

## **Diversity in the Field of Public Administration? Let's Keep Pushing the Envelope**

Concept Paper Proposed for the Minnowbrook 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Conference

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The faculty profile at institutions of higher education in the U.S. continues to be mostly white and largely men (Warikoo 2016; McMurtrie 2016; Brown 2004). This somewhat holds true for such fields such as public administration and political science depending upon faculty rank. In public administration, for example, we have made progress in terms of increases of white women in the field, but the higher ranks continue to be dominated by white men. Leisha DeHart Davis (2017), who with Mary Feeney spearheaded the creation of Academic Women in Public Administration (AWPA), invited comments through an anonymous Qualtrics survey posted on twitter, the AWPA email list and the Public Management Research Association's (PMRA's) listserv on the following questions: "Based on your experiences, is public administration a diverse and inclusive academic field? Why or why not? If not, what can be done? All thoughts, ideas, comments, suggestions, critiques welcome." While only twenty-five people posted comments, the responses were varied and provocative, and were summarized by Professor DeHart Davis. Responses included:

- Public administration is (not) a diverse academic field;

- Public administration is a white field that excludes minority voices;
- White men were overrepresented in power positions;
- The creation of Academic Women in Public Administration was viewed by some as positive, but others suspect self-serving motives and white feminism at play;
- International students, particularly those from China and Korea, bring diversity to PA;
- While Asian students do indeed bring diversity, it cannot be used as an excuse for ignoring the call for U.S. public administration to be more inclusive of women and faculty of color.

Other public administration faculty members across the U.S. were invited to comment on this issue (DeHart-Davis 2017, 3-7). They echoed some of the comments made by the anonymous respondents to the Qualtrics survey.

The issue of diversity in public administration deserves greater attention and asks the question, have the aims and objectives of Minnowbrook I and the New Public Administration been realized? What *were* the aims? How do we *define* diversity? Does the field include students, faculty and leaders in the field? Parenthetically, the Minnowbrook I conference had no persons of color nor women present.<sup>1</sup> This presentation will continue the conversation around diversity as led by DeHart-Davis, and push the discourse even further by posing such questions as:

- Is there a perception that research by women and faculty of color is not regarded as scientifically sound compared to that of white males?
- Is the research by women and persons of color cited at the same rate as research by white men?

- Are women and faculty of color perceived to have less leadership potential for positions such as Chair, Dean or editor-in-chief of prestigious journals in the field?
- Has the field become complacent about diversity, particularly given the inroads made by Asian students and faculty?
- How can we address these and other inequities?

## References

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## Note

<sup>1</sup> Why wasn’t Martha Derthick or other women invited?