Abstract

There continues to be a gap between the growing multicultural student body and predominantly White faculty and staff members who work with students. One factor in increasing the likelihood of persistence in college for minoritized students is the presence of a mentor with a similar ethnic background. Nevertheless, as of 2004, the populations of faculty, staff and administrators are still disproportionately dominated by White Americans. This study investigated how a university or college can better retain staff members of color. The participants were current and past staff members of color who worked at one university within the Midwestern United States. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and were coded and then categorized into overarching themes that emerged from the data. Findings from this study contributed to the limited research on professional staff members of color in higher education. A majority of the current research focused solely on the hardships of faculty of color without acknowledging professional staff members of color. Through this study, I sought to understand the difficulties faced by staff members of color and what circumstances led staff members of color to leave or stay at their institution. I now also have a better understanding of what a university might do to ensure staff members of color feel supported while working within an institution.