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PREVIEW

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PREVIEW

A STUDY OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE DEVELOPMENT OF ACADEMIC  
DEPARTMENT CHAIRPERSONS IN SELECTED  
INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for  
the Degree Doctor of Education in the Graduate School  
of Texas Southern University

By

Rondell E. Bailey, B.B.A., M.B.A.

Texas Southern University

1998

Approved By



Dissertation Advisor



Dean, The Graduate School

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**1998**

PREVIEW



A STUDY OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE DEVELOPMENT OF ACADEMIC  
DEPARTMENT CHAIRPERSONS IN SELECTED  
INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

By

Rondell E. Bailey, Ed.D.

Texas Southern University, 1998

Associate Professor Lillian B. Poats, Advisor

The primary purpose of this study was to explore the degree of participation of department chairpersons in administrative development activities. The study also described the relationship between the importance of career plan, importance of career goal, perception of the importance of administrative development, and the degree of participation in administrative development activities of departmental chairpersons.

The research instrument, a modified version of the Survey of Department Chairpersons, was mailed to 201 department chairpersons in selected academic units of the identified institutions in the state of Texas (Bowman, 1991). Three parametric procedures were employed in the study: (a) the Three-Way Analysis of Variance; (b) the One-Way Analysis of Variance; and (c) the Pearson Product

Moment Correlation.

Ethnic minority chairpersons participated more in administrative development activities than ethnic nonminority chairpersons. The investigation also concluded that younger department chairpersons participated more in administrative development activities. Further, it was concluded that chairpersons affiliated with Arts and Sciences and Education participated more in administrative development activities than their counterparts in Business and/or Economics.

The higher the emphasis on career goals and career plans, the more often chairpersons participated in administrative development activities. Regarding department chairpersons' perceptions of administrative development activities, the more favorable the perception, the more often they participated in administrative development activities.

It was recommended that administrators responsible for determining the degree of administrative development training needed by department chairpersons be cognizant of those factors that impact the chairperson's degree of training. It was further advised that an understanding of factors that aid in the effectual administrative development of chairpersons is crucial to success in the position.

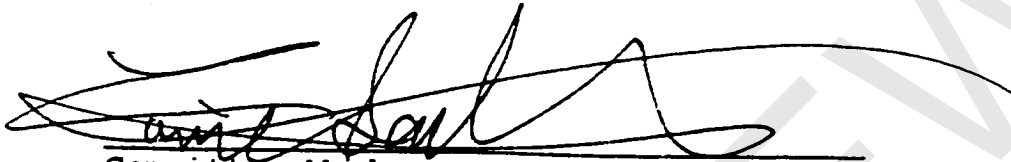
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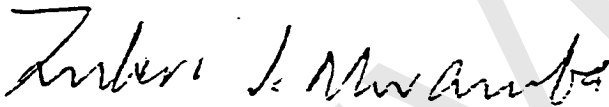
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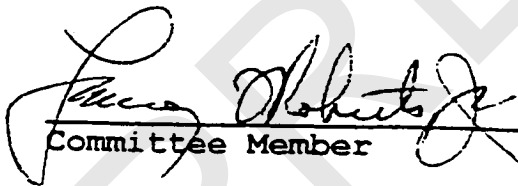
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## DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my mother who instilled in me the value of education and who afforded me the opportunity to pursue my goals. Without her love and support, this endeavor would not have been possible. A mother's love is very special and to be treasured. To God be the glory for the things she has done!

This dissertation is also dedicated in memory of my grandmother who was a constant source of inspiration. She believed in me and never doubted this would come to fruition. May God continue to bless her soul!

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, the researcher wishes to give thanks unto God, my creator and molder, and to my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. For I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. The race is not given unto the swift, but to the one who endures until the end. Thank God, this is finished!

I would like to express my sincerest thanks and appreciation to Dr. Lillian Poats, Chairperson of my Dissertation Committee, for her expert guidance and support throughout the research and writing of this study. The high level of intellect and professionalism that she exuded during this undertaking was immeasurable. I also would like to express appreciation for the wisdom of the most learned and skilled dissertation committee in the area of higher education and public affairs: Dr. Lonnie Sadberry, Dr. Launey F. Roberts, Jr., and Dr. Zuberi Mwamba.

A very special and loving thanks to my mother for her undying love, support, and prayers. I know and appreciate each and every sacrifice she made so that I might have. I thank God for her. Thanks to my cousins and other family members who always inquired about the progression of this dissertation.

Kudos to Dr. Launey F. Roberts, Jr. and the staff of EES Educational Services, Inc. for your constant patience, endurance, support, and tolerance as I pursued the writing of this dissertation. Special thanks to the board of directors and members of The Research Association of Minority Professors (RAMP), whose support and concern helped make it possible for me to complete this dissertation.

I would also like to thank all my friends who contributed in some manner to the completion of this study. Fortunately, I have been surrounded by a wealth of individuals who genuinely care about my welfare.

Finally, I have valued my association with this fine institution of higher learning. I am thankful for the opportunity to have matriculated through what I view as one of the premier institutions in the country. This superb institution has enabled me to grow and develop in ways that I could not have imagined a few years ago. Thank you, TSU.

## Chapter 1

### INTRODUCTION

In higher education institutions, academic departments are the organizational units within the institution whose chairpersons have considerable influence in helping resolve problems facing these entities. The chairperson's position is of utmost importance to higher education due to the complexities of operating an institution faced with decreasing budgets. As such, more and more tasks are being delegated to the department chairperson. Jones and Holdway (1995) stated "the assertion by some scholars that much of the decision making in postsecondary institutions occurs at the department level" contributes to the complexity of the problem (p. 189). Department chairpersons are instrumental in areas such as staff recruitment and tenure, curriculum planning, course offerings, teaching loads and assignments, and department policy making. According to Bowman (1991), quality leadership at the departmental level is needed as institutions face the challenges of the present and future. The department chair position has been a vital link in the institutional hierarchy for some time. Evidence of this was presented in a study by Heimler (1967) where the importance of the department chair position was substantiated by

results that indicated 80% of all administrative decisions are made at the departmental level. Therefore, given the historical importance of the position, the need for quality leadership at this level is apparent.

One possible means to help define quality leadership is a deeper understanding of the administrative development of chairpersons. The term "administrative development" refers to programs that promote the professional education and development of administrators by providing an opportunity to learn more about issues related to higher education and/or increasing knowledge that culminates in improved job performance. The purposes and benefits of administrative development are varied. McDade (1986) indicated these programs furnish the vital mechanisms for the advancement of institutions and society. Further, McDade (1986) asserted the literature of higher education and professional development focus almost exclusively on the usefulness of these programs for individuals by highlighting the personal development needs of administrators.

According to the American Council on Education, the [administrative] development of people should be high on the agenda of institutional presidents and trustees. Institutions of higher education need to live by their own-stated beliefs in the value of education for all (Atwell &

Green, 1987). Durea (1981) conducted a survey of 527 college and university presidents where results indicated administrative development was not perceived to be an important issue or concern. Although the professional development of administrators has not been emphasized in most higher education institutions, many authors stress the importance of quality leadership in order for institutions to face the challenges of both the present and the future (Bowman, 1991). The department chairperson is generally chosen from the faculty ranks, with faculty approval, and serves at the discretion of the dean. Consequently, the roles of the department chairperson are many and the responsibilities quite challenging. Deans and upper-level administrators look to the chairperson to shape the department's future. The department chairperson's activities have often been associated with the role of manager as well as academic leader.

As members of the faculty, chairpersons are selected, appointed, and/or promoted on the basis of teaching, research, and service, not administrative or leadership ability (Bennett, 1988). The reality is that few educational leaders, including department chairpersons, are schooled in management (Blyn & Zoerner, 1992; Foxley, 1980). McDade (1986) indicated, after a review of the literature,

this was a common practice applicable to higher education more so than any other profession.

Chairpersons of academic departments, a population highly involved in problems of higher education, have not been given the proper attention in educational research, considering the important roles they play. Given that higher education is characterized as complex, and includes a myriad of functions and roles, the well-trained department chair is in increasingly high demand. While professional development programs have existed in higher education approximately as long as in business and industry, these programs have not garnered an acceptable level of importance for higher education administrators as they have in business and industry (Fisher, 1978; Keller, 1983; Higher Education Management Institute, 1978; Scott, 1978). Many chairs are selected and or appointed for reasons other than those demonstrated by administrative skills. Research has shown that very little attention is devoted to the administrative development of department chairpersons once they assumed the position. Haynes (1985) contended that colleges and universities rarely provide adequate plans for the development of administrators. However, if colleges and universities are to be effective, they must have effective administrators (Cuthbert, 1988; Wheeten & Cameron, 1985).

Moreover, the lack of research regarding the training and administrative development of chairpersons is a problem that higher education needs to address. McDade (1986) contended much remains to be learned about the professional training and development of chairpersons. Accordingly, there have been few systematic studies conducted concerning the training and development of chairpersons. Further, most academic literature on university governance emphasizes the higher levels of administration, while research on the department chairperson has been neglected (Watson, 1986).

#### **Statement of the Problem**

The purpose of this study was to explore the degree of participation of department chairpersons in administrative development activities. More specifically, the researcher was concerned with the independent and combined effects of the variables gender, ethnicity, and age on the degree of participation of department chairpersons in administrative development activities. Additionally, this study investigated the independent and combined effects of the variables institutional identification, academic unit, and length of service on the degree of participation of department chairpersons in administrative development activities. Further, this study examined the influence of the variable training on the chairpersons' degree of



participation in administrative development activities. Finally, this study described the relationship between the importance of career plan, importance of career goal, perception of the importance of administrative development and the degree of participation in administrative development activities of departmental chairpersons. Answers to the following questions were sought.

1. To what extent does the variables gender, ethnicity, and age affect the degree of participation of department chairpersons in administrative development activities?
2. To what extent does the variables institutional identification, academic unit, and length of service affect the degree of participation of department chairpersons in administrative development activities?
3. Is there a significant difference between training and the degree of participation of department chairpersons in administrative development activities?
4. What is the relationship between department chairperson reported levels of actual participation in administrative development activities and the importance of career goal?
5. What is the relationship between department chairperson reported levels of actual participation in