

Underrepresentation of Faculty of Color In Anthropology Departments: What Do The Numbers Say?

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Abstract

From 1977 to 1998 the percent of faculty of color within anthropology departments rose from 4.6% to 11%. From there we see a stagnation of the latter percentage until 2002. The percentage begins to drop to its lowest percentage since 1977, to 4.4% in 2012. Are these numbers showing a steady decline of faculty of color within anthropology departments? To answer that question, I will use a linear regression analysis to predict whether the numbers are pointing to a steady decline in faculty of color in anthropology departments. This analysis will incorporate the use of Microsoft Excel to determine the linear regression formula for faculty of color in anthropology departments. The researcher will also use Microsoft Excel to determine the linear regression formula for the overall number of faculty in anthropology departments. These formulas will be used to predict the number of faculty overall in anthropology departments by 2020, and the number of faculty of color in anthropology departments by 2020. The researcher's analysis will demonstrate that the number of faculty of color is not declining, but a steady trend of underrepresentation is continuing since 2001.

Keywords: Predict, Underrepresentation, Analyze, Numbers, Anthropology

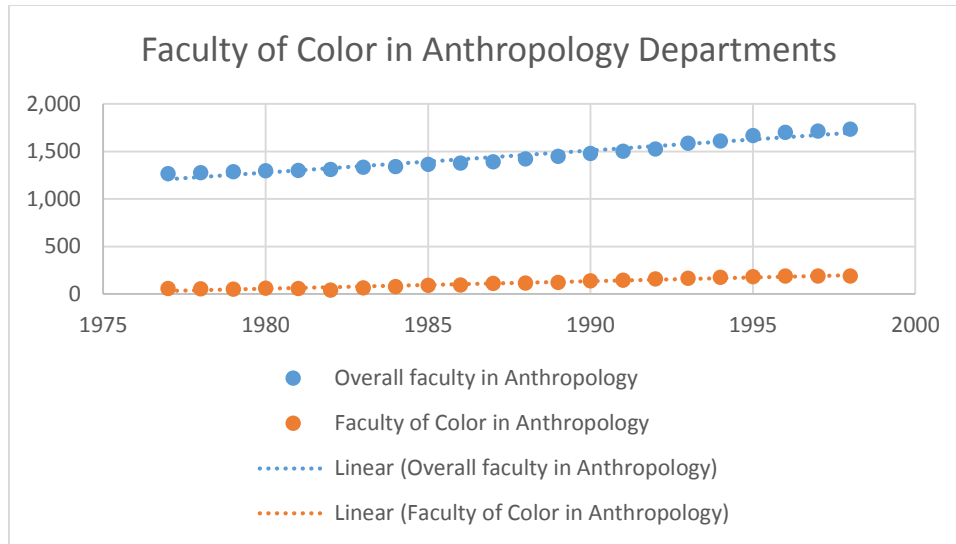
INTRODUCTION

Anthropology has long been a white-dominated discipline. It began, mostly dominated by white men making theoretical claims that were supposed to encompass all of humanity. It was not until the Boasian era of anthropology that the mainstream started to see women taking prominent roles in anthropology departments (Brodkin et al., 2011:545), and it was not until the 1960s that anthropology started to look at race critically (Brodkin et al., 2011:545). Despite what seems to be a steady progression towards introspection, to change the narrowed perspective of the past, anthropology cannot escape the fact that in its early years, the discipline included many scientific racists (JBHE, 1997:37). This fact cannot be denied, and many times steers prospective students of anthropology, who are of color, away from the discipline (JBHE, 1997:37). The students who do stick it out, and get that PhD, face the challenge of trying to get work in many institutions that consider themselves color-blind, and basically ignore diversity (Brayboy, 2003:73). The ones who do get hired find themselves as a minority within any anthropology department they are hired in (Denzin and Lincoln, 2002:4).

What effect does that latter have on a person of color's personal decision to become an anthropologist, admittedly, the researcher of this article has no data on, other than personal experience, but what this researcher will examine is the underrepresentation of faculty of color in anthropology departments. Specifically, this researcher will look at what the numbers say about underrepresentation of faculty of color within anthropology departments. The data gathered for this article comes from the American Anthropological Association's statistics of minorities, within anthropology faculties, since 1977. From 1977 through 1998 the percent of faculty of color within anthropology departments rose from 4.6% to 11%. After 1998, we see a stagnation of the previous percentage until 2002. The percentage, then begins to drop to its lowest percentage since 1977, to 4.4% in 2012. Are these numbers showing a steady decline of faculty of color within anthropology departments? To answer that question, I will use a linear regression analysis to predict whether the numbers are pointing to a steady decline in faculty of color in anthropology departments. This analysis will incorporate the use of Microsoft Excel to determine the linear regression formula for faculty of color in anthropology departments. The researcher will also use Microsoft Excel to determine the linear regression formula for the overall number of faculty in anthropology departments. These formulas will be used to predict the number of faculty overall in anthropology departments by 2020, and the number of faculty of color in anthropology departments by 2020. The researcher's analysis will demonstrate that the number of faculty of color is not declining, in fact, it is rising, but a steady trend of underrepresentation has continued since 2001.

FACULTY OF COLOR SINCE THE 60'S

The theoretical timeline of anthropology saw a major shift in the 1960s. For the first time a true feminist perspective was brought into the anthropological canon, while theories on power, sexuality and race mirrored anti-colonial sentiment of the time. In contemporary times, the common perception within higher education is that anthropology has increasingly become more diverse since the 1960s (Brodkin et al., 2011:548). In fact, table 1 shows data from the American Anthropological Association, that reflects a steady increase in faculty of color in anthropology departments since the 1970s all the way through the late 90's.



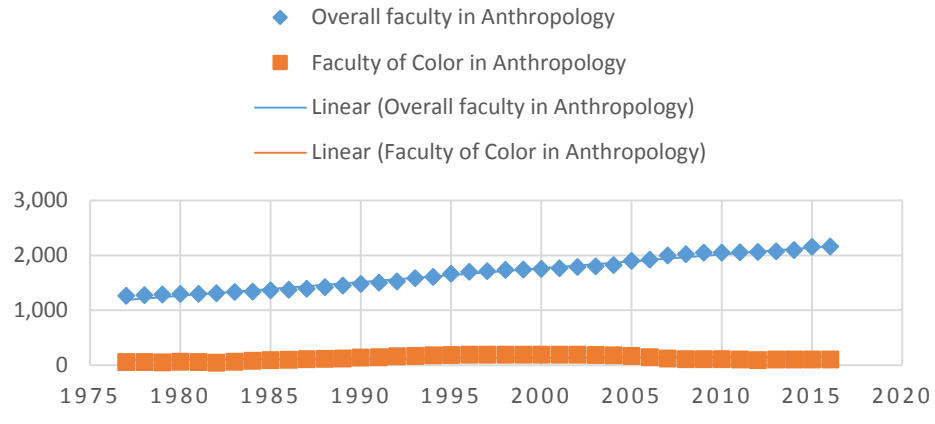
Plot 1

THE DATA

The data from plot 1 shows a steady rise in the total number of anthropology faculty from 1,266 in 1977 to 1,734 in 1998. For faculty members of color in anthropology departments, a steady rise to more than double the amount of faculty of color in 1977 compared to 1998. In 1977 the data shows that there were only 58 anthropologists of color in faculties across the United States. By 1998 there are 191 faculty of color in anthropology departments, in the United States. That translates to about 4.6% of the anthropology faculty, being faculty of color in 1977, to just a little over 11% by 1998. This data seems to reveal a heavy recruitment effort for minority faculty members between the late seventies all the way through the early mid-nineties, but as the years progressed the data shows a stagnation, then a sudden decrease in faculty members of color.

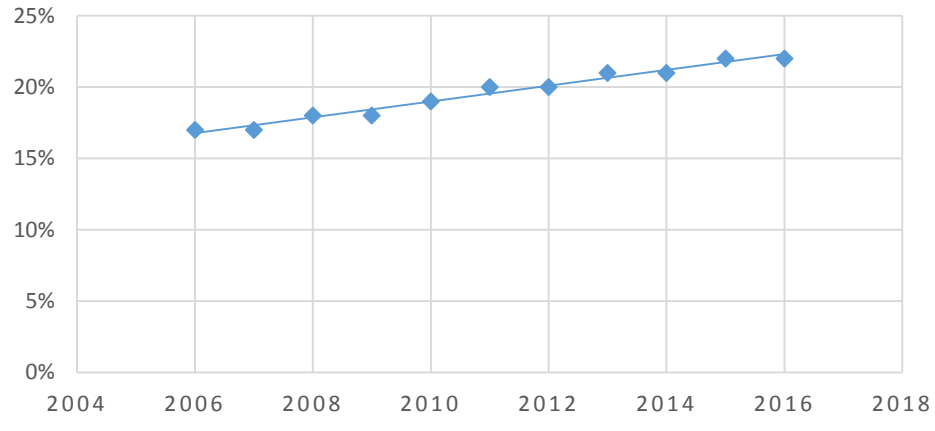
Plot 2 shows that by 2001, the amount of faculty of color in anthropology department has stagnated. Steadily the percentages of faculty of color stay at 11% since 1998, while the overall amount of faculty in anthropology has increased from 1,734 (1998), to 1,762 (2001). In 2002, a slight drop in faculty of color sees the percentage go down to 10.5%, while the amount of faculty in anthropology continues to increase to 1,789. Over the coming years, the amount of Faculty of color continues to decrease, while the amount of Faculty overall, continues to increase. By 2012, faculty of color in anthropology departments make up only 4.4%, it is its lowest percentage since 1977, while the overall amount of anthropology faculty has continued to increase to 2,065. When we compare the percentage of faculty of color in anthropology departments with the overall percentage of faculty of color in institutions associated with the American Association of Universities (Plot 3), we see no correlation between the two sets of data. Plot 3 shows a steady rise in the percentage of faculty of color overall, from 17% in 2006 all the way to 22% in 2016. In comparison, anthropology departments have dropped in the percentage of faculty of color from 7.3% in 2006 to 5.1% in 2016.

FACULTY OF COLOR IN ANTHROPOLOGY DEPARTMENTS



Plot 2

AAU PERCENTAGE OF FACULTY OF COLOR



Plot 3

DATA ANALYSIS

To analyze whether the data is showing a steady decline in faculty of color is occurring, we will use a predictive model called linear regression, through Microsoft excel. Linear regression is used to determine a score of a variable based off the score of another variable. The score based off another variable is called Y, while the variable used to determine the score, is called X. In this particular case, we will use the data from Plot 1 and 2 which show us that Y is the number of faculty, and X is the years from 1977 onwards. Using the data from the Plot 1 and, we will use $Y'=bX+a$ as the formula used to predict our result. Y is the score based off another variable (X). b is the direction in which the data is going, while a is where the line and y-axis converge. The results gained from this predictive model will not be perfect. The equation used to determine linear regression is still just a prediction. to illustrate the possible error in prediction in our end result () we will use the data from plot 1 and 2 to explain this. Afterwords, we will use linear regression to predict whether the number of faculty of color in anthropology departments are dropping.

The Error in prediction

Using Microsoft excel, this researcher found that the linear regression formula for faculty of color in Plot 1 is $Y'=7.9102x.+24.532$. To ensure the data is accurate, the researcher numbered the data with number 1 representing 1977. The number representing 2002 is 26. So, to get a prediction for 2002 the researcher plugged 26 in for x in the formula:

$$Y'=7.9102(26)+24.532= 230$$

$$Y'=230$$

The actual data from 2006 (Plot 2) was 188, so our error in prediction is $230-188=42$. The difference of 42 shows the reality of prediction, that it is not always accurate, but at least with the linear regression formula we can get as close to the actual number as possible.

Predictions for 2020

To predict the number of faculty of color in anthropology departments by 2020, the researcher first found the linear regression formula for plot 2 in Microsoft excel, $Y'=1.556x+93.985$. In this case the number 44 represents 2020. The researchers then plugged 44 for X in the formula:

$$Y'=1.556(44)+93.985$$

$$Y'=162.49$$

The predicted number of faculty of color in anthropology departments by 2020 is 163 total. We will now compare that to the predicted total number of faculty in anthropology by 2020,

$$Y'=25.095x+1164.8.$$

$$Y'=25.095(44)+1164.8$$

$$Y'=2268.98$$

The total predicted faculty in anthropology is 2,269. According to this prediction model, by 2020, 7.2% of faculty in anthropology, will be of color.

CONCLUSION

Based off the data analysis, this researcher concludes that the number of faculty of color in anthropology is not dropping, in fact it's rising, but compared to the rise of overall faculty in anthropology, there is still a low representation of faculty of color in anthropology departments. As referenced by some of the readings this researcher discussed, there may be several issues as

to why this underrepresentation of people of color within anthropology departments has increased. A starting point that can help researchers better address this issue is centering on understanding sex and racial/ethnic group differences in the status and experiences of faculty of Anthropology (Perna, 2003:205). More research needs to be conducted in order to find out why these percentages are not increasing, and what can be done to change that.

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