929). Charles Smith (an 1872 native of Bermuda graduate), Thomas D. Campbell (an 1890 native of Liberia graduate), and Eliezer Clark (an 1874 native of Barbados graduate) are just a few of the numerous people from wildly different backgrounds who have been educated at HUCM. Five graduates from the class of 1871 got together and created the first alumni organization, which became legally recognized as the Howard University Medical Alumni Association in 1945 (Miller, 1916). Edward Balloch, who served as the dean of HUCM for twenty years, was the first alumnus to hold that position (Miller, 1916).

Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell was the first female to earn a medical degree in the US in 1849 (Piechowicz, 2022). Twenty-three years later, Dr. Mary Spackman was the first woman to graduate from HUCM in 1872. The first Black woman to graduate was Eunice P. Shadd in 1877. The first woman professor at HUCM was Dr. Isabel C. Barrows (1870-1873) (Sterling, 2010). This history reflects the discrimination against women in medicine in the United States. Despite this history, Howard has been in the vanguard concerning the training of women physicians. In 2018, there were more women applicants and graduates of HUCM than men (Singh, 2022). In 2022, Howard University President Wayne A.I. Frederick, a graduate of the HUCM, named Andrea A. Hayes Dixon the first Black women dean of the College. This appointment addressed a long-standing issue of equity and inclusion in the administration of HUCM and academic medicine.

According to *US News*, HUCM is ranked number 95 of 124 in 'Best Medical Schools in Research' and number 68 in 'Best Medical Schools in Primary Care. Similarly, based on 67 evaluation factors, *med-colleges.com* ranked Howard University's medical program among the top 100 medical schools in the United States, 28 medical schools in the South, and 5 medical schools in the District of Columbia. The size of the professoriate at HUCM has dramatically increased over the years. A total of 187 faculty members are now responsible for the training of medical students at HUCM (Figure 1a) as against 5 at the beginning (Dyson, 1929). According to the 2021 data reported to the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data (IPEDS) by the Institutional Research and Assessment (IRA) of Howard University, HUCM has 42 professors, 67 associate professors, and 66 assistant professors. Of the faculty, 83 are full-time tenure-track, and 232 are tenured (Fig. 1a & 1b).

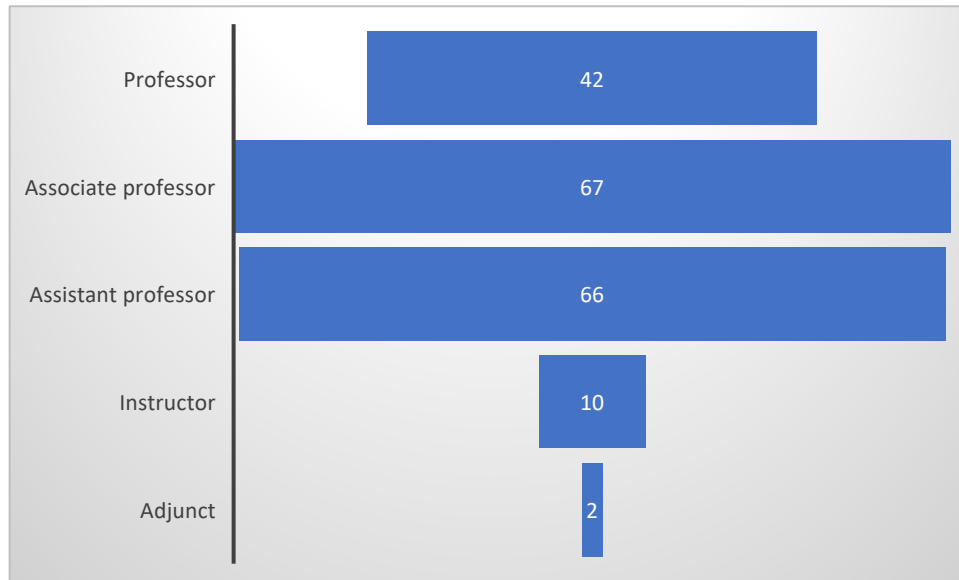


Figure 1a. HUCM faculty for the 2020/2021 session
 Source: <https://ira.howard.edu/dashboards>

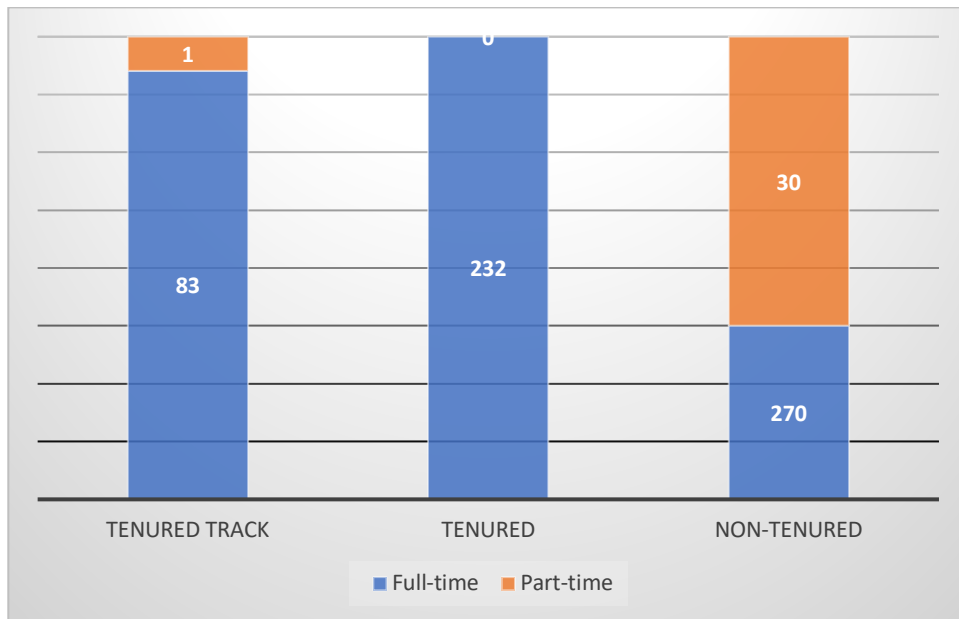


Figure 1b. HUCM faculty profile by tenure status (2018-2021)
 Source: <https://ira.howard.edu/dashboards>

HUCM STRUCTURE

HUCM is divided into two departments – Basic Sciences and Clinical Sciences, offering academic degree programs such as the Doctor of Medicine (M.D.) degree and the Doctor of Medicine / Doctor of Philosophy (M.D./Ph.D.) or the Bachelor of Science / Doctor of Medicine (B.S./M.D.) dual-degree programs (COM, 2022a). There is a total of 20

departments in HUCM. While Basic Sciences has six departments, the remaining 14 are under Clinical Sciences (COM, 2022a).

Basic Sciences

The departments in the Basic Sciences focus on research-based education and clinical services. The Departments of Anatomy, Biochemistry & Molecular Biology, and Microbiology offer research-based education in molecular medicine (COM, 2022b; COM, 2022c; COM, 2022d). The Department of Pathology provides clinical services related to diagnosing life-threatening diseases (HUH, 2022a). The Department of Physiology & Biophysics conducts programs in physiology and neuroscience to train medical practitioners and research scientists. Their research focuses on areas like cardiovascular physiology, pulmonary physiology, and endocrinology (COM, 2022e).

Clinical Sciences

The departments in the Clinical Sciences provide specialized healthcare services to Howard University Hospital (formerly Freedman's Hospital) patients. The Department of Anesthesiology offers anesthesia care and pain management services (HUH, 2022b). The Department of Community Health & Family Medicine offers primary healthcare and family planning services (HUH, 2022c). The Department of Dermatology specializes in the treatment of skin, hair, nails, and mucous membranes diseases (HUH, 2022d). The Department of Emergency Medicine provides emergency care services, including a level 1 trauma center, for both pediatric and adult patients (HUH, 2022e). The Department of Internal Medicine has 11 clinical divisions and 8 clinical centers that provide patients with excellent medical care (HUH, 2022f). The Department of Neurology offers inpatient and outpatient services and consultations for neurology patients (HUH, 2022g). The Department of Obstetrics & Gynecology covers women's health issues, including maternal-fetal medicine, gynecologic oncology, and urogynecology (HUH, 2022h). The Department of Ophthalmology offers various ophthalmology services, such as cataract surgery, glaucoma treatment, and pediatric eye care (HUH, 2022i). The Department of Orthopedics provides treatments for musculoskeletal system diseases and injuries (HUH, 2022j). The Department of Pediatrics & Child Health offers neonatal, emergency, and adolescent health services (HUH, 2022k). The Department of Surgery provides specialized surgical services in areas such as cardiovascular, bariatric, and minimally invasive surgery (HUH, 2022l). The Department of Psychiatry offers outpatient and inpatient services for mental illnesses (HUH, 2022m). Lastly, the Department of Radiology provides diagnostic imaging services for patients of all ages (HUH, 2022n).

GENDER REPRESENTATION AT HUCM

Howard University has a strong record of educating women physicians. Mary Spackman was the first female student to graduate in 1872, and Dr. Sarah Garland Jones from the class of 1893 became the first African-American and female certified to practice medicine by the Virginia State Board of Medicine (Sterling, 2010). The Bison, a collection of Howard

University yearbooks, indicates that between 1950 and 1963, female faculty representation at HUCM ranged from 6.1% in 1953 to a high of 29.4% in 1961 (Table 2).

According to the 2018-2019, State of Women in Academic Medicine published by the Association of American Medical Colleges, "The overall proportion of full-time women faculty has continued to rise since 2009, now at 41%, with similar increases at each faculty rank; yet, women make up a majority of faculty only at the instructor rank." According to the 2018-2021 data reported to IPEDS by the IRA of Howard University, nearly half (47.9%) of associate professors at HUCM are female, closely comparable with their male counterparts (52.1%). Additionally, women represent a significant proportion (47.2%) of assistant professors at the institution (Table 2). It is essential to highlight that three-quarters of female faculty members at HUCM have yet to be assigned an academic rank by IRA. Howard's record is higher than the average national female representation in senior academic ranks and leadership roles, as demonstrated by the Association of American Medical Colleges. The data from Howard University indicates a positive trend in the increasing representation of women in various faculty positions, in line with national trends.

Until recently, women were underrepresented in the leadership at the College. However, in September 2022, Dr. Andrea A. Hayes Dixon was appointed dean of the Howard University College of Medicine. She is the first Black woman to serve in this role. This was a historic moment given the college's 154-year history. This appointment marks a significant step towards addressing the underrepresentation of women, particularly Black women, in leadership positions in academic medicine. In 2021, only 22 percent of medical school deans in the US were women, according to the Association of American Medical Colleges (Cornelius 2022).

In recent years, there have been noticeable advancements in increasing the representation of women in leadership positions at HUCM, but there are areas where disparities persist. In 2021, 40% of the departments at HUCM were headed by female academic chairs (Table 2). While women also serve in other executive roles like senior associate dean, associate dean, and senior executive assistant to the dean, in 2021, 39.3% of the executive leadership positions at HUCM are held by women. Several prominent positions at HUCM are occupied by women, including vice director of the Surgery Residency Program, chief of endocrinology and director of the Diabetes Treatment Center, CEO at Howard University Hospital, chief medical officer of Internal Medicine at Howard University, founding director of Clinical Skills and Simulation Centers at Howard University Health Sciences, and chief of surgical oncology (Pope-Johns, 2021). These examples highlight the progress that has been made in increasing the representation of women in leadership positions at HUCM.

Table 2. HUCM faculty by the department by IPEDS rank and gender (%) from 2018 - 2021

Department	Professor	Associate professor	Assistant professor	Instructor	Adjunct
Anatomy	75.00 (25.00)	83.33(16.67)	57.14 (42.86)	100.00 (0.00)	-
Biochemistry & molecular biology	25.00 (75.00)	71.43 (28.57)	-	-	-
Microbiology	66.67 (33.33)	62.40 (37.60)	66.67 (33.33)	-	-
Pathology	100.00 (0.00)	50.00 (50.00)	20.00 (80.00)	-	100.00 (0.00)
Pharmacology	100.00 (0.00)	50.00 (50.00)	100.00 (0.00)	-	-
Physiology & biophysics	67.33 (32.67)	67.33 (32.67)	28.57 (71.43)	0.00 (100.00)	-
Anesthesiology	100.00 (0.00)	66.67 (33.33)	88.89 (11.11)	100.00 (0.00)	100.00 (0.00)
Community & family medicine	50.00 (50.00)	50.00 (50.00)	80.00 (20.00)	-	100.00 (0.00)
Dermatology	100.00 (0.00)	100.00 (0.00)	33.33 (66.67)	-	50.00 (50.00)
Internal medicine	81.82 (18.18)	33.33 (66.67)	47.83 (52.17)	-	50.00 (50.00)
Neurology	-	50.00 (50.00)	50.00 (50.00)	-	-
Obstetrics & gynecology	100.00 (0.00)	0.00 (100.00)	60.00 (40.00)	20.00 (80.00)	100.00 (0.00)
Ophthalmology	-	0.00 (100.00)	50.00 (50.00)	-	50.00 (50.00)
Orthopedic surgery	100.00 (0.00)	100.00 (0.00)	100.00 (0.00)	50.00 (50.00)	-
Pediatrics & child health	33.33 (66.67)	0.00 (100.00)	33.33 (66.67)	-	-
Psychiatry & behavioral sciences	100.00 (0.00)	33.33 (66.67)	0.00 (100.00)	-	-
Radiation oncology	100.00 (0.00)	0.00 (100.00)	80.00 (20.00)	100.00 (0.00)	-
Surgery	100.00 (0.00)	50.00 (50.00)	50.00 (50.00)	-	66.67 (33.33)

Source: <https://ira.howard.edu/dashboards> *Values in bracket represent the % of female faculty

Table 3. Current HUCM leadership by gender and roles as of Fall 2022

	Male	Female
Dean	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Senior associate dean, academic affairs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Associate dean, student affairs/admission	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Associate dean, research	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Associate dean, graduate medical education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Associate dean, strategy/outreach/innovation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Associate dean, continuing medical education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Senior executive assistant to the dean	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Departmental chairs	12	8

Sources: <http://medicine.howard.edu/departments>; <http://medicine.howard.edu/faculty-staff/administrative-units-leadership> (

ANALYSIS & CONCLUSION

Nearly half (47.9%) of associate professors at HUCM are female, closely comparable with their male counterparts (52.1%). There has been progress in the representation of women in academic roles at HUCM, with some minor disparities in the distribution of faculty ranks. The data indicates a slight drop in the representation of women at higher faculty ranks. These trends reveal the need for continued efforts to address and rectify the underrepresentation of women in senior academic positions. Institutions like HUCM need to continue to prioritize gender equity and create opportunities for the advancement of women in academia. By doing so, they can contribute to fostering a more inclusive and diverse academic environment.

Only six out of the 20 departments at HUCM have female full professors, as indicated by the IRA-IPEDS data from 2018 to 2020. This data reflects a low percentage of women who have achieved the rank of full professorship. It is clear from the provided data and sources that while there has been significant progress in the representation of women in medicine, gender inequity is still prevalent, especially in promotion and tenure.

According to the data provided by IPEDS and IRA of Howard University for 2018-2019, 2019-2020, and 2020-2021, respectively, there was an increasing percentage of women in various faculty positions. By simulating this data using the 'Forecast' function in Excel, it is projected that approximately 62.6% of full professors in the college will be women by the year 2030. (Fig. 4). An upward trend is also anticipated for assistant professors, with a substantial 82.60% projected to be women by 2025. Conversely, the figures for associate professors and adjunct professors indicate a decrease, with an expected representation of 23.4% and 7.6%, respectively by the same year. In conclusion, the data from Howard University reflects a positive trend in the increasing representation of women in various faculty positions. The projected rise in the percentage of women in full professor and assistant professor roles by 2030 is a promising indicator of the progress being made in addressing gender inequity in academic medicine. However, the decline in the projected representation of women in associate professor and adjunct professor positions is a concern that needs to be addressed.

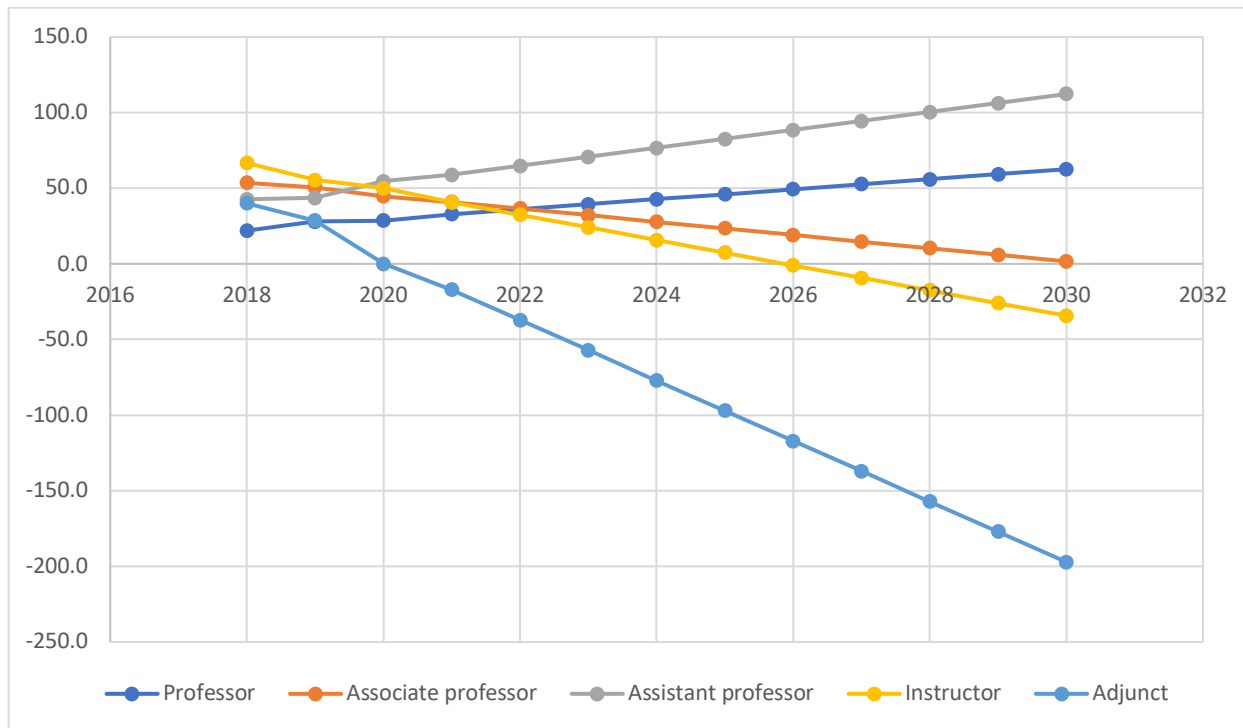


Figure 4. 2030 HUCOP faculty projections using the 'Forecast' function in Microsoft Excel

The increasing representation of women in medicine over the years has been a remarkable achievement, with the percentage of female physicians steadily rising. Howard's Medical School contributes to this progress by graduating a significant number of Black or African American physicians, addressing the underrepresentation of this demographic in the medical field.

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