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A National Analysis of Endowed Chairs and Distinguished Professors in the Field of Education

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Noting a gap in the literature, this study examines how race, gender, and prestige are related to endowed and distinguished faculty of education. Specifically, this study seeks to ascertain the makeup of higher education with regard to faculty diversity: what processes are at work that serve to recreate the status quo in terms of faculty of higher education? Or, are higher education faculty members becoming more diverse as homogeneous cohorts retire and heterogeneous cohorts replace them? Using social network theory as a theoretical framework, several hypotheses were set forth. Original data (n = 517) were collected and later analyzed using descriptive as well as inferential non-parametric statistics. The findings of this study are discussed as they relate to the research questions and hypotheses, informed by social network theory. Implications for higher education policy and practice are shared, and directions for future research are considered.

According to Kurtz (2014), “Compared to high school grads, workers with bachelor’s degrees earn about $1 million more, and workers with associate’s degrees earn about $325,000 more over a lifetime” (para 10) than do those with no postsecondary degrees. However, college degrees are not created equally. Tsui (2003) writes that the selectivity or prestige of a college/university positively correlates with lifetime earnings. In the end, the more selective the college/university an individual attends, the higher the earnings he or she will make in his or her lifetime. But, does the high cost in tuition required by attending elite colleges/universities pay off? According to Eide, Brewer, and Ehrenberg’s (1998) and Brewer, Eide, and Ehrenberg’s (1999) research findings, it

We welcome corrections to our database; see here: http://tinyurl.com/Endowed-Distinguished. Please email the corresponding author Nicholas D. Hartlep at ndhartl@ilstu.edu.

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does. Attending an elite college or university translates to meaningful lifetime earnings and a plethora of other positive outcomes.

It is at this juncture that our analysis breaks new ground, by studying the demographics and backgrounds of those faculty holding endowed chairs and distinguished professor titles in the field of education (Urbancic, 2008). Specifically, we are interested in determining if there are discernible patterns within the composition of elite positions in the professoriate, denoted as endowed chairs/professorships and distinguished professorships. Because no existing studies specifically look at the demographics and composition of endowed and distinguished faculty members in the field of education, this research relies on social network theory (Borgatti, Mehra, Brass, & Labianca, 2009; Wasserman & Faust, 1994) to guide its collection and analysis of originally collected data. Social network theory argues that the composition of one’s social circle has real and measurable impacts on one’s life. Social network theory is interested in the extent and nature of interactions between group members, and how these interactions impact everything from socioeconomic status, to employment, to the racial makeup of friendship groups. In this article we focus our analysis on three networks: (a) race, (b) gender, and (c) graduate school prestige. After reviewing the existing literature on endowed chairs in education and noneducation fields, we hypothesized that our national sample of endowed and distinguished faculty would be disproportionately White, male, and doctoral graduates of elite1 colleges/universities.

We first offer a brief review of the literature, beginning with definitions of endowed and distinguished positions. Second, we outline our research questions and hypotheses—which were influenced by social network theory—as well as our data sampling strategy. Next, we share our analyses and study findings. We then discuss the implications for policy and practice that this research holds. Finally, we conclude by identifying the study’s limitations and forecasting possibilities for future research.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Endowed chairs (ECs) and distinguished professorships (DPs) are typically awarded to full professors who have accomplished much in their respective field. Kamath, Meier, and Rao (2006) state the following:

For nearly 150 years, outstanding professors at U.S. universities have been rewarded by receiving the designation of [endowed professor or] distinguished chair. . . . The primary purpose for establishing these named positions is to provide recognition to faculty members for their accomplishments by giving them additional compensation, funds for travel, and in some disciplines, equipment and labs, and assistance with their research and teaching. Recently, there has been tremendous growth in the number of named chairs in all academic areas, but especially in business disciplines where schools seek to attract and retain qualified faculty members, but university budgets may not provide sufficient resources to do so. (p. 17)

Because we could not locate existing studies specifically analyzing the demographics and composition of endowed and distinguished faculty members in the field of education, this research relied on social network theory (Wasserman & Faust, 1994) to guide our analysis. One possible
explanation for this gap in the literature may be that the number of said academic positions in education is low compared to other programs and fields of study, such as the hard sciences, economics, mathematics, and engineering (STEM). This is a question worthy of future pursuit but outside the scope of this study, because no extant datasets contain exclusively EC and DP data in education. By comparison, such data do exist in other fields outside of education. For example, faculty directories exist for finance, marketing, economics, and management that list EC and DP faculty.²

Performing a review of the literature on ECs and DPs proved insightful. The majority of the previous research on endowed and distinguished professorships has been conducted in fields outside of education. For instance, research has been carried out in the fields of accounting (Meier & Kamath, 2005; Rezaee, Elmore, & Spiceland, 2004, 2006; Tang, Forrest, & Leach, 1990), economics (Kamath, Meier, & Tousey, 2005), finance (Metwalli & Tang, 2001), gerontology and geriatrics (Bell, 1986), management (Metwalli & Tang, 2002), nursing (Fitzpatrick, 1985, 2000; Fitzpatrick, Fitzpatrick, & Dressler, 2005), real estate (Weeks, Finch, & Hardin, 2007), and law (Delgado & Bell, 1989).

In terms of race and gender, Stone collected data on African Americans holding endowed university chairs in 1993, 1997, and 2001 (Stone, 1993, 1997, 2001). Although Stone’s publications contain lists of African American faculty holding endowed positions, none of these lists are field-of-study specific. By comparison, Hartlep and Theodosopoulos (2014) sampled endowed and distinguished faculty of education, finding nationally 42 African American endowed faculty, 20 of whom are women and 22 men, and nine African American distinguished faculty: eight men, one woman. Although Hartlep and Theodosopoulos’ (2014) study is helpful in that it is field-(education), gender-, and race-specific (African Americans), it is nevertheless limited in that it does not make interracial comparisons.

Because Thompson, Bonner, and Lewis’ (2015) Reaching the Mountaintop of the Academy: Personal Narratives, Advice, and Strategies from Black Distinguished and Endowed Professors highlights a sampling of distinguished and endowed professors who are African American, it doesn’t allow researchers to test if there is a shortage or abundance of African American distinguished and endowed professors in the field of education relative to other races. Unasked is the question, “Are African Americans more or less likely to hold endowed/distinguished positions when compared to Whites in the field of education?” Hartlep and Theodosopoulos’ (2014) and Thompson et al.’s (2015) research is unable to answer this question, a gap this research sought to fill.

Giroux (2009) has critiqued higher education for adopting corporate practices, for example allowing companies such as BMW to endow professorships. Giroux (2009, 2014) is concerned—as are others (see Food & Water Watch, 2012; Washburn, 2000)—that the funding of endowed positions by private corporations and companies may lead to diminished academic freedom and that the growing ties between universities and business may lead to an education that is less critical. This study sheds light on this important debate within the field of higher education, specifically in Colleges and Schools of Education, because it quantifies the funders of these specific ECs and DPs. For example, this study asks, “Are endowed or distinguished chairs in education more likely to be family-named, corporate-named, or university-sponsored?”

In terms of the prestige of one’s alma mater, Kamath et al. (2005) examined distinguished professorships in the academic field of economics in the United States from the 1995/96 and 2001/02 academic years using data from the Prentice Hall Guide to Economics Faculty. They
found that the typical distinguished professor in economics is most likely to be a man, a full professor, and employed by a private institution. They also found that graduates of U.S. public universities are less likely than graduates of private universities to occupy named professorships of economics at private universities with a Carnegie classification of R1.

PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

We were interested in examining, at a national level, professors of education holding an endowed or a distinguished chair/professorship. These prestigious positions (ECs and DPs) often constitute the highest honor most colleges or universities can bestow upon a faculty member (Thompson et al., 2015). As a result, EC and DP positions are generally reserved for scholars whose work substantially advances a discipline or field of study. When looking at the literature on ECs and DPs in the field of education, it is undeniable that this practice has been under-researched by scholars. Specifically, we were concerned that although EC and DP positions may be put into place to advance a given discipline, true advancement may not take place if such positions are not occupied by a diverse group of scholars. Today, the importance of diversity in higher education is widely recognized: We argue that this diversity must extend all the way to the top—to EC and DP positions—if higher education is to become truly diversified.

This study is a national-level study examining the status of EC and DP positions within colleges and schools of education using current and originally collected data to respond to nine research questions. We now turn to articulating the nine research questions we sought to answer, and to explain the analytic approach we took in this Internet-based research (Jones, 1999).

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESES

We posed the following nine research questions (RQs), and made the following nine hypotheses (Hs):

RQ1: Are men or women more likely to hold endowed or distinguished chairs/professorships in education?
H1: Men will be more likely than women to hold endowed or distinguished chairs/professorships in education.

RQ2: Are certain races more likely to hold endowed or distinguished chairs/professorships in education?
H2: Whites will be more likely than other races to hold endowed or distinguished chairs/professorships in education.

RQ3: What is the mean time since receiving one’s Ph.D. for attaining endowed or distinguished chairs/professorships in education?
H3: The mean time since receiving one’s Ph.D. for attaining endowed or distinguished chairs/professorships will be 20 years.

RQ4: Are professors who earned their doctorate from an elite college/university more likely to hold endowed or distinguished chairs/professorships in education than professors who earned their doctorate from a competitive or general college/university?
**H4:** Elite college/university alumni will have a distinct advantage when it comes to the likelihood they hold an endowed or distinguished chair/professorship in education.

**RQ5:** Are endowed or distinguished chairs/professorships in education evenly distributed across regions of the United States?

**H5:** No, the East coast will have a disproportionately higher number of endowed and distinguished positions.

**RQ6:** Which states have the most endowed chairs/professorships in education?

**H6:** Massachusetts, New York, and California will have the most endowed chairs/professorships.

**RQ7:** Are endowed or distinguished chairs/professorships in education held more often by holders of Ph.D.s or Ed.D.s?

**H7:** Endowed chairs/professorships will be held more often by holders of Ph.D.s.

**RQ8:** Do patterns exist when examining recipients of endowed or distinguished chairs/professorships in education by decade?

**H8:** Yes, the 1980s, the 1990s, and the 2000s will be high points in the number of faculty receiving endowed or distinguished chairs/professorships.

**RQ9:** Are endowed or distinguished chairs in education more likely to be family-named, corporate-named, or university-sponsored?

**H9:** Endowed or distinguished chairs will be most likely family-named.

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**THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

In this article, we used social network theory to guide our analysis. Pescosolido (2006) distinguishes between three characteristics of social networks: their (a) structure, (b) content, and (c) function. **Structure** refers to the skeleton of social networks; for example, the size, density, and makeup of the network. **Content** refers to resources that flow within and across the social networks. **Function** refers to the function the social network serves, including functions at the pragmatic level, emotional level, and so forth.

We contend that social network theory is a logical and useful theoretical framework for this research because social relationships can be an essential component of doctoral education and academe. As a result, social networks serve functions and result in material consequences for professors, students, and the colleges and universities that employ or serve them. Consequently, social network theory provides a context for higher education that we can use to (re)interpret this study’s statistical findings.

Social network theory is associated with Simmel’s (1955) *Conflict and the Web of Group Affiliations* and Durkheim’s (1951) *Suicide*. Simmel’s work is based on the following premise: “Society arises from the individual and the individual arises out of association” (p. 163). One’s association to others is an essential element of one’s being. According to Simmel (1955), the type of social ties one has is of utmost importance. Simmel distinguishes between “pre-modern” (p. 128) social ties (simple, close knit, intolerant of outsiders) and “modern” (p. 151) social ties (complex, interrelated, open to diversity; Blau, 1993; Giddens, 1990; Pescosolido, 2006).

Meanwhile, Durkheim’s (1951) classic work focuses on suicide rates across Europe, with an emphasis on the level of integration and regulation experienced by people given the structure of the society in which they live. Durkheim (1951) focuses on the types of social structures that arise out of differing levels of two types of social interaction: (a) integration (as opposed to isolation) and (b) regulation (as opposed to lack of regulation). Durkheim argues that rates of suicide will be
highest among people who experience low levels of integration and regulation in society; suicide is more likely to occur in groups of people whose social ties are weaker and whose lives are less regulated by society at large.

An important and key facet of social network theory is the concept of homophily. The homophily principle states that “contact between similar people occurs at a higher rate than among dissimilar people” (McPherson et al., 2001, p. 416). This principle has also been referred to by the adage “birds of a feather flock together” (McPherson et al., 2001). Although homophily may seem intuitive, its implications for the demographics and makeup of education’s ECs and DPs are serious and complex. McPherson et al. (2001) note that one of the most salient effects of homophily is that “people’s personal networks are homogeneous with regard to many sociodemographic, behavioral, and intrapersonal characteristics” (p. 415). This means educators’ social worlds are limited. We have limited access to information and experiences, which in turn affects our attitudes, outlooks, and professional outcomes. Noteworthy for the purposes of the current study is how the workings of homophily—in terms of race/ethnicity, gender, and class—are responsible for creating the most sizeable gaps in our social networks (McPherson et al., 2001). For the purposes of this study, we consider status homophily with regard to race and ethnicity; sex and gender; and education, occupation, and social class.

Status Homophily

Status homophily encompasses ascribed characteristics (race/ethnicity, sex/gender, age) and acquired characteristics (education/occupation/social class, network positions, behaviors). As McPherson et al. (2001) theorize, the dimension of status homophily is inclusive of the characteristics most often associated with social stratification. Following McPherson et al., we expect status homophily in the world of higher education not simply to be present, but moreover to affect significant consequences. We highlight some of these consequences in the implications for practice and policy section below.

Race and Ethnicity Homophily

According to McPherson et al. (2001), of all the characteristics of status homophily, race and ethnicity play the most significant roles when it comes to the divisions of social networks. Intersectionality can be understood as the intersection of statuses (such as the intersection of race and socioeconomic status); where statuses intersect, one’s experiences may be further compounded by this intersection (see Crenshaw, 1989). The intersectionality (Cole, 2009; Crenshaw, 1989) of these characteristics can compound one’s racial/ethnic status and cause further division:

Race and ethnicity are clearly the biggest divide in social networks today in the United States, and they play a major part in structuring the networks in other ethnically diverse societies as well. In this domain, the baseline homophily created by groups of different sizes is combined with the differences in racial/ethnic groups’ positions on other dimensions (e.g., education, occupation, income, religion) and the personal prejudices that often result from the latter to create a highly visible, oft studied network divide. (McPherson et al., 2001, p. 420)
Thus, given the apparent strength of status homophily, compounded by race homophily and the additional influence of intersectionality, we expect to find racial homophily present in the EC and DP population we sampled.

Sex and Gender Homophily

Although categories of race/ethnicity are numerous and diverse, the concept of gender tends to be understood in dichotomous terms: male and female, even if some self-identify as transgender or intersex. Although in society there are roughly the same number of men and women, research on gender and social networks indicates that segregation along gender lines is salient in specific environments. For example, McPherson et al. (2001) find that work environments tend to be highly segregated along gender lines (also see Bielby & Baron, 1986; Kalleberg et al., 1996). Gender differentials in the workplace translate to imbalanced power relations, with the dominant gender—male—being the most powerful within work environments (McPherson et al., 2001). Considering past research findings in sex and gender social network literature, we expect gender homophily to be present in the EC and DP population we sampled.

Education, Occupation, and Social Class

McPherson et al. (2001) posit that “unlike age, race, and gender, education, occupation and social class are largely achieved, rather than ascribed, characteristics” (p. 426). Social class typically locates people in specific neighborhoods and schools, churches, and social organizations; education organizes people by age and achievement; occupation groups people along areas of specialization. Therefore, a great deal of homophily is aligned with these three achieved characteristics, along relatively firm if not ascribed lines (McPherson et al., 2001). Specifically in terms of education, McPherson et al. (2001) argue the following:

All educational groups show inbreeding tendencies, as well as a social distance effect: People are both more likely to confide in others who share their same educational level, and become less and less likely to form such a tie as their difference from others’ achievement increases. . . . The edge categories of extremely high and low education show the biggest inbreeding tendency . . . with a socially significant divide between the college-educated and those without college experience and another major distinction between the white collar and blue collar occupations. (p. 427)

Evidence of homophily is regularly found in the multiclassed realm of education, and we anticipate education and occupation homophily to also be present in the EC and DP population we sampled.

Based on social network theory, we expect to find homophily among ECs and DPs of education in terms of race, gender, and graduate school prestige. We hypothesize that our research will confirm—at least partially—that birds of a feather really do flock together and that most ECs and DPs will be—to use another colloquial phrase—pale, male, and stale (White, male, and comparatively advanced in age). We anticipate that ECs and DPs in schools of education resemble those who preceded them (by the decade), and are followed by those who resemble them, along
each of these characteristics. We discuss implications of homophily among ECs and DPs in our implications for practice and policy section.

METHODOLOGY

Data

The research team consists of three professors (the first, second, and fifth authors), one graduate student (the third author), and one doctoral student (the fourth author). The research team collected data by examining the faculty web pages of colleges and schools of education in the United States. The graduate researcher, as well as the first author, began by examining the top-100-ranked education graduate schools. U.S. News and World Report was used, rather than the Forbes list, because the latter disregards public reputation, which causes some colleges to score lower than in other ranking formulas. Reputation is an important factor to consider in this research, given our reliance on social network theory. We collected the following data points: (a) name of EC/DP, (b) gender and race of the EC/DP, (c) highest degree the EC/DP earned, (d) institution where the EC/DP earned it and when it was earned, (e) when the EC/DP received the EC/DP position, and (f) the current e-mail address of the EC/DP.

In addition to searching college/university websites, we also searched Amazon.com and Google Books. We used the search terms endowed chair, endowed professor, and distinguished professor on the presumption that ECs and DPs have strong publication records and have likely published books; we hoped to, therefore, be able to find their institutions, and/or the name of their endowed or distinguished position via this search. Although we admit this searching strategy is rather haphazard, the team’s purpose was to uncover ECs and DPs who do not teach at top-ranked colleges/universities and who may have been overlooked in the previous analysis. In addition to searching on the Internet for ECs and DPs, we also employed a snowball sampling technique (Brown, 2005), which proved quite helpful. Because we collected the email addresses of ECs and DPs, we three times sent personalized e-mails to (a) confirm already-collected data and (b) inquire whether they knew ECs or DPs who met the study criteria, but who were not on our list. The comprehensive data collection and verification process took researchers two years to complete (Fall 2013 through Fall 2015).

Study Participants

Inclusion criterion was as follows: an individual professor currently holding either a distinguished, named, or endowed faculty position (EC or DP) in the field of education. The analytic sample of our analysis was n = 517 professors. Missing data accounted for approximately 1.3% of the total data from this dataset. Because the statistics in this study were primarily descriptive or simple group comparisons, missing data was only eliminated from the specific comparisons or descriptions involving those missing items. In the following sections, statistical analysis is offered against each research question (RQ). To assess significance, goodness-of-fit chi-square tests were
run assuming a proportional population to most adequately address the research questions. After responding to each of the nine RQs, we present implications, as well as limitations and future research possibilities.

FINDINGS

**RQ1. Are Men or Women More Likely to Hold Endowed or Distinguished Chairs/Professorships in Education?**

In their study of marketing named chairs, Kamath et al. (2006) found that most were held by men. Similar to their findings, we found that in education, men \( (n = 232, 58.0\%) \) held significantly more, \( \chi^2(1, n = 400) = 10.2, p = .001, \) Cramér’s \( V = .16, \) endowed positions than did women \( (n = 168, 42.0\%) \). Likewise, we found that men \( (n = 71, 60.7\%) \) held significantly more, \( \chi^2(1, n = 117) = 5.3, p = .02, \) Cramér’s \( V = .21, \) distinguished professor positions than did women \( (n = 47, 39.5\%) \). Thus, our hypothesis, which supports the prediction of social network theory, was confirmed.

**RQ2. Are Certain Races More Likely to Hold Endowed or Distinguished Chairs/Professorships in Education?**

Our results found race to be a significant predictor, \( \chi^2(3, n = 394) = 683.30, p < .001, \) Cramér’s \( V = .76, \) for whether an education professor held an endowed chair/professorship in this sample. Whites \( (n = 322, 81.7\%) \) held proportionately more endowed positions, compared to African Americans \( (n = 45, 11.4\%) \), Asian Americans \( (n = 9, 2.3\%) \), and other reported races \( (n = 18, 4.6\%) \). We also found race to be a significant predictor, \( \chi^2(3, n = 117) = 229.0, p < .001, \) Cramér’s \( V = .81, \) of distinguished positions in this sample. Proportionately, Whites \( (n = 100, 85.5\%) \) held the most distinguished positions, followed by African Americans \( (n = 9, 7.7\%) \), all other reported races \( (n = 6, 5.1\%) \), and finally Asian Americans \( (n = 2, 1.7\%) \). Our hypothesis was, therefore, confirmed, further validating the tenets of social network theory.

**RQ3. What is the Mean Time Since Receiving One’s Ph.D. for Attaining Endowed or Distinguished Chairs/Professorships in Education?**

In the case of the mean time between receiving one’s Ph.D. to attaining endowed chairs/professorships, the highest mean time was for Whites at 21.2 years, followed by African Americans at 19.9 years, all other reported races at 18.1 years, and Asian Americans with the lowest mean time at 5.9 years. The mean time for women was 19.4 years and the mean time for men was 21.8 years. Scheffé’s (1959) method of multiple pairwise comparisons indicates neither race nor gender alone were significant. The only comparison that showed significant differences
TABLE 1
Mean Time Between Ph.D. and Endowed or Distinguished Chairs/Professorships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Endowed Positions</th>
<th>Distinguished Positions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>22.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>19.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>305</td>
<td>21.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>19.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>19.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian American</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>15.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All other races</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>17.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>19.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>19.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>376</td>
<td>20.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

was between White men ($M = 22.5, SD = 9.7$) and White women ($M = 19.5, SD = 8.1$), $t(366) = -2.91, p = .004, g = .34$.

The highest mean time for distinguished positions was for Whites at 27.3 years, followed by Asian Americans at 26.5 years; all other reported races at 15.0 years, and African Americans with the lowest mean time at 14.2 years. The mean time for women was 25.0 years, whereas for men it was 26.3 years. For distinguished positions, Scheffé’s method indicated there were two significant differences between groups. Unlike endowed positions, there was not a significant difference between White men ($M = 28.3, SD = 9.32$) and White women ($M = 26.0, SD = 9.22$), $t(104) = -1.23, p = .221, g = .25$. However, in the case of distinguished positions, there was a significant difference between White men ($M = 28.3, SD = 9.32$) and African American men ($M = 14.0, SD = 7.82$), $t(104) = 4.12, p = .001, g = 1.54$. Mean times broken down by gender, race, and position type are shown in Table 1. Our original hypothesis was that the mean time between earning one’s terminal degree and endowed or distinguished chairs/professorships would be 20 years. Overall, this was roughly the case for endowed positions, whereas for distinguished the mean was 26 years.

RQ4. Are Professors Who Earned Their Doctorate From an Elite College/University More Likely to Hold Endowed or Distinguished Chairs/Professorships in Education Than Professors Who Earned Their Doctorate From a Nonelite College/University?

Elite versus nonelite was determined by creating an index for institutional prestige. Although rankings of elite universities exists for the hard sciences, such as the Academic Ranking of World
Universities (http://arwu.org), commonly referred to as the Shanghai Ranking, no such ranking exists for the field of education. Therefore, we examined three different metrics. First, we created our own index for institutional prestige by classifying the status of a doctoral degree into four categories: (a) elite, (b) competitive, (c) general, and (d) other. In our index, *elite* refers to colleges ranked 1 to 25 in the *U.S. News and World Report*. Meanwhile, *competitive* refers to a rank of 26 to 50, *general* refers to a ranking of 51 and above or to unranked institutions, and *other* refers to institutions outside of the United States. 9 Second, we dichotomized data according to whether the degree granting institution was a member of the American Association of Universities (AAU). The AAU is an organization of 62 leading research universities in the United States and Canada. Third, we used the Carnegie Classifications of Research University Very High Activity (RU/VH), Research University High Activity (RU/H), Doctoral Research University (DRU), and all other.

Using our own index for institutional prestige, we found prestige to be a significant predictor of endowed chairs/professorships in this study, $\chi^2(3, n = 399) = 178.6, p < .001$, Cramér’s $V = .39$. Faculty members who had earned their doctoral degree at an elite institution of higher education held the highest proportion of endowed chairs/professorships ($n = 195, 48.9\%$), followed by general ($n = 117, 29.3\%$), competitive ($n = 76, 19.0\%$), and other ($n = 11, 2.8\%$). Prestige was also found to be a significant predictor of distinguished chairs in this study, $\chi^2(3, n = 116) = 52.0, p < .001$, Cramér’s $V = .39$. Similar to endowed faculty, distinguished faculty from elite institutions held the highest proportion of positions ($n = 56, 48.3\%$), followed by general ($n = 34, 29.3\%$), competitive ($n = 24, 20.7\%$), and other ($n = 2, 1.7\%$).

When examining the AAU metric, faculty receiving their terminal degrees from AAU universities comprised $68.2\%$ ($n = 272$) of endowed and $70.1\%$ ($n = 82$) of distinguished positions. The Carnegie Classification results were more pronounced still. Faculty members who earned their terminal degrees from RU/VH institutions had the highest proportion ($n = 290, 72.7\%$), followed by RU/H institutions ($n = 97, 24.3\%$), with DRU and all other positions comprising a mere $3\%$ ($n = 12$). Our hypothesis was confirmed that professors who hold degrees from elite colleges/universities, AAU, universities, or RU/VH institutions were significantly more likely to hold endowed or distinguished positions.

### RQ5. Are Endowed or Distinguished Chairs/Professorships in Education Evenly Distributed Across Regions of the United States?

Figure 1 shares the nine regions of the United States according to the U.S. Census.

Table 2 illustrates that endowed chairs were fairly evenly distributed across U.S. regions, with the exceptions of Mountain ($n = 20$) and East South Central ($n = 19$). The top regions were West South Central ($n = 72$), Pacific ($n = 55$), and East North Central ($n = 55$). Distinguished positions, on the other hand, were not as evenly distributed. The top three regions were South Atlantic ($n = 32$), East North Central ($n = 23$), and North Atlantic ($n = 20$). The three regions with the fewest distinguished positions were West South Central ($n = 0$), New England ($n = 3$), and Pacific ($n = 8$). Contrary to our hypothesis, endowed positions were fairly evenly distributed across the nation with the east coast holding no advantage over other parts of the nation. Distinguished positions, however, were more concentrated on the eastern seaboard.
RQ6. Which States Have the Most Endowed or Distinguished Chairs/Professorships in Education?

Of the 37 states (including Washington, DC) with endowed chairs/professorships, we found that California ($n = 44$) was the state with the most, followed by Louisiana ($n = 43$) and Massachusetts ($n = 34$). The top three most diverse states were New Mexico (100% other races), Wisconsin (33% White, 50% African American, 17% all other races), and Oregon (50% White, 25% Asian, 25% other races). Also notable was that 14 states’ endowed chairs/professors were 100% White (AL, AR, CO, DC, DE, FL, IA, MD, NH, NJ, SC, UT, VA, & WY). Of the 28 states with distinguished chairs, North Carolina ($n = 16$) had the most, followed by Alabama ($n = 10$) and Pennsylvania ($n = 9$). Seventeen states’ distinguished faculty were 100% White (CA, CO, FL, GA, IA, KS, MA, MD, MI, MN, NE, NJ, NY, TN, UT, VA, & WA). Due to the low

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region of United States</th>
<th>Endowed Positions</th>
<th>Distinguished Positions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East North Central</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>13.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East South Central</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mountain</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New England</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Atlantic</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>13.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Atlantic</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>11.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West North Central</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>11.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West South Central</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>18.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
numbers of distinguished professors in some states, it was difficult to assess diversity; however, Kentucky’s sole distinguished faculty member was Asian American, and of South Carolina’s two distinguished faculty, one was African American; the other fell into the all other races category.

Our initial hypothesis was that MA, NY, and CA would have a higher number of endowed or distinguished positions due to the higher concentration of elite universities. This would have been the case, had it not been for the large number of endowed positions in Louisiana. This may be a byproduct of how public universities are funded there. The highest numbers of distinguished positions were found in NC, AL, and PA, also rejecting our initial hypothesis.

RQ7. Are Endowed or Distinguished Chairs/Professorships in Education Held More Often by Holders of Ph.D.s or Ed.D.s?

We find that endowed faculty of education were more likely to hold a Ph.D. \((n = 339, 84.8\%)\), compared to an Ed.D. \((n = 54, 13.5\%)\). Distinguished faculty of education were also more likely to hold a Ph.D. \((n = 100, 85.5\%)\) compared to an Ed.D. \((n = 15, 12.8\%)\). This finding supports our hypothesis, which was logical, given that a Ph.D. is a research-based degree, and endowed/distinguished faculty typically receive their positions due to high volumes of published, peer-reviewed research.

RQ8. Do Patterns Exist When Examining Recipients of Endowed or Distinguished Chairs/Professorships in Education by Decade?

Clear patterns emerged among our data (see Table 3). However, it is important to note that our sample included only current positions held by endowed and distinguished professors; it did not include retired professors or those no longer holding an EC or DP for other reasons.

White men held the earliest endowed positions in our study (1960s and 1970s), followed by White women (1990s), African American men and women (1990s), and Asian Americans (2000s). The largest proportion \((n = 177)\) of endowed faculty received their endowed position in the 2000s, followed by the 2010s \((n = 154)\), and the 1990s \((n = 44)\).

A similar pattern emerged with those holding distinguished chairs as for those holding endowed positions (see Table 4). The earliest distinguished positions were held by Whites from the 1970s,
TABLE 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>1960s</th>
<th>1970s</th>
<th>1980s</th>
<th>1990s</th>
<th>2000s</th>
<th>2010s</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian American</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All other races</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

followed by African Americans in the 1990s, and Asian Americans in the 2000s. The largest proportion ($n = 56$) of distinguished faculty received their positions in the 2000s, followed by the 2010s ($n = 43$) and the 1990s ($n = 10$). Our initial hypothesis was that the 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s would be the decades with the highest number of endowed or distinguished positions. This was not the case. The decade with the highest number of endowed or distinguished positions was the 2000s, followed by the 2010s, and the 1990s with only six positions remaining from the 1980s.

RQ9. Are Endowed or Distinguished Chairs in Education More Likely to be Family-Named, Corporate-Named, or University-Sponsored?

The path to answering this question was challenging. Endowed positions are funded in a variety of ways. However, these funding sources were generalized into five major categories: family, corporate, university, foundation, and individual. We found a significant difference in the sources of funding among these types, $\chi^2(5, n = 400) = 635.0 \ p < .001$, Cramér’s $V = .56$, with family-named chairs comprising the highest proportion (63.0%) and foundation-sponsored chairs comprising the smallest proportion (1.5%). In the case of distinguished positions, there was also a significant difference $\chi^2(4, n = 117) = 88.7 \ p < .001$, Cramér’s $V = .44$, by source. Family-

TABLE 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region of United States</th>
<th>Endowed Positions</th>
<th>Distinguished Positions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>252</td>
<td>63.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foundation</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>11.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>11.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
named chairs made up 43.6%, corporate named chairs accounted for only 1.7%, and there were no foundation-sponsored chairs (see Table 5). Family-named endowed or distinguished positions made up the majority of funding sources, which confirmed our hypothesis.

STUDY LIMITATIONS

This study was not without its limitations. First, our data was gathered via the worldwide web. Inherently, the Internet and college/university websites may not be current or completely accurate. We found that the list of ECs and DPs changes regularly, and, with retirements and unforeseen deaths, data changes frequently. Although we did our best to safeguard against inaccurate data by contacting faculty members directly (we did this three times), we cannot claim 100% currency for our data. As indicated earlier, we welcome updates to our EC/DP database.11 During the peer-review process of publishing this article, an anonymous reviewer suggested that we reach out to every professor in our dataset to verify that the information we recorded was accurate. We took this reviewer’s advice and e-mailed every professor in our dataset. We also modified our dataset and reran all of our analyses.

Second, we may have overlooked eligible faculty of education. Again, we took precautionary steps by asking faculty members to review our list and inform us about overlooked eligible faculty members. During our third verification process, we learned of three EC/DP positions that were not in the dataset. Notwithstanding, there remains a possibility that we have failed to include some eligible candidates.

An additional limitation was the possibility for error when coding the racial data. For instance, when we found an EC or DP on a website, we judged the race of the professor. If we were unable to visually or socially construct her or his race, we contacted the professor to ascertain how she or he self-identifies. For instance, originally we identified Dr. Linda Darling-Hammond as White. After member checking (Cho & Trent, 2006), we recorded her race as African American. Thus, there exists the possibility that the racial data was inaccurate. Future researchers might consider surveying participants; however, a drawback of such a design would be a reduced sample size and increased estimation bias due to survey non-response (see Groves & Couper, 2012; Groves & Heeringa, 2006).

IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY, PRACTICE, AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This study has considered the characteristics of ECs and DPs of education, and has framed our understanding of such characteristics as part of a larger web of factors—that of a network—postulating that networks have real and tangible outcomes for the individuals who comprise and inhabit them. Although much social scientific research has explained individual outcomes by pointing to individual characteristics (i.e., individual race linked to individual outcome), social network theory allows us to understand a range of individual characteristics within one’s social network (Borgatti et al., 2009). As noted earlier, this perspective allows for the acknowledgement of intersectionality—that characteristics in combination with one another both create and limit opportunities for those who hold them, depending on the characteristics and the environment in which they are held.
Diversity in higher education is critically important. We cannot wait for ECs and DPs who are White to retire their prestigious positions because, as our data show, these very same individuals will have mentored and trained the next generation of ECs and DPs in their own image: White, male, and from elite colleges/universities. Instead, a more pragmatic practice would be early intervention.

Our findings align with the basic tenet of social network theory: The social connections contained in one’s social network have real and measureable outcomes for individuals. According to our data, this holds true in terms of race, gender, education, and socioeconomic status. And, according to our data, social networks help to reproduce the existing social structure.

Another implication of our findings can be understood from the perspective of the institution, lest we forget that institutions themselves can be said to have perspectives when it comes to ratings, reputation, endowments, and so forth. Fairness and equity regarding academic reward systems should matter to institutions—at levels both personal and productive: i.e., morale, productivity, and overall work environment stand to be impacted by perceptions of equity involving academic reward systems (O’Meara, 2011). Academic reward systems send powerful messages to those outside the institution concerning what the institution stands for (O’Meara, 2011)—in today’s day and age (President Tim Wolfe’s resignation at University of Missouri after calls of rampant inequity within his University’s system, to name just one example), equity and fairness in terms of faculty matter—and not just to those within the system.

Suggestions for policy and practice include mentoring racially and institutionally diverse students earlier than graduate school. For instance, current ECs and DPs could very well mentor undergraduates, encouraging them to continue their studies in graduate school. This practice of early intervention may allow students who attend less prestigious colleges/universities to work with and be socialized by ECs and DPs who may work at a prestigious institution of higher learning and/or have an elite pedigree. By socializing with ECs and DPs who may be alums of elite colleges and universities, students of diverse educational backgrounds can begin to acquire the mindsets, skills, attitudes, and abilities that will enable them to become eminent scholars in the field of education.

EC and DP positions could (and should) be used as tools for diversifying institutions of higher education, especially within colleges and schools of education. We noticed that some EC positions in our dataset are held by faculty of education who are relatively early in their careers; for instance, Dr. Kenneth J. Fasching-Varner—a White man—held an EC as an assistant professor: the Shirley B. Barton Endowed Assistant Professorship at Louisiana State University. Likewise, Cory T. Brown—an African-American man—has held the Ashland Oil College of Education Endowed Professorship at Murray State University. Murray State University (n.d.) has used the endowed position to, according to its website, "augment and support the salary and activities of a position within the College of Education to attract qualified African-American candidates from the public schools" (para 2).

FUTURE RESEARCH

Our findings support the notion from social network theory that birds of a feather flock together. Future research could be conducted that examines a range of factors that may influence the process described previously: What are the norms for participation in the selection committee
of incoming education graduate students? How does the teaching-assistant/research-assistant assignment process work? Is there a formal mentoring process in place? If so, how is it structured? How does it work? If not, what informal processes have developed? Finally, what tracking mechanisms are in place to keep track of incoming and outgoing students in the graduate program? And, what does data from tracking systems reveal to us? This research would be compelling and important because it could be used to determine if, in fact, social networks exist in relation to doctoral training and advisement. For instance, it is quite possible that minority ECs and DPs may mentor and advise White doctoral students who later go on to become ECs or DPs themselves. As Niehaus and O’Meara (2014) caution, “While networks can enhance social capital for faculty members, not all networks are created equal” (p. 4).

Future research might also look at the question of who funds (or if funds are attached to) EC and DP positions. In our research, we find that some ECs and DPs were in name only—meaning some faculty of education held an EC or DP that had no funds associated with the position. Future prospective research is valuable, especially in the context of social network theory. Are ECs and DPs valuable because they have financial funding behind them, or is it their symbolic power that makes them beneficial both to an individual faculty member’s career and to the institution of higher education?

Researchers who are interested may also consider conducting qualitative investigations of ECs and DPs in the field of education. This study relied on statistical quantification (descriptive as well as inferential non-parametric statistics). Future studies might follow the lead of Thompson, Bonner, and Lewis (2015) and capture the first-person experiences of EC and DP faculty via qualitative research, to determine the impact of these positions on students, lines of inquiry, and the field.

NOTES

1. We define elite status in the findings section of this article.
3. Endowed positions come with many privileges, such as a dedicated office staff, a robust budget, large amounts of time to think, and minimum teaching responsibilities. See Sam Minner’s (2002) self-reflection on holding an endowed professorship. His reflection on holding this position for three years is available here: http://www.aahea.org/articles/endowed.htm
4. It only examines EC and DP positions in North America. We appreciate the anonymous reviewer who pointed out that these positions sometimes have politicized histories at institutions of higher education. Keeping this in mind, we do not consider EC and DP of education in Canada and other countries, although future researchers may consider this fruitful.
5. Typically EC and DP positions are given to Full Professors. Earning tenure as an Associate Professor and then obtaining Full Professor status takes time (or “generally takes a minimum of 12 years”), which leads to our hypothesis of 20 years.
6. The college/university classification of Elite, Competitive, and/or General is explained in the Findings section of the article.
7. These particular states have a substantial number of elite/prestigious colleges/universities who are known for excellence in research.


9. Thirteen professors earned doctorates outside the United States: Erna Alant, D.Phil at University of Pretoria, South Africa; Wolfgang Althof, Ph.D. at University of Fribourh, Switzerland; Arthur N. Applebee, Ph.D. at University of London, U.K.; Stephen Brookfield, Ph.D. at University of Leicester, U.K.; Eamonn Callan, Ph.D. at University of Alberta, Canada; Frank Farley, Ph.D. at University of London, U.K.; Andy Hargreaves, Ph.D. at University of Leeds, U.K.; Paul L. Harris, D. Phil at Oxford University, U.K.; Nonie K. Lesaux, Ph.D. at University of British Columbia, Canada; Peter L. McLaren, Ph.D. at University of Toronto, Canada; Jonathan Osborne, Ph.D. at King’s College, University of London, U.K.; Marek Oziewicz, Ph.D. at University of Wroclaw, Poland; and Roy Pea, D.Phil at Oxford University, U.K.

10. We routinely found articles on the Internet that described the EC/DP and the specific benefactor/donor or partner.

11. See http://tinyurl.com/Endowed-Distinguished

12. Programs like this already exist, such as the American Educational Research Association’s Undergraduate Student Education Research Training Workshop. According to its website, this workshop is designed to build the talent pool of undergraduate students who plan to pursue doctorate degrees in education research or in disciplines and fields that examine education issues. Applicants are sought who have potential and interest in pursuing careers as education researchers, faculty members, or other professionals who contribute to the research field. Thus, by beginning the mentoring process earlier, and with diverse students who attend less selective institutions of higher education, the social network of academe may become more diverse than it currently is.

13. At the time of revising this article, he is now the Shirley B. Barton Endowed Associate Professor.

14. Robert Arnove, Ph.D. at Indiana University-Bloomington; Stephen Jacobson, Ph.D. at University of Buffalo SUNY; Roger L. Geiger, Ph.D. at Pennsylvania State University, University Park; Michael G. Moore, Ph.D. at Pennsylvania State University, University Park; Naomi Zigmund, Ph.D. at University of Pittsburgh; Sigmund Tobias, Ph.D. at University of Albany, SUNY; Patrick Terenzini, Ph.D. at Pennsylvania State University, University Park; Daniel Levy, Ph.D. at University of Albany, SUNY; Greg Duncan, Ph.D. at University of California Irvine; and Gary Orfield, Ph.D. at University of California, Los Angeles hold ECs and DPs that are name only and not funded.

REFERENCES


