

## **Faculty Tiering and Academic Inbreeding: One Institution's Relationships and Realities**

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"Like inbreeding, if the proliferation of faculty tiering is problematic for academe, this institution is promoting faculty tiering, but at a lower rate than national trends. But, inbreeding and faculty tiering appear to be related, with more inbred faculty in lower tiered positions."

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Academic inbreeding has a long history as an issue and concern for higher education (Eliot, 1908). Although defined variously, inbred faculty members possess at least one degree from the academic institution employing them, most commonly their highest degree (Blau, 1973, 1994). Criticism about "pure" inbred faculty emanates from the concern that the entire professional experiences of these scholars were "limited to the confines of a single institution by virtue of their being recruited directly from the graduating classes of the employing institution" (Dutton, 1980, p. 2). "Silver cord scholars," those who have been "recruited back to their alma mater after having held positions outside their degree granting institution", (Dutton, 1980, p. 2) are not included in the controversy because their professional experiences were not restricted to a single institution. Negative impacts of inbreeding are assumed for both the institution as well as the individual. Bridgeland (1982) states that "an implicit attitude against inbreeding abounds" (p. 288) and "when candidates restrict their [job] search to the university that granted their highest degree..., they may be doomed to temporary and misfitting jobs or ones that underutilize their talents or training" ( p. 289). Despite these cautions, nationally, the average of inbred faculty of any kind has been typically 15% (Berelson, 1960; Blau, 1973, 1994).

A relatively recent realization within the research on faculty and the academic workplace is the existence of at least a two-tiered faculty: tenure-track, full-time faculty and those who are not (Buckless, Ravenscroft & Baldwin-Morgan, 1996; Burns, 1994; Clark & Corcoran, 1986; Dupree, 1993; Gappa & Leslie, 1993; Meisenhelder, 1986; Menges & Exum, 1983; Reichard, 1998; Roemer & Schnitz, 1982; Schuster, 1998). The numbers of these non-tenure track and part-time faculty have been increasing in recent years (Chronister, 1996; Chronister, Baldwin & Bailey, 1992; Gappa & Leslie, 1993; Leatherman, 1999; Leslie & Gappa, 1994). The most often cited rationale for increases in part-time and non-tenure track faculty are financial (Chronister, 1996); they cost less than tenure-track, full-time faculty.

The proliferation of rising numbers of a second tier faculty on the academy as a whole is not known. Although non-tenure track or off-track full and part-time segments of second tier faculty represent a "significant and growing element of the American academic profession" (Baldwin & Chronister, 1996, p.

4), these faculty typically "carry a significant part of the responsibility for teaching, especially at the lower-division level of undergraduate education" (Gappa & Leslie, 1993, p. 12). Although not exclusively part-time professionals, these faculty are often assumed to be less qualified and less productive. This is not the case (Dupree, 1993; Reichard, 1998), nor should they bear the blame for lowering academic standards in higher education (Thompson, 1992). In sum, little research has been done on this relatively new group of second tier faculty, other than to document their existence (Baldwin & Chronister, 1996; Rhoades, 1996; Roemer & Schnitz, 1982; Sommer, 1994).

## **Purpose of the Research**

Unlike the research focused independently on faculty inbreeding and faculty tiering, the purpose of this exploratory study was to reveal potentially invisible relationships among faculty demographics. Specifically explored were relationships between faculty tiering in terms of tenure and non-tenure track position types and gender, ethnicity and academic inbredness. Using data from a single institution, we sought answers to multiple questions:

- What are our faculty demographics in terms of tiering, gender, ethnicity and academic inbreeding?
- In terms of gender, ethnicity and academic inbreeding, what are the demographics of Tier 1 faculty?
- In terms of gender, ethnicity and inbreeding, what are the demographics of Tier 2 faculty?
- In what ways do Tier 1 and Tier 2 faculty differ?
  - In terms of gender?
  - In terms of ethnicity?
  - In terms of academic inbreeding?

## **Review of Related Literature**

Two sets of literature framed this research. The first was faculty tiering which emerges from the labor market research in higher education. The second was academic inbreeding, the institutional practice of hiring one's own graduates.

### **Faculty Tiering**

Over the years, numerous national studies have documented the demographics of faculty (age, race/ethnicity, gender, highest degree held, tenure status, academic rank) including disparities in compensation, workload, time allocation, job satisfaction and plans for the future by institutional type and program area (e.g., the most recent NCES, 1990; NCES, 1991; NCES, 1998). In many ways, Tier 1 and Tier 2 faculty are similar; they are mostly white and male (Baldwin & Chronister, 1996). However, data also depict women and minorities as over represented in Tier 2 positions (Baldwin & Chronister, 1996; Burns, 1992; Chronister, Gansneder, Harper & Baldwin, 1997; Clark & Corcoran, 1986; Lomperis, 1990; Menges & Exum, 1983). In fact, in one study, women were found to comprise 25 percent of Tier 1 faculty positions but over 40 percent of Tier 2 part-time positions (Lomperis, 1990).

In research from 1975 to 1985, the shift in the composition of the academic labor market from full-time tenure track faculty (Tier 1) to those who are not (Tier 2) has been "unequivocal" (Lomperis, 1990). Tier

2 faculty are found in all types of institutions, but, surprisingly are most heavily concentrated at public research institutions (Baldwin & Chronister, 1996). Although not labeled as second tier, graduate teaching assistants in research institutions constitute an invisible element of the Tier 2 faculty (Burns, 1994; Crannell, 1998). These teaching positions might more aptly be identified as non-tenure track and part-time faculty positions for the roles they play in institutions.

Many label Tier 2 faculty "part-timers." They are more critically dubbed "have-nots" (Bowen & Schuster, 1986; Leslie & Gappa, 1995; Chronicle, 1996), "second-class" (Leslie & Gappa, 1994), "proletariat" (Menges & Exum, 1983), "lowers and reserves" (Meisenhelder, 1986), "separate, low tier" (Dupree, 1993), "gypsy scholars" (Sommer, 1994) and "low-status caste" faculty (Gappa & Leslie, 1993). Many have focused on faculty tiering through the examination of part-time faculty. Leslie (1978) and Gappa (1984) independently and collectively (Gappa & Leslie, 1993; Leslie & Gappa, 1994, 1995) lead in the early research of part-timers. Their review of policies and procedures regarding part-time faculty employment at 18 representative colleges and universities documents "a wildly random collection of institutional and departmental practices" (Gappa & Leslie, 1993, p. xiii). They also found that part-time faculty felt "they were being exploited, and blatantly so" (p. xiii).

Typically Tier 1 faculty engage in the academic triad of teaching, research and service (outreach), while Tier 2 faculty primarily teach. They teach undergraduate courses (Gappa & Leslie, 1993), teach at two or more institutions (Burns, 1994; Thompson, 1992) and generally carry a teaching load of between one and five courses (Baldwin & Chronister, 1996). Tier 1 faculty are compensated on a yearly salary basis regardless of teaching load, while Tier 2 faculty are generally paid per credit hour taught. It is common for Tier 2 faculty to earn approximately \$2000 per course taught, generally a three-credit hour course (Wilson, 1999b). Conditions under which Tier 2 faculty do their work are often substandard (Crannell, 1998) and support resources are limited at best (Baldwin & Chronister, 1996), in spite of Tier 2 faculty numbers accounting for 42 percent of institutional staff in colleges (Schuster, 1998).

There are many occupational designations assigned to second tier faculty. These titles include "adjunct, part-time, non-tenure track, and temporary faculty" (Douglas, 1988, p. 1), as well as "lecturer" and "associate" (Sommer, 1994). Roemer and Schnitz (1982) denote titles including "visiting professor," "teaching associate," "doctoral research staff" and "one year appointment," including both full and part time employment conditions.

In describing part-timers, Gappa and Leslie (1993) built on the work of Tuckman (1978), modifying his taxonomy from seven categories to four. They retained Tuckman's (1978) semiretireds category, calling them career enders. These individuals were moving out of full-time positions but were also fully retired or in transition from full-time to retired status. Another of Tuckman's (1978) categories, full-mooner, they renamed specialist, expert or professional. These individuals held a primary, usually full-time career elsewhere but taught "for the love of it rather than because of a need for income" (Gappa & Leslie, 1993, p. 48). Gappa and Leslie (1993) called Tuckman's (1978) hopeful full-timers aspiring academics because, the focus of their career aspiration is not necessarily to teach full-time but to be fully participating, recognized, and rewarded members of the faculty with a status at least similar to that currently associated with the tenure-track or tenured faculty. (p. 48). Aspiring academics comprised more than one-quarter of the part-time ranks and appeared to be more common in large metropolitan areas. Their final category, freelancers, was a composite of Tuckman's (1978) part-unknowers, part-mooners and homeworkers.

These faculty were part-time by choice; they are not aspiring to full-time academic positions (Gappa & Leslie, 1993).

full-time, non-tenure track faculty have been researched most recently by Chronister, Baldwin, and Bailey (1992). Increasing numbers of institutions are making such appointments; up to 30 percent of institutional faculty at some private liberal arts colleges were identified. Lending to the notion of a tiered faculty, Chronister, Baldwin, and Bailey (1992) found non-tenure track faculty "felt that they had less influence on departmental and institutional policies, felt less involved in departmental faculty meetings and in campus faculty committees, felt more negative about their teaching loads, and also felt their salaries were inadequate" (p. 398) when compared to their tenure track colleagues.

Chronister, Baldwin and Bailey (1992) identified three types of non-tenure track appointments. The first type was described as "indefinitely renewable appointments" (p. 384). Faculty with this appointment type had the potential to renew their contract any number of times. The second type of appointment was the "restricted renewable appointments" (p. 384). Faculty with this appointment time were limited in the number of times their appointment could be renewed. Their final category was the "folding chair" (p. 384) which was strictly held to an appointment term and not renewable. With each of these appointments, there was the "lack of an explicit expectation of continued employment that a tenure appointment conveys" (Chronister, Baldwin & Bailey, 1992, p. 384).

Current demographic information estimates that 80 % of American higher education institutions employ non-tenure track faculty contracted by semester or year (Baldwin & Chronister, 1996). At the same time as little as 30 % of undergraduate coursework has been identified as being covered by tenure-track faculty (Wilson, 1999).

For full-time non-tenure track professionals, Chronister, Baldwin and Bailey (1992) found there were more obstacles confronted by these faculty than by faculty on the tenure track. These individuals were more likely to feel their positions were in jeopardy or feel trapped in the position they held (p. 395). These individuals were significantly more likely to be contemplating leaving academia or wistful about entering academia in the first place (p. 395).

For both full- and part-time second tier faculty, their political involvement with colleagues and faculty governance structures were negligible at best (Sommer, 1994) deferring more of this responsibility to full-time tenured and tenure-track faculty. Second tier faculty had limited access to fellow faculty members, few interactions in faculty meetings, and no resources for networking within their chosen field (Burns, 1994). These conditions can lead to invisibility (Gappa & Leslie, 1993) and a lack of voice (Douglas, 1988) within the organization. Such characterizations of individuals and institutions is not positive for academia or higher education.

Unfortunately, the warnings about the rise of a second tier of faculty are not isolated to concerns exclusively for individuals or institutions, but include cautions for academia as a whole (Baldwin & Chronister, 1996; Reichard, 1998; Schuster, 1998). Rhoades (1996) saw the growing second tier as a "challenge to the academic profession's definition of faculty lines as full-time, with a secure future" and "an explicit challenge to tenure as the professional structure that defines faculty's terms of employment" (p. 627). Reichard (1998) stated that the creation of a two-tiered faculty "is an insidious trend that must be resisted in the interest of high-quality education" (p. 41). From his profiles of research institutions,

Reichard (1998) believed that replacing tenured faculty with a "flexible" workforce and having a "disproportional presence of part-time faculty can undermine institutional quality" (p. 42). His argument continued that as research and teaching are disjointed, problems arise as "teaching becomes an isolated activity, not connected to research" (p. 42). Careful monitoring of this phenomenon of a growing second tier was called for by Baldwin and Chronister (1996) who saw this trend as transforming "academic careers, the culture of higher education, and ultimately, the teaching and learning process" (p. 1).

Schuster (1998) has done extensive study on what he terms as a "transformation" in higher education, specifically, the increase in part-time faculty members. By reviewing the rapid rise of part-time faculty within all types of institutions in the 1971 (22%), 1982 (32%), 1988 (33%), and 1992 (42%) U.S. Department of Education National Studies of Postsecondary Faculty, he estimated that a similar rate of increase would bring the 1997 numbers of part-time faculty up to 45 or 46 % of all faculty. Schuster expected this phenomenon to have "profound" effects on the professoriate, "albeit resistant to measurement in meaningful ways" (p. 50).

Schuster (1998) identified three specific issues of concern associated with the escalating numbers of second tier faculty members. These concerns included placing tenure at risk, weakening faculty loyalty and a decline in attractiveness of academic careers (p. 51). Lee (1983) predicted similar detriments for first tier faculty who would have greater responsibilities in the absence of first tier colleagues. Schuster (1998) also looked at prospects for future changes. If future "economic constraints" (p. 52) and the "perceived need to assure flexibility in the deployment of instructional staff" (p. 52) continue, the trend of increasing part-time faculty will continue undaunted. Many factors fuel this increase, including the boom in distance education and its influence to move away from the current role of accreditation in dictating acceptable ratios between full- and part-time faculty. Schuster (1998) also speculated that a reversal of this phenomenon could occur if there were certain shifts in the academic community. A narrowing of the supply and demand for faculty members may create changes, a higher consciousness among the academy about the effects of a tiered faculty on the quality of undergraduate education, and a major push by academic leadership to make "overdue corrections in the academic labor force" (p. 53).

### **Academic Inbreeding**

Starting in the early 1900's, the research on inbreeding documented its existence and cautioned against its practice (Eliot, 1908; Reeves, Henry, Kelly, Klein, & Russell, 1933; Eells & Cleveland, 1935; Hollingshead, 1938; Hargens & Farr, 1973; McNeely, 1932). By mid-century, McGee (1960) and Berelson (1960) suggested that there might be functional reasons for inbreeding's "prevalence in the face of odium" (McGee, 1960, p.483). McGee (1960) claimed that universities which face financial and geographical handicaps in the national competition for faculty member may inbreed junior faculty positions to free resources for competition in the national academic labor market. In his examination of graduate education, Berelson (1960) concluded that, even though it was believed that inbreeding had at least as adverse effects on faculty quality in the best institutions, as in other academic institutions, the top 12 institutions nationally experienced inbreeding "as a statistical consequence of their dominant position as producers" (p. 116).

Blau's (1973) examination of higher education resulted in additional insights into academic inbreeding. He asserted that "what promotes inbreeding in a major department in this country, with its many

universities, is not that graduates of no other department are good enough but that the members of this department are unwilling to admit that they are" (Blau, 1973, p. 138). His findings were more or less inconclusive, but raised two questions which have served to delineate inbreeding research to date:

1. What conditions in academic institutions affect inbreeding?
2. What effect does inbreeding have on faculty quality?

Ezrati (1983), Wyer and Conrad (1984a, b), Dagg (1993) and Dutton (1980) present the latest research in the area of effect. Wyer and Conrad (1984a) found that when time allocations were adjusted, inbred faculty were found to be more productive in all areas of scholarly research than their non-inbred counterparts. Ezrati (1983) examined the impact of specific personnel policies on women with families finding that anti-nepotism, inbreeding, leave of absence, part-time employment and childcare regulations worked against these faculty. Wyer and Conrad (1984b) further examined the relationship of sex and institutional origin to productivity finding that male and female inbred faculty presented significantly different patterns of productivity. These measures of productivity included 1) scholarly publications, 2) experience and time devoted to research, 3) allocation of time to tasks, and 4) the previous variables analyzed with salary earnings, receipt of research funding and services as paid consultants (Wyer & Conrad, 1984a). Dagg (1993), however, linked these productivity issues to professional mobility, not inbreeding.

Earlier research by Abramson (1975) and the Carnegie Commission (1973) related inbreeding issues to equity, focusing specifically on women because married women, in particular, often attended a specific university within the geographical area in which they lived and worked. She also believed that there was some evidence that this policy was eased more often for men than for women (Abramson, 1975). The report on the status of university women released by the Carnegie Commission in 1973 recommended "that policies which prohibit a department from hiring its own graduate students be reconsidered, since they have often worked to the disadvantage of women" (p. 131).

Through this history of inbreeding as a taboo, there were some specific indictments made to establish why such practice was negative for academia. McNeely (1932) stated that faculty hired from an institution's own graduates lacked the "broad outlook necessary to academic achievement" (p. 1). This concern was supported by research done by Eells and Cleveland (1935), Reeves (1933), and Hollingshead (1938). All of these studies found lower academic achievement by inbred faculty members based on indicators such as academic rank and length of service to the department. Eells and Cleveland (1935) went further, saying that institutions must exercise vigilance lest they be "undermined by excessive inbreeding leading to lessened academic productivity, if not sterility" (p. 328).

These early works on the negative effects of faculty inbreeding fell in line with the negative connotation the word itself brings to mind. Through the literature, or lack thereof, it appeared that for some time, the issue was moot and rarely discussed. No literature was found on academic inbreeding from 1938 to 1960. While trying to make the inbred faculty label less demeaning, Gonzalez, Newell, Berghage, Gallegos and Wooden (1997) preferred to use the term "homegrown" (p. 51) for this group of faculty. Perhaps the label was more agreeable, but the realities found in this research were consistent with earlier works. In terms of the hiring experience, consistently, the homegrown faculty realized later that they were hired for substantially less than comparable faculty positions. Many homegrown faculty battled with the

"perception of still being considered a student" (Gonzalez, Newell?Berghage, Gallegos & Wooden, 1997, p. 53). Collegiality was also lacking for homegrown faculty who felt they were expected to "prove themselves" rather than gain assistance and mentoring given to new incoming faculty members (p. 54). And, finally, these faculty faced opposition for tenure and promotion. For the homegrown faculty member, collaboration was more difficult than expected and resulted in feelings of isolation through the tenure and promotion process.

## **Summary**

Heavy use of part-time faculty blurs the employment picture for college faculty overall, it denies usually well-qualified part-time faculty the opportunity to be full participants in the academic community, and it increases the governance and counseling responsibilities of full-time faculty. (Lee, 1983, p.32)

The research on second-tier faculty has carefully examined diverse issues in-depth as they relate to this faculty population including use and abuse of second-tier employees as well as future needs and anticipated trends.

Most recent literature about the college experience stresses the magnitude of the freshman year of college with respect to improving undergraduate education, retention of students and college graduation rates (Goldberg, 1999). The extent to which second tier faculty are used for undergraduate education, especially lower level courses, is cause for concern. The quality of education students receive and their prospects to persist in higher education seem to be inextricably tied to the quality of the faculty in their early college experiences. A possible conflict with this perspective is the increasing second tier of faculty. Further concern may rise from the incidence of inbred faculty in the second tier faculty.

## **Methods**

For purposes of comparison, we sought answers to our research questions as far back as were possible through our institution's Office of Institutional Research. Surprisingly, we were able to go back no further than 1994. Our data sets include Fall semester demographics for 1994 and 1997.

## **Population**

Given our focus of instructional faculty only, individuals were included in each semester population by virtue of their assignments as instructor of record in a course. This included tenure and non-tenure track positions of all ranks. Faculty on sabbatical and graduate teaching assistants were excluded. Inbred faculty members were those whose highest degree attained was granted by our institution. "Tenure Received" and "On Tenure Track" were combined and assumed to comprise Tier 1 faculty while the "Not on Tenure Track" category was assumed to be Tier 2 faculty.

## **Statistics**

Descriptive statistics were used to establish population demographics (n, %). The average percentage of faculty found to be inbred nationally was 10.3% (NCES, 1998). In the southwest region where our

institution is located, an average of 9.7% of all faculty were found to be inbred (NCES, 1998).

## **Analysis**

The clear intent of examining a single institution's instructional faculty demographics was to reveal realities about faculty that might be masked by a collective examination. Following the reporting of demographic data, the realities revealed will be analyzed critically in terms of tiering, gender, ethnicity and academic inbreeding. These analyses follow the findings section.

## **Findings**

### **What are the demographics of our faculty in terms of tier, gender, ethnicity and academic inbreeding?**

In 1997, our instructional faculty were predominantly in Tier 1 positions (81%), male (73%), Caucasian (88%) and held terminal degrees from other institutions (82%). Those demographics changed little between 1994 and 1997. The number of instructional faculty at our institution rose 9% from 1994 to 1997, but that rise was in Tier 2 instructional positions (6%), as national trends would predict (Schuster, 1998). Interestingly, the number of female instructional faculty increased (5%) during this timeframe. It seems that at our institution, more faculty are being hired into Tier 2 instructional positions and that those instructional faculty are female. The diversity demographics and inbreeding of instructional faculty remained stable, changing no more than one percentage point. [Table 1](#) summarizes these data.

### **What are the demographics of Tier 1 faculty, in terms of gender, ethnicity and academic inbreeding?**

In 1997, 79 percent of Tier 1 faculty were male, 89 percent of these faculty were Caucasian and 88 percent of Tier 1 faculty held degrees from other institutions. These demographics were quite stable from 1994 to 1997, changing no more than one percent in any category. [Table 2](#) summarizes these data.

### **What are the demographics of Tier 2 faculty, in terms of gender, ethnicity and academic inbreeding?**

From 1994 to 1997, the percent of females in Tier 2 instructional faculty positions increased 10 percentage points from 39 to 49 percent. That 10 percentage point increase, however, was a 50 percent increase in females in Tier 2 positions, from 46 to 93. Virtually half of the Tier 2 faculty positions are now female. Males also increased in Tier 2 instructional positions, up 24 faculty or 33 percent. The ethnic diversity of faculty in Tier 2 positions changed little during this timeframe and the percentage of faculty with degrees from other institutions increased eight percentage points. In 1997, 39 percent of Tier 2 instructional faculty were inbred, down eight percentage points from 1994, and 84 percent of these same faculty were Caucasian, unchanged from 1994. [Table 3](#) summarizes these data.

### **How do Tier 1 and Tier 2 faculty differ?**

To answer this question, we needed to compare faculty tiers against each other and the institution.



**In terms of gender?** In 1994, 78 percent of the faculty at our institution were male and of that group, 90 percent were in Tier 1 positions. Three years later, in 1997, 73 percent of the faculty were male and of that group 87 percent were in Tier 1 positions. The number of males in instructional faculty positions were decreasing overall at the institution as well as in Tier 1. The converse was true for male faculty in Tier 2 instructional positions; their numbers were increasing.

The numbers of females employed in instructional faculty positions at our institution was increasing; from 22 percent (202) in 1994 to 27 percent (260) in 1997. Of that group, however, 77 percent (156) of the female instructional faculty in 1994 were in Tier 1 positions. Three years later, in 1997, that group had decreased to 64 percent (167). Like the demographics for males, female faculty in Tier 2 positions have increased as well from 1994 to 1997. However, unlike male demographics, by 1997, 36 percent of the females employed at our institution were in Tier 2 positions while only 13 percent of males were in similar faculty instructional positions. It seems that females were disproportionately underrepresented in Tier 1 positions and over represented in Tier 2 positions when compared to their male counterparts. ( [Table 4](#) compares Tier 1 and Tier 2 demographics, Tables 2 and 3 support aspects of these comparisons as well.)

**In terms of ethnicity?** The diversity of our faculty changed little from 1994 to 1997. The instructional faculty were predominately Caucasian (89% in 1994, 88% in 1997). When comparing Tier 1 and 2 diversity demographics, percentage increases in categories were found in Tier 2 Caucasians, African Americans, Asians, Hispanics and Nonresident Aliens. The only decrease was noted in Native Americans where Tier 1 instructional faculty increased from 71 percent to 74 percent or from 15 to 17 faculty. Although numbers were small, it seemed that increasing diversity demographics (except for Native American instructional faculty) were in Tier 2 positions.

**In terms of academic inbreeding?** In 1994, 83 percent of the faculty at our institution held terminal degrees from other institutions and of that group, 92 percent were in Tier 1 positions. In 1997, 82 percent of the instructional faculty held terminal degrees from other institutions and of that group 86 percent were in Tier 1 positions. Therefore, the number of noninbred faculty, those with terminal degrees from other institutions, were decreasing institutionally and in Tier 1 positions. Remarkably, however, despite the fact that the percentage of faculty with terminal degrees from other institutions was decreasing institutionally, their numbers and percentages were rising in Tier 1 faculty instructional positions, from 87 to 88 percent from 1994 to 1997.

The picture for inbred faculty is similar. In 1994, 17 percent of the faculty at our institution held terminal degrees from our institution and of that group, 13 percent were in Tier 1 positions. In 1997, 18 percent of the instructional faculty held terminal degrees from our institution and of that group 12 percent were in Tier 1 positions. Therefore, the number of inbred faculty were increasing but decreasing in Tier 1 positions. Tier 2 instructional faculty positions appeared to be key to understanding academic inbreeding at this institution.

From 1994 to 1997, the numbers of academically inbred faculty rose one percentage point (from 17 to 18%; from 156 to 172, 16 faculty). In 1994, 17 percent of the faculty at our institution were inbred and of that group, 65 percent (101) were in Tier 1 positions. In 1997, the number of inbred faculty had increased

one percentage point to 18 percent but of that group 58 percent (99) were in Tier 1 positions. Inbred faculty were increasing. Where, then, were increases occurring? They were found in Tier 2 positions where 42 percent of the inbred faculty could be found. It seemed that if inbred faculty were hired at our institution in instructional faculty positions, they were Tier 2 (non-tenure track and/or part-time) positions. This may be in response to financial constraints noted by Schuster (1998). ( [Table 5](#) compares Tier 1 and Tier 2 demographics, Tables 2 and 3 support aspects of these comparisons as well.)

## **Discussion**

We had a predominately male instructional faculty, these faculty were in predominately tenured or in tenure-track positions, they held degrees from institutions other than our own and they were overwhelmingly Caucasian. On the surface these data seem reasonable and comparable to national norms (NCES, 1998). According to the most current National Center for Education Statistics data (1998), 46 percent of instructional faculty nationally are in Tier 1 positions. At our institution, that percentage was 35 percentage points higher, 81 percent. In terms of tiering, our institution has yet to succumb to the same pressures as other institutions nationally. Our faculty were 73 percent male and the national norm is 62 percent. The percent of Caucasian faculty was virtually identical (NCES 87 %, our institution 88%). In terms of academic inbreeding, national norms are 10 percent while at our institution 18 percent were inbred (NCES, 1998).

A closer examination reveals something else. From 1994 to 1997, 83 new instructional faculty positions were created but 71 of those faculty positions were non-tenure track and/or part-time Tier 2 positions. Of the 83 new instructional faculty positions, twice as many were held by females (58 female hires, 25 male hires). Of the 83 new faculty positions, 16 (19 %) earned degrees from our institution and 60 (72%) of those faculty were Caucasian.

In sum, we are not making gains in terms of ethnicity. We seem to be making gains in terms of gender, but at what cost. These new female faculty are not in full-time tenure track positions. And, more new faculty hold degrees from our own institution; they are academically inbred.

### **Tier 1 Faculty**

When looking at Tier 1 instructional faculty positions, from 1994 to 1997, the numbers of faculty increased by 12 (9 %). Females gained all but one of the positions and all but two of these positions were held by faculty with degrees from other institutions. We had no increase in Caucasian faculty during this timeframe. The 12 faculty positions enhanced our institutional demographics by increasing African American (plus 1), Asian (plus 5), Hispanic (plus 2), Native American (plus 2), Nonresident Alien (plus 3) numbers. There seemed to be a focused drive to increase Tier 1 positions in ways that will diversity our faculty while increasing academic integrity by not academically inbreeding.

### **Tier 2 Faculty**

However, this same evaluation cannot be made of Tier 2 instructional faculty. The number of Tier 2 instructional faculty positions increased by 71 (63 %). Of those 71 faculty, 47 (66 %) were female and 24 (33 %) were male. Almost twice as many women as men were placed in Tier 2 positions. In this tier, we

gained Caucasian faculty during this time frame (60 of the 71), a demographic addition some would question. Of the 11 faculty positions that enhanced our institutional diversity demographics, gains were found in African American (plus 2, 100% increase), Asian (plus 3, 58% increase), Hispanic (plus 1, 100% increase), and Nonresident Alien (plus 4, 60% increase) categories. The number of faculty with degrees from other institutions almost doubled while the number of faculty with degrees from our institution increased by 25 percent. Such gains in inbred faculty numbers were well over the national norms or percentages recommended by scholars in the field.

## **Tier Comparisons**

**Gender.** From 1994 to 1997, the gender of instructional faculty changed. More women were being employed, but these women were being employed in Tier 2 positions. In fact, over one third of the female faculty at this institution were in Tier 2 positions compared to less than 15 percent of the male faculty. Our institution is employing fewer males in instructional faculty positions, but males still outnumbered females in instructional faculty positions at either level, Tier 1 or Tier 2.

**Ethnicity.** From 1994 to 1997, the diversity of instructional faculty changed. More ethnic diversity could be found in both Tier 1 and Tier 2 positions.

**Academic Inbreeding.** From 1994 to 1997, the numbers of instructional faculty holding degrees from our institution increased. Most of the increases were in Tier 2 faculty instructional positions.

## **Conclusions and Recommendations**

Changes in staffing in terms of tiering, gender, ethnicity and academic inbreeding were revealed by this distinctly different descriptive review of institutional demographics. What seemed like small changes, a percentage point or two, were much more dramatic when viewed through the lens of tiers, gender, ethnicity and/or academic inbreeding. For example, between 1994 and 1997, the numbers of males decreased one percent and the numbers of females increased one percent. What was not known, however, was that the decrease in males occurred in Tier 1 positions and the percentage of males in Tier 2 positions increased (each by 3%). At the same time, the increase in females (13%) occurred in Tier 2 positions and decreased in Tier 1 positions. The trends are the same, but the percentages show disparities some might view as alarming.

In terms of diversity, alarming trends are seen as well. Institutional demographics would indicate that instructional faculty are predominately Caucasian. Increases in diversity demographics, however, illustrate that these new instructional faculty are in both Tier 1 and Tier 2 positions. Although their numbers are low, the percentage point increases are Tier 2 positions are alarming. More faculty of color are in all likelihood not on a tenure-track, not full-time and may possess terminal degrees from our own institution. They would be classified by many as second class academic citizens. They fulfill institutional diversity needs, but do not have the same opportunities to gain in terms of academic position through tenure-track full-time employment (Chronister, 1996; Sommer, 1994).

Academic inbreeding has become less of an issue over the years as institutions have more routinely limited the numbers of inbred faculty in tenure-track positions. However, the rise in second-tier (non-

tenure track and part-time) faculty may be altering this reality. Inbred faculty reflect strikingly different demographics than those for the institution as a whole. They appear more likely to be female and in non-tenure track positions than their noninbred counterparts. And, in some cases, inbred faculty reflect diversity demographics for the institution as a whole. If academic inbreeding is not a good institutional strategy, unfortunately, our institution is practicing it beyond the current national norms, but within the historical 15 percent margin. These numbers, however, appear to be rising.

Like inbreeding, if the proliferation of faculty tiering is problematic for academe, this institution is promoting faculty tiering, but at a lower rate than national trends. But, inbreeding and faculty tiering appear to be related, with more inbred faculty in lower tiered positions. At this institution, inbreeding has a better chance of leading to non-tenure track, full or part-time positions. These positions also appear to be offered more often to women and some minorities than is typical for the institution as a whole. This relationship needs further examination.

Our focus on instructional faculty was purposeful in that we wanted to reveal the characteristics of faculty teaching both undergraduate and graduate coursework. At our institution, we believe in addition to being concerned about the rise in people of color and academically inbred faculty in Tier 2 instructional faculty positions, students and their education may also be negatively impacted. If academic inbreeding is not a wise practice for traditional Tier 1 faculty, why would it be appropriate for Tier 2 faculty who are primarily responsible for undergraduate instruction? This relationship needs further examination as well.

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