

# General Introduction

BLACK WOMEN IN HIGHER EDUCATION:  
THE HOWARD UNIVERSITY EXPERIENCE



**MOUHAMADOU M. HOYECK**

**NO. 8**

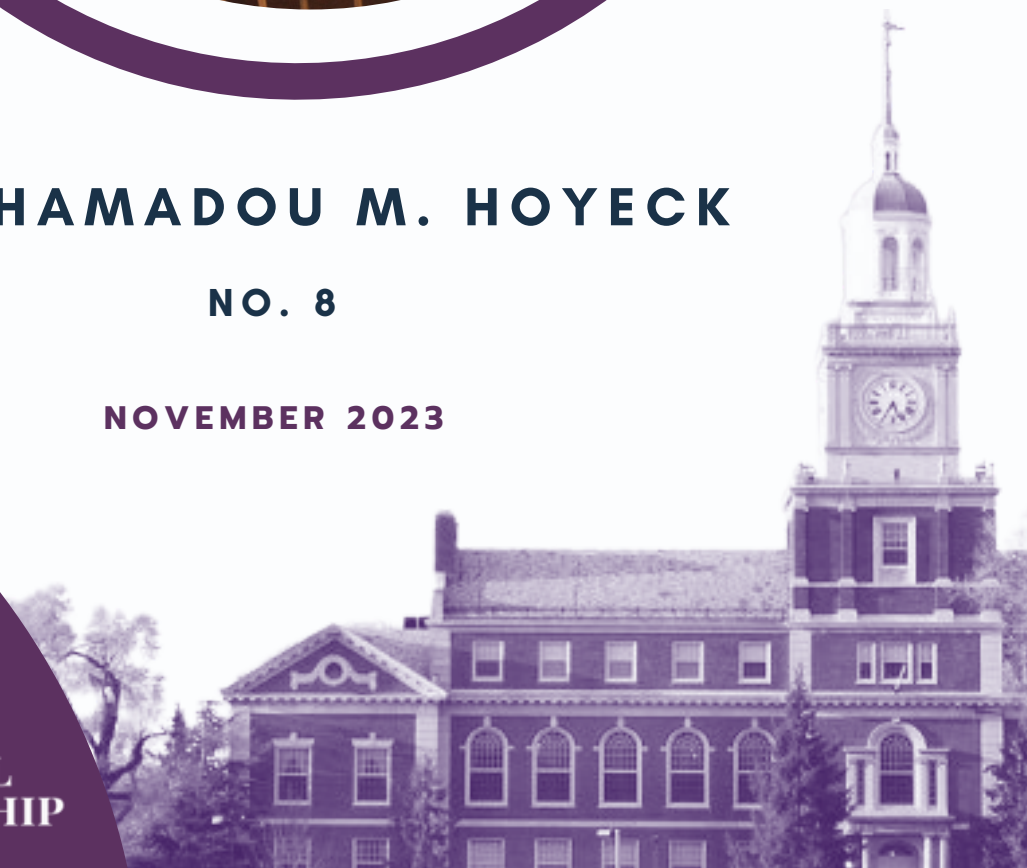
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**HOWARD  
UNIVERSITY**

CENTER FOR  
**WOMEN,  
GENDER  
& GLOBAL  
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  
WOMEN,  
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LEADERSHIP

# Black Women in Higher Education: The Howard University Experience

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## **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

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# Black Women in Higher Education: The Howard University Experience A General Introduction<sup>1</sup>

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## ABSTRACT

The results of 18 studies conducted across various schools, colleges, and departments at Howard University indicate that while women are well-represented in several areas, there are disparities in others. According to data from U.S. News & World Report, the student body is mostly comprised of women, with men accounting for less than 35%. Additionally, in the academic year spanning from 2019 to 2022, women made up 55% of the faculty. As of 2021, females occupy five out of fifteen executive positions; however, they constitute a majority among deans (77%). While there has been progress in the representation of women in academia, the disparities become more evident as women move up the ranks from assistant professor to full professor. This trend is consistent with the findings in various studies across different institutions in the US. The underrepresentation of women in senior faculty and some leadership roles is an issue, and it is clear that there is still work to be done to achieve gender equity in higher academic positions. Efforts to address these disparities should focus on not only increasing the number of women in academia but also creating an environment where they have equal opportunities for promotion, research funding, and leadership roles.

## INTRODUCTION

Howard University is committed to ensuring equal opportunity access to education regardless of race, color, religion, gender identity, disability, or sexual orientation. Internally, within the university, this commitment is attached to the preservation of harmony and living together in peace. Externally, it aims to train future citizens and professionals who are both open to the world and its diversity and know how to prevent discrimination. The university was built to serve as a temple of knowledge, mindful of the importance of inclusivity and social justice. Since its inception, its leadership has strived to create initiatives to increase diversity and the inclusivity of gender minorities. Most recently, Howard president Wayne

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



Frederick joined the United Nations women's global HeForShe initiative to create a new alliance for gender equality. With this initiative, Howard pledged to greatly contribute to the advancement of gender equality on campus and in the community.

This report documents the status of female students and faculty at Howard. It provides data on the status of women in areas including leadership positions, education, salaries, athletics, and violence. The last part of the report consists of a set of recommendations aimed to improve the conditions of women at Howard and advance gender equality.

The findings suggest that women are well represented in some areas but not all. For instance, the data show that the student body is predominantly women, with men representing less than 35% (U.S. News & World Report, 2020). In the 2019-2020 academic year, women comprised 55% of the faculty; however, 66.81% of full professors and 53.27% of associate professors are men (College Factual, 2020). Women are predominant as lectures, assistant professors, instructors, and adjuncts. One of the 18 presidents was a woman, and she was only an interim president for one year (1994-1995). However, of the 14 deans leading the different colleges, only three are men (for the Colleges of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Business, and Engineering and Architecture). Howard has more women's sports than men's. In addition to soccer, basketball, golf, tennis, swimming and diving, track and field, and cross country, women have bowling, softball, volleyball, and lacrosse teams. On the other hand, the men's football team is among the most attractive sports the university offers. The recommendations aim to suggest ways women can reach the highest leadership positions at Howard. They also provide ideas on how all types of violence, including all forms of violence against women, can be eradicated. Moreover, initiatives such as HeForShe should be recurrent, as they create a gender-equal environment at Howard.

Washington DC is home to several historical sites, including the White House, Capitol, Supreme Court, Arlington National Cemetery, and several museums. Like the rest of the country, for a long time, DC had visible domination by White men in all sectors. However, women have progressively gained representation in politics and seen their conditions change. This is illustrated by, for instance, the recognition of Belmont-Paul Women's Equality House as a National Monument symbolizing women's struggle to gain voting rights. Statues in edifices in the National Mall area acknowledge the struggles and great contributions of women to the long and rich history of DC. Two women have been elected mayor of DC, and women make up more than 20% of the police force. Among healthcare workers, women are the majority. These examples show that women's conditions are clearly changing.

Although women are making progress in many important sectors, the progress must be documented. Moreover, their advancement should not be overlooked or serve as an incentive to stop promoting women's rights. Gender inequality is still an issue. In the public sphere, women are still marginalized and usually given positions inferior to those of their male counterparts. Data from the U.S. Department of Labor show that the gender pay gap is still a reality.

Education is a crucial factor that can help address gender inequality in Washington DC and the United States. The examination of the status of women within U.S. universities. Education allows women to be fully aware of their rights and gives them the opportunity to question their place in a society that is mostly male-dominated. It is therefore an important feature in the advancement of women. Perhaps the gender gap widened considerably because for a long time, women were prohibited from attending college in many states. When they were allowed to access higher education, they were mostly disheartened by patriarchal structures. These structures perpetuating male domination in the education sector were made ineffective with the arrival of Title XI, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any schools throughout the U.S.

Today, women have access to more education and are also leaders in academia. Nevertheless, gender inequality issues persist. For instance, women make up the majority of U.S. educators but are a minority among tenure-track faculty and full professors (Schoening, 2009). Although they earn advanced degrees at an impressive rate, women tend to be in secondary roles in higher education, whereas men with the same or less experience hold prestigious leadership positions. Although many women are heads of departments and sometimes deans, college presidentship is still heavily male-dominated across U.S. universities.

The status of women in academia needs to be investigated to evaluate the efforts that have been made and propose ideas to ensure equality. This is the objective of the reports in this series, which focuses on the status of women at Howard and provides a comprehensive overview of students and faculty.

## METHODOLOGY

The statistics in this report are mostly descriptive. Most of the data are from the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment. Secondary sources were sometimes necessary; they are gathered from Howard reports or relevant scholarly articles. For more sensitive issues (sexual violence on campus and faculty salaries), the Title IX Office and Howard Human Resources department provided the data. Regarding salaries, this report does not address, for instance, why men are paid more; however, this is an attempt to show the bigger picture of gendered disparities at Howard. Data interpretation is left to the reader.

## LEADERSHIP POSITIONS

The leadership of most American universities is male-dominated. This is an important issue that should be monitored, considering that executives usually dictate and/or approve educational programs. Over the years, however, women have risen to be leaders at the university level. At Howard, women have been exponentially occupying leadership positions.

## **Administration**

Since 1867, all of Howard's official presidents have been men, although Joyce Ladner was an interim president (1994-1995). The main role of the president is to work with the board to ensure the school operates according to its mission. The president also networks and outsources on behalf of the university and facilitates moves to advance and modernize it. The importance of the position suggests the necessity of making it as open and inclusive as possible.

Other executive offices include the provost and the executive vice president. The former position is held by a man, Dr. Anthony Wutoh. The Office of the Provost manages Howard's schools, colleges, and resources. The provost takes lead over academics by determining what the university should prioritize and maintaining the quality of the programs they must implement to do so. Wutoh is also responsible for the leadership team dealing with academics and solving academic problems. The executive vice president is a woman. Tashni-Ann Dubroy assumed the position in 2017 and is assisting President Frederick with strategic planning aimed to move Howard forward. She works under the president in maintaining the integrity of the university's goals. One of her roles is to maximize Howard's performance and work with the provost as chief over academics. They report the status of the school's performance and head events such as fundraisers and alumni events. As of 2021, women held five of 15 executive positions (See Appendix 1).

## **Deans**

Contrary to the male dominance in the administration, women are the majority (77%) of deans, with only three (23%) male deans (Howard University, 2021a). The deans preside over the specific schools/colleges, admissions, and student recruitment. They manage students' academic honesty and progress, hire department chairs, and keep the subschools standardized and aligned with the university's mission and budget.

## **Faculty**

Male faculty had and continue to hold the most prestigious positions (See Appendices 2-4). For instance, the 2019-2020 IRA report shows that 75% of the faculty with no academic ranking are female, whereas 66% of full professors are male. More associate professors are male as well. These data concern all colleges and departments combined. Women take the lead in some areas, such as the school of education, where they make up over 55% of the full professors.

## **Center Directors**

As of 2021, Howard has 11 centers/institutes. The Center for Women, Gender, and Global Leadership is the latest, and it was officially launched on October 20, 2021. The centers are focal points of research, discussion, publication, and leadership. Although they can focus primarily on a specific area of study, they are interdisciplinary and welcome students from any major. Seven (63%) of the directors are women (Howard University, 2021b). The following centers are led by women either fully or partially: Clinical Skills Center, Center for African Studies, Ralph J. Bunche International Affairs Center, Center for Sickle Cell



Disease (the codirector is a woman), Ronald Walter Center, Simulation Center, and the Center for Women, Gender, and Global Leadership.

## STUDENTS

The president of the 61st Student Association Administration is a woman. The legislative branch of the HUSA is composed of 59% women and 41% men (HUSA Senate, 2021). Howard follows the national trend: more women than men enroll in universities. According to *College Factual 2021*, the student body is roughly composed of 10,000 students. Female undergraduates make up 71% of the student body, and men represent 29% (See Appendix 5). About 65% of graduate students are women, and 35% are men. Howard has over 6,000 female students and a little over 2,800 male students. The student body is mostly Black or African American. In its latest report, *Datausa 2019* showed that more degrees are being awarded to women than men; in 2019, 2,162 degrees were awarded across undergraduate and graduate programs, 67% to women.

## SALARIES

Documenting the salaries of faculty at Howard can be a challenge given that it is a private university, and it is not mandatory for officials to make this information publicly available. The data were provided by Faculty Union members who attempted to show the unequal salary distribution across genders and academic ranks. The table in appendix 6 shows that men earn more than women.

## VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Violence against women is an issue at all institutions. Although the Title IX Office receives many reports of probable sexual violence against women, it cannot quantify the exact number of cases due to confidentiality guidelines. Several prevention initiatives have been put in place, including the “HU Stand” campaign, which is a yearlong program aiming at promoting sexual assault prevention on campus. During the academic year, the Title IX Office partners with various organizations on campus to provide training sessions to educate the university community about their rights and the policies prohibiting sex-related discrimination and misconduct. The office annually commemorates months that are recognized internationally or nationally to raise awareness about sexual misconduct. With the establishment of the Center for Women, Gender, and Global Leadership, the advocacy for awareness on violence against women will be more effective and efficient.

## WOMEN'S INSTITUTIONS AT HOWARD

Howard offered spaces for women students to create gendered organizations and develop various sisterhoods. On average, 22 student organizations are dedicated to promoting women's affairs. The organizations are tools for female students to foster leadership development and student engagement while ensuring that women's interests and voices are

protected. Howard is also home to three institutions: the Women's, Gender, and Sexualities Studies, Women, Gender, and Sexualities Collective, and Center for Women, Gender, and Global Leadership. They engage in activism on gender and women's issues, discussions and scholarship on feminism, and programming. They contribute to establishing an academic environment where students can intellectually dissect the place and role of women in this globalized world. They collectively prepare student for opportunities they may encounter after graduation. They empower women and educate men to ensure that workplaces are filled with people who are gender conscious. For instance, as Byrne (2000, p. 48) put it, "without a women's center, for example, a successful, nontraditional woman student may not feel empowered to carry out her idea of establishing a hotline to help other new non-traditional women. She probably wouldn't find the space, resources, and support needed that a women's center could provide (and probably for little cost)."

## CONCLUSION

This is a general introduction to many other reports highlighting the state of women in the different Howard colleges, with a broad overview of the status of leaders, faculty, and students based on the available data. Overall, women are taking over leadership positions, even though work remains. The data on salaries, for instance, show that women are paid less than their male counterparts, which is a major area of concern for Howard. This is a crucial challenge as if women are still paid less, they may leave for better opportunities and therefore jeopardize Howard's reputation. Similarly, female representation decreases as the rank increases. The following reports expand on the status of women in the different schools, colleges, and departments.

## GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- Women's representation at the dean level is not an issue. However, women are lacking at the very top of the leadership. To change the dynamics, the university could initiate a gender parity system between the two top positions: the president and provost. For instance, if the president is a man, the provost will be a woman. For this to be possible, the university should create a leadership program to train candidates for these two positions, ensuring qualified candidates.
- Howard's male-female ratio is disproportionate, including both faculty and students. The university should consider offering an affordable daycare for female students and faculty members. This would help them focus more on school. This initiative could be carried by the newly created Center for Women, Gender and Global Leadership, which strives to ensure that Black women have the opportunity to assume leadership positions.
- Violence against women is a reality almost everywhere in the world, and Howard is no exception. The university should find a way to document the number of incidents that occur every year and, via the Title IX Office, publish a report that lists the victims and types of offenses. Although these can be anonymous, the numbers are important because that allows researchers to evaluate the efficacy of the safety programs. The data also offer Howard leadership an idea of whether the numbers are increasing or decreasing



U.S. News & World Report. (2020). *Howard University*. <https://www.usnews.com/best-colleges/howard-university-1448>

APPENDIX I

Table I: Current Leaders by Name and Position (2022)

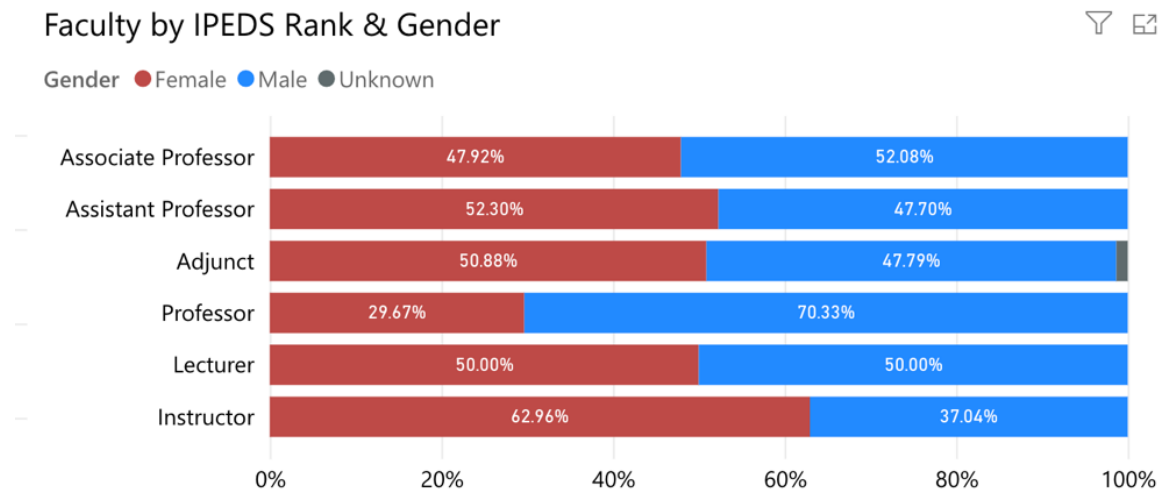
| Names                               | Positions   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Wayne A. I. Frederick, M.D., M.B.A. | President   |
| Anthony K. Wutoh, Ph.D.             | Provost & Chief Academic Officer                                |
| Tashni-Ann Dubroy, Ph.D., M.B.A.    | Executive Vice President & Chief Operating Officer              |
| Debbi Jarvis                        | Senior Vice President of Corporate Relations                    |
| Rashad Young                        | Senior Vice President and Chief Strategy Officer                |
| Stephen Graham                      | Chief Financial Officer   |
| Frank Bello                         | Interim Treasurer   |
| Frank Tramble, M.P.S.               | Vice President of Communications & Chief Communications Officer |
| Florence W. Prioleau, Esq.          | Senior Vice President & General Counsel                         |
| David P. Bennett                    | Senior Vice President of Development                            |
| Cynthia Evers, Ph.D.                | Vice President for Student Affairs                              |
| Bruce Jones, Ph.D.                  | Vice President of Research                                      |
| Hugh Mighty, M.D.                   | Senior Vice President of Health Affairs                         |

|                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| <b>Paul Monteiro</b>      | <b>Chief of Staff &amp; Assistant Vice<br/>President of External Affairs</b> |
| <b>Christie L. Taylor</b> | <b>Secretary, Board of Trustees</b>  |

Source: <https://www2.howard.edu/about/administration>

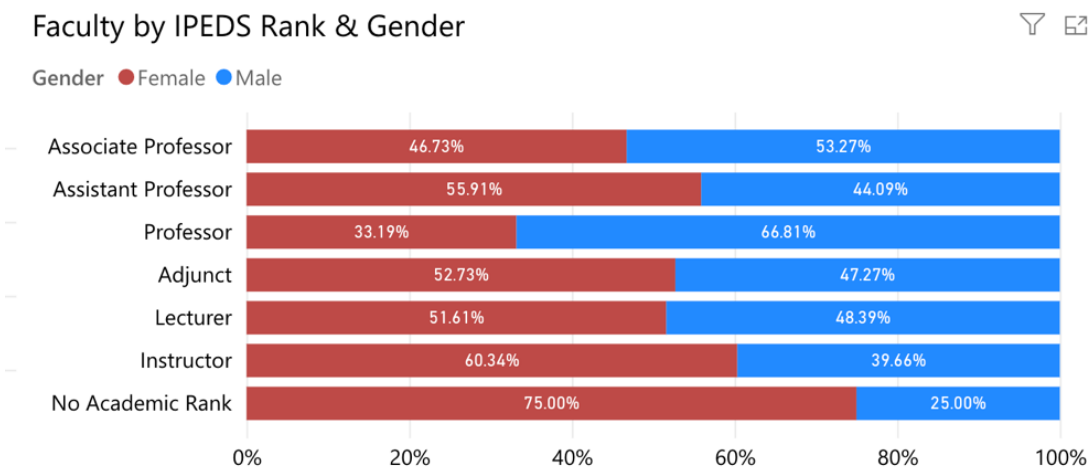
## APPENDIX 2

Figure 1: Faculty by Rank and Gender, Reporting Year 2018–2019



## APPENDIX 3

Figure 2: Faculty by Rank and Gender Reporting Year 2019–2020

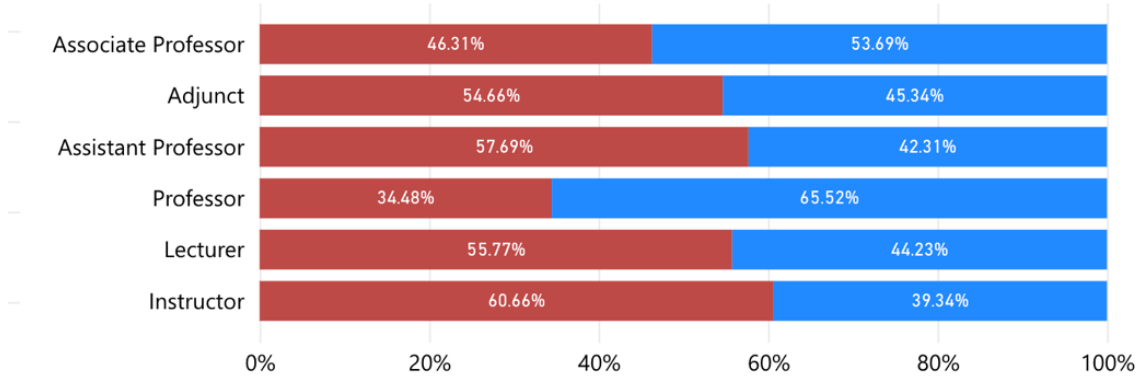


## APPENDIX 4

Figure 3: Faculty by Rank and Gender, Reporting Year 2020–2021

### Faculty by IPEDS Rank & Gender

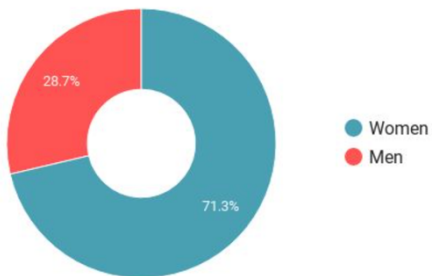
Gender ● Female ● Male



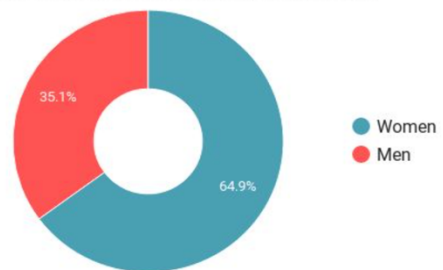
## APPENDIX 5

Figure 4: Overall and Graduate Student Male–Female Ratio

### Howard Male/Female Ratio



### Howard Graduate Student Male/Female Ratio





## APPENDIX 6

Figure 5: Average Salary by Academic Rank

