

An Overview of Women Full-time Medical School Faculty of Color

Women faculty in academic medicine and science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields face many barriers in their career advancement. Emerging studies suggest that women of color may face unique barriers, including those related to the intersection of gender and race.¹ Addressing these intersecting identities is important in understanding the experiences of individuals belonging to more than one minority group, including experiences of bias.

Women of color may experience bias in the workplace because of their intersecting identities as both racial/ethnic minorities

and women,² and research indicates that these women face additional challenges in the “double bind” (that is, having two identities that experience marginalization).³⁻⁴ Few studies, though, document the numbers of faculty who are women of color in academic medicine. Institutional leaders and administrators may benefit from knowing these numbers because they could then develop and refine institutional interventions that address barriers to advancement and equity. In this *Analysis in Brief* (AIB), we summarize the numbers and proportions of full-time faculty who are women of color and how many of these women are instructors;

assistant, associate, or full professors; or department chairs in U.S. medical schools.

Methods

Data were collected through the AAMC Faculty Roster. The Faculty Roster is an AAMC database on the academic, employment, and demographic background of medical school faculty. It is updated on a rolling basis throughout the year through uploads of data extracts from medical school databases or through manual data entry. For the purposes of these analyses, “women of color” refers to all full-time faculty not classified as “white” (including those classified as “other”).⁵

Table 1. Distribution of Women Full-time Faculty by Race/Ethnicity and Rank and Total Men Full-time Faculty, 2015

Race/Ethnicity	Women Instructors	Women Assistant Professors	Women Associate Professors	Women Full Professors	Total Women (All Ranks)*	Total Men (All Ranks)
American Indian/Alaskan	15	48	15	2	85	101
Asian	1,171	5,347	1,562	781	9,076	14,225
Black or African American	328	1,639	412	179	2,615	2,181
Hispanic, Latino, Spanish Origin	198	819	230	153	1,445	1,987
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	39	75	12	1	130	154
White	4,854	17,218	7,486	5,970	36,609	64,094
Other	184	169	39	7	408	350
Multiple Race, Hispanic	101	791	345	193	1,449	2,303
Multiple Race, Non-Hispanic	178	1,012	459	171	1,843	2,995
Unknown	1,924	4,732	631	301	8,264	9,379
TOTAL	8,992	31,850	11,191	7,758	61,924	97,769

*Columns do not add up to the totals because faculty in the “other” category are not reflected in this table. For all column values, see source link (below).

Note: This table excludes 138 faculty with missing sex data. To allow for unduplicated counts of faculty, the “multiple race, Hispanic” category includes all faculty who are reported as Hispanic and at least one other race. The “multiple race, non-Hispanic” category includes all faculty who are reported as more than one race but who are not reported as Hispanic.

Source: AAMC Faculty Roster, U.S. Medical School Faculty, 2015. www.aamc.org/download/453396/data/15table11.pdf.

1. Ginther DK, Kahn S. Education and academic career outcomes for women of color in science and engineering. Paper presented at: Seeking Solutions: Maximizing American Talent by Advancing Women of Color in Academia, a conference for the Committee on Women in Science, Engineering, and Medicine of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, June 7-8, 2012; Washington, DC.
2. Carr PL, Szalacha L, Barnett R, Caswell C, Inui T. A “ton of feathers”: Gender discrimination in academic medical careers and how to manage it. *J Womens Health (Larchmt)*. 2003;12(10):1009-1018.
3. Ong M, Wright C, Espinosa LL, Orfield G. Inside the double bind: A synthesis of empirical research on undergraduate and graduate women of color in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. *Harv Educ Rev*. 2011;81:181-196.
4. Long JS. From scarcity to visibility: Gender differences in the careers of doctoral scientists and engineers. Washington, DC: National Academies Press. 2001.
5. Many research studies combine the racial categories of “Asian” and “white.” These categories are separated in this study to capture the nature of experiences of women from racial identities other than white.

Results

In 2015, women full-time faculty of color made up 28 percent of all women full-time faculty (17,051/61,924) and 11 percent of the total full-time faculty workforce (17,051/159,831) at U.S. medical schools (see Table 1). Women made up 39 percent of the total full-time faculty population. White women made up 59 percent of all women full-time faculty, and faculty with “unknown race” made up 13 percent of women full-time faculty. For some groups, the distribution of women and men within each race/ethnicity category was similar to the overall distribution of women and men full-time faculty (for example, 39 percent of all Asian faculty were women, 36 percent of all white faculty were women, and 38 percent of all faculty with multiple races were women). Some categories had higher proportions of women. Women made up 42 percent of Hispanic full-time faculty. Women made up 54 percent of all African American full-time faculty, making them the only demographic group (besides the “other” category) where there are more total women faculty than total men faculty (n=2,615 and n=2,181, respectively). Despite the higher proportions of women in these groups, women made up a third of all African American full professors and 26 percent of all Hispanic full professors.

The proportion of women department chairs remains low. In 2014, of all chairs, about 14 percent were women; women of

color represented 3 percent of all chairs and 18 percent of all women chairs (Table 2). Notably, of chairs who were Asian or Hispanic, 22 percent and 19 percent, respectively, were women.

Discussion

Women faculty make up more than one-third of the U.S. full-time faculty workforce. Similar proportions are seen for women faculty within most, but not all, racial and ethnic categories. Women may be a majority, or a near majority, of faculty within their racial or ethnic group yet, importantly, may still be underrepresented in higher faculty ranks and leadership roles.

Examining binary categories of gender or race may not reveal layered experiences of bias and other factors that influence faculty leadership positions. Institutional leaders may benefit from looking at multiple faculty characteristics to understand overlapping groups.

Addressing the needs of women of color is relevant given that their numbers among medical school applicants, matriculants, and graduates are on the rise and, in some instances, have surpassed those for males of color.⁶ More research is needed to understand women of color as a growing faculty pool and how we can continue to retain them in academic medicine.

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Table 2. Distribution of Chairs by Department Type, Gender, and Racial/Hispanic Origin, 2014

Department Type	Asian		Black or African American		White		All Hispanic		Total	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Basic Science	4	25	2	10	93	476	9	24	123	579
Clinical Science	25	79	8	55	169	1,383	15	83	231	1,686
Other	0	0	0	1	16	29	1	2	18	38
TOTAL	29	104	10	66	278	1,888	25	109	372	2,303

Note: The total columns reflect the total number of department chairs in 2014, according to the May 2014 AAMC Faculty Roster. However, for display purposes, some race/Hispanic origin categories from the original source table are not shown. Race categories that did not have any women chairs are not displayed; chairs with unknown race/Hispanic origin are not displayed. In addition, the Hispanic origin categories from the original source table have been rolled up into one category, “all Hispanic.” To view the original table in its entirety, please visit source links (below).

Source: AAMC Faculty Roster, May 2014. www.aamc.org/download/411920/data/2014_table11.pdf and www.aamc.org/download/411932/data/2014_table11cont.pdf

6. Association of American Medical Colleges. *Diversity in Medical Education: Facts and Figures 2012*. Washington, DC: AAMC. Fall 2012.