

Department of Afro-American Studies

BLACK WOMEN IN HIGHER EDUCATION: THE HOWARD UNIVERSITY EXPERIENCE



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NO. 23

NOVEMBER 2023



1867

**HOWARD
UNIVERSITY**

CENTER FOR
**WOMEN,
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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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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 Department of Afro-American Studies¹

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This draft: December 2021

ABSTRACT

Howard University has proven to be a catalyst for countless Black female graduates and faculty who would go on to make history. However, despite the importance of these women in Howard's early history and leadership, their role has not been thoroughly examined. Thus, the current study seeks to redress this omission in part by focusing on the contributions and legacy of the women faculty and students in the Department of Afro-American Studies from its inception to the present day. Pulling from various sources, this report historicizes the contributions of women faculty who formed an integral part of the department as well as the legacy of the first classes of women in the student body since its inception.

INTRODUCTION

Howard University is an institution of many firsts. As one of the Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) established following the Emancipation Proclamation during the Reconstruction Era, Howard was the only one chartered by an act of the United States Congress in 1867. As Rayford Logan states in his early history of Howard, the charter establishes Howard as a “university for the education of youth in the liberal arts and sciences” (Logan, 1969, p. 21). While some HBCUs opted for gender-specific institutions, Howard was unique in that it did not discriminate on the basis of gender or race, and even included white women among its first students (Logan, 1969, pp. 25, 34). In addition, no other HBCU offered a curriculum as comprehensive as Howard (Logan, 1969, p. 26). Howard offered a liberal arts education of Latin, Ancient Greek, English, history, math, and sciences as well as preparation for teachers and for students continuing on in higher learning. Over the next decade, the university expanded to include a medical, a law, and a divinity school (Logan, 1969, pp.39-52).

From the beginning, Howard was established to provide both Black men and women a well-rounded education toward a larger goal of advancement for the entire race. From its

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

founding in 1867, women have played an important role in Howard's history and legacy as well as in Howard's wider influence in the pan-African movement and Civil Rights Movement. This fact is quite important to the legacy of Howard University and the Department of Afro-American Studies. According to historian Alan Colón, the Black Power and Civil Rights Movements created an influx of African-American students into university institutions. In the 1960s and 1970s, these students began to demand Black Studies for their universities to combat the Eurocentric philosophies and ideals present in the then-current curriculum (Colón, 2008, pp. 271-272). For students in predominantly white institutions (PWIs), Black Studies would serve as a way to transform the colonial and imperialist views of the curriculum as well as the views of non-black students. For PWIs, the formation of departments of Black Studies was about creating a space for Black thought and culture that was not previously represented. For HBCUs like Howard, it was an effort to make the curriculum more responsive to the changing needs of its students.

The demand for a dedicated department of Black Studies at Howard in the 1960s represented a call for the curriculum to reflect the changing world of Black life in America. At the time of the Civil Rights Movement and the rise of the Black Power movement, much of the student body thought that the university administration was making conscious strides to make the student body more white and assimilated to white culture and thought (Hare, 1968, p. 45). How could Howard simultaneously claim that it was a "Black university" while also refusing to deviate from the status quo during a radical shift in the reality of African-American life? Colón writes that "at Howard University, disgruntled student and faculty activists held a series of conferences at Howard in 1968 and 1969 to try to transform the institution from a 'Negro' to a Black university" in an effort to bring Howard closer to the needs of Black students (Colón, 2008, p. 272). It was a plea for the university to become less of a "Negro college" and one more relevant to Black life in the U.S. Put otherwise, the curriculum needed to expand to incorporate issues facing Black America.

In April ahead of the spring 1969 conferences, Howard newspaper *Hilltop* reporter Pearl Stewart published an account of the progress of the Black Studies Program Committee. When she was observed taking notes during the April 16 meeting, she was asked to leave because the details of the committee were not to be made public to the student body. Stewart wrote that the lack of student participation in the process of appointing faculty to the department by the administration was not surprising but disappointing, considering the efforts of both students and faculty in the months prior (Stewart, 1969, p. 5). Stewart went on to graduate from the Department of Afro-American Studies in 1971, along with Gail Sims and Linda Mallard, as one of the three women who made up the senior class (the Bison staff, 1971). In May of 1969, student demonstrations came to a head as the students continued to fight "to make Howard a 'Black University'" (Coleman, 1976, p. 10). These measures led to the creation of the Department of Afro-American Studies in September 1969. None of this would have been possible without the efforts of female faculty and students.

As Logan continues on in his book *Howard University: The First 100 Years*, “From the enrollment of the first white girls in 1867,” women have enriched the life of the University (Logan, 1969, p. 56). As a Pan-Africanist, Logan understood that Howard University would have never been what it became without the inclusion of women. The presence of women within the student body and faculty did much work for the university’s legacy but also beyond the academic world. Though there were not many women in academia at the time, both students and those who worked as faculty were celebrated in the history of the university (Logan, 1969). Revolutionary change without the involvement of Black women is questionable. Howard University has proven to be a catalyst for countless Black female graduates and faculty who would go on to make history. However, despite the importance of these women in Howard's early history and leadership, their role has not been thoroughly examined. Thus, the current study seeks to redress this omission in part by focusing on the contributions and legacy of the women faculty and students in the Department of Afro-American Studies from its inception to the present day. Pulling from a variety of sources, this report historicizes the contributions of women faculty who formed an integral part of the department as well as the legacy of the first classes of women in the student body since its inception.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Beginnings

Compared to other areas of study within Howard University, the Department of Afro-American Studies is relatively new. The department, established in 1968, has grown considerably in the last five decades. Although women were not listed among the faculty until 1973, the students graduating in Afro-American studies were largely women (Howard University Catalog, 1971-1973). The Department of Afro-American Studies was created in response to a demand from students, as discussed above (Rigsby, 1970), and provided an important space to reflect upon the historical and contemporary reality of African Americans. According to linguistics expert Dr. Joseph Applegate, Afro-American Studies centers on the history of people of African Ancestry in the United States, along with the contributions and current problems faced by African Americans (Ross, 1969). With grant money from the Ford Foundation, the College of Liberal Arts (later known as the College of Arts and Sciences) established the department, major and minor programs, and concentrations of study in September of 1969 (Rigsby, 1970). The first interim chair of the department was Gregory Rigsby. In 1971, Russell Adams became the first official chair of the Department of Afro-African Studies, holding the position for three decades.

In response to the continuous Eurocentric and colonial influences on education, Howard stood and still stands as a beacon for Afrocentric education and leadership. In his book *We Are Worth Fighting For*, Joshua Myers, associate professor at Howard University states that the debut of the department in 1968 marked Howard as an institution combating the “apartheid and settler colonial societies” before PWIs did in the 1980s (Myers, 2019, p. 70). Two decades later, student-led protests formed as part of an effort to have the curriculum reflect Afro-American realities. Part of the demands for change in 1989 was the requirement

that all graduating students of Howard take a class in the Department of Afro-American Studies. This demand represented the urgency of Black students fighting for their university to acknowledge their needs and affirm their identities (Myers, 2019, p. 31).

Women of the Early Department

According to university records, the Department of Afro-American Studies employed no women in the faculty for the first five years. The department began in the fall of 1969 with a handful of male faculty. Over the next three years, the department grew to consist of four faculty members, all of whom were men (Howard Catalog, 1971-1973). There is a gap in the catalog records over the next several years that would document faculty. Such is not the case in helping to identify students with yearbooks proving to be a useful resource. Despite the makeup of the faculty, the early students in the department were made up of both male and female students. While it is difficult to calculate precisely how many students were in the department for the first few years without official records, it is possible to find estimates for how many men and women made up the department's student body according to what is available from yearbooks and commencement programs. As demonstrated by Figure 1 (See appendix), many of the students making up the graduating class of the department were women. In 1971, the senior class was all women: Gail Sims, Pearl Stewart, and Linda S. Mallard.

DESCRIPTION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AFRO-AMERICAN STUDIES

Organization of the Department

The original plan for the Department of Afro-American Studies consisted of three areas of focus: historical surveys, cultural studies, and contemporary problems (Rigsby, 1970, pp. 210-11). As the department grew, new areas were added. As of 2021, the department has three core values: "political, social, and cultural" and four major concentration tracks: politics, economy, a socio-cultural subfield, and a joint program with the School of Education. Students fulfill a predetermined number of credits to receive a major or minor in the department. The number as well as the variety of courses offered has greatly increased since the department's beginnings.

African American Studies Departments Compared

Howard's Afro-American Studies department is one of the premier programs in the country. Although its origin is very similar to those of other African American Studies departments at HBCUs, Howard University is usually listed among the top ten universities in African American studies. According to *U.S. News and World Report*, Howard University's Department of Afro-American Studies falls within the top three universities, following Rutgers University and the number one-ranked Harvard (U.S. News). Harvard's department was created in 1969 following student pressure put on the university to include more courses for the Black student population following Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination (Isselbacher, 2019).

PWIs account for most of the top-ranking universities with African American studies programs. Ranking, however, is not always the best indicator of success. There are smaller HBCUs with excellent African American studies programs that lack the resources to be considered alongside other institutions. Nevertheless, the Howard University Department of Afro-American Studies has made a name for itself.

GENDER REPRESENTATION

This section provides an overview of gender representation throughout the history of the Howard University Department of Afro-American Studies. The data represented is collected from personal interviews, catalogs, resumes, university profiles, and other sources that speak to the matter. Factoring in the gaps in university records, technological errors, and human errors, the data covered is as accurate.

Primary Gender Representation Data Analysis

To begin, it was necessary to collect statistics on the number of women faculty in the department throughout the years. This is important with such a consistently small department. This data makes it possible to review the department demographics as a whole with projected ratios. Therefore, Figure 2 (See appendix) represents the number of women faculty in the department by year.

Please note the following clarifications that account for slight irregularities due to the gaps in reporting:

- For the first few years of the department's existence, a faculty list does exist but does not include any women faculty. Hence, the value of "zero" for the years 1969-1973.
- From the years 1973-1979, there is no data to report because there are not any archived catalogs or any other sources that list faculty from the department during those years.
- Data from 1982-1983 is missing and despite the number of male and female faculty staying the same years prior and after, without the data to reference, it is not included. This is to protect the integrity of the research. There are instances where a lecturer will be at Howard University for a year or even just a semester. By this fact, one cannot assume that the number stays the same for a missing year.

What can we take away from the graph in Figure 2? First, it took at least three years before any women were employed as faculty in the Department of Afro-American Studies. This is not uncommon for the early 1970s as women in the university setting for a very new department would be low in number for at least a few years. As observed, men, particularly in this department, usually outnumber women. The conditions of the department's establishment may have also affected the number of women in the faculty for the first few years. It was the meeting of student demands that led to consideration for the department, alongside half a dozen male faculty members. These faculty members remained in the department for about two decades with almost the same individuals that entire period. As displayed in Figure 3, while the number of women faculty varied over the two decades, the

five male founding faculty stayed the same. All in all, the ratio between male and female faculty has remained relatively consistent.

Without the data for male faculty in the department, is it possible to make any hypotheses on the future number of male and female faculty? One could argue yes upon reviewing the compiled data. Again, as illustrated by Figure 3, the percentage of women faculty in the department during the given period of years ranges from approximately 50-60%. According to data collected from Institutional Research and Assessment (IRA) in 2018, the number of faculty has become considerably smaller, but women still made up 50% of the faculty (IRA).

Faculty Position Data Analysis

Another factor worth examining when it comes to gender representation in the Department of Afro-American Studies is the rank that women faculty have held over the years. Figure 4.1 and Figure 4.2 represent the number of women per ranks per year that these women held. While collecting data, it was worth noting that many of the faculty positions common in the department's early years are still in place to this day. For the Department of Afro-American Studies, this entails the following: instructor, lecturer, adjunct professor, assistant professor, associate professor, and chair. Many of the rankings stay consistent for years and it is usually a change from assistant professor to associate professor as the same individuals remained in the department for years.

The data for Figure 4.1 seems almost a mirror image of the data in Figure 4.2. This is because when Howard University established the Department of Afro-American Studies, much of the faculty, both men and women, had yet to become associate professors. Many were filling the role of lecturer or instructor. As years passed, many more became associate professors, and some eventually even acquired tenure. With the passing of time and retiring faculty, the department votes to fill vacant positions. The process moves slowly and is a phenomenon that occurs among both male and female faculty in this department.

Some data points represent a visiting faculty member for one or two years, which would explain a sudden growth in the number of associate professors from those currently employed the year before. Despite the changes in faculty number from year to year, the total number of women in the department is never more than just six individuals. This is true as well for much of the data for the number of men in the department. The number of women faculty in the department remains fairly consistent, but reached its greatest, in this century, between 2007 and 2010.

First Women

Compiling the data to analyze the demographics of the department included researching the first women—students and faculty—of the young department. The first women of the Department of Afro-American Studies did much more than graduate or teach, they set the standard for the generations of students and faculty who would follow. The department was created out of student determination and faculty action to bring Howard to recognize the

importance of creating a space for Black students to learn about their history, culture, and present reality. Even though many of the women among these early players were students, a few years later, women would join as faculty.

As previously mentioned, the faculty for the first few years of the department's history was male-dominated. The student body was the exact opposite; most of the students were women. Revisiting the three women who comprised the first senior class of the department, Gail Sims, Linda Mallard, and Pearl Stewart, all of whom graduated in 1971 (The Bison staff, 1971), it was difficult to locate any information on Sims or Mallard. However, Stewart later earned her master's at American University. She wrote for the *Oakland Tribune* and was an editor for the *Chicago Defender*. Stewart taught at both Florida A&M and Xavier University and is also the founder of Black College Wire, an online news service for HBCU journalists (Griffith, 2012). The first traceable student to graduate from the Department of Afro-American studies went on to be very successful while also making contributions to the Black community— particularly Black college students.

The first women faculty of the department are Priscilla Ramsey, Barbara Moss, and Willa Johnson. These three women were assistant professors, lecturers, and instructors, respectively, within the department for several decades. Priscilla Ramsey remained within the field of Afro-American studies for many years and continued lecturing and researching the subject after her years at Howard. Barbara Moss graduated from the department in 1977 and began teaching soon after (The Bison staff, 1977). She went on to be an assistant history professor at Clark Atlanta University and a published author (Ohio University Press). There is no record of Willa Johnson's life after leaving Howard University.

GENDER AND LEADERSHIP

What does the research say about gender representation and leadership? In the case of the Department of Afro-American Studies, the data suggests some interesting findings.

Department Chair

As of 2022, Howard University has only ever had three chairs for the Department of Afro-American Studies. Russell Adams was appointed chair of the department in 1971 (History Makers), Greg Carr was appointed in 2008, and in 2021, Michael Ralph succeeded Carr.

Lila Ammons, a reputed professor and historian, served as interim chair from 2006 to 2008 before Carr was appointed (Howard Standing Committee, 2006). At the time, she had been an associate professor at Howard University since 1989 and maintains that position today. Thus, she is the first and the only woman chair the Department of Afro-American Studies has ever had, which is not as strong an indicator of gender representation as it would be for a much older, larger department. Her service as interim chair was by no doubt beneficial to the department's continued success while in between chairs.

Tenured Professors

As with any department, there will be several tenured professors. Data listing tenured professors by name is not available to Howard University students. However, interviews with department faculty assisted in filling in the gaps. Nikongo Nikongo, an associate professor of Afro-American Studies, recalls that of the women faculty in the department, there have only been four tenured professors. The first to receive tenure according to him was Priscilla Ramsey. Ammons, Valetia Watkins, and Amy Yeboah, all of whom still teach at Howard University today, are also tenured in the department.

Every woman who has been a part of the Department of Afro-American Studies has left a positive impact on its students, the university, and the future of Afro-American studies. Recognizing the department that Howard knows today would be impossible without all the research and work conducted by the tenured and untenured women faculty, educators, and female student body of the department.

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

The Department of Afro-American Studies has been a key part of Howard University since its inception. The prestige experienced by the department in years past that continues to today is largely due to its female students and faculty. The data collected on the rich history of this department welcomes a further discussion about the data itself and what it means for the report.

Gender Representation Data Collections and Analysis

For the data on the number of male and female faculty beyond 1989, some conclusions had to be deduced. A search for data on male faculty in the department led to many dead ends. Given that the focus of the report is on women, personal communications and resumes were the greatest aid in retrieving data. Searching through the subsequent bulletins along with names provided in the Howard catalogs yielded additional names and positions held. Personal communication with professors in the department yielded even more names, from which I was able to search for publications, CVs, or forms of archived sources. Though we are living in the age of technology, data can still be difficult to find. When a source is already online, it may not always be archived. This explains why it was much easier to research both male and female faculty of the department for earlier years, but very difficult to locate names and ranks of just women faculty for the past couple of decades. Nonetheless, data made available in the past few years paired with decades of data from the early years of the department leads to the informed conclusion that typically, 40-60% of the department faculty is made up of women. See Figure 2. With data showing a range between 3-5 women in the faculty each year, one could make an educated guess that the missing data supports the notion that there are hardly ever more than a dozen faculty in the whole department at a time. Using gender representation to fill in gaps of research can help us understand the makeup of the entire department.

The fact that the male faculty typically outnumber the female faculty can be due to any number of factors. One contributing factor could be the age of women faculty. In cases like

Barbara Moss who became a professor almost straight out of her college career and taught for decades, women faculty may have had to decide between working and raising a family. Despite the department being founded in the early 1970s, allocations for women faculty to take time off to care for infants or find affordable childcare impacted women's availability to work. This certainly may not have been the case for all women faculty, but it is a decision that often puts women's careers on hold when it comes to teaching at the collegiate level.

Another factor could also simply be that Afro-American studies is a male-dominated field. Even if such pressures are not felt from the men within the department, this type of pressure from the field could also have an effect on the number of women faculty. The Department of Afro-American Studies was created to offer students and faculty ways to study what directly affects Black people living in a country that is hostile toward said people. An opportunity in the department may not have felt as welcoming to female faculty in the 1970s and 1980s without any space to be recognized as women in the field. Recognition is incredibly important for women and marginalized groups; Black women are no exception. This department was created through the efforts of both women and men students and faculty. Without those first few classes of women students, let alone the women faculty, the existence of the department as it is known today is questionable. It is only right that these women are remembered by more than just word-of-mouth or a footnote in the university newspaper. The number of women faculty may grow stagnantly, but it is important that the women that find themselves in the department feel welcome within their own space.

Analysis of Rank among Women Faculty

The analysis of the rank of women faculty is reflective of that of men in the Department of Afro-American Studies. This is not to say that the collection of data is of no importance besides gender representation. If anything, the data presented in Figures 4.1 and 4.2 are a part of the history of the department itself. It shows the eventual transition between the early days and appointments of women faculty to the latter decades of tenure. It also represents the passage of visiting professors and lecturers through the department regardless of the length of stay. In Figure 4.2, the relationship between rank and the year it was granted varies. This represents the growth of the department coming into the twenty-first century. It also marks the turn in rank, following the appointment of Carr as department chair, as some new women faculty began to teach and become tenured. This is data that may not have been previously collected all in one table and shows the patchwork of appointments that women have held in the evolution of the department. With technology progressing and archival work ever expanding, there is room for the data presented to evolve as it reflects and incorporates present and future statistics. In addition, recovering this data is also another way to honor the work of the pioneering women who have done so much for the department.

PROJECTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

Howard University is a university unlike any other and continues to grow according to the needs of its students, faculty, and the Black community. Thus, it is no surprise that the Department of Afro-American Studies should follow the same progression. Upon the end

of the COVID-19 pandemic and open campus, a boom in student enrollment and therefore a greater student population within the department itself is not incredible. The number of faculty would also need to increase in order to accommodate the population of students and growing interest in Afro-American studies outside the university. There is also the fact that all women faculty in the department are tenured professors. As the department grows, more faculty will likely be added, increasing the number of women faculty. In addition, several visiting lecturers and professors will also increase the percentage of women. It would not be too far off to estimate 4 more tenured professors, 1 or 2 assistant professors or lecturers, and a visiting professor as well. Looking back at Figure 2 and Figure 3, it is also important to be realistic with the projection. It is not very likely that the entire department will comprise more than 15 individuals, but the women faculty will increase and so will the men accordingly. Ultimately, there will be greater gender representation in the Department of Afro-American Studies but percentage-wise, the data will remain within the same range.

CONCLUSION

Howard University's Department of Afro-American Studies has a short but very rich history. Since the results of student-led protests and the efforts of a handful of faculty, the department has grown significantly in the last four decades. At the Mecca, the department stands as a center of Black scholarship, leading the way in African American studies research and leadership among the Black community. The successes of the Department of Afro-American Studies would not have been possible without the women who were integral to the department's founding and continued existence. It is important that we recognize and celebrate these women for what they have done for the department as well as the field of African American studies. Documenting this information is only one step in recognition. Continuing to study gender representation within the department not only helps to contextualize the history and evolution of the department, but it also ensures that the legacy of the women of the Department of Afro-American Studies is adequately documented.

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APPENDIX

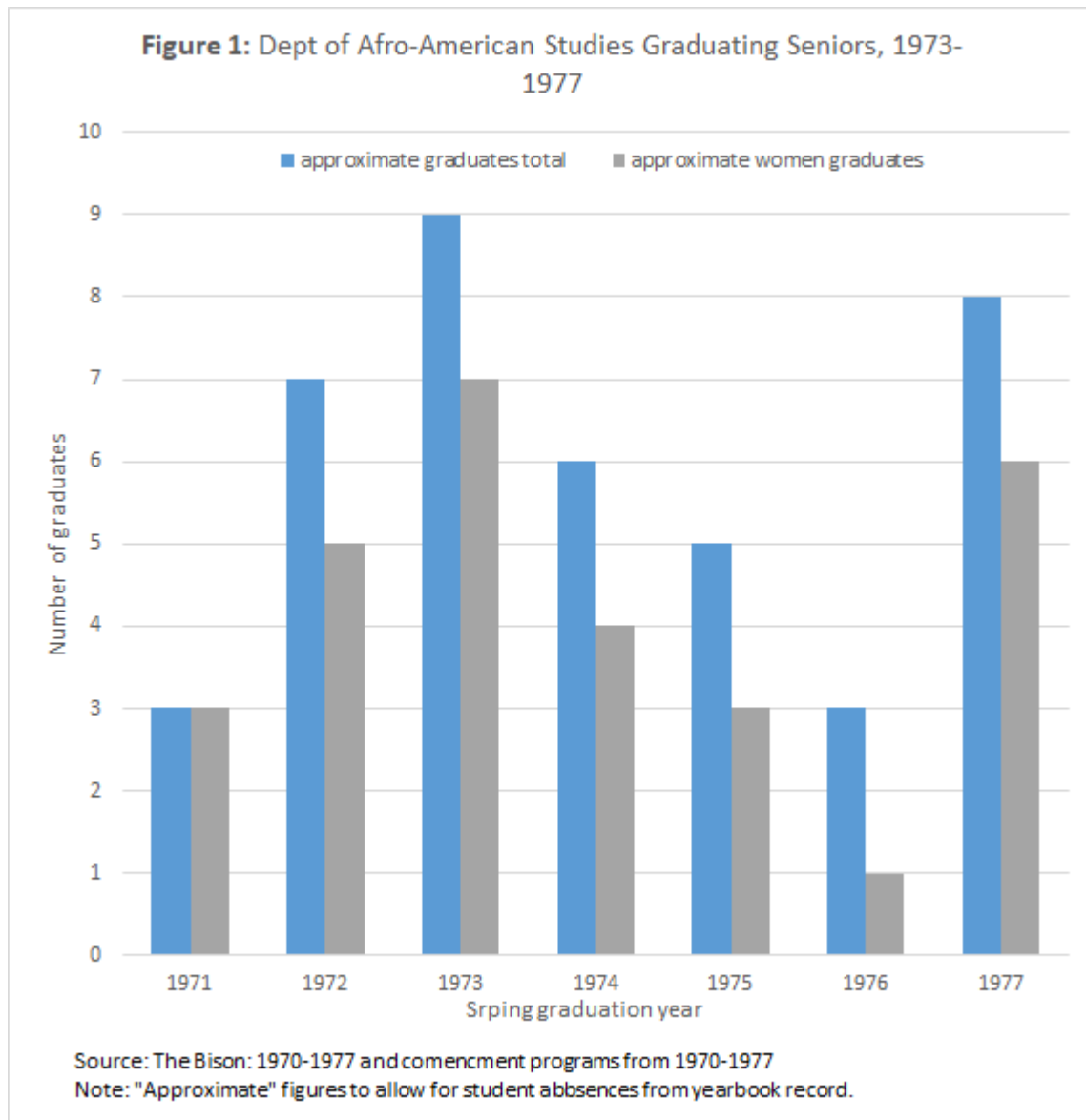


Figure 1: Dept. of Afro-American Studies Graduating Seniors, 1973-1977

Note: The number shown for 1971 does not represent the women who graduated that year, only the female seniors in the department at the time. This is important because it represents both women who graduated in the major and/or spent time within the department.

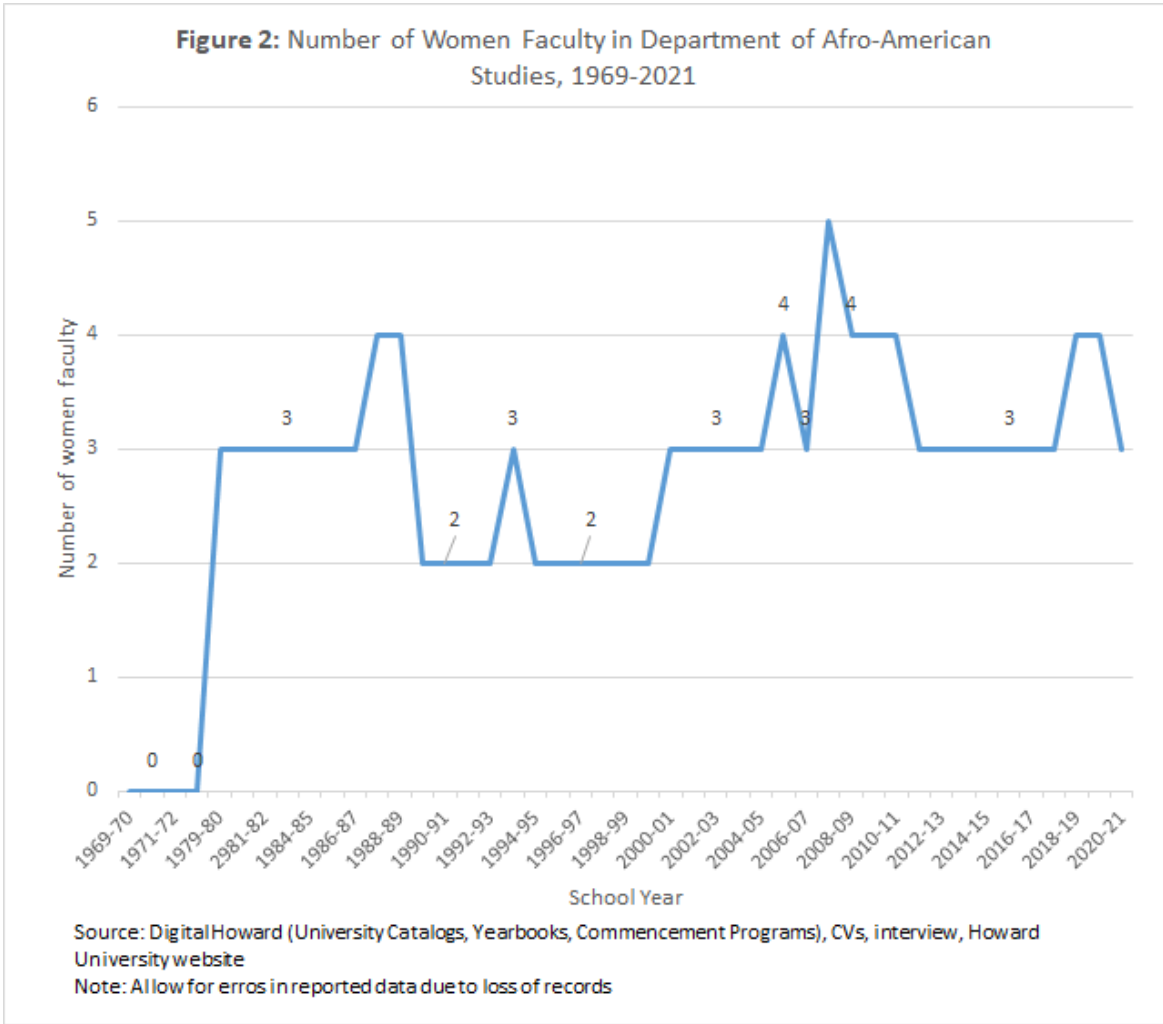


Figure 2: Number of Women Faculty in Department of Afro-American Studies, 1969-2021

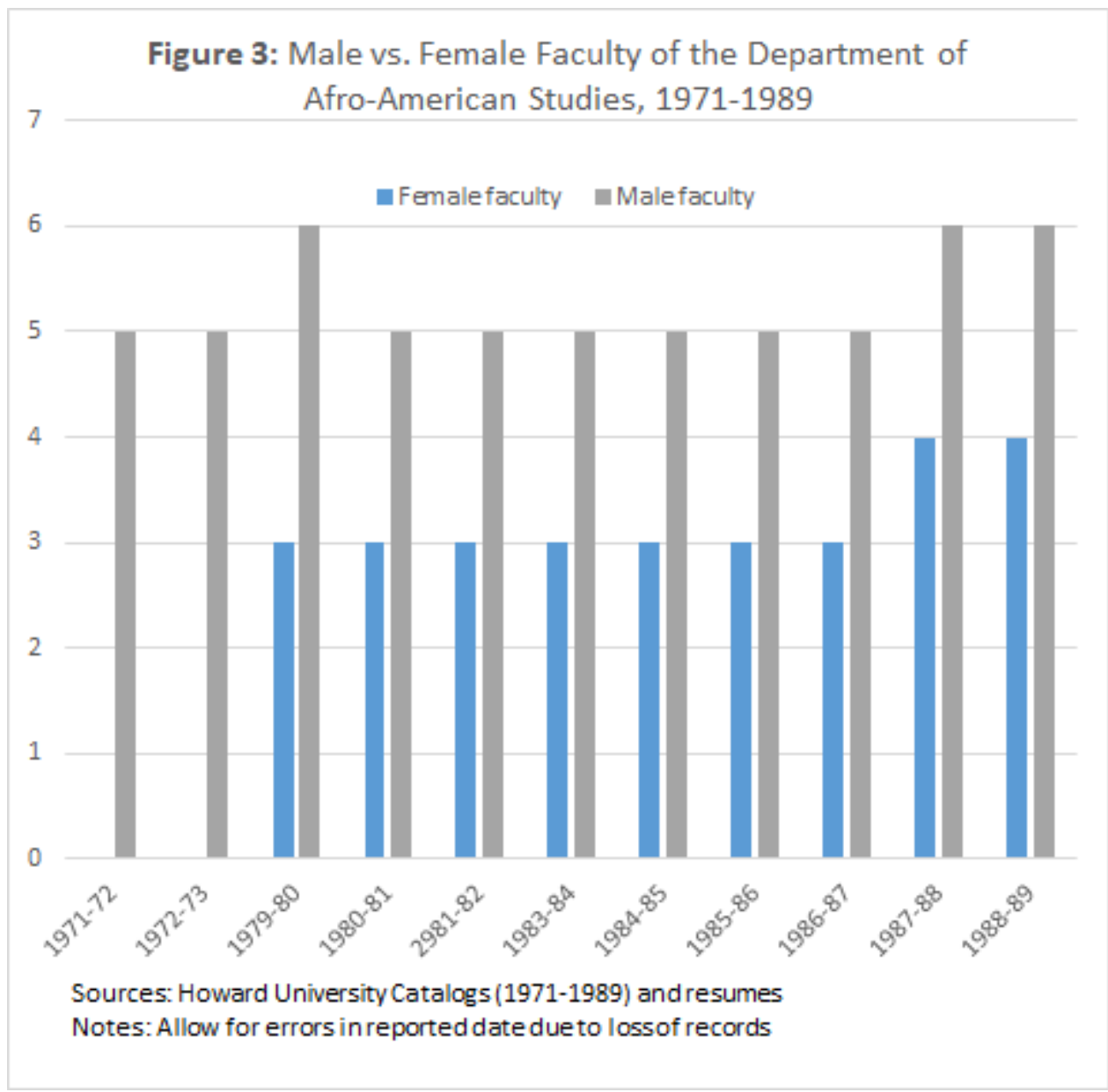


Figure 3: Male vs. Female Faculty of the Department of Afro-American Studies, 1971-1989

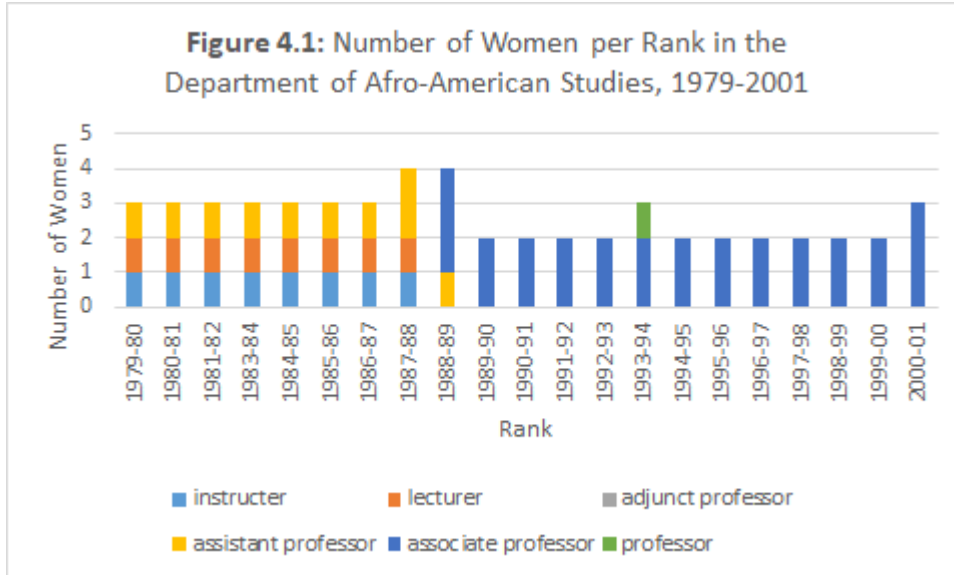


Figure 4.1: Number of Women per Rank in the Department of Afro-American Studies, 1979-2001

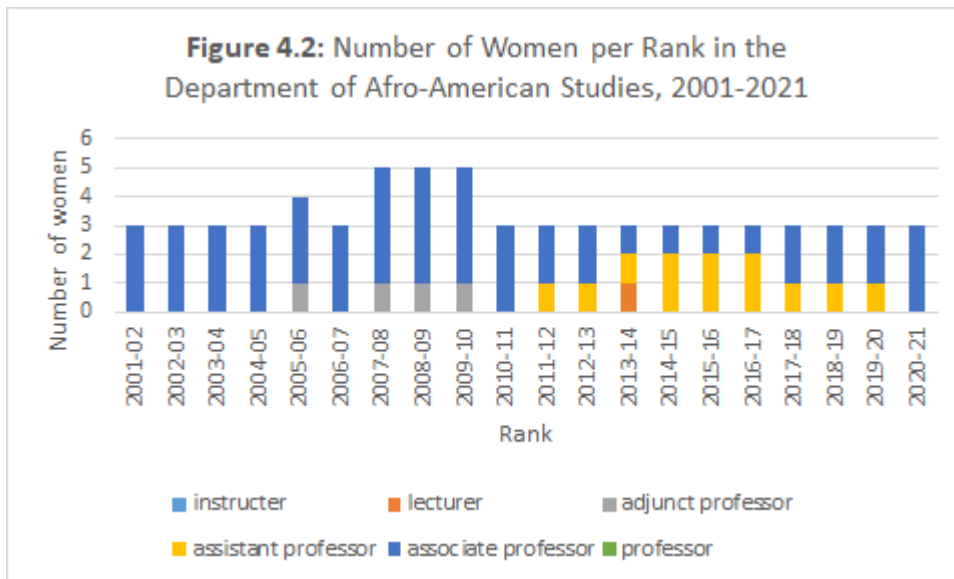


Figure 4.2.: Number of Women per Rank in the Department of Afro-American Studies, 2001-2021