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**Brief Summary**  
**Understanding the Relationship between Work Stress and U.S. Research Institutions' Failure to Retain Underrepresented Minority (URM) Faculty**

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Despite university-based discourses on diversity and trends toward greater representation of historically underrepresented minority (URM) students in colleges and universities, URM faculty is still disproportionately underrepresented across all degree-granting institutions. The percentages of URM African American (5%), Latino (3.6%), and Native American (0.4%) faculty are well below parity in all degree-granting institutions, especially research intensive universities,<sup>2</sup> with regard to their proportion of the total U.S. population.

Using a mixed methods design, an online survey (n=616) and in-depth interviews and focus groups (n=60), data were collected to examine the associations among occupational stress, coping strategies and physical and mental well-being among U.S. born tenure track assistant and tenured associate URM faculty. We obtained data on demographics, occupational stress indicators including perceived racism, mentoring adequacy, self-reported health status, psychological distress, and coping strategies. In-depth qualitative interviews and focus groups captured personal stories and lived experiences, using a life course perspective, which is particularly important in the investigation of the impact of systems of inequality on the health/mental health of URM faculty in the United States.

These findings shed some light on challenges URM faculty confront in higher education. The data reveal the contours of the struggles URM faculty face, including their various sources of marginalization (tokenism, “brown/black tax,” “only one” syndrome, etc.), intersectional struggles with systems of oppression (e.g., sexism, racism, and classism), issues of work/family balance, disruptive health events, institutional challenges to career progression, and limited access to institutional resources including mentoring.

<b>Thematic Findings</b>	
<p align="center"><b>Academic Environment and Diversity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low numbers of URM in universities-tokenism</li> <li>• Hostile and unwelcoming climate</li> <li>• Low value by institutions of higher education on community engagement</li> <li>• High racial/ethnic “tax” burden</li> </ul>	<p align="center"><b>Mentoring</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low perceived support of senior mentors</li> <li>• Few mentors who know their research area</li> <li>• Network shuffle-patchwork of mentors</li> <li>• 49% report that inadequate mentoring has significantly/somewhat impeded their career growth.</li> </ul>
<p align="center"><b>Perceived Racism and Discrimination</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experiences are subtle, intangible, difficult to name.</li> <li>• Manifest through devaluing</li> <li>• Faculty is perceived and perceive themselves as outsider, interloper, and having an unwelcome status within the academy.</li> </ul>	<p align="center"><b>Coping Strategies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confrontation</li> <li>• Intentional Ignoring</li> <li>• Staying Below the Radar</li> <li>• Resignation</li> </ul>
<p align="center"><b>Physical/Mental Well-Being</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Depression, anxiety, ulcers/GERD, migraines, asthma, shingles, high levels of stress and anxiety reported, associated with stress-related disorders.</li> <li>• More women than men met criteria for depression. African American women more likely to be depressed than other URM women.</li> <li>• A greater proportion of men reported their health as excellent/very good compared to women.</li> </ul>	

These data capture the experiences of a segment of the current domestic work force that is vital to strengthening our higher education institutions, decreasing social and economic inequality of communities, strengthening the education of future cohorts of diverse students, and decreasing barriers to academic progress and retention for URM faculty.

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<sup>2</sup> Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). (2011). U.S Department of Education. National Center for Education Statistics. Washington, DC.