

College of Dentistry

BLACK WOMEN IN HIGHER EDUCATION:
THE HOWARD UNIVERSITY EXPERIENCE



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NO. 20

NOVEMBER 2023



1867

**HOWARD
UNIVERSITY**

CENTER FOR
**WOMEN,
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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.



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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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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are grateful to the many Howard University community members who contributed to this project: Dean Oluwaranti Akiyode, Dr. Mario Beatty, Dr. Helen Bond, Dr. Melanie Carter, Dr. John Cotman, Dr. Emily Cramer, Dean Sandra Crewe, Dr. James Davis, Lakeiya Dulcio, Camryn Edwards, Dr. Earl Ettienne, Dr. Farhana Ferdous, Dr. Ruby Gourdine, Weslyn Harmon, Dr. Kathy Marshall, Dr. Celia J. Maxwell, Anita Schmied, Kobii Spruill and Dr. Grant Warner. We recognize the valuable contributions of the late Dr. Ruby Gourdine, a trailblazer in social work and an esteemed mentor and colleague.

Black Women in Higher Education: The Howard University Experience The College of Dentistry¹

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This draft: December 2022

ABSTRACT

The Howard University College of Dentistry was established in 1881 as a teaching and patient care institution created to meet the growing need for dental services in the District of Columbia. Until the 1950s, the under-representation of women in the dental profession was because of significant barriers to women entering the field. This began to change in the late 1970s following the civil rights movement that led to the formulation of policies to promote the enrollment of women in professional health schools. This report examines gender representation in the College's administrative leadership ranks. As of 2021, on the faculty, the number of male and female professors was equal. The dean and all of the associate deans were women. The author concludes that the significant representation of women in leadership positions at Howard University reflects a positive trend toward gender equality that should be sustained through policy and practice.

AN HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF HBCUS

HBCUs, an acronym for Historically Black Colleges and Universities, are institutions created to educate African Americans and people of African heritage. The creation of HBCUs is part of the commitment to ensure racial upliftment and community empowerment of the black community (Albritton, 2012). Before the Civil War, few colleges included the education and training of black people in their mission and goals. Some of the colleges were Lincoln and Cheyney Universities in Pennsylvania, and Wilberforce University, in Ohio, and they were the only viable options for "free" Black men and women who wished to pursue a college education at that time (Gasman and Tudico 2008).

However, when the Civil War ended, more opportunities became available for free Black men and women to attain their education. Such opportunities included the Freedman's Bureau and many colleges and universities opened by churches, for instance, Atlanta's Spelman Seminary, which later became Spelman College. (Laubach 2007). Today, more than a hundred HBCUs in the United States are committed to the education and liberation of black men and women.

¹This work was financially supported by the Center for Women, Gender and Global Leadership.

Howard University (HU) is one of the oldest historically black universities in the United States. Established in 1867 by the act of Congress, it was named after Oliver Otis Howard, a Union general in the Civil War and a director of the Freedmen’s Bureau. HU was founded to make education accessible and available for Americans of African descent. At a time when most African Americans were only interested in acquiring vocational education, Howard University was responsible for the provision of education in the social sciences, physical sciences, fine arts, law, and medicine. Since its inception, Howard has been at the forefront in terms of the academic, professional, political, and economic advancement of Black District of Columbia (DC) residents, African Americans from other parts of the country, and people of African descent from around the world.

THE COLLEGE OF DENTISTRY: AN OVERVIEW

The Howard University College of Dentistry was established in 1881 as a teaching and patient care institution. It was created during the fourteenth session of the Medical College of Howard because of the growing need for dental services in the District of Columbia (Barrier, 1934). It is the fifth oldest dental school in the United States, one of the only two HBCU dental schools, and one of two dental colleges in combined Washington, District of Columbia-Baltimore, Maryland.

The first lecture was given by Dr. James Hodgkins of the medical faculty, who was instructed to lecture the then-medical class on Practical Dentistry. The following year, Dr. X. W. Whitcomb, of Buffalo, New York was appointed professor of Operative Dentistry. His responsibility was to lecture those interested in oral health, and “a small fee” was charged. Six students enrolled for the course “Extraction of teeth,” the only course offered that year (Barrier, 1934). By 1884, Dr. Starr Parsons and Dr. N. W. Whitcomb were now in charge, and that was when the first regular lectures in dentistry began. The expectation from students by 1885-86 was that a dental student, before graduation, “should treat some patient” and “bring him before the Professor of Operative Dentistry”; prepare an “artificial case” and “bring the patient before the Professor of Dental Mechanics; “prepare at least one approved specimen case made at the college building to be deposited in the University collection”; “present a written thesis on some dental subject” also “provide himself with such instruments as were necessary for the Infirmary and laboratory” (Walter, 1929). The student who enrolled and graduated for the initial years was very small and is presented in the table below

Year	Students	Graduates
1882-1883	6	0
1883-1884	5	1
1884-1885	2	1

The first black graduate was Russell Alexander Dixon (February 24, 1898 – January 3, 1976), who also doubled as the first African American dean of Howard University College of

Dentistry, and the longest-serving dean in Howard dental education, with a 35-year tenure from 1931 to 1966.

Since its inception, the Howard University dental school and clinics have provided quality patient care and service to the community. The mission of the College of Dentistry includes the education of dental practitioners and dental hygienists, research, and service to the community. The college is made up of several departments discussed below. Before delving into the detailed discussion on gender in dentistry at Howard University later in this report, it is notable that as of 2022, 8 out of the 10 departments were chaired by females.

Department of Clinical Dentistry

The Department of Clinical Dentistry is responsible for formulating and maintaining clinical policies, establishing and implementing the clinical fees, and maintaining the standard of care the college provides. The current chairperson is Dr. Candace Mitchell, who also serves as an Associate Dean.

Department of Periodontics

This department deals with the training of general dentists to be skilled in the diagnosis and treatment of periodontal disease and to teach them the implication of periodontal oral disease on the overall health of their patients. The current chairperson of the department is Dr. Crystal Mcintosh.

Department of Dental Hygiene

Established in 1934, the department graduated its first class in 1935. The department's goals include maximizing students' potential to become excellent dentists, participating in and supporting community activities, and developing and implementing research programs. The department is currently chaired by Dr. Dawn R. Smith.

Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Pathology and Research

The Department trains students in the clinical practice and didactic teaching of the nature, identification, and management of diseases affecting the oral and maxillofacial region. The Department also conducts research on oral and maxillofacial pathology. It is currently chaired by Dr. Esther Childers.

Department of Restorative Dentistry

The department is divided into sub-divisions: restorative dentistry, fixed prosthodontics, removable prosthodontics, and community dentistry. Dr. Robert Gamble currently chairs the department.

Department of Endodontics

The department trains students in the diagnosis and treatment of diseases of the pulpal and periapical tissues. The department is currently chaired by Dr. Paula Nesbitt.

Department of Oral Diagnosis and Radiology

The department trains dentists to be able to critically analyze data from patients' medical history, clinical observation, and diagnostic aids. Dr. Gail Cherry-Pepper currently chairs the department.

Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery

The department trains students and professionals in the evaluation, diagnosis, and surgical treatment of diseases and defects involving hard and soft tissues of the oral and maxillofacial region. Dr. Dana Jackson currently chairs the department.

Department of Pediatric Dentistry

This department trains and equips students and professionals with the skills and knowledge required to practice and teach pediatric dentistry. Dr. LaToya Barham currently chairs the department.

Department of Orthodontics

The department was created in 1967 and has graduated over 200 orthodontists. The department trains students and residents in the clinical diagnosis and treatment of oral malocclusions. Dr. Kathy Marshall currently chairs the department.

KEY WOMEN IN THE COLLEGE OF DENTISTRY

Since its inception in 1881, there have only been two female deans of the Howard University College of Dentistry. Dr. Jean Sinkford served as the first female dean and Dr. Andrea Jackson served as interim dean before being formally appointed to dean.



Dr. Jean Sinkford

Dr. Sinkford studied psychology, chemistry, and dentistry at Howard University. She graduated from dental school in 1958 and joined the Howard faculty in the Division of Prosthodontics. She was appointed as the Associate Dean and Research Coordinator for the College of Dentistry, Howard University in 1975, and this came after she was elected to the American College of Dentists in 1967. At that time, she was the only female possessing this rank in any U.S. dental school. As part of her professional activities, she served as a consultant in Prosthodontics for several local hospital

staff, lectures dental students, writes for scientific journals, and conducts seminars for societies.

She established the American Dental Education Association Center for Equity and Diversity in 1998 and was the director for 17 years. In 2015, the American Dental Association conferred her the Distinguished Service Award. She is also a past recipient of the Candace Award from the National Coalition of 100 Black Women. She is a member of several professional bodies such as the Institute of Medicine, the American College of Dentists, and the International College of Dentists.

Dr. Sinkford is a published author with more than 90 articles in peer-reviewed journals. She also wrote an instructional manual for Crown and Bridge Prosthodontics and is the co-author of "Women Health info in the Dental School Curriculum: Report of a Survey and Recommendations." (Cobb and Johnson, 1975).

Dr. Andrea Jackson



Dr. Jackson received her Bachelor of Science degree, Doctor of Dental Surgery degree, and a certificate course in general dentistry at Howard University. She has served at HU for more than 30 years in positions of increasing responsibility at the college including the interim dean, associate dean of clinical affairs, professor and chair of the Department of Prosthodontics, and most recently, dean. Within the national dental organizations, Dr. Jackson has been of immense service. She has served as a member of the Joint Commission on National Dental Board Examinations, the Commission on Dental Competency Assessments, and the American Dental Education Association. She is a diplomat in

the American Board of Prosthodontics, a fellow in the American College of Prosthodontists, and a fellow in the American College of Dentists.

The next section examines wider concerns connected to gender equality and diversity within the dental profession in order to establish a background for the upcoming data and analysis of the College of Dentistry.

GENDER EQUITY AND INCLUSION IN DENTISTRY

Gender inclusion and equity are essential parameters for progress in any profession. Inclusion helps to create a culture in which diversity is understood, valued, and leveraged, thereby resulting in well-being, job satisfaction, and commitment among a group or workforce. Inclusion also promotes innovation, the representation of multiple perspectives, justice, and the quality of the decision-making process. In the dental profession, all stakeholders, including researchers, academic clinicians, and professional associations, are affected by and benefit from gender inclusion and equity.

In the United States, women had a very slow start in the dental profession and dentistry was a male-dominated profession, especially in the 19th century. The first dental school in the US enrolled only male students. In 1870, only 0.3% of US dental graduates were women, the numbers increased to 2.7% by 1900, followed by a decrease to 1.7% in the 1950s (Shue and Seldin 2017). However, in countries like Greece and France, half of the dentists present in the 1970s were women. In developing countries like Nigeria, women started enrolling in dental schools when the first school was established in 1965 (Ogunbodede, 2004). The under-representation of women in the dental profession was because women were victims of stereotypes and were often characterized as emotional, distracting, clumsy, fragile, and generally less capable than men in the profession.

Things began to change in the late 1970s following the civil rights movement, which stimulated discussions and grassroots activism about gender inclusion, and this led to the formulation of policies to promote the enrollment of women in professional health schools. Consequently, there was an increase in female enrollment in dental schools in the 1980s (19.8%), this number increased to 38% in 1990 and up to 44% in 2005, with about 44.9% of dental graduates being females in 2006 and 51% in 2020 (Bompolaki *et.al.*, 2022).

The increasing number of female dental students and graduates has raised concerns about whether there will be a proportional increase in female faculty and administrators in dental schools. The low female representation in administrative and leadership roles in dentistry can be attributed to the delay in the enrollment of female students into dental schools. Even though there has been an immense effort to promote gender equity and inclusion in academic dentistry in the past decade, women remain marginalized in leadership positions such as deans, department chairs, executive directors of professional organizations, and chief editors of journals (Jacobson *et al.*, 2021). Although the number of men and women currently attending dental school is equal, it will take some time before the number of male and female dentists working in the field becomes balanced. (Slapar *et al.*, 2018).

There are a few broad trends that can be noted when it comes to gender in dentistry. One trend is the increasing representation of women in the field. In the past, dentistry was a male-dominated profession, but this has been changing over time. A small proportion of researchers in the field of dental and oral health are female, and these researchers make up an even smaller proportion of the overall research workforce. Additionally, men hold the majority of full-time faculty positions at dental schools, with only 39% of these positions held by women (Garcia *et al.*, 2020). Today, women comprise a significant portion of dental students and practicing dentists. According to data from the American Dental Association, women comprised around 50% of dental students in 2020, and approximately 38% of practicing dentists in the United States were women. These numbers will likely increase as more women enter and succeed in the field. The profession is not only becoming more diverse in terms of gender but also in terms of race and ethnicity, as there are now more female dentists who identify as Hispanic, African-American, or African compared to their male counterparts.

In addition to increasing numbers, women in dentistry tend to have higher completion rates in residency training in general and pediatric dentistry than male dentists. They also have different practice patterns compared to their male counterparts. For example, studies have shown that female dentists are more likely to work part-time and in group practices, while male dentists are more likely to work full-time and in solo practices. This trend may be partly due to the fact that women are more likely to have caregiving responsibilities outside of work, such as raising children or caring for elderly relatives. There has also been an increase in the number of female and male dentists working in specialties. For female dentists, the most extensive growth was seen in pediatric dentistry and oral surgery, followed by orthodontics. Similarly, for male dentists, the most significant growth was in pediatric dentistry and oral surgery. Although most female and male dentists were general practitioners, a higher percentage of female dentists worked in pediatric dentistry (Surdu *et al.*, 2020).

Another trend is the pay gap that exists between male and female dentists. Despite the increasing representation of women in the field, there is still a pay gap between male and female dentists. According to data from the American Dental Association, male dentists earn an average of about \$20,000 per year more than female dentists. This pay gap is not unique to dentistry and is a trend that is seen across many professions. However, it is an issue that is being addressed by professional organizations and advocacy groups (Vujicic *et al.*, 2017).

Additionally, there is a growing recognition of the importance of addressing the needs and concerns of diverse patient populations, including those who identify as LGBTQ+. This includes training dental professionals to provide culturally competent care to all patients, regardless of their gender identity or sexual orientation.

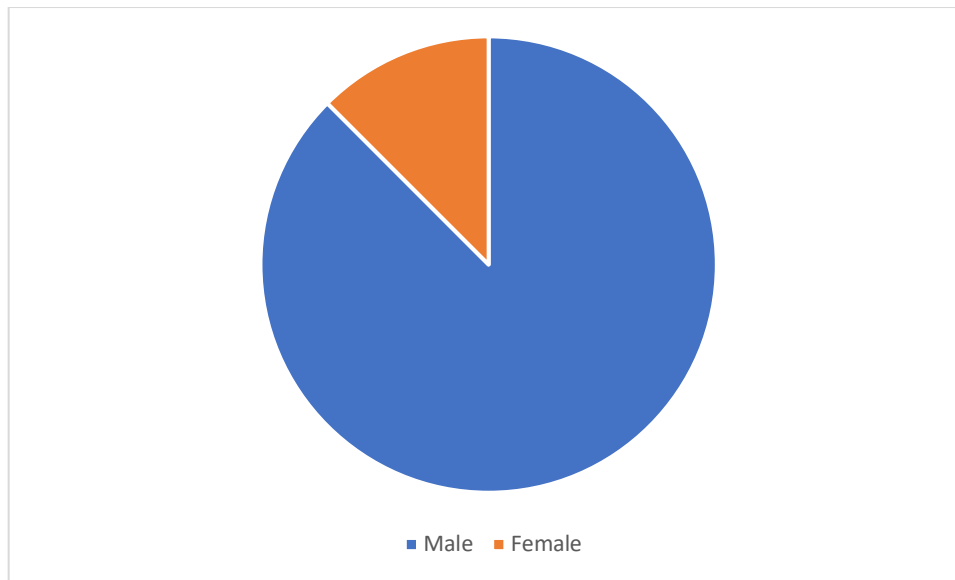
Overall, the field of dentistry is becoming increasingly diverse and gender-balanced, but there is still work to be done to ensure that women dentists can succeed and thrive in their careers. The American Dental Association (ADA) is working to increase diversity within the dental field in several ways. The ADA Institute for Diversity in Leadership focuses on developing the leadership skills of dentists who come from racial, ethnic, or gender groups that have traditionally been underrepresented in leadership positions. The ADA Accelerator Series offers financial, leadership, self-care, and work-life balance resources to help dentists, particularly female dentists, advance their careers.

The progress towards gender equality and diversity in the field of dentistry is commendable, but there is still more to be achieved. The efforts of institutions like Howard University are pivotal in creating an inclusive environment and providing opportunities for women in dentistry to thrive. The next section presents data on gender at Howard University's School of Dentistry and the success, barriers, and challenges of women administrators.

REPRESENTATION BY GENDER

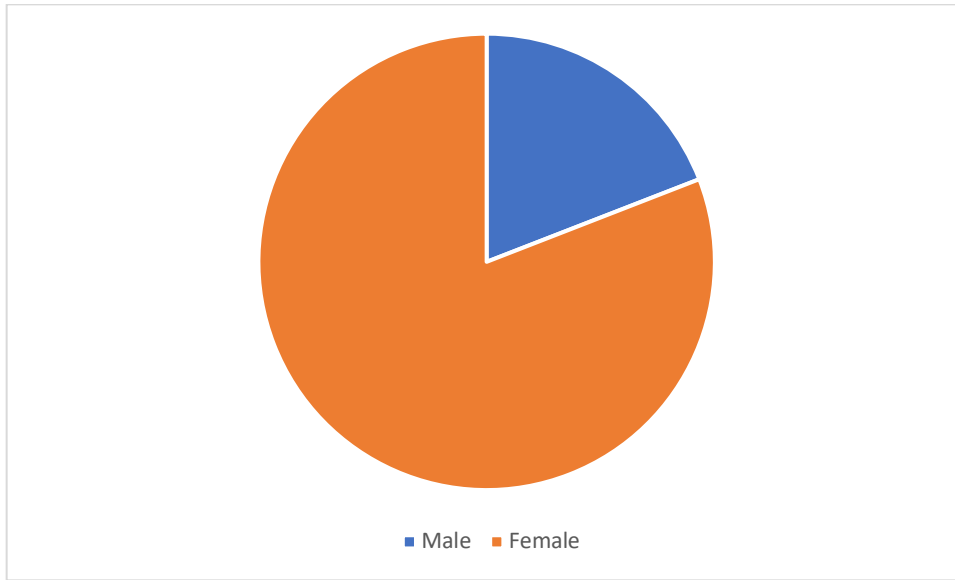
Based on available data for this research project, there have been sixteen deans and one interim dean of the Howard University College of Dentistry. Only two of the sixteen deans have been women. According to the information gathered from the Howard University yearbook, catalog, and commencement programs since the inception of the Howard University College of Dentistry in 1881, women's representation in the deanship has not increased, with most of the deans (87%) being male and 12% being females (See Figure 1 and Appendix I). Using this same information, going back to 1881, the male deans served longer than the female deans and even some of the male deans were appointed twice (See Appendix 1). However, the low female representation does not translate to low contribution by female deans, as the two female deans have contributed immensely to the College and the profession of dentistry at large as described in their biographies above. The current leadership in the various departments that make up the College of Dentistry also shows that 80.9 % are female while 19.1% are male (Figure 2 and Appendix II). In the professoriate, there are an equal number of male and female professors, with more male associate and assistant professors while all the instructors are male (figure 3).

FIGURE 1: Gender Representation of Deans of Howard University College of Dentistry (1881-2022)



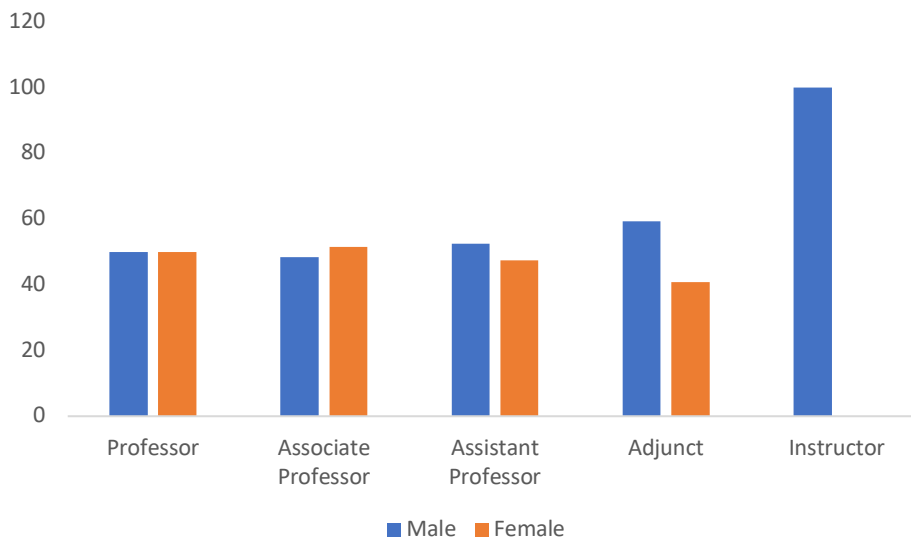
Source: Howard University commencement book and catalog

Figure 2: Gender representation of the current leadership of Howard University College of Dentistry (2022)



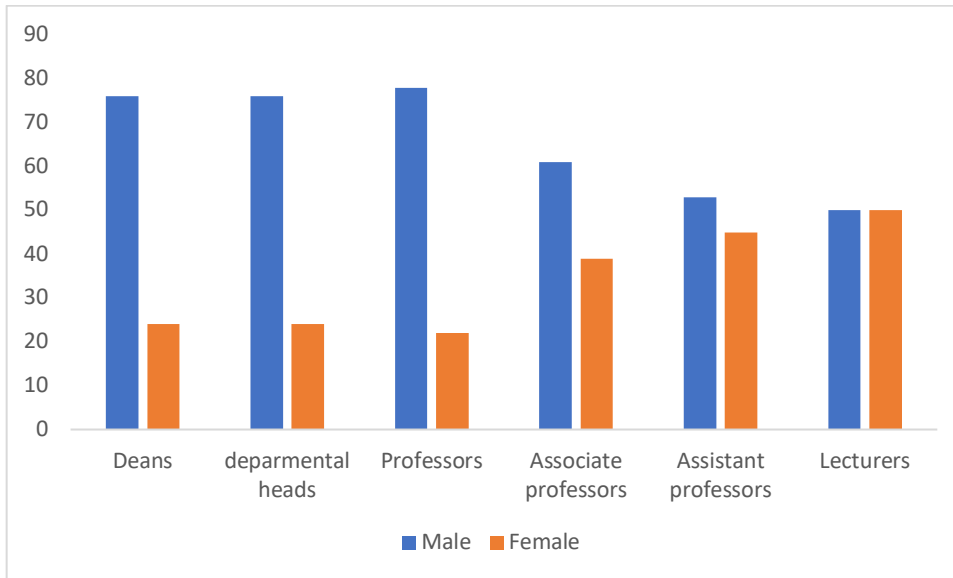
Source: *Howard University College of Dentistry Web Page*

Figure 3: Gender representation of Howard College of Dentistry faculty (2018 to 2022)



Source: College of Dentistry website

Figure 4: Gender representation of the US Colleges of Dentistry Faculty (2018).



Source: American Dental Association, 2018.

DISCUSSION

This significant representation of women in leadership and faculty positions at Howard University's School of Dentistry reflects a recent positive trend toward gender equality in the field of dentistry. This research aimed to assess the representation of women in leadership positions and the gender distribution of the workforce at the Howard University College of Dentistry. The results provide evidence of a reduction in the gender gap and that a considerable majority of women are currently in leadership and administrative positions in the College.

Based on the results of this study, the male-to-female ratio of Howard College of Dentistry deans since its founding is approximately 8:1, this ratio shows the under-representation of women, and is in accord with the 5:1 male-to-female ratio that has been consistently observed in the US dental schools in the last decade (Tiwari *et al.*, 2019, Bompolaki *et al.*, 2021). This result is also on par with the findings of other studies on gender inclusion and diversity which indicated the underrepresentation of women serving as presidents of professional organizations, lead speakers at scientific meetings, or chief editors of scientific journals (Phasuk *et al.*, 2021). Several challenges to the advancement of women into administrative and leadership roles in academic dentistry have been identified, they include gender inequality and bias, lack of policy to encourage retainment of female faculties, lack of

professional mentorship and career development, maintaining a proper work-life balance and inequality in remuneration (Feldman, 2015).

In the professoriate, the ratio of male to female faculties in Howard College of Dentistry is approximately 5:3, which shows the under-representation of women. However, the gender gap is minimal when compared to what is obtainable in other US dental schools where the gender gap is vast (16:9). This is an indication that the trend at Howard University is moving away from what was obtainable in 1975 when Dr. Sinkford was the first and only female dean of a dental school in the US. It also shows that women at Howard's College of Dentistry have come a long way in bridging the gender gap in academic dentistry and are leading the way in gender diversity and inclusion. A previous study concluded that schools with female deans tend to have more women in other administrative roles justifies the recent trend at Howard as the number of women in administrative roles increased since Dr. Andrea Jackson became dean in 2019 (Bompolaki *et al.*, 2021). The current estimate at Howard is optimistic for female faculty and administrators to reach parity with their male counterparts in the next generation.

Getting appointed dean usually requires being previously involved in administrative roles, serving as department chair or director of a unit and academic roles; and rising through the ranks to become a professor. Women at the Howard College of Dentistry are well represented at the professor, assistant professor, and associate professor levels. Again, this indicates a bridging of the gender gap in terms of the appointment of deans in years to come. This is, however, not the case in other US dental Colleges, it has been shown that gender inequality and underrepresentation of women in academic leadership might not change soon because even though women are well represented at the assistant professor level, higher ranks of associate professorship and professorship, have been reported to be dominated by men (Candamo *et al.*, 2019).

The field of dentistry has seen several trends and changes in recent years in terms of employment and demographics. One trend is an increase in the number of female dentists. According to data from the American Dental Association, the percentage of female dental students has steadily increased over the past several decades. As of 2020, nearly half of all dental students in the United States are women. This trend is also reflected in the workforce, as more and more women are becoming practicing dentists and taking on leadership positions within the profession (Surdu *et al.*, 2021)

Another trend is an aging workforce, with many dentists nearing retirement age. This presents opportunities for younger dentists to enter the workforce and assume leadership roles. There is also a trend of consolidation in the dental industry, with an increase in the number of corporate dental practices and dental service organizations. This can have an impact on the way dentistry is practiced and on employment opportunities for dentists.

In terms of demographics, the majority of dentists in the United States are white and male. However, there has been an increase in the number of dentists from diverse backgrounds,

including dentists from minority racial and ethnic groups, which helps ensure that the profession is representative of its diverse population.

The need for diversity and inclusion in the field of dentistry cannot be overemphasized. Firstly, a diverse workforce helps to ensure that the profession is representative of the diverse population it serves. This can improve access to oral health care for all, as a diverse workforce is better equipped to understand and address the unique needs and concerns of patients from different cultural, ethnic, and socio-economic backgrounds. A diverse workforce can bring different perspectives and ideas to the table, leading to more innovative and effective solutions to the profession's challenges.

Promoting diversity and inclusion can help to attract and retain a diverse talent pool, which can be beneficial for the profession in the long term, as it helps to ensure that there is a sufficient number of qualified professionals to meet the oral health needs of the population. Finally, diversity and inclusion also help promote gender equity and enable women to bring their different approaches and perspectives when it comes to patient care, and this can lead to more innovative and practical solutions to the challenges facing the profession. Having more women in leadership roles can serve as an inspiration and role model for other women and girls who aspire to join the field, breaking down the stereotypes and biases that may discourage them from pursuing a career in dentistry (Dhanoya *et al.*, 2021). To promote inclusion and diversity, it is essential to assess the effectiveness of initiatives to promote diversity and inclusivity in the workforce. Organizations should examine their data on diversity, the methods used in acquiring those data, and the policies implemented to determine if they achieve the intended results. This is necessary to ensure that the dental workforce of the future is equipped to provide the highest quality of care for all patients across the United States (Cain *et al.*, 2022)

CONCLUSION

The results of this research add to discussions on the position of women in academic and leadership roles within the dentistry field. Additionally, these findings offer insights for policymakers and decision-makers on matters concerning gender equality. Overall, the significant representation of women in leadership positions at Howard University reflects a positive trend toward gender equality in the field of dentistry. As of 2022, the dean and all of the associate deans are female, and the majority of department chairs were also female.

In order to sustain the current pattern and avoid a potential future decrease in the number of women holding leadership roles at THE Howard University College of Dentistry, it is vital to take into account the following suggestions:

1. Women in leadership positions should continue to advocate for policies that ensure female faculty retention and promotion, especially regarding work-life balance and salary.

2. Female faculty should continue to develop a robust pipeline for female leadership roles in and out of academia.
3. The College should collect data to identify disparities and inequities in various aspects of the institution among students, staff and faculty. This will ensure the College creates an inclusive and equitable environment and adjusts practices and policies to reflect the needs of different groups.
4. Women administrators should continue innovating and providing guidance for University administrators and their colleagues in dentistry in the U.S. on the critical role of diversity in the dental workforce.
5. International and countries dental organizations should encourage the collection of data that are stratified by gender to identify the gaps. Identifying gaps will enable the development of policies and strategies to promote gender equity and inclusion.

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APPENDIX I: Deans of the Howard College of Dentistry

Year	Name	Position	Gender	Duration of tenure
2019 to present	Dr. Andrea D. Jackson	Dean	Female	–
2018-2019	Dr. Andrea D. Jackson	Interim Dean	Female	1
2015-2018	Dr. Dexter A. Wood	Dean	Male	3
2004-2015	Dr. Leo E. Rouse	Dean	Male	11
1995-2003	Dr. Charles F. Sanders, JR	Dean	Male	8
1991-1995	Dr. Robert S. Knight	Dean	Male	4
1975-1991	Dr. Jeanne C. Sinkford	Dean	Female	16
1966-1975	Joseph L. Henry	Dean	Male	9
1931-1965	Dr. Russell Alexander Dixon	Dean	Male	34
1929-1931	Dr. A.B Donawa	Dean	Male	2
1928-1929	Dr. H.P. Davis	Dean	Male	1
1911-1929	Dr. A.J Brown	Dean	Male	18
1908-1911	Dr. C.H Howland	Dean	Male	3
1902-1908	Dr. A.J Brown	Dean	Male	6
1900-1901	Dr. H.B Hodgkin	Dean	Male	1
1892-1900	Dr. Thomas B. Hood	Dean	Male	8
1891-1892	Dr. J. F. R. Dufour	Dean	Male	1
1881-1890	Dr. Thomas. Hood	Dean	Male	9

APPENDIX II: Leadership of the University College of Dentistry in 2022

Name	Position	Gender
Andrea D. Jackson	Dean	Female
Donna Grant-Mills	Associate dean for student affairs	Female
Candace Mitchell	Associate Dean for clinical affairs	Female

Xinbin Gu	Associate Dean for Research	Female
Cheryl E.S. Fryer	Associate dean for academic affairs	Female
Tanya W. Greenfield	Director, operations, and strategy	Female
Iris Morton	Director, faculty development	Female
Dexter A. Woods	Director continuing education	Male
Christian A. King	Director, general practice residency program	Male
Melanie Thwaites	Director, pediatric dentistry postgraduate program	Female
Kathy L. Marshall	Chair, Department of orthodontics	Female
Crystal McIntosh	Chair, Department of Periodontics	Female
Dana C. Jackson	Chair, department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery	Male
Esther L.B Childers	Chair, Department of Oral Pathology	Female
LaToya Barham	Chair, Department of Pediatric Dentistry	Female
Robert Gamble	Chair, Department of Restorative Dentistry	Male

Paula Nesbitt	Interim Chair, Department of Endodontics	Female
Ioana Bettios	Interim chair, Department of Prosthodontics	Female
Alayna Smiley	Director of Oral and Maxillofacial surgery	Female
Gail Cherry-Peppers	Chair, Department of Oral diagnosis and Radiology	Female
Dawn Smith	Chair, Department of Dental hygiene	Female

APPENDIX III: Gender distribution of Howard College of Dentistry Professoriate (2018-2022) as a percentage

Rank	Number of Males (%)	Number of Females (%)
Professor	50	50
Associate Professor	48.48	51.52
Assistant Professor	52.50	47.50
Adjunct	59.24	40.74
Instructor	100	0

APPENDIX IV: Gender distribution of Dental School Faculty in the US (2018) as a percentage

Rank	Number of Males (%)	Number of Females. (%)
Deans	76	24
Department heads	76	24
Professors	78	22
Associate professors	61	39
Assistant professors	55	45
Lecturers	50	50