

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN IN
MIDDLE MANAGEMENT: TIME FOR A NEW CURRICULUM?

by

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ABSTRACT

Black women are the most educated demographic group in the U.S., however, they hold very few senior leadership positions within Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences (RBHS). This capstone is an exploratory study using qualitative research to learn the professional development needs of Black women in middle management staff positions at RBHS. Data was collected using a Qualtrics survey of sixteen questions with sixteen confidential respondents from RBHS, and six personal interviews with recent graduates of the Staff Leadership Series at Ohio State University. The findings of this study reveal that Black women in middle management staff positions at RBHS are not receiving the professional development that they desire or need to advance their careers.

Ohio State University has a Staff Leadership Series (SLS) for women that could be modeled at RBHS for Black women. This study provides valuable feedback on the success of the SLS from recent graduates and the professional development needs of Black women in middle management positions at RBHS.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background

When I was a child, my parents always told me if I worked hard enough I could become and do anything I wanted. As a result, I excelled academically throughout my primary and secondary education, however, I would later learn that it will take more than hard work for me to succeed. At the age of fourteen, I eagerly entered the workforce with determination and a strong work ethic. At fourteen, I was too young to be a cashier at the local grocery store so I became a bagger, stocked shelves, and worked in the floral and produce departments. By the time I was old enough to become a cashier I'd learned and done pretty much every job in the store except for the meat department and slicing deli meat. You had to be eighteen for that. I've approached every job since then with the same eagerness to learn and determination to succeed. It's only natural for an employee to expect that their hard work and loyalty be rewarded. Unfortunately, it is not always the case. Years later, working at the University of Pennsylvania as an Administrative Coordinator, while exhibiting a strong work ethic and dedication, I took on a role with additional tasks for nearly a year. Instead of being promoted, I was asked to train a new employee, a white woman, to do the job. She also happened to be a friend of my white supervisor. Did this happen to me because I'm a Black woman or is meritocracy a virtue that isn't extended to everyone? It was at that moment I realized I would not be able to advance my career within that department reporting to that supervisor.

Empirical research in various disciplines, including social psychology, economics, gender studies, and organizational behavior reveals that Black women exist at the intersection of both racism and sexism in the workplace (Rosette et al., 2018). In *The Memo*, Minda Harts, a Black woman and executive coach, speaks candidly about her own experiences in the workplace. Harts reveals that a Black woman's experience in the workplace is not the same as that of a white woman (Harts, 2019). Donald Tomaskovic-Devey also writes about workplace inequalities for people with categorical distinctions, such as race, gender, class, and occupation (Tomaskovic-Devey, 2014). He discusses how inequalities in the workplace are created through relationships and one's perceived value over another.

According to new research by McKinsey and LeanIn.Org, the greatest obstacle to Black women's progress is the "broken rung" at the very first steps on the corporate ladder—the initial promotion to management. The "broken rung" is a unique phenomenon that differentially impacts Black women compared to white women. This broken rung results in more Black women getting stuck at the entry level and fewer Black women becoming managers (Lean In, 2019). According to DiversityInc, as of 2016, women of color comprised only 14% of total corporate management within the top 50 most diverse companies in the U.S. Since fewer Black women are promoted to junior management, there are fewer Black women in the pipeline when it comes time to choose employees for senior management roles. Although Black women are increasingly more visible in the workplace since the 1964 Civil Rights Movement, making up **6.6% of the workforce as of 2018** (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2019), they still face many barriers such a lack of networking opportunities, ethnic role models and mentors, and high-

visibility assignments that hinder their professional growth (Reynolds-Dobbs et al., 2008).

I've experienced these barriers firsthand throughout my own career. I can recall working at a grocery store as a teenager and my white manager giving preferential treatment to the white employees over the Black employees like it was yesterday. He gave them more and better hours, and easier assignments. I knew his actions were unfair and showed racial bias, but I was young and didn't know how to feel or what to do about the situation other than accept it. As an adult, I worked for two major shipping companies that were so white and male-dominated that there were no Black women in senior management. At one of the companies, there was a significant presence of Black women in lower management positions; the highest position any of us reached was part-time supervisor. When I asked how I could reach a higher rank, management told me that they needed to promote more women to meet their diversity quota, but that was as far as I could go. As a Black woman, I checked off two boxes for the company helping them meet their quota. At both companies there was no clear path to senior leadership for Black women. I watched as both white and Black men with less education and job knowledge than me be mentored by male managers and groomed for promotion. There was no career mentorship available for me and certainly no professional development. I had two female managers, one Black and one white. They both tried to be supportive and offer me advice, but in my opinion, neither had the experience, job knowledge or respect of their colleagues and staff to be an effective mentor to me.

After spending a decade in the same department as an Administrative Coordinator at the University of Pennsylvania, I was passed over for promotion several times. I started

to feel stagnant and discouraged. I felt there was no opportunity for career advancement within my department. In an effort to get out of my department, I applied for two positions a week even if I wasn't fully qualified for the job. In most cases though I was overqualified. I interviewed for many positions within the University. Hiring officers would often tell me that they went with a stronger candidate or that the position was posted with someone else in mind.

During that time the Chair of my department was promoted to Executive Vice Dean and his office was looking to fill a Program Coordinator position. I knew the hiring officer well and they were having a hard time finding an applicant who spoke Spanish fluently. They finally hired someone, but she couldn't handle the workload and didn't last three months in the position. Through my relationship with the hiring officer, I learned that the position was reposted without the bilingual requirement along with an additional financial component. Because my undergraduate degree is in accounting, the hiring officer encouraged me to apply for the position. Networking skills, essentially my social capital, that I didn't even know I had, led me to a promotion to Program Coordinator. That opportunity ultimately led to the sponsorship (Harts, 2019) which allowed me access to my current position, Executive Assistant in the Chancellor's office at Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences (RBHS).

Since 2013, I've been working for the Chancellor for Biomedical and Health Sciences, at Rutgers University's main campus in New Brunswick (and in Newark) as his Executive Assistant. Our office is gender and racially diverse, so when a Vice Chancellor for Diversity and Inclusion was appointed by the Chancellor last year, my initial thought was "Why do we need one of those?" At a monthly leadership meeting, where the senior

leaders gather to share updates on their respective units and discuss matters that impact the University as a whole, it occurred to me that despite our overall diversity, we still only had one Black woman in senior leadership at RBHS, Dr. Denise Rodgers. Dr. Rodgers is the Vice Chancellor for Interprofessional Programs. As a Black woman this bothered me, as I feel Black women need to have more representation.

Evidence that can be found on the other Rutgers campus websites (New Brunswick, Newark, and Camden) reveals the presence of having more Black women in senior leadership roles, but Black women are still consistently underrepresented relative to both Black men and white women. Why is that? What can I do to help change that? Is it as simple as discrimination and bias against Black women or are there other barriers in play? Can I, as a Black woman, expect to advance my career at Rutgers? Nearly all of professional development programs sponsored by University Human Resources are provided through LinkedIn by way of non-interactive online training modules. These modules cover a vast number of topics from Excel to how to manage stress. Although the offerings are extensive the delivery is not interactive and therefore misses the opportunity to meet the trainees where they are.

The Rutgers Center for Organizational Leadership does offer the Rutgers Leadership Academy (RLA) to all faculty and staff. The RLA is a one-year program for mid-career faculty and staff who aspire to broadened leadership roles within their units, the university, and/or higher education, more generally. Although this program is open to staff, in actuality, it caters to faculty as they overwhelmingly outnumber the staff participants. As such the discussion topics are not tailored for staff.

Organizations need to develop diversity programs which identify high-potential women of color to help give them the skills needed to become leaders (Reynolds-Dobbs et al., 2008). Rutgers has a very diverse student body population as it has partnerships with area high schools to target underrepresented groups. University personnel are typically invisible within D&I initiatives. Our collective experience at Rutgers is therefore more akin to the race and gender experiences of Black women in corporate spaces, not the Ivory Tower. I believe there's an opportunity here for Rutgers to create significant change by supporting Black women's career advancement through the creation of relevant professional development programs. Diversity and inclusion (D&I) are a key element of the University's 2015 Strategic Plan.

In 2013, shortly after the merger of Rutgers and the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, Rutgers embarked on a year-long strategic planning process. The University and the community contributed their ideas through surveys, town halls, and focus groups. The results were the University's 2015 Strategic Plan. As part of this plan the University's goal is to successfully hire and retain diverse faculty. Outside of required online compliance trainings, there are currently no D&I initiatives in place for RBHS staff. At the end of the 2018 academic year, RBHS employed 5,415 staff and 1,572 faculty (See Table 1). Black women represented 23.2% of the total staff. These individuals must not be ignored. There is clearly diversity among the staff, but there lacks inclusion. This is why Black women in staff positions need an initiative specifically for them. Not only would such an initiative bolster inclusivity, but boost morale.

Table 1: Number of Full-Time Faculty and Staff by Race/Ethnicity and Gender for RBHS

	African American		Asian		Latino		White		Other		Total	
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
Faculty												
Tenure	5	2	21	56	7	7	108	171	17	22	158	258
Not Tenure	42	20	129	126	36	14	289	276	126	98	622	534
Total	47	22	150	182	43	21	397	447	143	120	780	792
%	6.0	2.8	19.2	23.0	5.5	2.7	50.9	56.4	18.4	15.2	100	100
Staff												
Total	899	201	483	293	512	131	1375	558	613	350	3882	1533
%	23.2	13.1	12.4	19.1	13.2	8.5	35.4	36.4	15.8	22.8	100	100

Source: IPEDS 2017 Fall Human Resources Survey and Rutgers Human Capital Management

I want to know why there are so few Black women in senior leadership roles at RBHS. However, a more tangible question is, do Black women in middle management staff positions have access to the professional development they need to advance their careers? And, what does effective professional development for Black women in the middle management staff positions look like at RBHS? If RBHS can meet the professional development needs of Black women perhaps more Black women will have the opportunity to expand their career trajectories past middle management and take senior leadership roles. Reynolds-Dobbs et al. (2008) supports the need for organizations to understand the challenges and barriers Black women face in the workplace.

Much of the extant social science literature and recent think tank reports, find that Black women are often victims of implicit bias; race and gender stereotypes about their intellectual abilities, aggressive nature, and lack of professionalism remain prolific in the corporate sector (Harts, 2019; Rosette et al., 2014; Emerson & Murphy, 2014).

Black women report encountering very persistent and intractable negative race-based stereotypes. They report that their authority and credibility are frequently questioned, and that they do not consistently receive institutional support (Catalyst, 2004; Travis, 2016; Huang et al., 2019). In, *The Gender Gap Is Just the Tip of the Iceberg for Black Women*, Sonya George (2019) notes that leaders who put all women into one group are making a mistake. Black women need their own support systems with people who can be trusted with their feelings and who will have their back (George, 2019). Race is a particularly difficult topic for African American women to discuss with non-African American coworkers. Because of the African American historical legacy of slavery, legally enforced racial segregation, and discrimination based on skin color, African American women see race as a sensitive topic (Catalyst, 2004).

The purpose of this capstone is to examine the accessible professional development available at RBHS and whether it meets the needs of Black women; and to learn what the professional development needs are for Black women at RBHS. At a later date, with the support of the Vice Chancellor for Diversity and Inclusion, I will conduct focus groups with Black women to have an open dialogue about their professional development needs. We will send emails to the staff inviting Black women to participate in these focus groups. To explore the needs of Black women staff at RBHS, I analyzed a professional development program designed by Ohio State University to address the diverse needs of non-faculty female employees at the University. The program, Staff Leadership Series, first developed in 2005, was developed to offer professional development to an underrepresented group.

My goal is to develop a new curriculum for a pilot professional development program, modeling OSU's SLS, specifically for Black women in middle management staff positions. I'm using this program as a template based on the positive feedback I received from some of its recent graduates. This pilot program is an integral piece of my own professional development; it is part of my performance management evaluation. To this end, I've applied for the inaugural RBHS-IDEA Grants program for innovations in inclusion, diversity, equity, and advocacy. The mission of the RBHS-IDEA innovation grants is to support action-oriented projects that promote an inclusive, diverse, and cohesive culture at RBHS. As a Black woman, I feel that meeting our developmental needs would reinforce the University's stance on being more inclusive and could potentially pave the way to allow for the promotion of more Black women into senior leadership. This initiative is directly aligned with the University's Strategic Plan for diversity and inclusion. Students and patients, as well as faculty and board members will benefit from the potential innovation resulting from more diverse leadership. Both the RBHS Chancellor and the Vice Chancellor for Diversity and Inclusion support my efforts.

Staff Leadership Series (SLS)

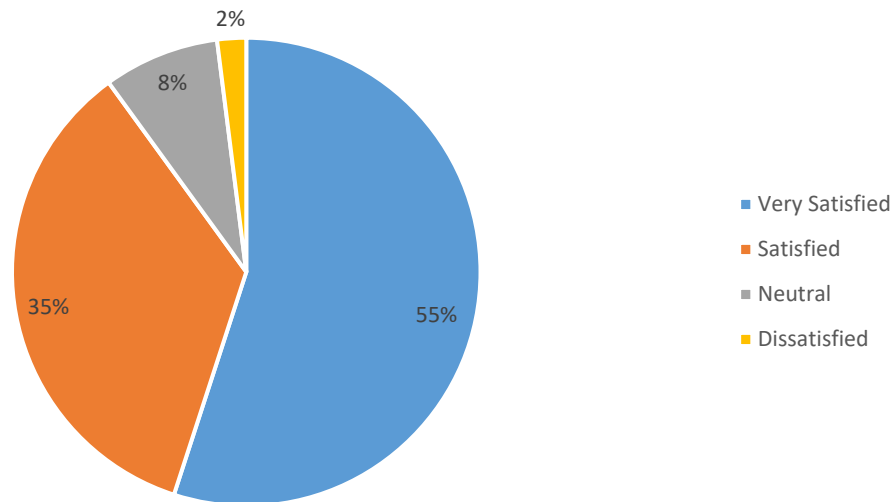
In 2005, Ohio State University (OSU) initiated a staff leadership series sponsored by OSU's women's policy office called The Women's Place (TWP). Research conducted by TWP and the President's Council on Women confirmed the importance of climate and management to retaining and supporting women. The SLS was an outcome of this study. TWP designed the SLS concept and curriculum specifically for the needs of women,

regardless of race, who hold staff positions at OSU. The SLS is for women who are interested in skill-building and leadership development. This initiative is meant to create a pool of potential staff leaders from groups that have been traditionally underrepresented, like Black women, in key leadership roles. Some of the topics SLS offers are: mentoring, negotiations, career mapping, and strengths for leadership. The average number of participants in the program each year has been close to twenty. Online, the SLS reads like an amazing program that I would love to enroll in myself (Ohio State University, 2020). It addresses the real need for a professional development program, not just a workshop, specifically for staff women who work at colleges and universities. The most appealing part of this program is the potential for building a network of career motivated women from various areas of RBHS. OSU and Rutgers are similar in that they are both public state schools with multiple campuses. OSU with seven and Rutgers with four. However, OSU has over 49,000 employees more than half of which are staff. Rutgers has a similar ratio of faculty to staff but on a much smaller scale with just over 8,700 faculty and over 14,900 staff (Ohio State University, 2020; Rutgers University, 2020). These similarities make me hopefully that modeling the SLS at Rutgers could be possible. However, more feedback from Black women at Rutgers is needed as only 16 women were surveyed.

In 2011, TWP did an evaluation of the SLS. They reported that 90% of the program participants between 2005-2010 were satisfied or very satisfied with the program (Ohio State University, 2020). (See Figure 1) If this program is successful could it be modeled at Rutgers?

Figure 1: Level of Satisfaction of SLS Graduates 2005-2010

Level of Satisfaction of SLS Graduates 2005-2010



N = 233

Drawing on confidential interviews with six recent SLS graduates they candidly shared how satisfied they were with their experiences in the program and why they believe SLS is integral to cultivating and empowering women professionals.

My data approach consists of two parts: 1) an online survey with African American women who work in RBHS; 2) confidential phone interviews with SLS graduates at OSU. At RBHS, I created a confidential online Qualtrics survey (See Appendix A) that was sent to a small cohort of African American women in middle management, staff positions. The objective of the survey was to examine how Black women in similar roles to me feel about their respective roles within their department, the racial climate and how professional development initiatives could positively impact their career advancement.

Using the snowball sampling approach (Corbin & Strauss, 2008), I asked potential respondents to forward the survey to other African American women that they know in middle management across departments. To date, 16 Black women in RBHS participated in the survey. It is my hope that from these responses I can identify how some African American women in middle management feel about their access to professional development and which areas of development would be most beneficial at this point in their careers to advance. During their interviews, I also asked the SLS graduates from OSU the questions from the survey.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

There is scant literature in the social sciences and professional fields that specifically addresses the professional development of Black women in middle management staff positions. However, during my research, I came across some professional development programs for staff who work at postsecondary institutions. These programs have varying foci and objectives; most are cross-sectional and limited in scope, as they don't necessarily address professional advancement, nor are they race or gender-specific. For example, Gallaudet University, a small private liberal arts university in Washington, D.C. offers a mentoring program for its staff members with the purpose of developing relationships to build a more collaborative work environment. This mentoring program is available to all employees regardless of classification, including faculty. Some expected outcomes for the mentee are identifying areas for professional growth, extending networks, enhancing professional identity, and a greater understanding for promotions processes and how to negotiate these effectively. The duration of the mentor/mentee relationship is mutually agreed upon by the participants (Gallaudet University, 2020).

In 2016, Brown University began its Staff Mentoring Program with the goal of fostering employees' professional development and career growth while enhancing a culture of inclusion. This program pairs early and mid-career professionals with higher level staff mentors. Although this program is not focused specifically on staff members from underrepresented groups, Judy Nabb, Director of Learning and Development,

explains that “a formal mentoring program makes such opportunities more equitably accessible to all members of our community” (Singer, 2018). Follow-up surveys with participants have revealed positive results. In all, 100 percent of mentee respondents rated Brown’s program as very or extremely effective, 91 percent said it helped them enhance their professional development, and 100 percent said it helped expand their professional network. In addition, mentees reported feeling more self-confident, valued, and empowered because of the program (Singer, 2018).

According to Shelly Sherman, Executive Director of Human Resources Business Partner for the University of Cincinnati, the University conducted a climate survey. The results revealed that “people who were in underrepresented groups, such as women or people of color, said they didn’t feel they had some of the opportunities to network and engage in career development that their majority counterparts had” (Singer, 2018). In response, the University of Cincinnati created Mentor Me UC in 2017, a program to help retain employees, breakdown barriers to confidence, foster career development and support diversity, equity and a sense of inclusion for newer staff employees (Schefft, 2018). In this informal mentoring program pairs are encouraged to maintain their relationship for at least nine months. According to Sherman, 43 percent of the mentees in the program are employees of color and 87 percent are women (Singer, 2018). Mentor Me UC and Staff Mentoring Program at Brown are too new to fully assess their success.

Since 2000, Ohio State University (OSU) has had a central resource for women called *The Women’s Place*. As part of this resource they have a professional development initiative for women called the Staff Leadership Series (SLS). The SLS focuses on experiential leadership skill building and development for Ohio State staff. The year-long

SLS is meant to expand leadership capacity; the program facilitates skill development to help female staff become more effective, innovative and inclusive leaders (Ohio State University, 2020). Within this initiative, SLS creates a pool of potential staff leaders from groups that have been traditionally underrepresented in key leadership roles. Some of the topics commonly offered are: mentoring, faculty-staff relations, difficult conversations, implicit bias, negotiations, and strengths for leadership (Ohio State University, 2020). SLS is structured to cater to a specific cohort, staff women. The program's continuity and content have attributed to its rate of satisfaction with its graduates.

Reynolds-Dobbs et al. (2008) write about the power of stereotypes and effects of implicit bias that hinder Black women's career development. They describe in detail the stereotypical images of Black women that can be psychologically damaging as well as detrimental to their ability to conquer "the broken rung." The image of the "Mammy" takes me immediately to the South during slavery and I sense a negative connotation. Reynolds et al. (2008) lay bare the powerful, historical images of Black women as the "Mammy," the "Jezebel", the "sapphire," and the "crazy Black bitch" that still exist today. The latent stigmas of these intersectional and distorted personifications of Black women in these roles since slavery hurt their contemporary professional aspirations as they are unknowingly pigeon-holed.

The Mammy is seen as nurturing and loyal. She's Big Momma. She's the older Black woman in the office looking out for the younger people, more like her children than staff. The Mammy is content with her job which isn't bad unless she does want to advance. In contrast, the "Jezebel" is the image of a tempting seductress. She is aggressive and will do anything to reach the top. Reynolds et al. (2008) argue that the

stigma of this label makes it difficult for Black women to build professional relationships in the workplace especially with non-Black women. Moreover, the “Sapphire” is the angry (and bossy) Black woman image and the “crazy Black bitch” image is angry and aggressive. Most, if not all, Black women have been told at some point in their lives that they have to work twice as hard as their white counterparts. The “emotional tax” of having to keep that pace your entire life is exhausting (Carpenter, 2018; Travis, 2016). Although these stereotypes may not impact all Black women, many suffer from the implications of these images which help maintain white dominance in the workplace and can be mentally, physically, and emotionally damaging for Black women (Bryant et al., 2005).

After explaining the phenomena of intersectionality (the intersection of two or more social categories), Rosette et al. (2018) also outline the stereotypes Black women endure and some unique challenges they face. They write that Black women with natural hairstyles are seen as less professional and less competent. It’s another emotional tax for Black women to endure while they struggle with whether or not to assimilate to the white standard. Black women cannot begin to focus on professional development let alone career advancement if they cannot bring their authentic selves to the workplace (Harts, 2019).

Rosette et al. (2018) also contend that Black women must work harder than other groups to demonstrate their competence to their white peers and superiors. The authors argue that Black women’s presumed incompetence likely impedes their attainment of top roles and at least partially explains their immense underrepresentation in senior leadership roles (Rosette et al., 2018).

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Survey Methodology

This qualitative research began with a convenience sample of female colleagues within Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences (RBHS) who met the criteria of identifying as an African American woman in a middle management staff position. I asked these women to complete a 16-question, confidential online survey about their experiences with professional development and how they perceive themselves as Black women in their respective departments. Use of an open-ended survey model was the best method to assess thoughts, opinions, and feelings. To further build my sample, I utilized my own professional contacts and encouraged colleagues to forward the survey to other women that fit the sampling criteria and would be willing to complete the confidential survey. This type of sampling is referred to as snowball sampling. Snowball sampling is where research participants recruit other participants for a study (“snowball sampling,” n.d.). In the survey, respondents were asked to self-identify racially; I did not require respondents to disclose their gender because the sample design required that they be women.

The term middle management is a slippery and dynamic concept without a clear definition in the professional and organizational cultural literature. Merriam-Webster defines middle management as “management personnel intermediate between operational supervisors and policy-making administrators” (“middle management,” n.d.). For the purposes of this study the Cambridge definition is more fitting, “the people within a

company who are in charge of departments or groups, but who are below those in charge of the whole company” (“middle management,” n.d.). Unfortunately, many middle managers are not recognized as such and may self-impose the title. By this I mean they may not formally hold the title, but take on all the roles and responsibilities. In a Harvard Business Review article, titled “Why Being a Middle Manager Is So Exhausting” Eric M. Anicich and Jacob B. Hirsh describe middle managers as a “neglected but critical group” (Anicich & Hirsh, 2017). Middle management is often behind the scenes holding the department together, and all too often unappreciated and unrecognized. Since being middle management was expressed as a criteria in the survey recruitment script (see Appendix B), completion of the survey affirms the respondent’s self-identification as middle management.

The online survey was created using Qualtrics Survey Software. The survey questions were open-ended, as opposed to closed questions, in an effort not to lead the respondents to an answer. The questions were carefully worded to maintain objectivity (Schuman, 2002). Some responses were not as thorough as I’d hoped for, however, this is an exploratory study meant to be a working blueprint to design a program at Rutgers that can help Black women in middle management roles advance. Once I reviewed all of the responses, I sorted the data by respondent and found several common themes. The main themes of the survey include: 1) the respondent’s desires to advance; 2) the areas of development they feel are most valuable; 3) whether they feel included in the departments; 4) and, how they perceive themselves as Black women in their department.

The survey begins by asking general demographic information such as age, ethnicity, and highest level of education completed. Race and gender bias are predictable

barriers to upward mobility, but age and education can also be limiting. My objective in asking these questions was to examine each respondent's career trajectory as related to their accessibility to professional development tools, their current position title, number of years in the position, as well as past positions that lead to their current position. Survey responses confirm that if the respondent has no interest in moving ahead, she may not have encountered barriers that others have.

The survey also asked respondents if they planned to make any career changes, and the reasons behind those plans. I therefore asked if they had applied or interviewed for a next level position within the last year, and the outcome. If the respondents revealed that they were actively looking to change positions, they reported what that experience had been like throughout that process. Next, respondents also were asked to describe their 10-year plan and whether they perceive barriers to their professional advancement and to specify what those barriers are. Real or not, the perceived barriers are what need to be exposed so that they can be addressed.

The purpose of the next two questions was to acquire an understanding of what professional development opportunities respondents have access to and which areas of training they feel would be most valuable to them at this stage in their careers. Finally, respondents were asked about the racial climate in their respective departments and how they perceive themselves as minority women in their workplace; they detailed what types of diversity and inclusion (D&I) initiatives they've participated in, whether they believe their department does enough with regard to D&I and how their departments can improve those efforts.

Interviewing Methodology

I reached out to the Office of Diversity and Inclusion at Ohio State University to research the success of their Staff Leadership Series (SLS) and to see if it was the type of program that could be modeled at Rutgers as a resource for women of color. Its structure and content looked like it might meet the developmental needs of the Black women at RBHS. Several of the SLS topics align with the areas of development most valued by the survey respondents and interviewees, such as mentoring, negotiations and leadership development (See Figure 4, Figure 5). The Associate Vice Provost for Diversity and Inclusion, Dr. Jacquelyn C.A. Meshelemiah, responded to my initial inquiry and connected me to Dr. Andrea N. Williams, Interim Director of *The Women's Place*. I explained my research objectives and that I hoped to build pilot a program similar to the SLS at Rutgers. Dr. Williams introduced me to seven SLS graduates.

By phone, I interviewed six of them to get feedback on their experience with the SLS and what it has done for their careers. I asked each of them why they enrolled in the SLS, and how it was different from other professional development experiences. Importantly, I asked them to specify how the SLS met their developmental needs and which components were most beneficial to them. Finally, I asked how the SLS impacted their career trajectory and if there was anything they'd change about the program. I took notes during each confidential phone interview; each conversation lasted between 40 minutes to an hour and 10 minutes and I use this data to complement my survey findings from African American women in middle management positions at RBHS. I also asked the SLS graduates the questions from the online survey.

Qualitative interviewing allowed me to explore the views and in-depth experiences of the individual participants (Gill et al., 2008). There were overarching themes between both groups. Both groups felt that mentoring is an important component to their career advancement, and both also believe their advancement has been hindered by sex and/or race.

In addition to my survey data and interviews with graduates from OSU's SLS initiative, I had the opportunity to interview a Black woman in senior leadership at Rutgers, who I refer to here as "Gail." Since mentoring is such an integral component of the SLS curriculum, I wanted to understand Gail's experiences with mentorship and how it contributed to her career trajectory. I emailed Gail and explained the reason for my interest and she agreed to speak. This interview took place by phone and lasted about an hour.

I will present my study findings to the Vice Chancellor for Diversity and Inclusion and her team. I will collaborate with the Director for Special Projects who is actively surveying the schools within RBHS to compile a list of school specific professional development opportunities for staff. The next step will be to conduct focus groups in Newark and New Brunswick with African American women to delve deeper into their specific professional development needs.

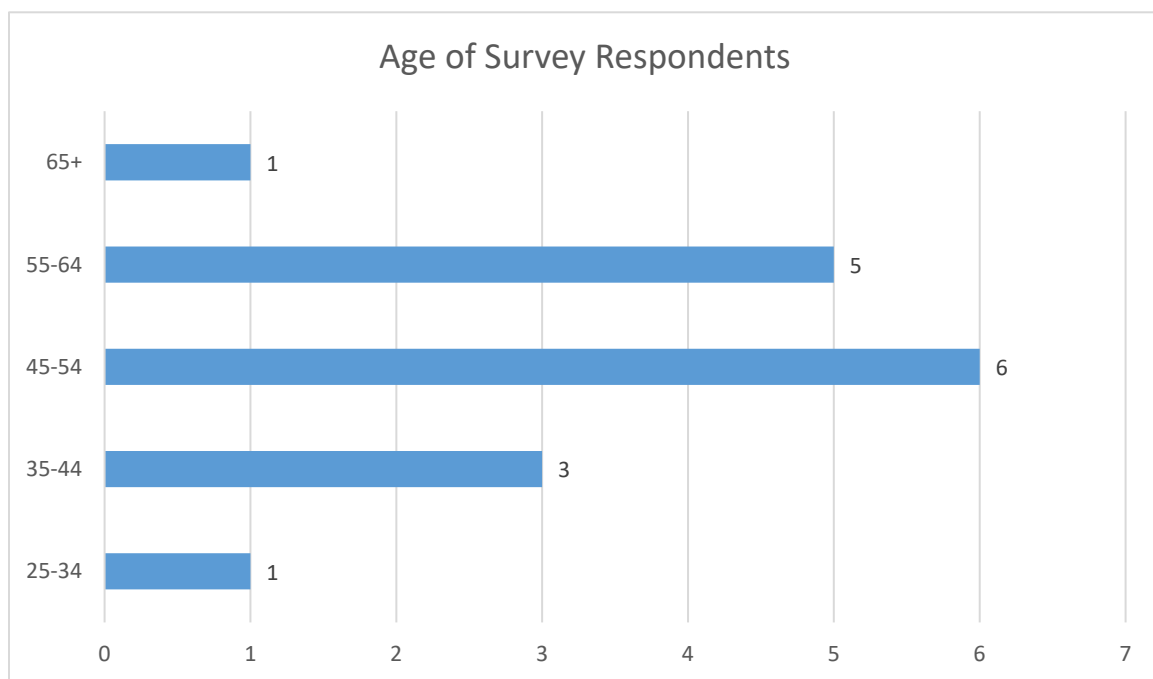
CHAPTER 4

DATA COLLECTED

Survey Findings

Of the original 16 survey respondents, 11 were between 45-64 years old and all except one self-identified as African American (See Figure 2). The one self-identified as

Figure 2: Age of Survey Respondents



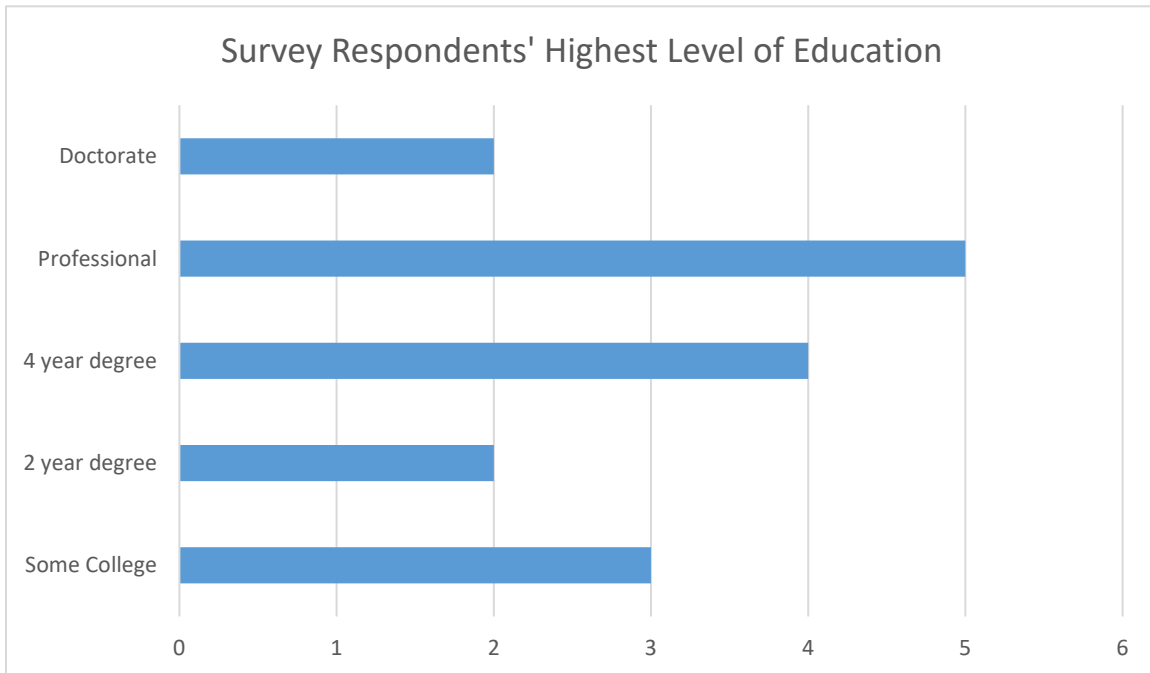
“other.” Eleven respondents reported that they completed a four-year degree or higher and just three indicated that they had attended college but did not graduate (See Figure 3).

Four respondents revealed that they plan to retire within the next 10 years whereas the rest of the respondents expressed the desire for upward mobility within their careers.

Only three women expressed that they did not feel barriers were keeping them from taking their career to the next level. Some common-themed responses of barriers

were race and gender bias, lack of professional education and mentoring, and an employer's general inability to see potential in their loyal staff. All of the respondents

Figure 3: Survey Respondents' Highest Level of Education



acknowledged having access to professional development and have taken advantage of training opportunities. However, several reported that there are not enough opportunities, and one explained that the courses she took were not relevant to her career path. The positions held by the survey respondents varied (See Table 2).

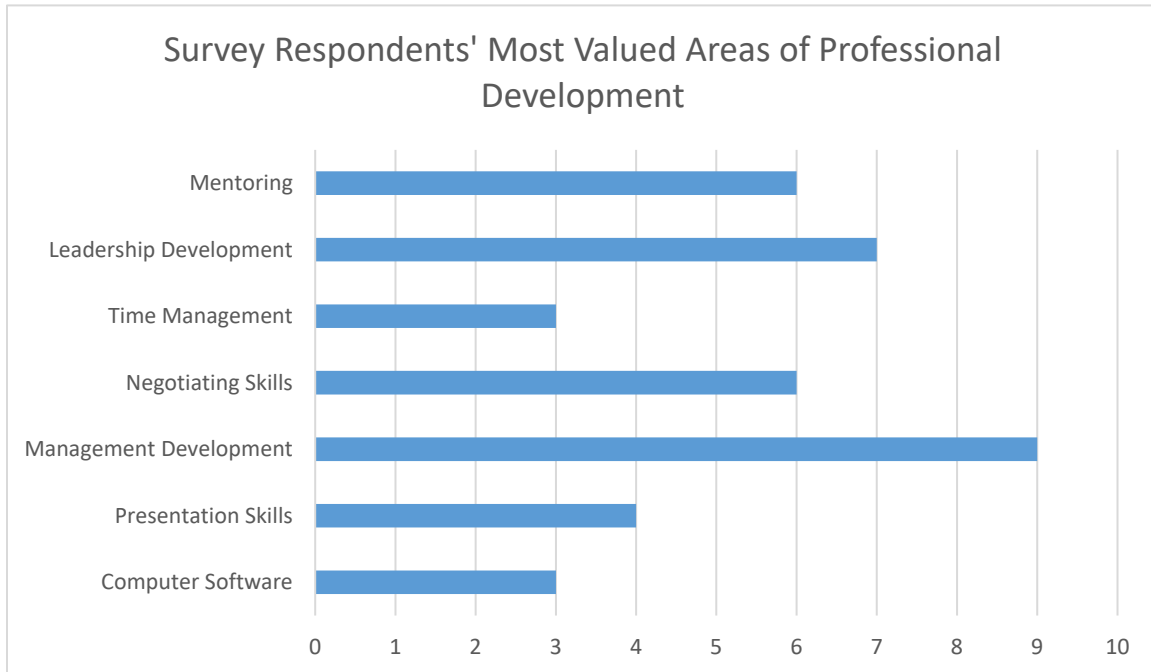
Table 2: Survey Respondents' Demographics

Respondent	Age	Race*	Education	Position	Years in Position
1	45-54	B	Masters	Grant Administrator	7
2	55-64	B	Bachelors	Administrator	2
3	45-54	B	Masters	Special Assistant	14
4	55-64	B	MD	Associate Professor	6
5	55-64	B	<2yr degree	Senior Billing Manager	2
6	65+	B	Masters	Manager	5
7	45-54	B	PhD	Associate Dean	1
8	45-54	B	Masters	Nurse	21
9	55-64	B	Bachelors	Program Administrator	5
10	35-44	B	Masters	Program Development Specialist	1 ½
11	45-54	B	Bachelors	Director	1
12	35-44	B	Bachelors	Faculty Affairs Coordinator	3
13	25-34	B	2yr degree	Faculty Coordinator	4
14	35-44	B	<2yr degree	Executive Assistant	4
15	55-64	O	<2yr degree	Management Assistant	8
16	45-54	B	2yr degree	Administrative Analyst	13

*B=Black, O=Other

When asked which areas of professional development they felt would be most valuable at this stage in their careers, the top responses were management development, leadership, mentoring, and negotiating skills, followed by presentation skills, time management, and computer software (See Figure 4).

Figure 4: Survey Respondents' Most Valued Areas of Professional Development



Only three respondents reported having participated in diversity and inclusion (D&I) endeavors. Those that did felt it was not enough and that more efforts were needed. The lack of follow through by the department caused the activities to lose momentum. Common themes regarding more D&I efforts and whether it would help with career development are a desire to have equal opportunities and to be reviewed fairly, and the lack of Blacks in leadership. All except four respondents feel that their respective departments can improve D&I by offering D&I training as people aren't even aware of their own bias, incentivizing individuals to make D&I a part of their own strategic plan and make them accountable for their own actions. In their survey responses, respondents also indicated the importance of human resources asking employees what they'd like to discuss; they also expressed the importance of asking employees for suggestions as well as hiring more African American researchers.

In her commentary, one respondent shared:

“Be more open to the issues that affect the Black lady and not be afraid of their strength. Stop using their strengths as weakness against them such as assertive, and aggressive. Be more understanding of why they approach issues from a different standpoint.”

These comments resonate with me because Black women, including myself, have been extremely stigmatized by negative stereotypes that impact their ability to perform in the workplace, and ultimately impact their ability to advance. Supporting the advancement of Black women is an indication that organizations recognize their challenges (Reynolds-Dobbs et al., 2008).

Common themes on racial climate centered on the sentiment that departments are racially diverse, but “women of color have to push harder to break through certain barriers to advance.” And, as one survey respondent notes: “I feel as though I have to speak louder to be heard and to ensure my thoughts and ideas are recognized,” and “as a young African American woman I feel that my efforts are questioned and not seen as expert level.”

Interview Findings

In April, I interviewed six graduates of the Staff Leadership Series (SLS) at OSU, and assigned each a pseudonym to identify them and to maintain confidentiality. From all of my conversations, the SLS graduates reported being very satisfied as staff at OSU. They made me feel like I might be working for the wrong university. OSU offers a lot of resources that Rutgers doesn't. OSU has a program called *Advocates & Allies for Equity*.

“The program is designed to bring men into the gender equity equation by building a cross-campus network of male Allies who share an understanding of the effects of implicit bias and systemic privilege and to introduce specific practical actions to help men better support women at the University” (Ohio State University, 2020). The goal is to develop a more equitable environment and advance the professional interests of women faculty and staff and other underrepresented groups. OSU’s concerted D&I efforts are a likely reason for its satisfied employees – at least among the SLS graduates. All of the SLS graduates reported that they were satisfied with the leadership series. Their most common remarks were with regard to the content and structure of the program. The continuity and the personal interactions with a variety of women from all over the University was a favorable experience for them all.

Angela is an African American woman between the ages of 35-44 with a doctoral degree. She enrolled in the SLS because she was a new manager and she thought it would be a good networking opportunity to meet other managers. Angela felt the program was different because it offered a safe place to “peel back the curtain” and have real conversations about the struggles women face in the workplace. Also, the topics of discussion--strategies, negotiations, mentoring--were different from what Angela experienced in other training programs; as a result, SLS exceeded Angela’s expectations. The topics of discussion that were most beneficial to Angela were negotiations and difficult conversations between subordinate and supervisor. The SLS impacted Angela’s career trajectory by helping her identify ways to advance and make herself more valuable. The only thing that Angela would change about the SLS would be to make it longer. Although SLS is advertised as a year-long program, it was only nine months long.

Barbara is an Asian woman between the ages of 35-44 with a bachelor's degree. She enrolled in the SLS because she was intrigued by the exclusivity of the program and that it included women outside of her discipline. You have to apply for a limited number of opportunities. Each cohort was no more than 20 participants. Barbara shared that she was interested in building a professional network of women with diverse backgrounds to propel her to her next level. To Barbara, what made the SLS different from other professional development programs were the personal interactions. The group met once a month in a positive safe space – judgement free. There was transparency about challenges they each faced and the subgroups enabled participants to meet women outside their immediate workspaces. Barbara was very satisfied by the program and enjoyed the alumni presenters. In addition, Barbara valued the personal interaction and the sharing of challenges women face; these were the most beneficial parts of the program. The SLS impacted Barbara's career by making her more confident, a better listener, and gave her new strategies to use. Barbara thought that shortening the lectures and making the interactive portions longer could improve the program.

Carol is a Caucasian woman between the ages of 55-64 with a master's degree. In her interview, she shared that she had enrolled in the SLS because it was a women's group and thus wanted to get to know like-minded women across the University to build a viable social network. This program was different to Carol because of the collaboration involved and the program's continuity; the SLS met monthly for a year. The SLS helped Carol make some key professional connections. Hearing alumni share their experiences was inspirational to Carol and gave her confidence to advocate for herself. To improve

the program, Carol recommends more follow up, including annual meetings of cohorts to sustain the relationships that were built over the program duration.

Donna is an Asian woman between the ages of 45-54 with a bachelor's degree. Donna enrolled in the SLS because she heard of others who completed the program and she wanted to learn how to develop her staff. The SLS was different because the same group met each month and participants were able to build bonds with strong women. Donna acquired some new leadership tools and referred her staff to the program. She benefitted from the discussion on difficult conversations between subordinate and supervisor; she also found the personality classification she received from the Enneagram personality test to be valuable. Donna had never taken this particular personality test. Donna would recommend that SLS pitch a more comprehensive definition of what the program would cover in advance. Donna explained that the SLS participants did not know the topic of discussion until the day of class. She also suggested that facilitators have a high level of energy during each session.

Ellen is an African American woman between the ages of 25-34 with a master's degree. Ellen was encouraged by her supervisor to enroll in the SLS. For her, the length of the program, the content, and the diverse attendees differentiated the program from other types of professional development. She stated: "It was a safe place to think about what you want to do. Ambition was okay there." The most beneficial component to Ellen was the personality assessment, Enneagram. A practitioner showed them how to use the results. Ellen was new to the campus so hearing from peers and networking was helpful. Ellen would recommend rotating the meeting locations so that the meetings aren't always on the same campus.

Frances is an Asian woman between the ages of 45-54 with a master's degree. Frances enrolled in the SLS because she thought it was an awesome opportunity. The SLS was different in that it is a 12 month long program, not just a workshop. Frances felt that learning how to network was very beneficial to her. The SLS gave her the confidence to achieve a promotion.

The SLS graduates also answered the survey questions. The ages, races, and positions held varied in this group, but they all have obtained a bachelor's degree or higher (See Table 3).

Table 3: Staff Leadership Series Graduates' Demographics

Interviewee	Age	Race*	Education	Position	Years in Position
Angela	35-44	B	PhD	Manager of Clinical Pastoral Education	1
Barbara	35-44	A	Bachelors	Art Director	1 ½
Carol	55-64	W	Masters	Education Curriculum Coordinator	6
Donna	45-54	A	Bachelors	Director, Non-therapeutic Clinical Research	4
Ellen	25-34	B	Masters	Director, Undergraduate Recruitment	2 ½
Frances	45-54	A	Masters	Contract and Agreement Manager	<1

*A=Asian, B=Black, W=White

Carol, the Caucasian woman, reported that she had experienced barriers related to her gender. In contrast, two of the three Asian interviewees revealed they did not experience barriers related to their gender or race. Frances, however, experienced bias because she is a woman of color, has an accent, and because English is not her native language. She reported that she feels her colleagues see her as a foreigner and is not to be trusted; but the SLS made her more resilient and has helped her to gain knowledge of herself. Frances described herself as an introvert, but that the SLS pushed her step out of her comfort zone to hone her networking skills.

Ellen also believed that she experienced professional obstacles due to her gender and race. Colleagues have told her that she was intimidating and there were “fit issues.” Overall, this group feels their departments need to be intentional about inclusion and promote implicit bias training. Common areas for professional development needs for this group are: mentoring, leadership development, management development, negotiating, and time management.

Gail, a Black women in senior leadership at Rutgers, shared her experiences with mentoring. Besides her parents, her first significant mentor was a Caucasian Jewish man. He helped her to see how entitled white men think and operate. She learned that she would never succeed if her goal was to be part of the “boy’s club” because it was not built that way. Another influential mentor is a Black woman leader in healthcare at the federal level. She offered Gail a safe space to discuss challenges. As educated and successful as Gail is, she recognizes that she still needs to be “three times better than the mediocre white man,” as reminded by her friend. Gail recommends having at least two mentors. One internal within your organization who knows the politics of the institution, and one outside who you can trust who isn’t impacted by your achievements. Today, being a mentor is a big part of Gail’s legacy as she knows first-hand how impactful it can be on one’s career.

OSU and Rutgers are similar in that they are both public state schools with multiple campuses. OSU with seven and Rutgers with four. However, OSU has over 49,000 employees more than half of which are staff (Ohio State University, 2020). Rutgers has a similar ratio of faculty to staff but on a much smaller scale with just over 8,700 faculty and over 14,900 staff (Rutgers University, 2020). These similarities make

me hopefully that modeling the SLS at Rutgers could be possible. However, more feedback from Black women at Rutgers is needed as only 16 women were surveyed.

Next Steps

With the support of the Vice Chancellor for Diversity and Inclusion (VCDI), I plan to organize focus groups on the Newark and New Brunswick campuses.

Coordinating with the VCDI, emails will be sent by me to the entire staff population asking for Black women to volunteer to participate in small group discussions (no more than ten at a time) about their professional development. The VCDI and I discussed having these meetings in June, but they have been indefinitely postponed due to the pandemic. If I'm unable to develop a curriculum and pilot an entire program at Rutgers similar to that of the SLS, I will advocate for a staff mentoring program. A common theme with the SLS graduates and survey respondents is the desire for mentoring.

Mentoring is an essential part of professional development and can play a crucial role in the advancement of Black women. As Gail attested to in her commentary, mentors can be an instrumental tool in professional development and career advancement. I could have used a mentor when I had my first position as a supervisor. I was young, inexperienced and excited to attend my first work retreat. I showed up in my Sunday best only to find out that the dress code was casual. I didn't even know to ask. Mentoring can play a key role in the career advancement of Black women and keep them from embarrassing themselves.

CHAPTER 5

DATA INTERPRETATION

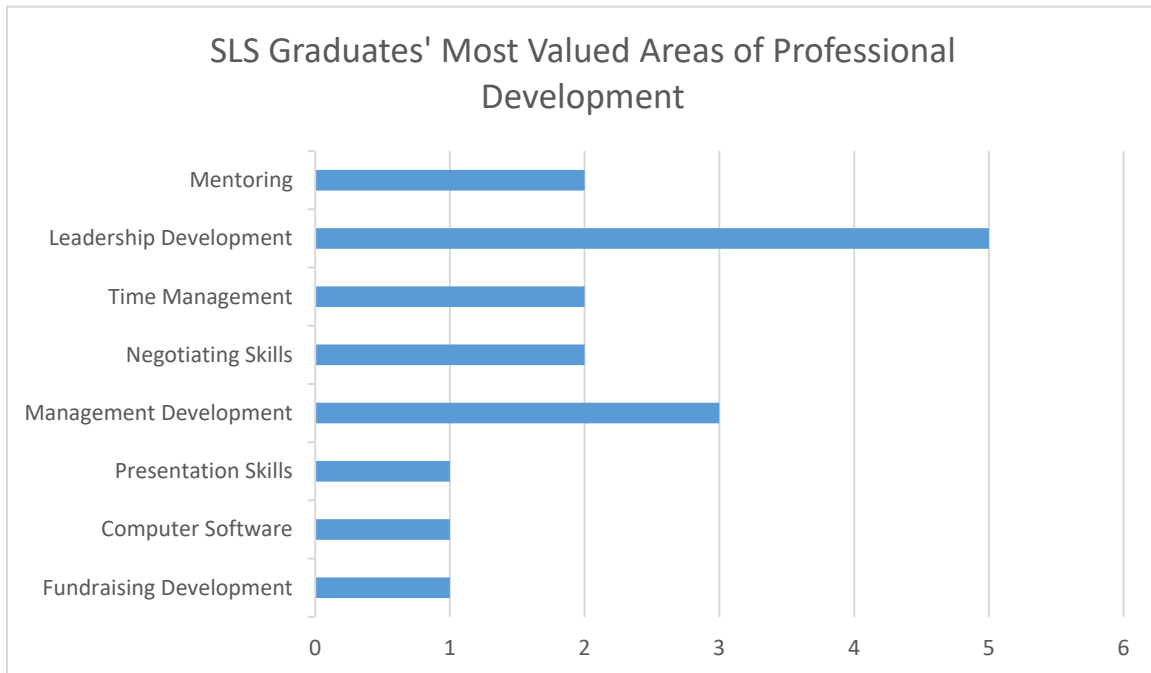
Data collected from the online survey responses confirmed that African American women are not a monolithic group and therefore their needs will vary. The data sample of African American women used was very diverse. The respondents varied in age, education, position, and aspiration (See Table 2). One of the six respondents over 55 years of age with some college education indicated that she is happy in her position of eight years as Management Assistant; she plans to retire from there. She recognizes that her lack of education has been a limiting factor with regard to her career opportunities. On the other hand, the one respondent over 65 is working on her second master's degree and also plans to continue in her current Manager position. Her age may be a limiting factor, but she also feels that her loyalty has been a hindrance to her advancement.

For the six respondents between the ages of 45-54 the desire to continue learning and growing was a commonality among all except one who's approaching retirement. Their education ranges from a 2-year degree to a doctorate (See Figure 3). The woman with the 2-year degree is currently pursuing a bachelor degree to apply to her professional career. The women between the ages of 35-44 all wish to build upon their skills and advance their careers. The data confirms that these women want to advance in their careers and are taking advantage of professional development opportunities even when they are not relevant to their career paths.

The areas of professional development the survey respondents feel are most valuable to them at this stage in their career are: management development, leadership

development, negotiating skills, and mentoring (See Figure 4). These areas were similar to the top choices for the interviewed SLS graduates (See Figure 5).

Figure 5: SLS Graduates' Most Valued Areas of Professional Development



Not all of the survey respondents identified experiencing barriers of any kind when trying to transition into a next level position. For those who did report barriers, the common themes included: race and gender, age, education, and lack of mentorship.

The questions regarding the racial climate in your department and how you perceive yourself as a minority woman in your workplace may not have been clear as two respondents responded “yes.” However, this response is in absolute alignment with the purpose of this study.

The racial climate here is very diverse and more catering to other groups. As a minority woman I do not see many minority women like myself. There are others that teach and try to bring all minority women together as a whole but in some cases you would like to have that diversity where there is someone who you can relate to and can understand your situations. I perceive myself as a strong independent woman with a lot to offer and teach to others giving the opportunity.

When asked if more diversity and inclusion efforts are needed in their departments, responses from the survey respondents varied from “not particularly” to “I don’t believe the issue is diversity, but it is definitely inclusion.” And, “if we were included more, we could gain some insightful skills or even sharpen those already inherent.” Two respondents feel their departments are diverse, but recognized the lack of minorities in management. Other responses were:

It is tough as a Black woman because I see Asian women getting more opportunities because they fall into the minority category but are not Black...

Not within my department but definitely within the organization. It would create additional awareness around the shortage of minority leaders in our organization.

I think that it is needed university-wide. When applying for positions across campus, I would like to feel that I am being given an equal opportunity and that the selecting manager is interviewing a wide pool of qualified candidates and reviewing each fairly.

I don't think more D&I training is needed but, I'm sure it can never be too much. I don't believe that would help my career development in any way.

I think more D&I is needed in my department as it would broaden the culture of the department. It would also spark conversations that would best help the community in which they serve.

The follow-up question asking how their departments can improve diversity and inclusion also received an array of responses, however, two respondents did not offer feedback.

Ask what would we like to discuss, how are we feeling as a member of the department/team, ask for suggestions and follow through with how the department feels as a whole not just chalk it up as another meeting where you can say yes we are a diverse office and we talked about things but the morale stays the same. I think it is about really understanding us as individuals first.

I feel that everyone should be considered for promotion; and more classes should be offered as we are under the umbrella of the health department, which has a lot of diversity and the department is made up of mostly women.

I believe the department management could first start by hiring more African Americans, both men and women, as researchers. This would begin to show that all are welcome.

We respect each other and know our boundaries so I'm not sure if this is applicable to my department. Again, we're a very diverse group and we recognized and appreciate that.

More diverse executive-level leaders.

Once I have made use of the current opportunities I will be able to assess for improvement.

I think the first step would be to offer diversity and inclusion training. Sometimes I don't think people are even aware of their bias.

Nothing, our department involves a diverse pool of reviewers when we post our positions. Our selections in the past year that I've been in the department have been inclusive.

I need to have the courage to state my desire for leadership advancement and hope my leaders would support my plans and provide mentorship accordingly.

Not sure, this department is more diverse than others.

More D&I training sessions and departmental shadowing could possibly help.

Training could be useful.

Be more open to the issues that affect the Black lady and not be afraid of their strength. Stop using their strengths as weakness against them such as assertive and aggressive. Be more understanding of why they approach issues from a different standpoint.

Training and alignment around evaluations so people are held accountable for their actions. Incentive individuals who make D&I a part of their strategic plan.

The Staff Leadership Series (SLS) graduates from Ohio State University (OSU) that I interviewed by phone, not only gave me feedback on their experience with the SLS, they also answered the questions from the online survey. Angela, an African American woman, agreed that her department is diverse, but expressed that they need to be more

intentional about inclusion. She thinks her department can improve D&I efforts with recruitment and retention initiatives. There wasn't a follow-up question, but it's assumed that those initiatives would target underrepresented groups.

Barbara, an Asian woman, also reported that her department is diverse and did not identify any areas to improve D&I. However, Carol, a Caucasian woman, believes that the student body on some campuses (OSU has seven campuses) is more diverse than others. She feels that an effort by the University to engage with the community to welcome and become aware of the student's needs would help improve D&I. Donna, an Asian woman, also reported that more outreach could be done to reach students at a younger age, particularly at inner city schools. Ellen, an African American woman, also argued that recruitment efforts that explicitly target underrepresented groups would help to improve D&I at OSU. Frances, an Asian woman, works with mostly women, but felt isolated because she's a foreigner and English isn't her first language. She has to make an effort to build trust and work hard to earn a good reputation, but there's always bias that she can't control, so she focuses on her self-improvement. Frances believes more opportunities, recognition, and implicit bias training would help improve D&I. She just wants to be seen for herself, not her gender or race.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Despite my past experiences with racial and gender biases throughout my career, I feel like I'm currently in a good place career-wise. I have a boss who's supportive and encourages my professional development. Many of my colleagues cannot say the same. I have colleagues who find themselves in a pigeonhole without guidance or any hope of career advancement. The majority of staff could benefit from mentoring and interactive professional development like that of OSU's Staff Leadership Series.

Why does Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences have only one Black woman in senior leadership? The reason should not be that there aren't any qualified Black women for these positions. Black women are the most educated demographic in the U.S. (Thompson, 2019). "The broken rung" (Lean In, 2019) is often an obstacle that prevents Black women from advancing. Another obstacle for Black women is being classified as staff. Within academic settings the needs of staff are often overlooked as the focus tends to be predominately on students and faculty. Black women have become so stigmatized by negative stereotypes that it's not only affected them psychologically and emotionally, but has had an adverse effect on their career advancement. Black women need access to professional development opportunities that specifically meet their needs that will enhance their ability to succeed in the workplace.

Rutgers offers online training modules to its general staff, however, that type of training does not fully meet the needs of staff looking to advance. Specifically, it does not meet the needs of Black women in middle management staff positions. My capstone

work was intended to help bridge the gap by hearing directly from Black women in middle management staff positions what they'd like to see in their professional development. During my research I found a successful program that if modeled properly could meet the needs of Black women in staff position at Rutgers.

In follow-up focus groups I'd like to address the gaps in my data. The survey did not capture all of the data I'd hoped. Two questions that should have been asked are, "What would your ideal professional development program look like?" and "How would it be structured?" I should have described OSU's Staff Leadership Program in the survey to gauge the respondent's interest. The online survey missed some key pieces of data. Following up on this data with focus groups is crucial to determine if a professional staff development program like the Staff Leadership Series at OSU would meet the needs of African American female staff at Rutgers. If I had to do this study again I would forego the survey and organize a focus group of Black women at RBHS to question first. I would have liked the opportunity to follow-up on some of the survey responses given.

Rutgers must become aware of the challenges for Black women and develop approaches and strategies for their career development (Reynolds-Dobbs et al., 2008) so that we can see the number of Black women in senior leadership roles increase at RBHS. Implementing a staff leadership program for Black women will be a step in the right direction that aligns with the University's Strategic Plan with regard to diversity and inclusion.

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APPENDIX A

SURVEY QUESTIONS FOR AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN IN MIDDLE-
MANAGEMENT ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF POSITIONS

1. Age range:

- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65+

2. Ethnicity:

- Non-Hispanic White
- Black or African American
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- South Asian
- Hispanic/Latino
- Other

3. Highest Level of Education:

- High school graduate
- Some college
- 2-year degree
- 4-year degree
- Professional degree
- Doctorate

4. Current position title:

5. Number of years in current position:

6. What were your past positions that lead to your current position?

7. Are you planning to make any career changes? If so, why?

8. Have you applied or interviewed for a next level position within the last year? If so, what was the outcome?

9. What is your 10-year career plan?

10. Do you feel that there are barriers keeping you from taking your career to the next level? If so, what are those barriers?

11. Do you think there are relevant professional development opportunities available to you? If so, have you participated in any and were they helpful?

12. Which areas of professional development do you feel would be of most value to you at this stage in your career and why?

- Computer software
- Presentation skills
- Time management
- Negotiating skills
- Leadership
- Management development
- Mentoring
- Other

13. Have you participated in any diversity and inclusion (D&I) endeavors in your current and/or past positions? If so, what did you think of those activities?

14. What is the racial climate (norms and interactions around race and diversity) in your department? How do you perceive yourself as a minority woman in your workplace?

15. Do you think more D&I efforts are needed in your department? If so, why? Would it help with your career development?

16. What do you think could be done in your department to improve diversity and inclusion?

APPENDIX B
SURVEY SCRIPT

My name is Felicia LeSure and I am a graduate student at the University of Pennsylvania in the Department of Organizational Dynamics. I am completing my Capstone research project to fulfill program requirements. My research focuses on the professional development needs of Black women in middle management. We are all aware of the shortage of Black women in senior leadership positions. I will look at the obstacles Black women face moving beyond middle management. My main focus will be on professional development and whether or not it is accessible, utilized, and/or effective. If professional development is underutilized or ineffective could it be because the curriculum is not meeting the specific needs of the Black woman.

I've put together an anonymous short survey (16 questions) to get an idea of what Black women in middle management need from their professional development. Please try to answer as honestly and as thoroughly as possible. Your candidness is greatly appreciated. The data I collect will remain confidential and de-identified. My findings could be used in the future to develop a new inclusive curriculum. Please find the survey link below. Thank you for your time.