Mapping the Leaky Leadership Diversity Pipelines at Five Canadian Universities

For Immediate Release

(Edmonton, 3 March 2020) The senior administrative leadership pipeline at Canadian universities is leaky for racialized minorities. Senior university administrators do not yet reflect the diversity of the rank-and-file professors and instructors and are a far cry from reflecting the diversity of the Canadian population.

This leadership diversity gap study, conducted by Genevieve Fuji Johnson and Robert Howsam, and published in collaboration with The Diversity Gap and the Academic Women’s Association at the University of Alberta, focused on 1,299 central and senior administrators from five Canadian universities: Simon Fraser University, University of British Columbia, University of Toronto, University of Victoria, and York University. The administrative positions examined included departmental program chairs (e.g., undergraduate program chair), departmental chairs, associate deans, deans, and senior executives (e.g., vice-presidents, provosts, and presidents). The infographic represents these findings.

Complementing the equity audit methodology used by Malinda S. Smith in the leadership diversity gap studies (2016, 2017, 2018, 2019), three researchers coded headshots, names, and biographical statements for gender expression and racialized identity. In the first phase of analysis, they engaged in independent coding. The results of this coding were used to calculate an overall interrater reliability coefficient, which for qualitative analysis was remarkably high (i.e., .94). In the second phase, the researchers worked consensually to address disagreements in their results.

Relative to Statistics Canada 2016 Census data on professor and lecturer income recipients, we find a notable overrepresentation of White men throughout both central and senior academic administrative structures. Based on Statistics Canada data:

- We expected to find about 43% White men in these ranks. Instead, in all ranks except associate deans, we find the percentage of White men to range from 45.8% for senior executives to 59.1% for deans.
- White women are also overrepresented in the ranks of associate deans (42.6%) and senior executives (43.4%) relative to Statistics Canada data, which indicates about 36% White women among professors and instructors.

The benchmark in the Statistics Canada 2016 Census data on professor and lecturer income recipients for racialized men is about 12% and for racialized women about 7.2%. Racialized minorities are underrepresented within the ranks of deans (4.6%) and senior executives (7.2%). Racialized women are underrepresented in the ranks of deans (2.3%) and senior executives (2.4%).

Similar to Smith’s findings (2019), we find that that: 90% of deans and senior executives, when aggregated as one group, are White. Conversely, both racialized men and women are hitting a ceiling at the level of associate deans.

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