Black professors managing mentorship: Implications of applying social exchange frameworks to our understanding of the influence of student interaction on scholarly productivity

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Background/Context: Past research has focused on benefits that students reap from mentoring, but less attention has been focused on the faculty experience. Studies on faculty and mentorship tend to highlight the costs that can negatively influence faculty productivity rather than addressing any benefits they may accrue. Black faculty may be at particularly high risk for these challenges, considering their high rates of service and mentorship. By examining the nature of mentoring, this study clarifies how certain types of developmental relationships may distract, but also potentially contribute to the scholarly success of, Black professors.

Purpose/Objective/Research Question/Focus of Study: The purpose of this study is to explore how Black faculty experience and perceive specific types of interactions within their mentoring relationships, especially in relation to their scholarly productivity.

Setting: Data were collected at two large predominantly White research universities of similar size, type, and mission: Oceanside University and Columbia University (pseudonyms).

Population/Participants/Subjects: A total of 17 Oceanside professors (10 males, 7 females) and 11 Columbia professors (6 males, 5 females) agreed to participate. Five participants were assistant, 11 were associate, and 12 were full professors. The largest proportion of faculty taught in the social sciences (n = 12), followed by professional programs (n = 5).

Research Design: This research is a qualitative multi-case study that uses pattern matching to analyze transcripts of 60- to 90-minute interviews with faculty participants.
Findings/Results: Interactions with students were perceived as having both costs and benefits, which had varying influence on productivity based on the type of interaction between the faculty member and the student. Collaborative activities (productive exchanges) have the potential to increase faculty productivity; however, interactions that are focused primarily on student development (generalized exchanges) can be rewarding, yet appear more likely to distract from research and limit scholarly productivity.

Conclusions/Recommendations: Although Black professors participating in this study perceived themselves as more likely to counsel students (generalized exchanges), they did not note that they were more likely to collaborate with students, particularly on research. Thus, rather than suggesting that Black faculty have slower rates of advancement and higher rates of attrition because they spend too much time working with students, this study suggests that perhaps their diminished outcomes stem from both frequency and form of interaction. Findings suggest that policy makers and institutional leaders, in addition to supporting Black professors as they work with students, could consider ways to foster the ability of Black professors to simultaneously counsel and collaborate with students as they develop strategies to encourage faculty promotion and retention.

Student–faculty interaction generally, and mentoring specifically, has been the topic of many studies in higher education (see reviews by Crisp & Cruz, 2009; Jacobi, 1991; Pascarella, 1980). These studies often focus on the benefits that students generally, and those from underserved backgrounds in particular, accrue because of their engagement in mentoring relationships and informal interactions with faculty (e.g., Adams, 1992; Bowman, Kite, Branscombe, & Williams, 1999; Guiffrida, 2005; Kuh & Hu, 2001; Pascarella, 1980; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). For example, interactions with professors outside the classroom are positively related to several academic outcomes for undergraduates, including degree attainment, grade point average, interest or actual enrollment in graduate school, interest in faculty careers, and graduating with honors (Astin, 1993; Crawford, Suarez-Balcazar, Reich, Figert, & Nyden, 1993; DeAngelo, 2005; Pascarella). Mentoring is lauded as beneficial for graduate students as well. Graduate students who have mentors report increased levels of interest in becoming professors, better academic performance, increases in critical thinking ability, academic skill development, and more success in their efforts to obtain research grants and fellowships (Adams; Hill, Castillo, Ngú, & Pepion, 1999; Kelly & Schweitzer, 1999).

Although students’ experiences in mentoring relationships are well documented, little attention has been directed toward the other members of mentoring dyads: faculty, who are the focus of this study. Contrary to the literature on the benefits that accrue to students when they interact with faculty, the limited literature addressing the faculty experience...
frames the time and energy spent working with students rather negatively. As success in academe is increasingly defined in relation to a professor’s research productivity and quality of scholarship, the amount of time professors spend working with students holds less weight. Further, research suggests that more time working with students results in less time on research and writing, leaving these faculty vulnerable for negative tenure and promotion reviews (Banks, 1984; Tierney & Bensimon, 1996; Williams & Williams, 2006).

Although all faculty must balance their engagement in teaching, research, and service, African American professors appear to manage a different balancing act than their colleagues. Black faculty often carry a heavier service load than White professors, more often serving on committees, volunteering to lead professional organizations, and, notably, mentoring and advising students (W. R. Allen, Epps, Guillory, Suh, & Bonous-Hammard, 2000; Padilla, 1994; Tierney & Bensimon, 1996; Turner & Myers, 2000; Umbach, 2006). Their high visibility and success in academe can lead students to view Black faculty as role models and potential mentors (Menges & Exum, 1983; Plata, 1996; Tierney & Bensimon; Williams & Williams, 2006). Thus, in addition to managing their assigned advising load, African American faculty are sought out by underserved students generally, and Black students specifically, for additional support and guidance on issues related to their personal and professional development. Because Black faculty seemingly engage with students at rates higher than their White colleagues, they are at higher risk for negative outcomes associated with a general overcommitment to service (W. R. Allen et al.; Padilla; Tierney & Bensimon) and may pay a price unexpected of others.

Although these arguments suggest that mentoring may hold little benefit for faculty members, a small number of studies have begun to address what faculty potentially gain as they participate in service activities (e.g., committee work, leadership in professional organizations), including student mentoring. Neumann and Terosky (2007) noted that, although not always viewed positively, the increased service obligations required of newly tenured faculty provide opportunities for gaining insights into their area of study, how to effectively work with others, and how to think about and navigate their institution. Service can also lead to positive experiences and outcomes for faculty of color. In addition to allowing professors to contribute to the betterment of their communities, race-related service activities can provide avenues for faculty of color to make connections across campus, providing a sense of community and networks of support for those who feel isolated (Baez, 2000; Stanley, 2006).
Although these studies acknowledge some potential benefits, research specifically examining faculty perspectives on the costs and benefits of mentoring is limited. In the present study, qualitative data are used to explore how Black professors experience mentoring relationships and how specific types of interactions within these relationships are perceived as shaping their productivity. When examined through a framework of social exchange, findings suggest that in addition to the amount of time that Black professors spend working with students, we also must consider the nature of engagement to understand the influence of developmental relationships on faculty work. By examining the nature of mentoring, this study clarifies how certain types of developmental relationships can distract, but also contribute to the scholarly success of, Black professors.

BACKGROUND

Mentoring has been defined inconsistently, leading to inconsistent measurement of the influence of mentoring relationships and a lack of clarity about what mentorship means as compared with other forms of faculty interaction (Crisp, 2009; D’Abate, Eddy, & Tannenbaum, 2003; Jacobi, 1991; Johnson, Rose, & Schlosser, 2007). According to Jacobi, mentoring is studied within the fields of education, psychology, and management, with each field offering its own interpretations of what mentoring actually is. Jacobi recounted at least 15 definitions in her literature review on mentoring and undergraduate success. In her study of mentoring within the workplace, Kram (1988) also found that she received a wide range of responses when she asked her participants to define the wordmentorand that the term was challenging to define.

Based on these wide-ranging ideas about the nature and definition of mentoring, Kram (1988) adopted a more general term, developmental relationships, to describe what we typically consider a mentoring relationship. She identified developmental relationships as associations between senior (i.e., faculty) and junior individuals (i.e., students) focused on the junior members’ personal and/or career development and individual growth. This definition guides the present study; although it was developed for use in a business context, the concept of developmental relationships also is applicable to higher education. A focus on developmental relationships provides room for an examination of formal advising relationships in which students and faculty are assigned to one another, relationships that develop into friendships and sources of psychosocial support, and informal out-of-class exchanges. Thus, whether professors are guiding students through the dissertation process,
supplying career advice, collaborating with students on research, or offering support during a personal crisis, they can be considered as engaging in developmental relationships.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Hunt and Michael’s (1983) mentoring framework guides this study (see Figure 1). This framework is useful in its ability to link environmental factors, individual characteristics, and relationship quality within developmental relationships to faculty outcomes. Within the framework, five interrelated areas of mentoring research are identified: the context within which the relationship emerges and takes place; the mentor’s characteristics; the protégé’s characteristics; stages of the mentoring process; and the outcomes of mentoring relationships.

The model can be understood as offering two core propositions. First, contextual forces, characteristics of mentors, and characteristics of protégés all have the potential to shape the mentoring process. Hunt and Michael (1983) focused primarily on individual relationships, noting the different experiences and behaviors across each stage of the relationship. In moving from the business to the academic arena, the focus of this frame is modified, shifting from a focus on individual mentoring interactions to professors’ interactions with students more generally. In other words, rather than considering the stages through which individual developmental relationships progress, in the academic context, it makes sense to address the frequency with which professors mentor students.

The second proposition of the model indicates that the mentoring process can shape personal and professional outcomes for protégés, mentors, and the organizations within which these relationships take place. This acknowledgment challenges traditional notions of mentoring, which focus exclusively on the outcomes and experiences of protégés. This has certainly been the case in higher education, where attention has been focused on the benefits that accrue to students as a result of student–faculty interaction (Johnson et al., 2010). Although rarely studied in higher education, the benefits that mentors accrue from developmental relationships have been studied to some extent within the field of business. This literature suggests that mentors gain psychological support, satisfaction, organizational recognition, the loyalty of their mentees, and a more competent workforce when they mentor protégés (T. D. Allen, Lentz, & Day, 2006; T. D. Allen, Poteet, & Burroughs, 1997; Kram, 1988; Ragins & Scandura, 1999). Although not directly applicable to the experiences of faculty, these studies suggest that mentorship is not unidirectional, and mentors may also benefit from the relationships they
form. Thus, the present study will expand knowledge regarding the potential outcomes associated with mentoring for faculty members by exploring how mentoring students can influence the work of African American professors.

Figure 1. Interpretation of the Hunt and Michael (1983) conceptual framework

SOCIAL EXCHANGE THEORY AND MENTORING

Hunt and Michael's (1983) acknowledgment of mentors' experiences and outcomes is consistent with the principles of social exchange, a framework used by relationship researchers to better understand the benefits that individuals accrue from engaging in social interactions (Gibb, 1999). Social exchange perspectives suggest that humans are self-interested actors focused on their own goals and objectives and seeking opportunities to maximize their personal outcomes (Molm, 2006; Young & Perrewe, 2000). Relationships are reciprocal and bidirectional; relationships are formed because they enable people to reach goals they cannot reach by themselves (Emerson, 1981; Lawler & Thye, 1999).
When the dimension of Hunt and Michael’s (1983) model that specifically addresses engagement in mentoring relationships is examined using a social exchange framework, choices regarding whether to mentor are based on the perceived costs and benefits of the interaction (Ensher, Thomas, & Murphy, 2001; Gibb, 1999; Molm, 2006). Receipt of benefits is contingent on providing the other party in the exchange with something of value; every relationship has some form of “cost” (Emerson, 1981). Costs are subtracted from the benefits, leaving something similar to a “profit” associated with forming relationships (Homans, 1958). Based on this understanding, individuals will only adjust their behavior in ways that encourage their relationships if they anticipate a significant “profit,” with the benefits of interacting outweighing the costs (Ensher et al.; Gibb; Homans).

It may be challenging to conceptualize relationships between professors and students as a series of exchanges based on costs and benefits, particularly considering that faculty are expected to engage students outside the classroom and have advising responsibilities (e.g., course selection, ensuring completion of degree requirements). However, Johnson and colleagues (2007) suggested that social exchange frameworks have much to offer in terms understanding faculty–student interaction, particularly when assessing the quality and scope of mentoring relationships and understanding why faculty participate in relationships that go beyond expectations associated with advising. Urgin, Odom, and Pearson (2008) offered one of the few applications of social exchange frameworks to faculty–student mentoring relationships. New faculty who had higher quality social exchanges and more social ties with their dissertation advisers were more productive than those who did not. These findings not only speak to the applicability of social exchange to mentoring relationships in higher education, but they also highlight the importance of reciprocity and camaraderie in faculty–student relationships and that the quality of exchange can often influence the outcomes of those engaged.

Subtle manifestations of the importance of reciprocity and exchange can also be seen in the extant research on advising and mentoring. Crookston (1994) suggested that there are significant differences between the outcomes associated with prescriptive and developmental advising relationships. Prescriptive advising is largely based on hierarchical relationships, in which professors instruct students on what to do and what choices to make. The potential outcomes of the relationship are focused on the student, and good advice from the faculty member, followed by implementation of this advice by the student, will result in better grades and degree completion. Crookston acknowledged that there
are certainly occasions when it is important to receive clear advice to follow; however, he advocated for a wider adoption of developmental advising structures. Developmental advising is less hierarchical and uni-directional. These relationships are based in a series of opportunities for the student and faculty member to learn together, which results in growth for both parties. Thus, developmental advising more closely mirrors principles of reciprocity, holding more potential for mutual benefits.

Social exchange frameworks also allow for deeper exploration of the specific benefits that faculty value and can gain access to through developmental relationships. Costs and benefits are determined by an individual actor’s perceptions of what he or she values (Molm, 2006). The subjectivity associated with perceptions of resources makes it difficult to determine whether a relationship will be formed and successful based on an outsider’s analysis alone. What may appear to be a costly interaction to outsiders may be a rich, valuable interaction based on an individual actor’s self-defined needs. Thus, as social exchange is considered in congruence with Hunt and Michael’s (1983) framework, the characteristics of mentors and protégés, specifically their motivations and goals, become more central and have great importance based on their influence on the formation of developmental relationships.

THE NATURE OF MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS AND STRUCTURES OF MUTUAL DEPENDENCE

Although the acknowledgement of outcomes for all relationship constituents is consistent with principles of social exchange, Hunt and Michael’s (1983) model omits attention to an issue of interest and importance: the nature or type of interactions within the relationship. Scholars often aim to measure and assess student–faculty interaction; however, definitions of this construct are often imprecise and do not differentiate between different forms of interaction or relationships (Baker & Griffin, 2010; Johnson et al., 2010). Baker and Griffin argued that although the terms mentoring and advising are often used interchangeably, students’ needs differ, and faculty have different understandings of students’ interests. These distinctions create a need to classify different forms of faculty–student interaction, varying in levels of personal and professional support, which can result in very different outcomes. For example, it is recommended that underrepresented and underserved students in particular have access to culturally responsive advising that attends to their unique experiences with marginalization in higher education (Gardner, 2008; Holmes, Land, & Hinton-Hudson, 2007; Mitchell & Rosiek, 2005;
Integration of these components into a developmental relationship could produce very different outcomes for mentors and protégées, perhaps encouraging the persistence and degree completion of students from underserved groups.

Varying forms of interaction can also be better understood through a more nuanced analysis using social exchange frameworks. Social exchange theorists have increasingly explored structures of mutual dependence, or how reciprocity and the exchange of costs and benefits are balanced in relationships (Molm, 2006); however, structures of mutual dependence do not appear to have been used by researchers to frame mentoring relationships in higher education or business. When applied to the mentoring relationship dimension of Hunt and Michael’s (1983) model, attention to structures of mutual dependence focuses on both the amount and kind of interactions within relationships. Structures of mutual dependence also suggest that different structures produce different costs, benefits, and “profits” for mentors and protégées.

Molm (2006) identified three primary structures of mutual dependence: direct exchange, generalized exchange, and productive exchange (Figure 2). In a direct exchange, also referred to by some as reciprocal exchange, the members of the relationship both receive resources and experience costs directly from engaging in the interaction (Figure 2A). The interaction will likely continue if the benefits outweigh the costs. Generalized exchange is slightly different from direct exchange in that interactions are not directly reciprocal in a dyadic way (Figure 2B). As stated by Yamagishi and Cook (1993), “In this structure, each participant provides benefits to an actor in the network who does not return benefits directly to that participant” (p. 237). Molm offered the peer review process associated with academic publication as an example of this form of exchange; one author reviews an article for the benefit of another in hopes of having his or her work reviewed in the future or adding to the knowledge in his or her field.

The final structure presented is productive exchange (Figure 2C), which is the least studied of the three structures of mutual dependence (Lawler, Thye, & Yoon, 2000). Similar to generalized exchange, there is little direct reciprocity. However, it differs in that it is centered on mutual interdependence, or joint action in the creation of collective resources. Productive exchange is based in the actions of two (or more) actors focused on creating a joint project that will, in turn, benefit all involved (Lawler et al.; Molm, 2006). Productive exchange is unique in that focus is concentrated on the contributions that an individual makes to the
group through the production of a new resource, not an exchange of resources between individuals (Lawler et al.). Therefore, a group of scholars working together on a research project or students working on a collaborative assignment would qualify as a productive exchange.

Figure 2. Social exchange framework: Structures of mutual dependence

THE PRESENT STUDY

By examining developmental relationships in academia through Hunt and Michael’s mentoring framework (1983) and principles of social exchange, we can anticipate that characteristics of mentors and protégés will shape the developmental relationships that Black professors form. Along with their students, it is anticipated that Black professors experience benefits along with costs in their developmental relationships. Although social exchange has been used in a broad sense to understand developmental relationships, scholars have not explored the nature and influence of specific mentoring behaviors. Specifically, structures of mutual dependence have not been used to understand the nature or behaviors within mentoring relationships. It is uncertain whether the three structures of mutual dependence apply to the ways in which faculty engage their students and, if so, whether engaging in different structures of exchange shape resulting professional outcomes for faculty members, namely productivity.

Given these gaps in the literature, Hunt and Michael’s (1983) mentoring model and a social exchange framework are applied to gain a deeper understanding of how mentor and protégé characteristics shape mentoring relationships and the outcomes of these relationships for Black professors. Specifically, the present project addressed two core research questions: (1) How do Black professors describe and make meaning of the relationships they have with students? (2) How do Black professors describe the costs and benefits of engaging in developmental relationships with students, particularly in relation to their productivity?
METHOD

This study is an interpretive multi-case study. According to Merriam (1998), interpretive case study allows researchers to go beyond describing phenomena, encouraging the collection and coding of data in ways that support, challenge, or develop theory about events, experiences, and outcomes. Multi-case studies include data collection and analysis of more than one case (i.e., more than one professor), allowing for comparison across cases and enhanced external validity of findings (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Merriam). These strategies create opportunities to compare participants across academic field, professional rank, and institution.

INSTITUTIONAL SITES

In-depth interviews were conducted with 28 African American professors employed at two public research universities of similar size and institutional mission: Oceanside University and Column University (pseudonyms). Both institutions are categorized as “Research Universities—Very High Research Activity” within the newest edition of the Carnegie Classification system. Detailed demographic information on both institutions can be found in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographics for Institutional Sites

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Oceanside</th>
<th>Column</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>West Coast</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>Public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Coast</td>
<td>Research University</td>
<td>Research University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>37,000</td>
<td>35,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latina/o</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Pacific Islanders</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>12%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Native Americans</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>2500</td>
<td>2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
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<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latina/o</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asian/Pacific Islanders</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Native Americans</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
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</table>
Oceanide University is a public institution founded in the early 1900s and is located in an urban community in the Western United States. It serves over 37,000 students; approximately two thirds are undergraduates. In 2005, almost 2,500 individuals were employed as faculty members at Oceanside University. The majority of professors are White, making up 66.4% of all faculty on campus. Almost a third of the faculty members at Oceanside are from minority groups. Column University is located on the East Coast in the Mid-Atlantic region and is the flagship institution in its state’s higher education system. Comparable in size to Oceanside, Column enrolls approximately 35,000 students; 25,000 are undergraduates. Almost 2,000 faculty were employed at Column in the 2005 academic year. Although Column has a smaller population of minority faculty as compared with Oceanside, it employs a larger number of African American professors.

PARTICIPANTS

Based on an interest in having ample sample representation by gender, rank, and discipline, interview participants were selected and recruited using purposeful rather than random sampling (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). Key administrators at Column and Oceanside assisted with participant identification and recruitment. At Oceanside, Black professors were identified by their membership in the institutional organization for Black professors and staff. Invitations to participate in the study were distributed through the organization’s listserv by its president, with interested faculty directed to reply to the principal investigator. Black professors were also identified through their public faculty Web sites and contacted directly. At Column University, an administrator working on faculty retention endorsed the study and provided a list of all Black faculty employed at the institution. Professors were e-mailed directly and invited to participate in the study.

Snowball sampling (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998) was also used to recruit participants. Participants were asked to recommend other African American faculty who could add additional insight through their involvement in the project. Nominated faculty were contacted by their recommenders and asked to contact the principal investigator directly if interested in participating.

All Black faculty who were willing to participate in the study were included in the sample. A total of 17 Oceanside professors (10 males, 7 females) and 11 Column professors (6 males, 5 females) agreed to participate in this study. All participants are referred to by pseudonyms in the
reporting of this study’s findings. Twenty-six were full-time professors, and 25 were tenure-line at the time of their interview. Participants had been professors for an average of 16 years. Five participants were assistant professors, 11 were associate professors, and 12 were full professors at the time of interview. Faculty were from a diverse group of departments and programs, with the largest proportion teaching in the social sciences \( n = 12 \), followed by professional programs \( n = 5 \). Four professors were in math or engineering, 2 taught in the life sciences, 1 taught in the arts, and 1 identified as being in an interdisciplinary program. Participant demographics appear in Table 2.

### Table 2. Participant Demographic Characteristics

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Tenured?</th>
<th>Taught at another institution?</th>
<th>Academic area</th>
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<td>Alberto Ranks</td>
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<td>Corinne Davis</td>
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<td>Matt Miller</td>
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### PROCEDURES

Each participant engaged in a one-on-one semistructured interview (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998) exploring his or her path to the professoriate, experiences on campus, perceptions of professional expectations and obligations, and relationships with both undergraduate and graduate students. Interviews took approximately 60–90 minutes to complete, and all
participants were asked for permission to tape-record interviews for verbatim transcription.

To facilitate analysis, the researcher completed reflective memos within 24 hours of each interview’s completion. These memos were meant to assist in the process of making sense of the interviews and potential findings, capturing immediate thoughts and feelings on the discussion, how a given professor’s responses fit into the responses of others, and emerging connections between themes. Memos were also written throughout the analysis and writing process in an effort to clarify the researcher’s thinking around emerging themes and how various aspects of professors’ narratives were related to one another.

MEASURES AND ANALYSES

The interview protocol was developed based on a review of the literature on the experiences of African American faculty, particularly their participation in developmental relationships (the protocol is available in Appendix A). Particularly relevant to this study, participants were asked questions about their experiences as professors at their home institutions; past experiences as a mentor and protégé; the types and quality of relationships they had with the general student body, students of color, and African American students; and their thoughts on the influence of these relationships on their personal and professional lives and development.

On completion of transcription, professors’ narratives were organized through a systematic coding process, which provides a structure for comparison and understanding of the data (Maxwell, 2005). The codes were developed via a deductive and inductive process. In the deductive phase, the literature on mentoring and faculty–student interaction was reviewed and distilled into an initial list of codes. Most relevant to this study, these codes reflected each structure of mutual dependence (i.e., direct, generalized, productive), and common costs and benefits associated with mentoring (i.e., time spent, scholarly productivity and quality of work done, positive emotions). Then, in the inductive phase, the interview transcripts were reviewed to include and account for themes emerging from the data. The inductive themes most relevant to this study were specific activities that faculty described engaging in with their students (e.g., social interactions, research and scholarship, teaching collaborations, counseling, skill development, encouragement, dissertation-related work), and emerging costs and benefits associated with developmental relationships (e.g., perceptions of others based on work with students, shaping the future of academia, energy expended or gained). These codes were then added to the deductive themes to develop a codebook.
The codes developed during this deductive and inductive process were clustered into four major categories that captured the perceived influence of environmental forces on developmental relationships, actors within and motivation to form these relationships, the frequency and nature of engagement in mentoring, and outcomes (e.g. costs and benefits) associated with developmental relationships. Each overarching category contained more detailed codes that were used to capture participants’ experiences and perspectives, providing specific examples of phenomena and facilitating cross-case comparisons.

These codes were used to organize the data and were applied to participants’ narratives using ATLAS.ti software. Examples of how data were coded appear in Appendix B. Once codes were applied, quotations categorized within the same code were reread to identify emerging themes and divergent perspectives within the data. Data obtained from interviews were then further analyzed using the “pattern matching” technique (Yin, 1994), in which data are compared with existing literature and theory. In this case, emergent themes were compared with existing theory and research on social exchange, student–faculty interaction, and faculty productivity.

VALIDATING FINDINGS

After data were analyzed and an initial written report of findings was completed, a member-checking strategy was used to validate findings (Maxwell, 2005). All participants were e-mailed a summary of emergent findings and solicited for feedback. All participants were invited to discuss these findings further, and in-person or phone appointments were scheduled with all interested participants. Appointments were optional, and most study participants opted to forgo this meeting. Further, all respondents had the right to review their transcripts and comments, which appeared in the text of the manuscript, and they were able to edit, omit sections of, or prohibit use of their transcript or interview recording.

In addition to member checks, a test of intercoder reliability was conducted to ensure reliability of interpretation and understanding of professors’ narratives (Fink, 2006; Lombard, Snyder-Duch, & Bracken, 2005). With the help of a volunteer coder, kappa statistics, which assess the agreement between coders beyond chance (Fink), were calculated using SPSS software. Additionally, an average kappa was calculated for all codes. The average kappa for all codes was within the moderate range (0.716). Two items in the coding scheme had kappa statistics below 0.40 and were discussed and revised to enhance clarity and accuracy of the codes.
FINDINGS

Consistent with literature suggesting that Black faculty are often engaged in developmental relationships with students, several professors described their own high rates of student interaction. For example, Albert Banks and Aaron Dodd noted that they are often sought out, particularly by Black students, for support and exposure to research based on their understanding of Black students’ experiences. Albert Banks spoke broadly of the level of engagement in developmental relationships that he observed among faculty of color, saying that they “tend to get overrun with people who wanted to work and being a source of support and the whole nine yards.” Aaron Dodd concurred, noting, “The problem with Black faculty is that we tend to get a disproportional amount of . . . mentoring because Black students feel more comfortable going to Black academics.”

Some professors specifically referred to expectations around student interaction as a form of “tax,” an additional time commitment not required of their colleagues. According to Wallace Pearson, “Being a Black faculty member, there’s a tax you have to pay—you’ve got to put in a little bit of extra time.” Jackson Brown’s comments touched on similar themes, and he described the expectations that Black professors are subjected to concerning work with students: “You probably heard of the tax that African American faculty pay per student. It just sort of happens, you can’t avoid it, and you’re expected to do things and you sort of have to because there’s nobody else to do it.” When asked to elaborate on the types of activities that fall within this tax, Professor Brown replied that in addition to mentoring and advising, he is sought as an adviser for student organizations that need faculty mentors. Thus, Black faculty perceive themselves as spending more time than their peers working with students in various capacities, referring to it sometimes as a tax or an extra expenditure of time not required of others.

In addition to describing the time spent working with students in developmental relationships, participants shared more detailed accounts of the activities they engaged in, how they felt about the importance of these relationships for students, and the perceived influence of mentoring on their own productivity. Findings indicate that specific activities that Black professors engage in within developmental relationships can be appropriately understood within a social exchange framework that focuses on structures of mutual dependence. Professors’ narratives are used to illustrate the varying influence that structure of exchange can have on faculty outcomes, particularly productivity.
MENTORING AND STRUCTURES OF MUTUAL DEPENDENCE

Direct exchange. According to Molm (2006), direct exchange is distinguished by reciprocity, in which “each actor’s outcomes depend directly on the other actor’s behaviors” (p. 27). If we understand mentoring as direct exchange, then a mentor receives benefits or valued resources from interacting with students, and students benefit similarly from their professors. In many ways, this form of exchange can be understood as akin to a friendship between mentor and mentee, with each providing the other with resources that he or she needs to be successful.

Participants noted that they rarely participate in relationships based on direct exchange with their students. Thus, these exchanges will only be discussed briefly. Few faculty seek students for social or emotional support, preferring to turn to colleagues, friends, or family for encouragement. However, there are some occasions when professors form close relationships with undergraduate and graduate students that resemble direct exchanges, often within the context of faculty–student working relationships. Eileen Smith, for instance, described students she worked with in the past who became friends with whom she kept close touch. Similarly, Reginald Spencer described himself as building friendships with several of his graduate students, particularly students of color, explaining that they frequently meet socially.

Direct exchange and scholarly productivity. Few professors perceived direct exchanges and friendships with students as related to their scholarly productivity. In terms of benefits, direct exchanges offered resources similar to those obtained from any friend or colleague. Yet, there were also times when close relationships based in friendship or direct exchange could be troublesome and distracting. For Alice Butler, having close, personal relationships with students could lead to more time spent talking and connecting, leaving less time to complete her work:

You might have a meeting that you have 45 minutes set aside to meet about your research, but then you might have another 45 minutes because you’re talking about some personal issue. And it may be me bringing it up, something that happened to me. And then we get into it. . . . So then what is set aside as a 45-minute meeting . . . ends up being an hour and a half . . . the time in a day, there’s only a certain amount of time. And the more you spend on one thing, the less there is for another.

Like any friendship, developmental relationships based in direct exchange take time, and having close friendships with students had the
potential to draw Dr. Butler away from other tasks that needed to be completed during her workday. Thus, it seems that friendly exchanges with students can be a potential distraction, drawing time from a variety of tasks, including research.

*Generalized exchange.* More often than was the case with direct exchange, professors described participating in activities consistent with generalized exchange. Generalized exchanges are characterized by an indirect form of reciprocity, in which one individual interacts with another and has little chance of direct benefit, but can potentially stand to gain resources in the future (Molm, 2006). In other words, a professor can interact with a student and not anticipate a direct benefit; however, the professor may receive some form of benefit from someone his or her mentee interacts with in the future or because of his or her mentee’s contributions to a larger network or community.

Narratives reveal that in most cases, working with students on activities focused on personal development or building their skills as scholars (e.g., advising student groups, guiding dissertations and theses, counseling students through personal problems) is not seen as directly beneficial. These interactions can be understood as forms of generalized exchange. Faculty engaging in this structure of mutual dependence focus on what students can and will do in the future because they have a mentor, and how that in turn will have a positive influence on the wider community. For example, Iris Hayes perceived the training she offered undergraduate students through research opportunities as not really benefitting herself. However, it could help the students and the professors they would go on to work with. Further, she acknowledged that her graduate students were trained by someone else. As such, she benefitted by her engagement in this process, albeit indirectly:

> Of course with undergraduate students, sometimes you put a lot more in than you get back. . . . I just see that as an investment I might not get a lot of return on. . . . it’s trying to get them interested in research and hopefully they’ll stay in research. And who knows, maybe they’ll come back to you as a research student, but if not, they’ll go to someone else, and someone else, and someone else. [But] you know, a student that someone else has trained will eventually come to you.

Hegstad (1999) and T. D. Allen et al. (1997) noted that mentoring can be motivated by previous experiences as a protégé, which is supported by professors’ narratives and can be understood as a form of generalized exchange. Several scholars spoke of their engagement in generalized
exchange as being part of a larger pipeline project: Someone helped them in the past so that they could go on to help someone else in the future. They are now bringing their students into the pipeline, helping those students so they can go on to help others. Reginald Spencer shared that he loves helping students figure out their path, and he feels that it is important: “If it weren’t for the people who took their time with me, I wouldn’t have had this opportunity. So it’s up to me to provide a similar sense of mentorship, support, and training that was provided to me. It’s just what you do.” For Jonathan Baker, talking with students about challenges they face in the classroom, particularly around issues of race, or in making decisions about their career path, is fulfilling in that it allows him to support students in ways similar to how he was supported:

I think it’s an opportunity to help them figure out their lives at a point in time when many of them are confused about, the direction of their career. . . . Or they feel like, you know, the issues of race that they care about aren’t always dealt with in their classes . . . [it] makes me feel good to be able to play that role. I feel like professors invested in me in that way, and I feel that it’s important to give back in the same way.

**Generalized exchange: balancing satisfaction and productivity.** When describing their interactions with students that more closely resembled generalized exchange, participants spoke of the positive psychosocial outcomes they associated with these relationships. Reflecting on his past efforts to develop students, Albert Banks expressed, “I am certainly proud—I’m very proud of their professional, personal successes.” Darren Jefferson also noted his sense of satisfaction when observing what his students accomplish. Contrary to his expectations, the successes of his students are, in fact, one of the things he is most satisfied with in his career, and they hold great personal importance for him.

Some scholars also noted that working with students allows them to shape their respective fields by supporting and training the next generation of scholars. For example, Reginald Spencer acknowledged that training students and helping them with their research creates an opportunity to “shape the discipline” for a long time to come, training a cadre of future faculty “who approach the work a certain way.” By extension, professors also appeared to view generalized exchanges, particularly with Black students and others from underrepresented backgrounds, as a way to work toward increasing the diversity in both scholarly work and academia. In addition to being motivated by those who mentored him in the past, Leonard Freeman advises students to extend the presence of
African Americans into areas where they are not commonly represented. Keira Bailey also spoke of her efforts to develop students, particularly by working with them on their research projects and dissertations. She expressed that her commitment is based on adding to the cadre of Black scholars in academe doing scholarship related to social change:

One of the reasons why I do the work that I do is because I really want to grow and develop another generation of Black scholars in particular, and women of color scholars more generally, who are committed to—not just any, but those who are really committed to social justice and social change . . . I want to retire one day and I want people to be there when I leave.

By working closely with students and developing their skills as scholars, Professor Bailey sees herself as leaving an academic legacy in terms of scholarship and representation. In addition to facilitating more social justice-oriented scholarship, she is helping to prepare a talented cohort of Black scholars to continue her work and diversify the academy.

Despite these benefits, generalized exchange has a potentially negative influence on faculty productivity if it is not carefully balanced with other responsibilities. Offering examples of when they helped develop student research or pushed students to develop the skills necessary for success, participants widely described these experiences as “very time consuming and very exhausting” (Felicia Adams). Perhaps capturing this idea most simply, Wallace Pearson responded, “Time. Time is the biggest one” when asked about any costs related to working with and advising students.

The time and energy that professors spend working with students often come at the expense of their other responsibilities, particularly those most closely related to their scholarly productivity. Eileen Smith discussed the amount of time she spends working on students’ dissertation committees, noting the great time cost associated with this type of work. It affects her ability to work on other projects, and she explained, “Any time you spend with students or teaching is time you’re not spending on research.” Felicia Adams offered a clear example of the lengths to which she sometimes goes to foster her students’ development, but she also acknowledged that they sap her energy and affect her ability to get her own work done:

It takes a lot of intellectual and cosmic energy, I think . . . especially because I see a lot of students and I get so deeply into their lives, and it’s a lot. It’s a lot to do. . . [A student] actually came to
my house on Monday to get help with her resume and writing a
cover letter for some new job she wants. . . . And I had a bunch
of other stuff I was supposed to do. I sort of got it done, but didn’t get all of it done.

In her comments on the time-cost associated with working with stu-
dents, Teryn Mitchell expressed frustration with the energy she expends. She offered an example of spending an afternoon advising a student and how this form of commitment to students draws time from her research and goes unacknowledged and unappreciated at the institutional level:

That kind of work is draining. So we are doing essentially cultural
work, and cultural work requires a lot. And when you’re doing
that kind of cultural work and you’re trying to finish your own
work and teach courses and publish and do all the things that
our profession requires of you, it really is a lot. And then when
you have to argue with your institutions about why they should
pay you a certain amount of money because you did this cultural
work, which enables them to retain the very students that they
say they want, although they’re not really doing anything to
demonstrate that, it becomes a pain in the butt, then you get
tired of that.

Teryn Mitchell sees the work she is doing advising, mentoring, and de veloping students’ skills as critical to her institution’s efforts to retain a
diverse student community, yet her efforts go unrewarded in a profes sional sense. Further, by distracting her from her research, building relat ionships based on generalized exchange has the potential to diminish
her productivity and, because she is an assistant professor, hurt her
progress toward tenure.

Productive exchange. Productive exchange is distinguished from gen eral ized and direct exchange in that the relationship between two or more
people is focused on a joint resource that actors are trying to develop or create (Molm, 2006). For faculty, productive exchange can be under stood as being rooted in collaboration on research, teaching, or service. Relationships that take place within the context of completing the profes sor’s research are described in ways consistent with productive exchange. For example, 20 of the 28 participants worked with undergraduate or graduate student research assistants and coinvestigators on projects at some point. Interestingly, 3 of the 8 scholars who did not participate in productive exchange around research are assistant professors, who expressed their desire to involve students in their research as soon as
possible. It is important to note, however, that some faculty may be less able or willing to participate in productive exchange. For example, Matt Miller suggested that professors in the humanities do not tend to bring students on to their projects or collaborate on research. Further, he expressed his own hesitations in collaboration because he fears stealing students’ ideas and adopting them as his own.

*Productive exchange and productivity.* Black professors who described having interactions with students based in collaboration and productive exchange linked these relationships positively to their productivity. Opportunities to collaborate, particularly on research, were perceived as beneficial to students and professors. These relationships offer students opportunities to learn, provide faculty with opportunities to complete their work, and create products that benefit everyone. Jackson Brown captured this sentiment in his comments, acknowledging the similar goals of students and professors: “There’s a symbiotic relationship in that they want to do research and you want to do research, and you collaborate and both of you benefit more than if you are working in isolation.”

Students are helpful collaborators in research projects in various ways. First, they can offer their skills as writers. For example, Eileen Smith explained that her collaborative work with students on research enhances her productivity because “they [students] can help write papers, they can help write proposals.” Albert Banks and Jackson Brown both produced several well-received and highly regarded journal articles that were due to their collaborations with students.

In addition to addressing students’ ability to contribute to the research process through writing, Karla Trent and Iris Hayes addressed how participating in productive exchange allows them to collect and analyze more data. Karla Trent described the ways in which having a research team enables her to complete large projects:

I have a research team of about 12 students—none of which I have a dime to pay. They are the most committed group . . . we have multiple projects going on. It’s unbelievable . . . some of them are working on projects to help code and transcribe data, and then several others are working on manuscripts with me . . . and I just get incredible support and work out of them.

For Iris Hayes, students are on the front lines of the data collection process, doing work she no longer has time to do:

Once you become a professor, you’re writing proposals, you’re writing papers, you’re critiquing other people’s papers for the
journals and all that stuff. You don’t have as much time to go code up algorithms. . . . So they [students] do the actual building of the system. . . . they’re doing a lot of the grunt work, you know, and I wouldn’t want to have to sit there and do that kind of stuff anymore. It’s too time consuming, and I need to spend my time on other things.

Thus, for Iris Hayes, having a student research team both allows her to collect more data and gives her time to do other work that she views as necessary to fulfill her role as a professor.

Different student contributions to productive exchange. Although they are generally described as helpful collaborators, not all students are able to contribute equally. Overall, faculty engage in productive exchange with graduate students more often than undergraduates. This is not to say that there are no faculty collaborations with undergraduates. Specifically, Michael Stuart, Eileen Smith, Paula James, Aaron Dodd, Marilyn Taylor, and Iris Hayes applauded the efforts and insights of undergraduate researchers. Despite these accolades, these professors and others perceive undergraduates’ lack of training as preventing them from contributing to faculty research in significant ways. Aaron Dodd reflected on the differences, admitting that although one occasionally finds an undergraduate with the necessary maturity, graduate students more regularly push his thinking and have greater influence on his scholarship:

They [graduate students] challenge you both intellectually and academically, and they help you refine your thoughts, rethink your assumptions, and come to new conclusions. Because of the maturity of their intellectual development process, they can engage you at that level. You get that in an undergraduate once in a while, but typically that comes from the graduate students.

Iris Hayes’s comments directly linked her work with undergraduates to her potential productivity. She does not avoid interactions with undergraduates or prohibit them from participating in her research, but they are not as helpful: “You sometimes are pleasantly surprised, because you sometimes have undergrads that are really on it and very productive, but generally that’s not the case. So I don’t see that as a downside—it’s just something that—you just have to view it properly.”

Black professors also described benefits of productive exchange with Black students. Much like distinctions made between collaborations with undergraduate and graduate students, benefits are related to students’ abilities to understand and contribute to the research being conducted.
The research of 22 of the 26 participants is either directly relevant to or focused on the experiences of people of color broadly, or African Americans specifically. Because of their topics of interest, Black students are perceived as being especially helpful to professors as they think through the findings and implications of their work. For example, Wallace Pearson noted that he does not feel he needs to explain how issues of race and equity affect the individuals he is studying when he works with a Black research assistant, which is an asset to his work. Teryn Mitchell shared that Black students (specifically Black female students) are more likely to have been exposed to courses and research that support the work she is doing; they have a preliminary background in the areas she is interested in, making them easier to work with. Further, Eileen Smith stated that Black students “have a particular perspective that other students of color might not have,” based on their experiences, and Black professors find these perspectives quite valuable. Alice Butler talked about how these perspectives add to her work, noting that her Black students often help her to make sense of her research on issues that affect the Black community:

I will always be primarily interested in African American kids and families, and I’m always going to be looking for other African American students to help me understand them. Because there are unique experiences with those situations. It’s not that you have to be African American to study African Americans’ issues, but I think it sure helps.

Thus, because many Black students are part of a larger, shared African American experience, these professors see them as able to both grasp key concepts and provide unique insight into their research projects, allowing them to produce higher quality work.

LIMITATIONS

As with any study, there are several limitations to the analyses presented in this article. The qualitative nature of the research limits its generalizability. Although the evidence reported here strongly indicates that certain experiences and perceptions are common among Black professors employed at predominantly White research universities, these findings are context specific. They must be confirmed through further study across multiple educational contexts.

It is also important to note that the present study did not include an objective measure of whether and how working with students might
shape faculty productivity over time; the influence of engagement in developmental relationships on faculty outcomes is based on personal assessment and reflection. Similarly, the student voice was not heard in this study, and there is no exploration of students’ perceptions of their mentoring relationships with Black professors. This exclusion limits the ability to confirm or challenge the ways in which Black professors perceive that developmental relationships with students are linked to their productivity.

This study also does not compare the mentoring patterns of Black faculty with those from other racial/ethnic groups, and it makes few comparisons across gender, academic discipline, or academic rank. Although these comparisons may be fruitful, they are outside the goals of this article, which are to examine Black faculty perceptions of the costs and benefits of mentoring in terms of their productivity, the ways in which Black faculty conceptualized their developmental relationships, and the viability of social exchange and structures of mutual dependence as a way to understand the relationships that Black professors form.

Perhaps the most significant limitation of this study stems from self-selection. Professors could choose whether they had the time, interest, or inclination to participate in this study. Despite efforts to recruit a diverse group of participants, small numbers of untenured faculty agreed to participate. This makes it more challenging to distinguish between the costs and benefits of mentoring pre- and posttenure. It is also entirely possible (and likely) that those who had strong positive feelings about working with students were more inclined to express an interest in participating. These individuals may have spent more time thinking about mentoring and how they chose to work with students. Perhaps they emphasized the benefits and minimized the costs more than others who perceived developmental relationships as less important. This in no way invalidates the study’s findings; however, perhaps they are best seen as being reflective of the perspectives of Black professors who feel strongly about mentoring, and less representative of those who feel that student interaction has limited importance or presents too many challenges.

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Although the quality of research that a scholar produces is certainly related to his or her notoriety and professional success, previous research suggests that the quantity and volume of one’s body of work are most central in shaping a professor’s career trajectory (Cremer, 1998; Sax, Hagedorn, Arredondo, & DiCrisi, 2002). Scholars have previously linked productivity to professors’ time expenditures on teaching and service
suggesting that time spent on these activities can be detrimental to scholarly productivity because they are unrelated to research. This study makes a significant contribution to the scholarly literature by more closely examining and shedding light on the relationship between service, specifically participation in developmental relationships, and the productivity of Black scholars.

Extant scholarship suggests that Black faculty frequently mentor and advise students, often interacting with students at rates higher than their peers (Menges & Exum, 1983; Stanley, 2006; Tierney & Bensimon, 1996; Williams & Williams, 2006; Umbach, 2006). The findings of this study are fairly consistent with these assertions, given that participants described themselves, and Black faculty more generally, as spending more time with students than their colleagues did. Many participants used the term Black tax to describe this experience among Black scholars, highlighting their high level of engagement in these relationships as compared with their peers. This terminology is reminiscent of Padilla’s (1994) cultural taxation, which is described as being part of the shared experience of faculty of color. He noted, “We frequently find ourselves having to respond to situations that are imposed on us by the administration, which assumes that we are best suited for specific tasks because of our race/ethnicity or our presumed knowledge of cultural differences” (p. 26). These tasks take on many forms, including service on campus committees, being called on to conduct diversity workshops, or mediating problems between the administration and various racial/ethnic groups on campus.

Participants’ narratives add to the extant literature, indicating that the additional time they spend with students may indeed be part of the broader cultural taxation experienced by faculty of color. Regardless of form of cultural service in which faculty of color engage, Padilla (1994) suggested that their participation takes time away from activities that would positively translate into professional advancement: research and scholarly writing. In some ways, extra expectations to engage in student interaction were seen similarly. Participants described their developmental relationships as potentially tiring, emotionally draining, and time consuming, leaving them with less time and energy to engage in research. Presentations of student interaction as costly are not uncommon in the scholarly literature. Students have often been described as a significant distraction in relation to professional productivity, drawing time away from research (W. R. Allen et al., 2000; Banks, 1984; Blackwell, 1988; Tierney & Bensimon, 1996).

Although some findings are consistent with the extant literature, several extend our understanding and challenge traditional notions of
developmental relationships, in which the benefits of mentoring are for the mentee alone and come at the expense of the mentor’s time and energy (Ensher & Murphy, 2005). Several professors described feeling good about their efforts to help students and the relationships they formed. Although it was rarer, developmental relationships with students could offer professors a source of friendship and support. These findings are reflective of much of the existing literature in business that highlights mentor benefits, which are described as being largely psychosocial in nature (T. D. Allen et al., 1997; Gibb, 1999; Kram, 1988; Ragins & Scandura, 1999); however, similar trends have rarely been acknowledged or observed empirically in academia. This study adds to the literature on the benefits of mentoring, highlighting potential faculty-specific benefits associated with developmental relationships in an academic context.

Beyond experiencing benefits personally, findings of this study are unique in that they suggest that Black professors can also have positive professional outcomes associated with their developmental relationships. These findings may appear contradictory to those just described; however, social exchange frameworks and structures of mutual dependence (Molm, 2006) can promote understanding of these divergences. In this study, the costs, benefits, and ultimate outcomes of mentoring relationships appeared to be dependent on the actual activities in which professors and students were participating and the associated underlying structure of the exchange.

The use of social exchange has been described as a positive and innovative new direction in the study of faculty–student relationships (Johnson et al., 2010). This study confirms the potential applicability of these frameworks to developmental relationships in academia, and social exchange offers a deeper understanding of the findings of this study. Many of the interactions within mentoring relationships could be connected to an underlying structure of mutual dependence, categorized by a different exchange of resources and carrying its own unique set of costs and benefits for actors within the relationship (Molm, 2006). Direct exchanges, which are based in direct reciprocity and most closely mirror friendship, were relatively uncommon and were perceived as largely unrelated to productivity. On the other hand, engaging in activities that reflected generalized exchange could be beneficial psychosocially, but a distraction from scholarly activities. For example, participating in activities that focused on developing students’ academic skills, preparing them for their careers, and assisting them with their theses and dissertations are activities related to increasing the diversity in their respective fields and to professors’ feeling that their work is rewarding. Unfortunately, helping students in this way was often described as costly in terms of the
time it takes, and it was described by participants as unrelated to their scholarship at best, and detrimental to it at worst.

Although the emphasis that Black professors place on generalized exchange may not initially appear rational given the tenure system and its emphasis on scholarly productivity, it is important to remember that behavior cannot be predicted based on outsiders’ understandings of what is costly or beneficial (Molm, 2006). Individual actors’ goals and perspectives must be taken into consideration. Despite being a potential distraction, Black faculty acknowledged that their developmental relationships and generalized exchanges with students were often accompanied by warm feelings and satisfaction in contributing to students’ academic success, particularly when working with underrepresented students. This finding has implications for how generalized exchange is conceptualized, and it suggests a slight adaptation to this dimension of the social exchange framework. The benefits associated with generalized exchange do indeed appear to be largely based on indirect reciprocity and knowledge that working with students will have long-term benefits. However, the satisfaction and pride felt by these professors could also be understood as a direct benefit, possibly fostering their desire to continue to participate in these relationships.

Additionally, the value that participants placed on generalized exchange and the success of students of color appears to reflect a value for community advancement and uplift. Although framing these commitments as a form of generalized exchange is a unique contribution of this study, these findings align with the earlier work of Baez (2000), who suggested that the participation of faculty of color in race-related service reflects the value they place on contributing to their communities. The behaviors of the professors in this study are also consistent with a broader historical trend and sense of obligation observed among Black scholars to support and advance their communities (Banks, 1996; Du Bois, 1903; Padilla, 1994).

Consequently, we must consider what it would mean to a professor if she or he was told to cease his or her participation in these relationships. An act taken to diminish participation in developmental relationships to promote productivity may in fact lend to greater dissatisfaction or less meaning associated with one’s work. Further, developmental relationships are critical to student learning and achievement, particularly for students from underrepresented backgrounds (Adams, 1992; Juarez, 1991; Pascarella, 1980; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Tan, 1995). Encouraging faculty to distance themselves from these interactions could put students at risk, decreasing access to the important support and guidance that Black professors can provide.
Rather, if institutions are serious about retaining underrepresented students and faculty, a preliminary step would be to reconsider the placement of service and mentoring within the tenure and promotion process. Assessing a professor’s commitment to student growth and mentorship in an authentic way, and allowing it to have a real influence on faculty advancement decisions could encourage engagement in developmental relationships, providing students with much needed support and making the faculty sacrifice personally and professionally worthwhile.

In addition to inspiring recommendations for reform to the tenure and advancement process, the findings of this study suggest the value of attending to Black faculty who provide support for students, advising them about ways to do this that will not impede their professional progress. Perhaps this can take place through the encouragement of productive exchange between faculty and students. Productive exchange has received little attention from social exchange theorists (Lawler et al., 2000); however, this study highlights the importance of, and potential positive outcomes associated with, productive exchanges with students. Participants largely viewed productive exchanges as reciprocal, beneficial interactions to engage in, which came with fewer costs to mentors. These exchanges enabled students to learn while allowing professors to complete a larger quantity and better quality of scholarship, improving their chances of academic promotion and advancement.

These findings have significant implications for how Black professors think about their developmental relationships. Acknowledging the ways in which students can actually offer resources suggests that Black faculty may want to consider adding research collaborations to their already established developmental relationships, perhaps mitigating some of the costs associated with mentoring. Consistent with Hunt and Michael’s (1983) mentoring framework, student characteristics had the potential to positively influence their productivity in unique ways, which could be conscientiously used to professors’ benefit. However, this study provides a more nuanced understanding of the different forms of support and resources that different mentees can offer. For example, graduate students were perceived as appropriate and useful participants in productive exchange, largely based on their maturity and knowledge. Thus, instead of seeing graduate students only as pupils, perhaps faculty would be well served to more often consider them as potential collaborators. When a student comes to a professor for advice in crisis or because he or she lacks the ability to clearly identify a research topic for dissertation (generalized exchanges), this situation could be used as a moment to foster collaboration. Proposing a joint exploratory research project linking both the mentor’s and protégé’s research interests could be one way to allow the
student to narrow her or his interests and develop his or her curriculum vitae, while also allowing the professor to produce new research and publications.

The findings of this study also add to the discourse about the contributions that Black faculty make to Black students, focusing attention on the faculty experience. Black students encouraged the productivity of Black professors in unique ways. These students provided beneficial insights, particularly as they aimed to complete their research related to social justice, equity, and/or the experiences of communities of color. Given that Black students are particularly likely to seek support from Black professors, the findings of this study suggest that it may be important for Black faculty to consider how to incorporate productive exchange in these developmental relationships. For example, discussions about students’ professional goals could easily incorporate an assessment of what they know and hope to learn, which could then translate into learning opportunities through research collaboration. Encouraging mentees to participate in research opportunities such as the McNair Scholars Program or the Louis Stokes Alliances for Minority Participation (LSAMP) program could also be beneficial. Research programs create opportunities for students to contribute to faculty research and gain access to a mentor who can offer personal and professional support.

Policy makers and institutional leaders who aim to increase Black professors’ likelihood of retention and promotion would also be well served to consider how to foster their engagement in productive exchange more often. In addition to teaching, grantsmanship, and writing workshops, institutions could offer sessions on working with students to help faculty think through ways to incorporate collaboration as they mentor. This may be particularly important for junior faculty as they work toward producing enough scholarly work to become tenured. Further, institutions can and should offer grants and other forms of financial support that enable Black professors to better recruit and engage students in their work as research and teaching assistants.

Institutions must also play a larger part in providing Black faculty with able students who are prepared to engage in research. Faculty identified the time they must spend developing basic skills as a barrier to productive exchanges with their students, particularly when working with undergraduates. If various student services offices can develop workshops and seminars that provide students with basic research skills, professors might be able to spend less time on basic skill development, and students could more quickly make active contributions to faculty research.

Finally, although research collaboration is the most frequently noted form of productive exchange, it is important to remember that these
partnerships are not necessarily as feasible in some academic programs as others. For those who cannot or choose not to incorporate students into their research, productive exchange can be encouraged in other ways. For example, creating opportunities for graduate students and faculty to collaborate on course instruction allows students to build teaching skills that they will use if they enter the professoriate and frees faculty from some of the time they spend preparing for class and grading papers.

It is certainly possible that all faculty can participate in activities with students that fall under the three principal forms of exchange described in this article, and this question should be explored in future studies of developmental relationships in academia. This study, however, focuses on the experiences of Black professors in an effort to address scholarship suggesting that Black faculty interact more with students, limiting their personal and professional outcomes (W. R. Allen et al., 2000; Banks, 1984; Blackwell, 1988; Tierney & Bensimon, 1996; Umbach, 2006; Williams & Williams, 2006). Yet, it is important to consider whether this is consistent across all forms of exchange. Black professors perceived themselves as more likely to counsel students and advise student groups (generalized exchanges); however, they did not note that they were more likely than their colleagues to collaborate with students on research. Thus, rather than suggesting that Black faculty have slower rates of advancement and higher rates of attrition than professors from other backgrounds because they spend more time working with students, this study’s findings suggest the possibility that these outcomes stem from both frequency and structure of exchange. Future research should not only explore whether Black professors spend more time with students, but also foster a deeper understanding of whether they more often engage in activities that are professionally costly, and less often in activities with professional benefits.

Mentoring has been identified as difficult to study in part because it is such a challenging behavior to define (Jacobi, 1991; Kram, 1988). Ultimately, the findings of this study offer insights into this debate, suggesting that part of the challenge may be rooted in our misunderstanding of this activity. Mentoring is not one behavior that individuals participate in differently; perhaps it is a conceptual umbrella for a set of activities that come together in a variety of ways. Thus, counseling, tutoring, administering professional advice, collaborating on research, and connecting personally are all activities that could be considered “mentoring.” Yet, the findings of this study show that these activities are very different, are rooted in different structures of mutual dependence, and require different skills and expenditures of energy.
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References


APPENDIX A
Interview Protocol

1. Tell me about your academic path—how did you end up here at this institution as a professor?

2. I’d like to focus a bit more on some of the relationships that you’ve had as you developed as a scholar—could you please share a story or a specific experience with someone you’ve worked with closely who has influenced your development as an academic (either positively or negatively)?

3. Turning to experiences on your current campus—generally, what have your experiences as a professor here been like?

4. How would you generally describe your philosophy on working with and interacting with students?

5. If you can, think about a relationship you’ve formed with a specific student—tell me about the student and the nature of your relationship.

6. Let’s broaden our focus a bit to talk about relationships you’ve formed with students broadly and how they’ve influenced you. How do you feel student interaction (or being affiliated with students) influences your career trajectory (progress toward tenure, academic advancement, etc.)?

7. Still thinking about relationships with students broadly—what kind of influence do you think having relationships with students has on you personally?
8. If a graduate student came to you and asked how students could help you (or help others like you) develop and succeed as professors, what would you say?

9. Is there anything else you’d like to share with me? Do you have any questions for me?

APPENDIX B
Examples of Coding of Raw Data

EXAMPLE 1
Quotation: I mean, my first publication came from my first-year research project, and it was because, you know, I worked with a faculty member who saw how important it was to do that. And he kind of pushed for us to get it out. But it was my first-year research project. So, you know, it’s the goals of both faculty and students that could be better realized by kinda understanding what the connection is and, you know, and how efforts can support the development of both.

Codes Applied
Productive—Two individuals interact with their focus on creating something else (key example: faculty and student work together on a research project or a class).
Reciprocity—Mention of relationships between students and faculty being mutually beneficial or not beneficial.
Research—Engaging with students outside of the classroom around research, includes research team meetings and individual work with students on specific projects.

EXAMPLE 2
Quotation: I think it’s probably true for most people, especially true in my case, that I could not have received the . . . or put it this way . . . I probably wouldn’t have been as successful in my profession without these kinds of contacts and interactions with the people that I’ve mentioned, including a whole host of others that I didn’t mention here, and when you recognize that, you realize that this is a community of scholars, and the community means that you receive and give in the true sense and at certain points in life, you need more so you receive more, and then at some point, you’re able to gain resources that you can then give, and I think that’s the continuum that we’re all on and I’m at the part where you recognize what you achieve through the receiving and now it’s time to give. Yeah, certainly lessons from mentor relationships in the past have influenced me to do the same.

Codes Applied:
Generalized—Relationships in which the mentor interacts with the student without anticipation of a direct benefit, but may gain a benefit in the future because of their current interaction (key examples: interacting with a student for the good of the community or to diversify academia).
Past Mentor—A past mentoring experience (or lack thereof) as a mentor or protégé influenced current mentoring (frequency or nature).

Volume—Comments regarding how much time a faculty member spends with students.

EXAMPLE 3

Quotation: I think I have a very good relationship with my African American students. Um, my current African American students and students I’ve had over the years—and, I’ve developed some very close friendships with some of my African American students. Like one of my students who finished three or four years ago—she’s like, I tell her that she’s my adopted daughter. And before my mother died, she considered her her adopted granddaughter. I mean, she’s really very much a part of our family. And that never would have happened had not we had this sort of common connection because, you know, we’re both African American.

Codes Applied

Affect—Emotions and feelings (happiness, joy, sadness, contentment, anger, frustration, supported, less isolated) associated with interacting with developmental relationships.

Black—Thoughts about or interactions with Black students.

Direct—Interactions in which both individuals stand to experience benefits in the interaction, but there are costs for both in the interaction as well (key example: friendships, interaction related to job performance).

Friend—Description of building friendships and collegial relationships through mentoring relationships, adding to network of support.

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