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## The Color Ceiling: African Americans Still Fighting for Equity and Equality

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## The Color Ceiling:

### African Americans Still Fighting for Equity and Equality

The Glass Ceiling term was originally created to address the promotional issues women, specifically White women faced in the corporate world. Thus, it is odd that African Americans are currently placed under the same Glass Ceiling umbrella. The purpose of this article is not to dismiss the Glass Ceiling term but to show that a new term must be created to better illustrate the uphill battle that African Americans face for financial, employment, and promotional equality.

At present, the Glass Ceiling refers to:

Artificial barriers to the advancement of women and minorities...these barriers reflect discrimination...a deep line of demarcation between those who prosper and those left behind...the glass ceiling is the unseen, yet unbreachable barrier that keeps minorities and women from rising to the upper rung of the corporate ladder, regardless of their qualifications or achievements (Federal Glass Ceiling Commission, 1995 as cited in Cotter, Hermsen, Ovadia, & Vanneman, 2001).

The term Glass Ceiling has been credited to Katherine Lawrence and Marianne Schreiber who coined the term while they were employed at Hewlett-Packard in 1979 (Hennessey, MacDonald, & Carroll, 2014). They were concerned with the lack of upward mobility occurring for them and other female employees within the company and realized that no matter how hard they tried, they would never crack the Glass Ceiling (Hennessey, MacDonald,

& Carroll, 2014). Katherine Lawrence introduced the term during a presentation at the 1979 annual conference of the Women's Institute for the Freedom of the Press, but the term did not gain attention until 1986 (Zimmer, 2015) when Hymowitz and Schellhardt (1986) addressed the glass ceiling by examining the invisible barriers that prevent women from reaching upper level positions. They, along with other researchers, did an excellent job of informing the public about the existence of the workforce inequality faced by women (Hymowitz & Schellhardt, 1986; Bryant, 1984; Morrison, White, & Van Velsor, 1987). As previously stated, the current Glass Ceiling definition included people of color, but as the origin of term notes, the term was created to address the advancement barriers women faced in the corporate world (Hymowitz & Schellhardt, 1986).

The addition of people of color to the Glass Ceiling was actually an afterthought (U.S. Department of Labor, 1995). As Johns (2013, para. 1) stated, "In 1991 the US Congress found that, despite a dramatically growing presence in the workplace, women and minorities remained underrepresented in management positions in business and that artificial barriers were inhibiting their advancement." Thus, "in Title II of the Civil Rights Act of 1991, Congress enacted the Glass Ceiling Act establishing the Glass Ceiling Commission" (Johns, 2013, para. 1). The Glass Ceiling term was developed in 1979 and gained popularity in the '80s but it was not until the '90s when people of color such as African Americans were included under the umbrella of the Glass Ceiling instead of being given separate terms that truly illustrated their unique issues.

This is the reason that a new term must be created. A new term must be created whose origin is based on research focused directly on the workforce barriers faced by African Americans. Thus spawned the new term, Color Ceiling, which was created by the author. The Color Ceiling refers to the invisible barriers that impede financial equity, employment equity, and promotional advancement for African Americans in the workforce. In arenas where equality should be the end result, prejudicial and indomitable barriers, which have resulted in financial and promotional gaps, persist for African Americans.

In a similar fashion as the Bamboo Ceiling, the author's goal is to raise awareness about the workplace injustices faced by African Americans. The term, Bamboo Ceiling, refers to the workplace barriers faced by Asian Americans that impede their career advancement and was created to address such issues faced by Asian Americans (Hyun, 2005). The creation of the term, Bamboo Ceiling, emphasized the importance of groups breaking out from under the Glass Ceiling term so that their voices could be properly heard. By creating the term, Hyun (2005) has done an excellent job of raising awareness about the workplace discrimination that Asian Americans face. Similar to the Bamboo Ceiling, the Color Ceiling separates African Americans from under the Glass Ceiling term so that their financial and workforce inequalities can properly be identified and addressed.

To emphasize the importance of utilizing a term that clearly identifies the issues faced by African Americans and to critically examine the financial inequalities they experience, the author will, first, examine the Glass Ceiling's gender-based wage gap. The Glass Ceiling's

gender-based wage gap will be examined by looking at race and gender jointly instead of looking solely at gender. Then, unemployment rates based on race and educational attainment will be analyzed. Within the Color Ceiling, employment equity does not solely include financial or promotional aspects, but also examines whether equity exists in regards to the employment of African Americans. To do so, the unemployment rates based on educational levels between African Americans and their counterparts will be examined.

Next, higher education occupations in accordance with the Color Ceiling will be analyzed. By utilizing the Color Ceiling, the existence of workplace promotional inequalities at academic and managerial levels in higher education will be explored. To analyze whether workplace promotional inequalities exist at the academic level, data from 2001-2013 will be examined to determine whether there has been a substantial increase of African American faculty at the promotional faculty ranks of associate professor and professor. To examine whether workplace promotional inequalities exist at the managerial level, data from 1993-2013 will be analyzed to determine whether African Americans have made significant higher education managerial progress. Lastly, the collegiate presidential level will be explored to determine whether African Americans have been provided the opportunity to serve at one of the highest and most prominent levels in higher education.

The author utilizes these steps to support the creation of the new term, Color Ceiling, which he developed to properly address the financial, employment, and promotional barriers placed on African Americans. As stated prior, by placing African Americans under a term

that was not created for them, their concerns have not been properly addressed and the true nature of the barriers they face have not been brought to the forefront.

### **Financial Barriers: Closer Look at the Glass Ceiling's Gender-Based Wage Gap**

In addition to the promotional barriers faced by women and people of color, the Glass Ceiling looks at several other barriers impeding workforce progress such as the gender-based wage gap (Blau & Kahn, 2006a, 2006b, 2007). Several studies, as well as the Bureau of Labor Statistics, have noted that a gender wage gap exists between men and women (Blau & Kahn, 2006a, 2006b, 2007; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009a, 2010a, 2011a, 2012a, 2013a, 2014a). They highlighted the existence of gender-based wage inequity which has assisted in raising awareness about the issue (Blau & Kahn, 2006a, 2006b, 2007; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009a, 2010a, 2011a, 2012a, 2013a, 2014a).

It is important to note that the existence of the gender-based wage gap is somewhat true when simply looking at the average male and female full-time employees' median weekly earnings (Blau & Kahn, 2006a, 2006b, 2007; National Equal Pay Task Force, 2013; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009a, 2010a, 2011a, 2012a, 2013a, 2014a, 2015a, 2016). The latest data demonstrated that in 2015, women's median weekly earnings was \$726 while men earned \$895 (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2016). The data could cause an individual to believe that all men earn more money than women which is incorrect. When looking at earnings based on race and gender, White and Asian American

women earned more than both African American and Latino men (refer to Table 1) (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009a, 2010a, 2011a, 2012a, 2013a, 2014a, 2015a, 2016).

Data from 2002-2015 showed that White and Asian women consistently earned more and found greater financial progress than African American and Latino men. For example, in 2002, the median weekly earnings for Asian American women was \$566, \$547 for White women, \$524 for African American men, and \$451 for Latino men. In 2015, the numbers changed but the median weekly earnings order remained the same. The median weekly earnings for Asian American and White women were \$877 and \$743, respectively, compared to \$680 for African American men and \$631 for Latino men (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009a, 2010a, 2011a, 2012a, 2013a, 2014a, 2015a, 2016). The average year consists of 52 weeks thus when calculating the 2015 average yearly wages of the groups, Asian American women earned \$45,604, White women earned \$38,636, African American men earned \$35,360, and Latino men earned \$32,812. Asian American and White women made over \$10,000 and \$3,000, respectively, more than African American men, while Asian American women earned nearly \$13,000 and White women made close to \$6,000 more than Latino men (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014a).

In addition, the financial median weekly income progress from 2002-2015 showed that Asian American (+\$311) and White (+\$196) women had significantly larger increases in their median weekly earnings over the span of 14 years than African American (+\$156) males (U.S.

Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009a, 2010a, 2011a, 2012a, 2013a, 2014a, 2015a, 2016). The weekly income and financial median weekly income progress of Asian American and White women compared to African American and Latino men clearly supports the prior statement that the existence a gender-based wage gap is somewhat true when simply looking at the average male and female full-time employees' median weekly earnings but, when looking at earnings based on race and gender, White and Asian American women earned more than both African American and Latino men.

The discrepancy in pay between White and Asian American women when compared to African American women was even more disparaging. While Asian American and White women's 2015 median wage earnings were \$877 and \$743, African American women earned the second lowest median wage earnings of any group, where they earned \$615 (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014a). Thus, the yearly wages for African American women was \$31,980 compared to \$45,604 for Asian American women and \$38,636 for White women (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014a). Also, the wage earnings increase from 2002-2015 was +\$142 for African American women, the lowest of any group and well below their Asian American (+\$311) and White (+\$196) counterparts (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009a, 2010a, 2011a, 2012a, 2013a, 2014a).

The data demonstrated that a financial disparity exists between Asian American and White women and their Asian American and White male counterparts. They must continue the advocate for financial equality with their male counterparts due to the wide median



weekly earnings gap but the statement that men earn more than women must be stated with an asterisk. The Bureau of Labor Statistics data clearly showed that from 2002-2015, African American and Latino males' median weekly earnings never surpassed Asian American and White women thus the statement that men make more than women is not correct when race is factored in. Instead of a gender-based wage gap, there appears to be a race-based wage gap where African Americans and Latinos received less median weekly earnings than Asian Americans and Whites. By grouping African Americans with White and Asian American women under the Glass Ceiling, an accurate depiction of the financial inequalities African Americans is not given the proper attention it deserves. The purpose of the Color Ceiling is to expose such inequalities.

**Table 1: Median Weekly Earnings by Race & Gender (Full-Time Workers)**

Year	Black Male	Black Female	Latino Male	Latinas	White Male	White Female	Asian American Male	Asian American Female
2002	\$524	\$473	\$451	\$397	\$702	\$547	\$756	\$566
2003	\$555	\$491	\$464	\$410	\$715	\$567	\$772	\$598
2004	\$569	\$505	\$480	\$419	\$732	\$584	\$802	\$613
2005	\$559	\$499	\$489	\$429	\$743	\$596	\$825	\$665
2006	\$591	\$519	\$505	\$440	\$761	\$609	\$882	\$699
2007	\$600	\$533	\$520	\$473	\$788	\$626	\$936	\$731
2008	\$620	\$554	\$559	\$501	\$825	\$654	\$966	\$753
2009	\$621	\$582	\$569	\$509	\$845	\$669	\$952	\$779
2010	\$633	\$592	\$560	\$508	\$850	\$684	\$936	\$773
2011	\$653	\$595	\$571	\$518	\$856	\$703	\$970	\$751
2012	\$665	\$599	\$592	\$521	\$879	\$710	\$1,055	\$770
2013	\$664	\$606	\$594	\$541	\$884	\$722	\$1,059	\$819
2014	\$680	\$611	\$616	\$548	\$897	\$734	\$1,080	\$841
2015	\$680	\$615	\$631	\$566	\$920	\$743	\$1,129	\$877
14 year Gain	+156	+142	+180	+169	+218	+196	+373	+311

Note. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009a, 2010a, 2011a, 2012a, 2013a, 2014a, 2015a, 2016

## **Employment Barriers: Not Even Education is an Equalizer**

Additional rationale for the Color Ceiling can be found when analyzing unemployment rates. As Table 2 showed, from 2003-2015 the unemployment rates for African Americans were higher than their Latino, Asian American and White counterparts (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2016). The 2015 data showed that the African American unemployment rate of 9.6% was the highest of any group (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2016). In fact, African American's unemployment rate more than doubled Asian Americans (3.8 %) and Whites (4.6 %) in 2015 (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2016). When race and gender were examined, African American males (10.3%) unemployment rates was twice that of Asian American (4.0 %) and White (4.7 %) males, while African American females' (8.9%) unemployment rates were twice that of Asian American females (3.7%) and almost doubled that of White females (4.5%) (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2016). The 14 years of unemployment rate data illustrated the disparaging level of unemployment inequality that has existed in the United States where African Americans maintained the highest unemployment rate of their counterparts, which has continued a disturbing trend of injustice.

Table 2: Unemployment rates 2003-2015 (Gender and Race)

Year	African American	African American Male	African American Female	Latino	Latino Male	Latinas	White	White Male	White Female
2003	10.8	11.6	10.2	7.7	7.2	8.4	5.2	5.6	4.8
2004	10.4	11.1	9.8	7.0	6.5	7.6	4.8	5.0	4.7
2005	10.0	10.5	9.5	6.0	5.4	6.9	4.4	4.4	4.4
2006	8.9	9.5	8.4	5.2	4.8	5.9	4.0	4.0	4.0
2007	8.3	9.1	7.5	5.6	5.3	6.1	4.1	4.2	4.0
2008	10.1	11.4	8.9	7.6	7.6	7.7	5.2	5.5	4.9
2009	14.8	17.5	12.4	12.1	12.5	11.5	8.5	9.4	7.3
2010	16.0	18.4	13.8	12.5	12.7	12.3	8.7	9.6	7.7
2011	15.8	17.8	14.1	11.5	11.2	11.8	7.9	8.3	7.5
2012	13.8	15.0	12.8	10.3	9.9	10.9	7.2	7.4	7.0
2013	13.1	14.2	12.1	9.1	8.8	9.5	6.5	6.8	6.2
2014	11.3	12.2	10.5	7.4	6.8	8.2	5.3	5.4	5.2
2015	9.6	10.3	8.9	6.6	6.3	7.1	4.6	4.7	4.5

Year	Asian American	Asian American Male	Asian American Female
2003	6.0	6.2	5.7
2004	4.4	4.5	4.3
2005	4.0	4.0	3.9
2006	3.0	3.0	3.1
2007	3.2	3.1	3.4
2008	4.0	4.1	3.7
2009	7.3	7.9	6.6
2010	7.5	7.8	7.1
2011	7.0	6.8	7.3
2012	5.9	5.8	6.1
2013	5.2	5.6	4.8
2014	5.0	5.3	4.6
2015	3.8	4.0	3.7

- U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2009b, 2010b, 2011b, 2012b, 2013b, 2014b, 2015b, 2016

It is important to not solely study overall unemployment rates, but to also more closely examine unemployment rates based on education attainment. As Horace Mann stated,

“Education, then, beyond all other divides of human origin, is a great equalizer of conditions of

men—the balance wheel of the social machinery” (Horace Mann as cited in Growe & Montgomery, 2003). Sadly, the disparity between African Americans and White and Asian Americans’ unemployment rates proved that Mann was actually wrong. Although Mann believed that education was an equalizer, data from 2008-2015 showed that African Americans, regardless of equal education level, never had equal unemployment rates than their White, Asian American, and Latino counterparts (refer to Tables 3-10) (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2009b, 2010b, 2011b, 2012b, 2013b, 2014b, 2015b, 2016). The most disturbing aspect of the data showed that regardless of the educational attainment category, African Americans possessed the highest unemployment rates (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2009b, 2010b, 2011b, 2012b, 2013b, 2014b, 2015b, 2016). The data showed that the belief of education as the great equalizer is actually a myth. It is a myth that must be exposed for the fight for equality to ever advance.

**Table 3: Unemployment Rate by Educational Attainment in 2008 (Race and Gender)**

Education	Black	Black Male	Black Female	Latino	Latino Male	Latinas	White	White Male	White Female	Asian American	Asian American Male	Asian American Female
High school diploma	9.3	10.6	7.9	6.2	6.2	6.2	5.1	5.2	4.8	4.3	4.2	4.3
Associates degree	6.2	6.1	6.3	4.1	4.1	4.0	3.3	3.4	3.3	3.8	4.7	2.9
Bachelor’s degree or higher	4.0	4.2	3.7	3.4	3.3	3.5	2.4	2.3	2.5	2.8	2.8	2.9

-U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2009b

**Table 4: Unemployment Rate by Educational Attainment in 2009 (Race and Gender)**

Education	Black	Black Male	Black Female	Latino	Latino Male	Latinas	White	White Male	White Female	Asian American	Asian American Male	Asian American Female
High school diploma	14.0	16.2	11.5	10.4	10.9	9.6	9.0	10.2	7.4	7.5	9.6	5.2
Associates	10.3	13.6	8.0	8.5	8.9	8.1	6.2	7.1	5.5	7.5	7.5	7.4

degree												
Bachelor's degree or higher	7.3	8.2	6.7	5.7	6.1	5.3	4.2	4.4	4.0	5.6	5.5	5.7

-U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2010b

**Table 5: Unemployment Rate by Educational Attainment in 2010 (Race and Gender)**

Education	Black	Black Male	Black Female	Latino	Latino Male	Latinas	White	White Male	White Female	Asian American	Asian American Male	Asian American Female
High school diploma	15.8	18.2	13.1	11.5	11.9	11.0	9.5	10.3	8.3	7.6	8.5	6.7
Associates degree	10.8	12.0	10.0	8.8	8.7	8.8	6.5	7.3	5.7	6.2	7.3	5.1
Bachelor's degree or higher	7.9	9.2	6.9	6.0	5.7	6.3	4.3	4.4	4.2	5.5	5.1	5.9

-U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2011b

**Table 6: Unemployment Rate by Educational Attainment in 2011 (Race and Gender)**

Education	Black	Black Male	Black Female	Latino	Latino Male	Latinas	White	White Male	White Female	Asian American	Asian American Male	Asian American Female
High school diploma	15.5	16.9	14.0	10.3	10.3	10.3	8.4	8.9	7.7	7.6	7.8	7.3
Associates degree	12.1	13.6	11.1	8.8	7.7	9.8	5.9	5.9	5.9	6.5	5.4	7.5
Bachelor's degree or higher	7.1	7.9	6.4	5.7	5.6	5.9	3.9	4.0	3.9	5.2	4.4	6.2

-U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2012b

**Table 7: Unemployment Rate by Educational Attainment in 2012 (Race and Gender)**

Education	Black	Black Male	Black Female	Latino	Latino Male	Latinas	White	White Male	White Female	Asian American	Asian American Male	Asian American Female
High school diploma	13.4	14.2	12.7	9.0	8.6	9.6	7.5	7.6	7.3	6.1	6.4	5.8
Associates degree	10.2	9.6	10.5	8.0	8.0	8.1	5.4	5.5	5.4	6.3	5.8	6.8
Bachelor's degree or higher	6.3	6.7	6.0	5.1	4.8	5.5	3.7	3.6	3.9	4.3	3.7	4.9

-U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2013b

**Table 8: Unemployment Rate by Educational Attainment in 2013 (Race and Gender)**

Education	Black	Black Male	Black Female	Latino	Latino Male	Latinas	White	White Male	White Female	Asian American	Asian American Male	Asian American Female
High school diploma	12.6	13.5	11.6	7.9	7.9	7.8	6.6	7.0	6.1	5.4	5.9	4.8
Associates degree	8.5	8.1	8.8	5.9	5.2	6.4	4.9	4.7	5.0	4.3	5.1	3.5

Bachelor's degree or higher	5.7	5.1	6.0	5.0	4.9	5.2	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.6	3.4	3.8
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- U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014b

**Table 9: Unemployment Rate by Educational Attainment in 2014 (Race and Gender)**

Education	Black	Black Male	Black Female	Latino	Latino Male	Latinas	White	White Male	White Female	Asian American	Asian American Male	Asian American Female
High school diploma	10.7	11.3	10.1	6.2	5.8	6.8	5.1	5.3	4.9	4.5	5.3	3.7
Associates degree	6.8	6.4	7.1	5.2	4.3	6.0	4.1	3.9	4.2	3.9	5.1	2.8
Bachelor's degree or higher	5.2	5.1	5.2	3.9	3.8	4.0	2.9	2.8	3.0	3.7	3.6	3.8

- U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015b

**Table 10: Unemployment Rate by Educational Attainment in 2015 (Race and Gender)**

Education	Black	Black Male	Black Female	Latino	Latino Male	Latinas	White	White Male	White Female	Asian American	Asian American Male	Asian American Female
High school diploma	9.7	10.0	9.2	5.9	5.4	6.6	4.6	4.6	4.7	4.1	4.6	3.5
Associates degree	6.1	6.5	5.9	4.3	3.3	5.3	3.4	3.2	3.5	3.1	3.6	2.7
Bachelor's degree or higher	4.0	4.0	4.0	3.4	3.4	3.4	2.4	2.3	2.5	2.8	2.6	3.0

- U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2016

**Promotional Barriers: Promotional Equity Nonexistent in Higher Education**

When Katherine Lawrence and Marianne Schreiber created the Glass Ceiling term in 1979, they brought to light the lack of upward mobility for women in corporate America. They generated awareness about the barriers placed on women attempting to advance in the corporate world, which they brilliantly did. Workplace barriers (i.e. promotional barriers), similar to the ones that Katherine Lawrence and Marianne Schreiber spoke of have also been placed on African Americans, but instead of making legitimate progress, African Americans

have, actually remained stagnant in their attempt to increase their presence in higher education upper echelon.

The following data will reflect the poor representation of African Americans in upper level higher education ranks (i.e. faculty and administrative ranks). The data will coincide with the prior data that showed the inequalities that African Americans have faced, where they exhibited poor earnings progress and possessed high unemployment rates, higher than their White, Asian American, and Latino counterparts. These issues reflect the true nature and definitions of the Color Ceiling.

### **Faculty**

There is a lack of promotional advancement for African Americans in higher education faculty ranks. According to National Center for Education Statistics: Institute for Education Sciences, full-time faculty can be defined as lecturers, instructors, assistant professors, associate professors, and professors (U.S. Department of Education, 2003a, 2007, 2010a, 2012a, 2014a). For full-time faculty to reach the promotional ranks of associate professor and professor, they traditionally begin their careers as tenure track assistant professors and then proceed to work their way up the ranks. Table 12 showed that from 2001-2013, the increase of African Americans in the assistant professor rank was essentially nonexistent (U.S. Department of Education, 2003a, 2007, 2010a, 2012a, 2014a). Such poor growth can impede the progress of African American faculty in the promotional ranks of associate professor and professor. To fully understand the lack of growth of African Americans assistant professors, their individual

growth or lack thereof, must be stated. Data from 2001-2013 showed an increase of .1% for African Americans (6.2% to 6.3%) in the assistant professor rank which is abysmal (U.S. Department of Education, 2003a, 2007, 2010a, 2012a, 2014a). To better understand the low percentage and lack of progress of African Americans at the assistant professor rank, the 2013 data will be further analyzed.

In 2013, African Americans made up 6.3% of the assistant professor positions compared to 67.6% for Whites (U.S. Department of Education, 2003a, 2007, 2010a, 2012a, 2014a). When looking directly at the academic promotional advancement of people of color, one word to describe their promotional advancement would be dreadful. From 2001 to 2013, data showed that African Americans made very minimal promotional gains (U.S. Department of Education, 2003a, 2007, 2010a, 2012a, 2014a). African Americans did not even increase a single percentage point in either the associate professor or professor ranks during that period (U.S. Department of Education, 2003a, 2007, 2010a, 2012a, 2014a). In 2001, African Americans only comprised 5.3% of associate professors which increased to 5.7% (+.4%) in 2013 and 3.1% of professors in 2001 which increased to 3.7% (+.6%) in 2013. The low percentages combined with the lack of progress highlight the poor promotional advancement of African American faculty (U.S. Department of Education, 2003a, 2007, 2010a, 2012a, 2014a).

As stated prior, African Americans only saw .4% and .6% growth in the associate professor and professor ranks, respectively, while other faculty of color such as Latino (+1.4%, associate professor; +1.2%, professor) and Asian American/Pacific Islanders (+3.7%, associate



professor; 2.8%, professor) saw a higher increase in the ranks when compared to African Americans during the 2001-2013 period. Still, it is important to note that the positions were held primarily by White faculty (75.3%, associate professor; 81.8%, professor). White females witnessed an increase in the associate professor rank (+2.2%), but truly witnessed remarkable growth in the professor rank (+5.9%). White female’s growth in the professor rank was the highest of all groups while their male counterparts saw a decrease in both the associate professor (-10%) and professor (-11.2%) ranks, but still possessed the largest percentages in each positional rank of any group. Such an increase in the professor rank, the highest faculty rank, by White females point to the potential early stages of them cracking the Glass Ceiling in higher education faculty ranks, while the dismal progress of African Americans provide support to the existence of the Color Ceiling.

**Table 11: Full-time Instructional Faculty in Degree-Granting Institutions (by Race)**

Year	Black	Latino	Asian/Pacific Islander	Asian	Pacific Islanders	White	White Male	White Female
2001	5.1%	3.0%	6.2%	-	-	80.9%	49.8%	31.0%
2003	5.3%	3.2%	6.5%	-	-	80.2%	48.6%	31.6%
2005	5.2%	3.4%	7.2%	-	-	78.1%	46.4%	31.7%
2007	5.4%	3.6%	7.6%	-	-	76.8%	44.7%	32.1%
2009	5.4%	3.8%	8.2%	-	-	75.6%	43.2%	32.5%
2011	5.5%	4.1%	8.8%	8.6%	.2%	74.0%	41.5%	32.6%
2013	5.5%	4.2%	9.1%	9.0%	.2%	72.7%	40.0%	32.7%

-U.S. Department of Education, 2003a, 2007, 2010a, 2012a, 2014a

\*Asian data for 2001-2009 combined Asians and Pacific Islanders. As of 2011, Asians and Pacific Islanders comprised separate categories

**Table 12: Full-time Instructional Faculty in Degree-Granting Institutions (by Assistant Professor Rank & Race)**

Year	Black	Latino	Asian/Pacific Islander	Asian	Pacific Islander	White	White Male	White Female
2001	6.2%	3.3%	7.7%	-	-	75.5%	40.7%	34.8%

2003	6.2%	3.5%	8.6%	-	-	73.8%	39.3%	34.5%
2005	6.2%	3.6%	9.3%	-	-	71.7%	37.7%	34.0%
2007	6.3%	3.8%	10.3%	-	-	69.8%	35.8%	34.0%
2009	6.4%	4.0%	10.9%	-	-	68.7%	34.7%	34.0%
2011	6.3%	4.3%	11.4%	11.2%	.2%	67.8%	33.6%	34.2%
2013	6.3%	4.3%	11.1%	10.9%	.2%	67.6%	33.0%	34.7%

-U.S. Department of Education, 2003a, 2007, 2010a, 2012a, 2014a

\*Asian data for 2001-2009 combined Asians and Pacific Islanders. As of 2011, Asians and Pacific Islanders comprised separate categories

Table 13: Full-time Instructional Faculty in Degree-Granting Institutions (by Associate Professor Rank & Race)

Year	Black	Latino	Asian/Pacific Islander	Asian	Pacific Islander	White	White Male	White Female
2001	5.3%	2.7%	6.5%	-	-	83.1%	52.1%	31.0%
2003	5.4%	2.9%	6.9%	-	-	82.2%	50.7%	31.5%
2005	5.3%	3.1%	7.3%	-	-	81.3%	49.4%	31.2%
2007	5.5%	3.3%	7.7%	-	-	80.2%	48.0%	32.2%
2009	5.5%	3.6%	8.5%	-	-	78.7%	46.1%	32.6%
2011	5.6%	4.0%	9.3%	9.1%	.2%	76.9%	44.1%	32.8%
2013	5.7%	4.1%	10.2%	10.1%	.1%	75.3%	42.1%	33.2%

-U.S. Department of Education, 2003a, 2007, 2010a, 2012a, 2014a

\*Asian data for 2001-2009 combined Asians and Pacific Islanders. As of 2011, Asians and Pacific Islanders comprised separate categories

Table 14: Full-time Instructional Faculty in Degree-Granting Institutions (by Professor Rank & Race)

Year	Black	Latino	Asian/Pacific Islander	Asian	Pacific Islander	White	White Male	White Female
2001	3.1%	1.9%	5.7%	-	-	87.2%	67.7%	19.5%
2003	3.2%	2.1%	6.1%	-	-	87.1%	66.4%	20.6%
2005	3.2%	2.2%	6.5%	-	-	86.3%	64.5%	21.8%
2007	3.4%	2.4%	7.1%	-	-	85.3%	62.5%	22.8%
2009	3.4%	2.6%	7.5%	-	-	84.2%	60.4%	23.8%
2011	3.6%	2.9%	8.1%	8%	.1%	82.8%	58.4%	24.4%
2013	3.7%	3.1%	8.5%	8.4%	.1%	81.8%	56.5%	25.4%

-U.S. Department of Education, 2003a, 2007, 2010a, 2012a, 2014a

\*Asian data for 2001-2009 combined Asians and Pacific Islanders. As of 2011, Asians and Pacific Islanders comprised separate categories

The prior data has shown that faculty of color, specifically African Americans, are drastically

behind their White counterparts at each faculty rank. Turner, Gonzalez, & Wood (2008)

addressed the issue of lack of faculty of color in academe by analyzing 252 publications that addressed the topic. Through their analysis, the authors identified themes that affected growth of faculty of color. Turner et. al. (2008) found that:

undervaluation of their research interests, approaches, and theoretical frameworks and challenges to their credentials and intellect in the classroom contribute to their dissatisfaction with their professorial roles. In addition, isolation, perceived biases in the hiring process, unrealistic expectations of doing their work and being representatives of their racial/ethnic group, and accent discrimination are noted negatives described in the literature (p. 143).

The authors also found that the dearth of diversity on campus and faculty being forced to be the spokespeople for people of color attributed to retention and promotion issues for faculty of color Turner et. al. (2008). Additionally, “a perceived lack of departmental/institutional effort to recruit, hire, and retain faculty of color contribute negatively to the experience of faculty of color” (Turner et. al, 2008, p. 144). In addition, the debate regarding affirmative action and various institutions refusal to effectively apply policies associated with affirmative action has contributed to poor representation of faculty of color on college campuses (Turner et. al, 2008).

Financial barriers also existed for faculty of color due to salary inequity (Turner et. al, 2008). Faculty of color were not provided with the same salaries as their White counterparts, thus creating issues surrounding salary equity, which was found to factor into the poor representation of faculty of color (Turner et. al, 2008). Also, there were tenure and promotion

barriers found for faculty of color, “such as negative student evaluations, undervaluation of research, and unwritten rules and policies regarding the tenure process” (Turner et. al, 2008, p. 147) and lack of mentorship which were found to greatly aid faculty as they sought tenure and promotion.

By identifying issues that directly affect African American faculty, determining ways to create promotional equity, and looking directly at the issues that have led to poor advancement work towards the important goal of dismantling the Color Ceiling. To place African American faculty under the Glass Ceiling would result in the refusal to look solely at the unique issues they face in higher education and would, ultimately, be an injustice.

### **Higher Education Managerial Positions**

Similar to faculty promotional inequity, higher education executive, administrative, and managerial positions roles have continued to lack diversity. According to the U.S.

Department of Education (n.d.), these positions would include:

presidents, vice presidents (including assistants and associates), deans (including assistants and associates) if their principal activity is administrative and not primarily instruction, research or public service, directors (including assistants and associates), department heads (including assistants and associates) if their principal activity is administrative and not primarily instruction, research or public service, assistant and associate managers (including first-line managers of service, production and sales

workers who spend more than 80 percent of their time performing supervisory activities)

Table 15 showed the progress that White females have made but also, sadly, illustrate the poor progress that African Americans have made in such roles (U.S. Department of Education, 1996, 1998, 2000, 2001, 2003b, 2004, 2006, 2008, 2010b, 2012b, 2014b). The latest data showed that White women held 41.7% of the executive, administrative, and managerial positions in higher education which was the highest percentage of any group (U.S. Department of Education, 2014b). In 1993, White females held nearly 15% less executive, administrative, and managerial higher education positions than their White male counterparts but by 2013, they held approximately 6% more executive, administrative, and managerial higher education positions than White males ((U.S. Department of Education, 1996; U.S. Department of Education, 2014b). On the other hand, in 20 years, African Americans in the same category increased by only one percent (U.S. Department of Education, 1996, 1998, 2000, 2001, 2003b, 2004, 2006, 2008, 2010b, 2012b, 2014b). It is important to take time to fully comprehend the atrocity affiliated with the lack of progress for African Americans. To think that in 20 years, African Americans would only hold 9.8% of the executive, administrative, and managerial higher education positions was quite unsettling when in 1993, they held 8.8% of the positions (U.S. Department of Education, 1996, 1998, 2000, 2001, 2003b, 2004, 2006, 2008, 2010b, 2012b, 2014b). Thus, compared to their counterparts, African Americans witnessed the lowest growth.

A factor that has been associated with the underrepresentation of administrators of color has been the focus of educational institutions who seek to diversify their campuses focusing only on increasing the diversity of their student body and faculty but negating the importance of increasing their administrators of color (Jackson & O’Callaghan, 2009). In addition, issues such as lack of mentorship, networking opportunities, appealing salary offers, and support of institutional leadership were identified as factors that affected the increase, retention, and advancement of administrators of color (Jackson & O’Callaghan, 2009).

Table 15: Higher education management in degree-granting postsecondary institutions, by race/ethnicity

Year	Black	Latino	Asian/Pacific Islander	Asian	Pacific Islander	White	White Male	White Female
1993	8.8%	2.6%	1.7%	-	-	86.1%	50.5%	35.6%
1995	9.0%	2.7%	1.8%	-	-	85.2%	48.4%	36.8%
1997	8.7%	2.8%	1.9%	-	-	85.3%	47.0%	38.2%
1999	8.8%	3.1%	2.1%	-	-	84.5%	45.2%	39.3%
2001	9.3%	3.6%	2.4%	-	-	82.7%	44.2%	38.6%
2003	9.4%	3.9%	2.7%	-	-	81.8%	41.3%	40.5%
2005	9.4%	4.3%	2.8%	-	-	81.2%	40.3%	40.9%
2007	9.7%	4.6%	3.0%	-	-	80.0%	38.6%	41.4%
2009	9.5%	5.0%	3.4%	-	-	79.1%	37.7%	41.5%
2011	9.4%	5.4%	3.4%	-	-	78.1%	36.8%	41.3%
2013	9.8%	5.2%	3.6%	3.5%	.1%	77.6%	35.9%	41.7%

-U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1996, 1998, 2000, 2001, 2003b, 2004, 2006, 2008, 2010b, 2012b, 2014b

### College Presidents

When looking solely at college presidents, the position has remained predominantly White. Cook & Kim (2012) created the most comprehensive college president study to date. The authors found that from 1986-2011, the number of nonwhite college presidents increased by

only 5% (8% - 13%) (Cook & Kim, 2012). Also, Cook & Kim (2012) found that from 2006-2011, the number of nonwhite presidents actually decreased. In 2006, 14% of colleges were led by nonwhite presidents but by 2011, the number dropped to 13% (Cook & Kim, 2012). Table 16 showed that over the span of 25 years (1986-2011), African American presidents increased by only one percent from 5% to 6% (Cook & Kim, 2012). To think that in a quarter of a century, African Americans did not make headway in diversifying the college presidential ranks is baffling and incredibly worrisome.

An aspect of the Color Ceiling refers to the invisible barriers that impede promotional advancement for African Americans in the workforce which can be clearly seen in faculty, higher education managerial positions, and college presidential ranks.

Table 16: College Presidents Demographics (Race)

Year	Black	Latino	Asian American	White
1986	5%	2%	0%	92%
2006	6%	5%	1%	86%
2011	6%	4%	2%	87%

- Cook & Kim, 2012

### **Conclusion**

The purpose of this article was not to diminish the positive effect the Glass Ceiling has had on raising awareness of the occupational plight that women have faced but to raise awareness of the ignored workforce issues that African Americans have continually faced. The intended goal of this investigation was to verify the need for the development of a

distinctly different phrase that specifically highlighted the persistent financial, promotional, and occupational inequalities for African Americans. Through careful examination of demographics and Census data, patterns were found that supported the need for a newly created term, the Color Ceiling. The author was able to support the necessity of such a phrase through data that painted an even bleaker picture than anticipated. For example, the analysis of the gender-based wage gap was quite eye opening. Prior studies and terms highlighted attention to the existence of a gender-based wage gap, but more in-depth look at the wage gap based on race and gender was even more revealing, providing a more accurate portrayal of critical issues to be addressed (Blau & Kahn, 2006a, 2006b, 2007).

It must be noted that due to the high rate of Native American financial data omitted by the Bureau of Labor Statistics publications utilized in this study, their higher education data was not included. The lack of Native American financial data was quite concerning and as stated by Sue & Sue (2012), Native Americans have been treated as “invisible” and their omission in a number of the Bureau of Labor Statistics publications made that very evident which is something that must be changed.

The current research found that a major discrepancy existed in terms of the race-based wage gap where African American and Latino males actually earned less than Asian American and White females. This issue has not received the same attention as the gender-based wage gap due to the heavy focus on gender-based wage equality. It is important for the gender-based wage gap discussion to continue, but it is equally important for the African



American and Latino communities to be informed about the financial injustices they have faced where, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, they received the lowest median weekly income in the United States regardless of their gender.

The second aspect of the Color Ceiling states that an invisible barrier exists that impedes the employment equity for people of color. Data showed that African Americans continuously possessed the highest rate of unemployment when compared to their Latino, Asian American and White counterparts. Data also showed that regardless of equal educational attainment, African Americans continuously possessed higher unemployment rates than Latinos, Asian American and Whites. Even when African Americans possessed a bachelor's degree or higher, they still did not have lower unemployment rates than Asian Americans and Whites who only possessed associates degrees. This data altered the author to a major employment equity problem that must be addressed.

The final aspect of the Color Ceiling states that an invisible barrier exists that impedes promotional advancement for African Americans. After looking at the employment inequality data, an individual may feel sick to their stomach due to the lack of promotional opportunities for African Americans in higher education. Data from 2001-2013 showed that African American faculty were poorly represented in the promotional ranks of associate professor and professor and made very minimal gains in that time frame.

Additionally, 20 years of data (1993-2013) showed that African Americans made little gains in executive, administrative, and managerial positions in higher education. In the span

of 20 years, African Americans witnessed an increase of 1% in higher education executive, administrative, and managerial positions. When the author examined the appointments of higher education presidents of color, 25 years of data illustrated how African Americans have not been given the opportunity to lead higher education institutions. In 25 years, African American college presidents increased only a single percentage from 5% to 6% (Cook & Kim, 2012). The paltry promotional advancement of African Americans in important higher education positions is an area that must be addressed and the data shows the importance of the Color Ceiling being utilized to address such issues. The lack of promotional opportunities for African Americans has been in existence for a number of years but has not been given the proper attention it deserves. It is the hope of the author that these issues are appropriately focused on and rectified in a timely manner.

With the creation of the Glass Ceiling, the injustices faced by women in the workforce were brought to light and has continued to be discussed. The lack of promotional opportunities for Asian Americans has also been brought to light through the creation of the Bamboo Ceiling. It is the hope of the author that through the creation of the Color Ceiling, African Americans will not continue to be placed under a term that did not include them during its conception and that their financial, employment, and promotional injustices receive the proper attention that they deserve through a term that was created solely for them.

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