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Academic Reality “Show”: Presented by Women Faculty of Color

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Abstract

Although the resolution of World War II brought dramatic growth to higher education, it was not until the 1950s and 1960s with social movements of equal and civil rights that women faculty of color had foray into faculty positions. Unfortunately, data on sex and minority status were limited in large studies during these decades, and any numbers of minority women faculty were estimated proportions of total faculty (see, e.g., Menges & Exum, 1983). In his analysis, Graham (1978) noted that women faculty positions actually declined from 1930 to 1970. Higher education after 1970 continued to expand due to the Civil Rights Movement, and this Movement propelled women and women of color to enter the academy.

In academe today, women faculty of color know their own reality—they live in a world where an academic reality “show” would point out the truth, that is, all progress made in higher education does not represent them or their story. To begin, numerous quantitative studies do show that women have made significant progress in education over the decades. For example, *The Condition of Education 2008* noted females account for nearly two-thirds of undergraduate and graduate (i.e., Master's level) degrees through 2007 (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], n.d.). For graduate and professional degrees, women have almost equalized the total number of degrees awarded to men (U.S. Department of Education, as cited in *The Nation*, 2007; see, also, NCES, “Participation,” n.d.). Even though increases in male and female graduate students are expected through 2018, female enrollment is expected to increase at a rate faster than male enrollment (NCES, “Participation,” n.d.). Along a similar line, women of color (i.e., American Indian, Asian, Black non-Hispanic, and Hispanic) earned more doctorate degrees than male ethnic minorities in 2004-05 (U.S. Department of Education, as cited in *The Nation*, 2007).

Women faculty of color hold only 3% of full professorships, representing an important difference from their classification of 10% as assistant professors (Snyder, in Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2009). This supports research that has found that women, and especially women of color, face significant barriers as they move toward tenure. Then, too,

there has been only a sluggish increase in hiring racially and ethnically diverse faculty members, and this increase includes hiring these individuals into certain types of higher education institutions -- two-year colleges and community colleges (American Association of University Professors, 2009; Gappa, Austin, & Trice, 2007).

As Jackson (2004) emphasized in her article, there are numerous other factors behind the numbers that tell the story of progress of women in academe. Personal experiences in the academic workplace are not found in percentages or other representative numbers. To understand the academic reality “show” for women faculty of color, we need to listen to their stories. These stories articulate messages that are often suppressed or ignored in academe. Perhaps the time has come to rethink again current practices in the academy—practices that confine, restrain, and dehumanize lives.

Keywords: Women, education, reality show, faculty, barriers

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Introduction

To set the stage for this article's academic reality "show," the academic environment needs some description. It was 1999 when Glazer-Raymo announced that "[u]ltimately, the institutional culture of most universities is not compatible with the needs and concerns of women in academia" (p. 207). More recently, Valimaa and Ylijoke (2008) discussed the environment of higher education from varied cultural perspectives, challenging former concepts and theories and finding numerous disadvantages for female faculty. Discouragingly, some of the same historical issues still remain in place. As Bracken, Allen, and Dean (2006,) clarified, "When family-friendly policies, programs, and resources are fully in place, the academy will be better positioned to encourage women to stay in the pipeline to tenure and enjoy satisfying work and family lives as university professors" (p. 26). In higher education, the added distinction of being a woman of color contributes an additional disadvantage in the academic environment.

Institutional Change

There is a need for institutional change to include the rich experiences and perspectives of women faculty of color; relatedly, Bracken, Allen, and Dean (2006) argued for new definitions of "support" and "expectations" that include diversity. Early on, some universities developed initiatives to foster diversity for institutional change, as one example pointed out:

[U]nderstanding and valuing diversity is only a first step in the process of institutional transformation. These understandings must translate into activities undertaken by all members of the University community that create an inclusive and welcoming climate for students, faculty, and staff . . . A welcoming and inclusive climate is grounded in respect for others, nurtured by dialogue between those of different perspectives. (Pennsylvania State University, n.d., ¶ 1)

Collecting Stories

It is easy to ignore research about women of color. Many deem it as irrelevant or "soft" research. There are those in academe who step back and ask themselves, "So what if women of color have problems adjusting to the workplace environment. Don't we all have problems?" Examining research on women of color from a comparative lens often causes us to rationalize, justify, and even ignore the research about ethnic minority women, targeting them as "complainers" or minimizing their struggles. It is only by hearing personal stories from women of color that we begin to realize the challenges and barriers that were likely absent in others' entry and socialization into the academy.

Storytelling is one way to humanize the experiences in academic life and tie them back to theory, practice, and research (Solorzano & Bernal, 2001). Then, too, stories provided by multiple women of color give rise to a collective consciousness that validates their realities in the academy. As Aguirre (2000) articulated, "I tell my story to bring to light an alternative interpretation of institutional practices in academia that support the majority stock story" (p. 319).

By women of color expressing life experiences through storytelling and our documenting these stories, we offer readers multiple perspectives of the academic reality often faced by these individuals. We also offer faculty women of color a voice of inclusion—a voice often absent in their day-to-day lives in higher education. In introducing the university experiences of seven female faculty of color, a platform is provided in which to challenge existing practices and make available recommendations for change—change that will benefit all members of the academy.

Purpose and Procedures of the Study

The purpose of this study was to assess the experiences and challenges facing faculty of color at a southwestern university and provide recommendations to enhance the recruitment and retention of faculty of color at this higher education institution. This study was conducted by ethnic minority individuals representing two university committees.

The institution's Office of Affirmative Action sent 56 letters to self-identified ethnic minority faculty requesting voluntary participation in the study. In response, 26 tenure-track faculty members consented to structured interviews. Interviews were conducted by six different interviewers utilizing a standard protocol consisting of 21 closed- and open-ended questions (e.g., Please identify your faculty rank and when you first joined the faculty at the institution; were there any efforts made by your department to assist you in your professional and social integration? If yes, what support was provided? If no, what might have been helpful?). The faculty participants were separated into four main categories: African/African American, Asian/Asian American, Latina/o, and Native American. All individuals interviewed fell into one of these four groups.

Data were transcribed by a paid staff member at the institution. Each transcript was sanitized by the transcriber. Transcriptions of the interviews were analyzed qualitatively by a team of eight tenure-track faculty and staff representing the two sponsored university committees. Participants consistently addressed three areas as identified in this article: (a) campus climate, (b) marginalization and exclusion, and (c) faculty roles and responsibilities. Through the analysis process, the team discussed each protocol and came to consensus on major themes based on the data provided.

For the purposes of this article, the authors will discuss the findings based on 7 of the 26 interviews, as the authors were particularly interested in the perceptions and attitudes of U.S. ethnic minority women and therefore ethnic/racial minority men and non-American women were excluded. Data obtained from these individuals were reserved for future articles. In addition, minor changes in the narratives were made to eliminate words/statements that might identify the participants.

The voices of seven individuals will be presented as it is the authors' belief that their experiences are representative of many other faculty women of color working in university settings. Their academic reality may teach us lessons about “humanizing” an often competitive, uncivil, and alienating workplace—the academy. The struggles and triumphs of these women challenge us to consider reforming the academic environment to include a culture of inclusion,

choice, and flexibility. As many know, the academy is not “just” a workplace, but also a community where lives are played out.

Academic Reality Through Stories from Women Faculty of Color

In academic reality, what one individual sees is not necessarily how another individual feels, experiences, or remembers. From the literature, history, current conditions, and future predictions can be learned; however, only when stories of women faculty of color are connected (or disconnected) from the literature, do these women’s lives become illuminated. This section reviews research on academic climate, the workplace environment, and roadblocks existent in teaching, service, and research as related to three themes that emerged from the women’s stories.

The Cold Campus Climate

According to the American Council on Education (in Green, 1989), campus climate “embraces the culture, habits, decisions, practices, and policies that make up campus life. It is the sum total of the daily environment and central to the ‘comfort factor’ that minority students, faculty, staff, and administrators experience on campus” (p. 113). Campus climate becomes “chilly” or cold when faculty of color and students of color feel marginalized, underrepresented, overused, discouraged and/or discriminated against (Jackson, 2004; Park, 1996; Patitu & Hinton, 2003; Turner, 2002; Turner, Myers, & Cresswell, 1999). Jackson (2004) found that minority faculty feel more discouraged and discriminated in comparison to their white male counterparts and asserted that “[a]t every point, white women and Black/Hispanic faculty were nearly twice as likely as white men to be discouraged from pursuing their education/career goals. Women of color experienced their greatest discouragement at the faculty level” (p. 179).

In addition to feelings of discrimination and discouragement, minority faculty often felt overused because they were expected to handle minority and gender affairs at the expense or in addition to their teaching and research (Turner, 2002). Minority faculty faced obstacles related to campus climate that their white male counterpart rarely encountered. For example, Alicia, a Latina associate professor in this study, recalled her own entry into the academy.

Within a month of being hired, one of the search committee members told me that I was not the first choice in the candidate pool. They really wanted this person [said name removed] from another state . . . but they felt they needed a person of color. I was their second choice on the list . . . I responded to her by saying, “You know you would have been very fortunate to get her here.” I tried to diffuse it, but I thought that was very hurtful . . . I was second on the list and was made to know that. So, that kind of set the stage for my first year . . . I was recruited, and I was recruited in at \$1,000 more than the other people who were recruited that same year, and boy you would have thought that I made \$20,000 more--the resentment that came from that. Apparently, a group of faculty members went to the Dean and said, “Why did so and so get hired at \$1,000 more than I did?”

Sonia, a Latina assistant professor, also recalled her entry into academia. In her negotiation process, she advocated for a competitive salary and other accommodations. One

administrator discussed the specifics of her negotiations with faculty members outside of the search committee, setting the stage for a cold environment:

[I said to another junior faculty member] that I really felt isolated . . . , so I wanted to get to know you [and other junior faculty]. There was a group of faculty women [who met regularly], and she said . . . “Things are pretty unfair around here and a lot of people are disgruntled . . . For example, you make more than me.” She was a junior faculty member who was hired ahead of me. I said, “Really, well I think that is terribly unfair. I think you would use me as a way to get more for your salary.”

The stories of Alicia and Sonia are riddled with concerns regarding academic policy in hiring, confidentiality in the hiring process, and messages of exclusion for being hired. As highlighted in their narratives, Alicia came to realize that another faculty member of the dominant culture would try to “put her in her place,” while both Sonia and Alicia felt that by being competitive in hiring negotiations they were alienated. Interestingly, both women were placed in positions where they felt they needed to “play nice.” In academia it is not unusual to offer a competitive package to a desirable candidate, but if you are a woman of color it is often assumed that only the “color” and not the “competence” factored into the job hire. Ignored were the credentials of these two top candidates by other faculty, with hiring policies breached. The “cold” climate was set into place almost immediately upon their employment.

Chilly or cold climates across higher education have existed for some time (Hall & Sandler, 1982). According to Patitu and Hinton (2003), institutions that do not commit to diversity initiatives had few faculty of color and had conservative attitudes and beliefs (or in other words, a non-supportive environment), which ultimately effected faculty members’ satisfaction. In this context, diversity efforts and strong institutional advocacy are essential in creating safe and supportive campus climates for women faculty of color.

Not-So-Subtle Marginalization and Exclusion

Much debate has ensued whether diversity initiatives have had a positive impact on the quality of life of faculty of color in academic institutions (Aguirre, 2000; Baez, 2003; Flores & Rodriguez, 2006; Jackson, 2004; Niemann & Dovidio, 1998; Sterrett, 2005). Sterrett (2005) argued that while institutions may continue their quest to achieve diversity and access, other initiatives besides traditional affirmative action programs are needed. Baez (2003) asserted that “white women are the greatest beneficiaries of affirmative action, and their success kept Whites overrepresented in faculty and administrative positions” (p. 99). In addition, there has been a perception that qualified faculty of color are unjustly framed as affirmative action hires (Flores & Rodriguez, 2006; Niemann, 1999). Jackson (2004) contended that the problem is further compounded when academic institutions confuse diversity and affirmative action as conceptual synonyms. While faculty members across the board have welcomed diversity on their campuses, they may still reject the idea of affirmative action even if it resulted in their own employment or hiring of colleagues that they respect and admire (Baez, 2003; Flores & Rodriguez, 2006). Regardless, diversity efforts have contributed to more faculty of color being hired at academic institutions (Flores & Rodriguez, 2006; Niemann & Dovidio, 1998; Smith, Turner, Osei-Kofi, & Richards, 2004).

Whether or not one agrees with diversity initiatives in part or as a whole, faculty of color and women faculty of color are still largely underrepresented at academic institutions across the board (Allen, Epps, Guillory, Suh, & Bonous-Hammarth, 2001; Park, 1996; Perry, Moore, Edwards, Acosta, & Frey, 2009; Turner, Myers, & Cresswell, 1999). Results of this underrepresentation are impetus for feelings of marginalization and tokenism (Niemann, 1999; Segura, 2003; Turner, Myers, & Cresswell, 1999) or the syndrome of one minority per pot, as coined by Reyes and Halcon (1997). In her own personal reflection in *The Making of a Token* (1999), Niemann stated that she felt lonely and stigmatized when overhearing, "She's the one the dean forced the social science department to hire," and "[n]ow that we have you, we don't need to worry about hiring another minority" (p. 118). The marginalization experience has been further explained by hooks (1990) as being "part of the whole but outside the main body" (p. 149), provoking distrust, suspicion, anxiety, nervousness, and even fearfulness (Madrid, 1988). Overall, Chun and Evans (2008) stressed that higher education must address workplace climate, institutional policies, and collective behaviors to eliminate marginalization and exclusion.

As troubling as the "only one" or "the other" syndrome is, the fact remains that marginalization and tokenism lend themselves to stereotyping. Lara, an associate professor of Mexican descent in the study, explained how she is expected to be the voice for all individuals of Mexican descent. In addition, the pressure to "fit" the Mexican stereotype was also placed upon her, implying that "all" individuals of Mexican descent have the same philosophy towards life, speak the same language, and even act the same--with the landscape of human behavior and differences narrowed for individuals of color when singled out as being the "one." Lara shared the following:

To be an ethnic minority faculty means, first and foremost, to be different because there are so few of us [in the academy]. It means to me that I carry an unreasonable burden. I have to represent 50 million United States citizens of Mexican descent. Part of the burden means the whole range of good and bad that that population represents. It means to me being marginalized . . . Being an ethnic minority means being treated differently. Clearly I am different by the scripted characteristics, but I am different by treatment towards me.

Sandra, a Native American assistant professor who doesn't fit the stereotypical "look" of a Native American, was questioned about her ethnicity and the validity of her cultural ties. She explained, "I was very discouraged to be called a 'water-down Indian' by a few people. That got back to me and that was a hurtful thing . . ."

Another study participant, Denise, a Mexican American assistant professor lacking ethnic/racial credibility because she did not "look" the role (i.e., the narrow television and media portrayal of what a Mexican should look like and act like), stated her frustration in being overlooked as an ethnic minority:

In some ways, I guess I'm in a unique situation in that I am frequently not considered ethnically diverse. I mean you can tell by looking at me that people frequently don't think of me as being ethnically diverse, so that can be frustrating for me, very frustrating. For example, when I'm doing research on diversity, there are times that I get the impression from people that you don't know what this experience is like, you don't know what it's

like to be ethnically diverse . . . I do know what it's like to be ethnically diverse. I may not look like I am, but I am . . . So, it's an interesting experience for me and maybe I see the other side of it because people don't recognize my diversity. I see prejudices that just drive me wild.

Rarely does stereotyping happen to members of the dominant culture—no one challenges their “Whiteness.” Marginalization and tokenism brings with it expectancies to window dress, to posture, to placate the dominant culture, and to be the caricature that represents a whole population of people. When ethnic minority women of color do not fit the stereotype they become suspect—distrusted and even shunned.

It is through supportive institutional systems in tandem with diversity initiatives that help eliminate stereotyping and diminish the unreasonable burdens often placed upon women of color—thus creating supportive campus climates. McKinley and Brayboy (2003) stressed, “Unless we are committed as a unified faculty and administration to changing the institutional structure, implementation will merely maintain and strengthen the status quo that marginalizes diversity” (pp. 85-86).

Cultural Tax on Traditional Triad of Roles and Responsibilities

The traditional triad of faculty responsibilities (teaching, service, and research and scholarship) is ever-present in policies and expectations of higher education faculty. Research studies have shown that faculty of color and women of color spend more time doing service and teaching than majority-male faculty spend doing research (Antonio, 2002; Bellas & Toutkoushian, 1999; Jackson, 2004; Owen, 2009). This creates a dichotomy that often leads to a fast burn-out rate and little reward. As Antonio (2002) stated, “Faculty, many of whom are drawn to the academy because of their commitment to teaching and service, are finding themselves torn away from those activities to concentrate on the research productivity required for promotion” (p. 585).

In explaining the term “cultural tax,” Owen (2009) concluded that “[i]t is far too often the case that women and men of color and White women are called upon to serve on diversity committees, mentor students of color or female students, and fulfill other functions that serve the institution's diversity goals” (p. 194). Minority faculty, and in particular women faculty of color, are overwhelmed with service activities (National Education Association, 1991) and often feel overburdened and stressed with more responsibilities compared to their White male counterparts (Baez, 2003; Niemann & Dovidio, 1998; O'Meara, 2002).

In the study Rose, a Native American assistant professor, pointed out how her exhausting service load pulls her away from research. Because of her commitment to indigenous students and the need for an ethnic minority voice on committees, she is often asked to serve on multiple university committees. Without the appropriate mentoring from senior faculty, it is often difficult for a new faculty member to know when or how to refuse a committee invitation, thus taking on the additional burden of excessive service work without realizing the risks it may carry. As Rose expressed in her story:

The teaching load is high, 3-3. I hardly have time to do my research. I've managed to grind out three articles. I'm looking to finish my book. It is my own commitment to making connections between nearby reservation communities and the university community . . . I think it's true of faculty of color, particularly women, that we spend so much time doing the service commitment that we think is important. So we're always overloaded . . . This is my third year in a tenure track position, and I get called on to be on so many committees because they need a token brown person, and I get way overextended.

Alicia, unlike Rose, had a female senior faculty member to help her negotiate how to limit her service and how to choose committees that would make a positive difference in the promotion and tenure process. In essence, unless mentoring is present in entry to the academy, it is difficult to navigate the bumpy terrain of university responsibilities and make wise choices toward tenure. As Alicia confirmed:

When you're new, you don't know how to say no. At least I didn't. Because I was the minority rep, I was on every search committee imaginable. It wasn't until my third year that one of the full professors, a woman, said, "You're crazy. You don't owe anything to these search committees" . . . We have so few ethnic minorities on campus that those who are willing to serve on search committees can be eaten alive by it. So my first two years, I was on a lot of committees, just by virtue that they needed me to be on them. But now, I'm very selective in what committees I choose to be on.

As Jackson (2004) confirmed, "[I]t is widely known that new/junior faculty are confused by the tenure process in higher education, the nuances of institutional politics, and how to ensure balance in their work agenda" (p. 181). Women faculties of color often get sidetracked and lose sight of scholarly research essential to their tenure eligibility (Antonio, 2002; Niemann, 1999). As Niemann (1999, p. 118) told in her own story, "The faculty distanced me and made no attempts to mentor me or facilitate my road toward tenure." In their Faculty Work-Life Study, Thomas and Hollenshead (2001) reported that women faculty of color felt colleagues did not solicit their opinions about research ideas yet pressured them to alter their intellectual interests to fit in with those of departments.

While service and teaching undoubtedly augment the overall climate of an institution, they nevertheless are not valued compared to scholarly research, which has been considered a more valuable indicator for eligibility for tenure (Butin, 2006). To counter, Bellas and Toutkoushian (1999) asserted that teaching and service loads should be recognized and "equitably distributed among departments" (p. 384). They continued their argument:

Equity encompasses not only number of courses, but number of course preparations, frequency of new courses, number of students, and support from graduate assistants. In addition, the level of preparation required of courses can vary (graduate versus undergraduate; course content that changes very little versus that which changes almost daily because it deals with current issues). (p. 384)

Until institutions begin to recognize (and reward) service and teaching equal to research as well as mitigate burdensome multiple roles for women faculty of color, the cultural tax of the traditional triad of responsibilities will remain. Moreover, women faculty of color will continue to experience mixed messages in the workplace; confusion over departmental, college, and university requirements and responsibilities; and difficulties in the tenure and promotion process.

Steps Institutions Can Make Now

I would have liked having some of the faculty that had been here for awhile helping me go through the ropes of what was expected of me. In that realm I didn't get a lot of direction outside of the letter of expectation. I mean that was minimal--so perhaps more direction on just how you go about becoming a faculty member.

Celia (Native American Assistant Professor)

The stories of women faculty of color help in understanding the cold academic climate. Additionally, dealing with and confronting marginalization and exclusion, tied to unending, inequitable teaching and service burdens, were clearly stated as critical concerns. While the literature has pronounced numerous solutions to these concerns, developmental steps in the growth process for women faculty of color can provide assistance in a multitude of academic areas and arenas. One step requires the utilization of other voices with experience and knowledge—mentors in the academy.

Within The Academy: Development of Mentoring Programs

Institutions of higher education have a distance to travel in order to recruit and retain women of color. For many in academia, the “only one syndrome” takes its toll in terms of “cold” academic climate, tokenism, and differentiated roles and responsibilities. There is no single strategy or answer to improve the lives for women of color in the academy, but current research continues to verify earlier research findings--that early mentoring and faculty social support may help relieve many of the stressors associated with induction into the academy and change the cold work climate and the culture of the organization (Bilimoria, Joy, & Liang, 2008; Driscoll, Parkes, Tilley-Lubbs, Brill, Bannister, & Pitts, 2009; Thompson, 2008; Wang, 2009).

Mentoring also enables senior faculty members to advise junior faculty members in learning how to balance different aspects of their jobs and lives (Major, Fletcher, Davis, & Germano, 2008). Institutions can actively support women and faculty of color by expanding mentoring programs, providing guidance on tenure, and offering advice on how to contend with the varied responsibilities carried by women (e.g., child care, elder care). In this study, Alicia commented on the difficulty in managing various faculty and life roles and relayed the necessity of having senior faculty mentor junior colleagues:

I'm doing all this committee work and I'm working 20 hours out of 24 trying to keep up with research, teaching and everything else. I was burnt out before I ever started my career . . . It wasn't until female senior faculty members pulled me aside and said, “You're nuts. Let's look at what you're doing and get rid of this, this, and this.”

Celia, a single mother in the study, emphasized that she did not have the good fortune of having senior female faculty members help her prioritize her committee work, research, and teaching load as well as offer advice on other aspects of her life (e.g., schools in the area, recreation activities for her children, child care) during her first year on campus. In similar respect, Jackson (2004) had argued, "Institutions should not leave it to chance for [new or junior] faculty . . . [to] offer candid and systematic feedback on how things are going in their departments" (p. 181).

Numerous studies over decades have shown positive and important impacts of mentoring in higher education. In Thomas and Hollenshead's (2001) study of faculty members' work-life balance, women faculty of color felt their careers could be enhanced by a supportive mentor (see, also, Aparicio, 1999). Institutions need to promote both informal and formal mentoring efforts and programs to assist women faculty of color as they traverse the cold campus climate, approach issues of marginalization and exclusion, and challenge their faculty roles and responsibilities. Unfortunately, many ethnic minority individuals do not have role models (outside of their doctoral program) that mentor them on how to be a faculty member--or even what it means to be a faculty member. So, left alone, faculty members of color swim upstream in torrential and unknown waters.

Crawford and Smith (2005) explained that mentoring is important on many levels:

- 1) For enhancing an individual's skills and intellectual development;
- 2) For using influence to facilitate an individual's entry and advancement;
- 3) For welcoming the individual into a new occupational and social world;
- 4) For acquainting the individual with its values, customs, resources, and role players; and
- 5) For providing role modeling behavior. (p. 54)

Crawford and Smith (2005), moreover, found that individuals preferred several mentors opposed to one mentor, mainly because mentors have strengths in different areas. By expanding mentoring relationships, junior faculty members may be more apt to navigate inside the institution and within their own departments without circumstantial roadblocks. A mentor gauges and encourages faculty members to stay on track without being waylaid by potentially draining activities that will not support their promotion. In mentoring a Native American female faculty member, Green (2003) stated, "I learned the difficult balance of encouraging this individual to refuse to take on tasks that were not critical to her survival yet encouraging tasks that would benefit her ultimate promotion and would assist Native students where possible" (p. 231). Segura (2003) revealed that it is challenging to women faculty of color to "just say no" to student advising and office hours, for fear of weakening "their connection to the strong sense of political mission that fuels their academic integrity" (p. 38). A mentor may be more persuasive guiding conflicted faculty when their academic and personal goals seem out of synch. Without a successful mentor, a faculty member can feel lost without support. Patitu and Hinton (2003) discovered how a female African American faculty member "perceived that she had received no direction, although she had sought advice and suggestions from faculty members at other institutions" (p.87).

In practical terms, Jackson (2004) noted that when “academic administrators and faculty mentors structure or plan discussions . . . [this planning] would identify issues of faculty concern around socialization, [and] may result in more collaboration and advancement of a teaching and/or research mission” (p. 182). And more pointedly, Chittister (2000) in her final analysis stated:

The function of an older generation of women is the empowerment of the next. We have not done our duty until we teach them every lesson, give them every question, prepare them to the hilt, empower them to begin, and allow them the privilege of risk. Anything else is to leave them powerless in the face of systems made only for the powerful. (p. 70)

Beyond The Academy: Honoring Work-Life Balance

Woven within the stories of women faculty of color in this academic reality “show” were those subtle, yet powerful, comments regarding the women’s personal lives—comments institutions should not ignore. As one Native American study participant said, “There was a time when I had personal things that came up. My child was very sick . . . She is fine now, but that took a big chunk away from my being able to complete my work in the time that I wanted to.” One single mother noted that “with trying to do this job it is really, really difficult so I don’t have a lot of time to really go out and socialize with other people across campus.” Yet another study participant discouragingly expressed, “It’s just not possible to live in this town on the pay we make at [institutional name deleted]. That is another reason why I am leaving. I will never be able to afford to live in this town and that’s sad.”

Some higher education institutions have not paid close attention to work-life balance issues, recognizing the extensive family obligations of many female faculty members (see, e.g., Erickson & Rodriguez, 1999). And even when institutional policies promote the work-life balance, there is fear of bias when individuals utilize the policies in their quest to resolve issues and problems. As Christensen (in Cook, 2009) stated, “There’s a structural mismatch of how the workplace is organized and the needs of the current workforce. Now the workforce expects the career path to mimic a life lived” (p. 1). Women faculties of color need flexibility in the work environment to meet their personal needs and responsibilities. These issues necessitate institutions embrace changing the academic reality where women faculty of color reside.

The Chronicle of Higher Education’s survey (“Great Colleges to Work for,” 2009; Philipsen, Bostic, & Sorcinelli, 2009) noted numerous factors and indicators important to faculty working at higher education institutions: newly constructed child care centers, flexible-work options (e.g., work from home office) or compressed work weeks, monies toward a purchase of a home with a specified area near the college, low-rent housing for faculty, and university events to help employees learn about caring for aging relatives. Then, too, evidence exists that family-friendly policies make a difference, that is, faculty members are more committed to their institutions and are less stressed in their work environments (Halpern, 2005, 2006). What cannot continue is every junior faculty member’s nightmare:

There is no end to faculty work—academic institutions are greedy in their demands for faculty time. In fact, some faculty find it hard to know when to go home at the end of the day because there is always more that needs to be done, and there are no obvious end-of-the-day indicators, especially for new faculty to help them decide when they have prepared enough for the classes they teach, advised students well enough, fulfilled faculty committee assignments, or completed enough quality research for the day. (Halpern, 2008, p. 59)

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (2007) has projected that 662,000 faculty jobs will become available during the timeframe 2006-2016, with 382,000 as new positions, and 280,000 as replacement positions. Institutions should take note as they re-imagine the academic environment. Will women faculty of color reach the point where they ask (as poignantly expressed by Reyes and Halcon in 1988): Is it necessary for women faculty of color to give in or give up?

Non-supportive, non-collegial, and unfriendly institutional environments may hear more women faculty of color voice their perspectives, as one voice in a video project about women faculty of color clearly revealed: “I’ve come to understand that I value family more than I do career, and that is maybe one of the best kept secrets in academia” (Aparicio, 1999, p. 127). Higher education needs to learn that the work-life balance is critical; if institutions do not provide mechanisms and policies to support integration, faculty may forgo professional opportunities and challenges.

Strategies Inside Academe for Internal Oppressions

Although developing mentoring programs and incorporating policies, structures, and initiatives to address personal and family responsibilities are of primary importance in assisting women faculty of color as they maneuver academic reality in their institutions, there may be situations wherein faculty members will need to access other avenues of progression. Higher education provides human resources as well as affirmative action services. Human resources ensure university policies are in place and provide guidance and assistance in the promotion of communications within the workplace, while affirmative action offices more specifically foster diversity in the campus community and ensure that legal procedures and policies enforce the institutional commitment to the concept of affirmative action, equal opportunity in all aspects of employment for those historically excluded or prejudiced.

Additional resources of health and well-being are found on most higher education campuses. These programs focus on all aspects of the total person with emphasis on the spiritual, intellectual, physical, emotional, social, and occupational wellness of employees. Services may include learning how to handle work-related stress in an individual’s life or how to prioritize and balance work-home activities. Other wellness resources often include body-mind integration activities (i.e., meditation, Thai chi).

Then, too, faculty ombuds programs are available at some institutions. The goals of these programs are to provide voluntary, informal, neutral, and confidential third-party assistance in resolving individual questions, issues, and conflicts that arise in the work environment. Working

outside of the formal problem-resolution and grievance procedures, ombudspersons assist informally in working with individuals before problems escalate on a personal or professional level. This type of intervention often involves informal mediation. For faculty women of color this may mean bridging cultural understanding.

Although institutions of higher education may offer a number of services under a multitude of office, program, and initiative nomenclature, protection and assistance for women faculty of color must be made transparent to them and all new faculty members. In providing a comprehensive listing of campus and community resources, universities may be able to retain faculty and ease the transition into university life and work expectations.

Changing the Academic Reality Show of Women Faculty of Color

Understanding and addressing the interactions of work, family, and personal issues will become increasingly important in these times of a crushing economic environment. Higher education institutions must take steps to address the work-life balance, allowing for flexibility and choice. Women faculty of color should not feel trapped when making decisions outside of their academic lives. Creating mentoring programs with a confluence of stakeholders' interests, passions, and energies is another step that should be considered. Overall, scholars need to reframe discussions surrounding the concerns of women faculty of color and make sure that institutional policies and procedures support such investigations. As the second decade of the new millennium awaits, the academic reality "show" of women faculty of color more so than ever needs to change stations.

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