

*Full Length Research Paper*

## **Women Faculty of Color: Voices, Gender, and the Expression of Our Multiple Identities within Academia**

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Accepted May 19, 2011

**Women of color (scholars and an administrator) from different cultural, ethnic, and racial backgrounds and disciplines within academe share their personal and professional experiences in higher education from their unique cultural and discipline perspectives. The article focuses on strategies that women of color in academia can use to integrated their multiple identities, transgress marginalities, cross boundaries, and subsequently, find a sense of self-definition in predominantly White institutions and contexts. It culminates with recommendations for combating problems associated with marginalization and oppression of women of color.**

**Keywords:** women faculty of color; faculty of color, women faculty, women in academia, academic marginalization, women in leadership, women scholars, women of color, women identities

### **The Plight of Women of Color in the Professoriate**

Women of color within academia are confronted with many obstacles—the least of which are those associated with bringing their identities with them to the academic table while confronting issues of marginality. Of particular importance for these women is their noted struggle to combat their identities, being literally departmentalized (e.g. being identified by gender, ethnicity, and race rather than by gender, race, and ethnicity). With the academic culture resistance to change, while simultaneously using Eurocentric and male lenses to frame standards and dictate certain cultural, behavioral, and professional norms, these women of color, devoid of their culture and identity, often find themselves not fitting in and not able to climb the academic ladder to success (Turner, 2002). Mainly, because how they understand the scholarship, is through their qualitative experiences of it. Keeping in mind that academe is still principally structured on an academe discipline (field of study) basis, therefore, women faculty of color, like other scholars; generally acquire a strong sense of professional identity. As a point of departure, as people of color, their individuality is more likely to be constituted on values of collectivity, reciprocity, relationality, and connectivity (Asante, 2003; Zhang, 1994).

Though the concepts of identity and self-definition,

marginalization and oppression, social and professional integration, and mentoring and support can be critically distinct in definition and theory, for us, as women faculty of color, our narratives, more than often overlap. This article is one of our efforts to drive home the plight for women faculty of color. The narratives of these women faculty of color demonstrate their abilities to hone their synergies among their gender and multiple cultural and academic identities.

### **Gendered, Ethnic, and Professional Identities**

Because women faculty of color, like research universities, are so complex, so multifaceted, and often so fragmented, we have chosen theoretical frameworks that we felt would shed light on our unique experiences: First, as faculty, we ground our narratives in Boyer's (1990, 1997) framework for teaching, service, and scholarship, one that has informed institutional standards. Specifically, Boyer admonishes us that the most important responsibility confronting the nation's colleges and universities starting with the decade of the 1990s and into the Millennial was "to break out of the tired old teaching versus research debate and define, in more creative ways, what it means to be a scholar." Likewise, for women faculty of color in Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs), their survival is largely dependent on academe defining in more creative ways

what it means to be a scholar.

Second, we are women with interlocking systems of oppression that can be viewed through the lens of multiracial, Black feminism, and womanism (Hill-Collins, 1991; Howard-Hamilton, 2003; Walker, 1983; Zinn & Dill, 1996) frameworks. Nonetheless, even when disconnecting the elements cited as key variables in the well-being among women of color—particularly the inclusion of multiracial, Black feminist, and womanist models that are more reflective of the gendered experiences among women of color in a male-dominated society—it becomes readily apparent that finding viable strategies to resist marginalization and oppression is critical. According to Lorde (1984),

The need and desire to nurture each other is not pathological but redemptive, and it is within that knowledge that our real power is rediscovered. It is this real connection which is so feared by a patriarchal world. Only within a patriarchal structure is maternity the only social power open to women (4). In essence, women faculty of color face misperceptions and distortions of their identities and their roles in their respective institutions. That is to say, women of color, like their White counterparts, face pre-existing societal stereotypes, biases, and discriminations that negatively impact their progress and the image of themselves in the male-dominated, patriarchal, and sexist structure of academe (Task Force on Women in Academe, 2000). This includes, based on those stereotypic views, women having to prove they are qualified in spite of impeccable credentials and having their research and achievements minimized.

Rather than silencing the voices of women of color by erasing their identities, their identities should be embraced by the academy (Marbley, 2007; Singh, Robinson, & Williams-Green, 1995; Wildman & Davis, 1995). Thus, instead of struggling to gain and to affirm their identity, their intellectual contributions to higher education leadership should not only be valued, but women of color should be aggressively sought after (hooks & West, 1991; Howard-Vital; 1989).

We present our narrative description as a technique (from a non-positivist perspective) rather than a research method. According to Erickson (1986), what makes research interpretive or qualitative is substantive focus and intent, rather than a procedure in data collection. Further, Erickson states, for researchers with a nonpositivist and interpretative approach, the technique of continuous narrative description can be used in which “The immediate (often intuitive) meanings of actions to the actors involved are of central interest (p. 20).” Therefore, in an effort to share our intuitive meanings of our experiences as female people of color in the academy, each author presents a descriptive narrative from her unique perception. We hope to show through a nonpositivist, interpretative approach the importance of multiple identities in the academy and our individual disciplines.

Through our narratives as women faculty of color and that of a woman administrator who has mentored and supervised women faculty of color and from different disciplines, we provide first-hand accounts of marginalities and successes in the academy. Specifically, this article will focus on women faculty of color and the mental and emotional challenges plus the positive milestones associated with (a) identity and self-definition; (b) marginalization and oppression; and (c) social and professional integration.

### **“Ain’t I a Woman?” (Counselor Educator)**

Marbley is an African American. She is a licensed professional counselor and supervisor and a Professor in Counselor Education. She is a critical social justice womanist activist scholar with a research focus on global multicultural-social justice, human rights, social rights, and cultural rights

### **Identity and Self-Definition**

I entered the professoriate as a counselor educator in the fall of 1997, armed with all the rhetoric and jargon of my chosen profession. As I reflect back, I am reminded of Sojourner Truth’s (a 19<sup>th</sup> century abolitionist and womanist) famous “Ain’t I a Woman?” speech that she delivered at the 1851 Women’s Rights Convention and how it captures my struggles for validation as a twenty-first century African American female in academe.

During the past two decades, I folded my counseling identity into my newly acquired counselor educator one and was prepared and eager to integrate myself, and my passion for diversity, into my work (teaching, scholarship, and service). I had worked through most of the ugliness of the racial and gender discrimination that I had experienced most of my life. As a multicultural counselor educator, I was not only in a good position, but felt predestined to integrate my identity as an African American female into my work as a counselor educator in a way that would help both mainstream and marginalized students from diverse backgrounds. Yes, I was eager to reclaim my core identity as an educated African American woman that I had safely tucked away for over 20 years in my *personal closet*.

Sadly, in my first five years in academe, despite my preparedness, eagerness, and my academic training and degrees and passion for helping, my identity as a Black, African American female faculty member in a PWI was met with opposition, and I experienced an unwelcoming climate that Turner and Myers (1999) referred to as chilly, exclusive, isolating, alienating, and hostile, just to name a few. In essence, without my permission or input, my identity had already been defined for me.

### **Marginalization and Oppression**

My initial research agenda that was focused on domestic and

global disparities and inequities was derailed by the crap (marginalization and oppression) that I experience as a as tenure-track woman faculty of color. It became desperately important for me to publish my experiences for other women faculty of color who were experiencing the same thing, but felt powerless and alone. Consequently, my earlier experiences, such as efforts to find my voice and my reliance on other faculty of color for mentoring and support are reflected in several of my published works.

At the time I began my tenure-track position as an assistant professor in counselor education, I was culturally isolated and felt weighed down with the burden to represent my race (that is, being the first African-American to graduate with a doctorate from my degree-granting institution, the only Black in my program, one of two Black Counselor Educators in the state of Texas, and the only licensed professional counselor in my surrounding area).

### **Social and Professional Integration**

I remembered vividly receiving an invitation, along with my colleagues in the College of Education, for special discount tickets to see a well-known orchestra that was coming to town. Nearly everyone around me was so caught up in the excitement and thought it was a once in a lifetime event. Even more importantly, no one seemed to notice or care that this event was culturally isolating for so many people of color, at least, for me. In essence, it felt like no one even noticed my culture. Nonetheless, over the years, the social events remained largely White, and I like so many of my fellow faculty of color, have come to know that in the 21<sup>st</sup> century any social and professional integration worth its weight in salt is done in places where women and people of color are excluded, such as the golf course and the city orchestra.

### **Mentoring and Support**

“Aretha, you must remember that there are two things that are important: your family and your career and this job is not your career. Remember to keep your family first, and then you must focus on your career, and that means you must publish, publish, and publish.” This sage advice came from my mentor and friend, a White male counselor educator. “Peu, in order to survive here, you must keep friends close, enemies closer, and White colleagues who decided your tenure even closer.” This came from my best friend and peer mentor, now an African American male administrator at a doctoral research intensive university. Both sets of advice continue to serve me well as I as navigate the higher education terrain.

Further, I was very fortunate that my college had a formal mentoring program for tenure-track faculty. Faculty members were mentored on everything from effective teaching, getting published, how to compete for major grants to social integration into the college, university, and their profession. I had many affirming relationships with great support and mentoring from people of color and my White colleagues, both

male and female. Yet, most of my knowledge of the *micropolitics* and survival skills has come from my White male mentor and African American male peer mentor.

### **“You Had No Right” (Foreign Language Professor)**

Pratt, a native of Ghana, is currently an Assistant Professor in Bilingual Education and Secondary Education in Curriculum and Instruction at Texas Tech University. She is a linguist and foreign language educator with a research focus on curriculum design, foreign language instruction and acquisition, and sociolinguistics.

### **Identity and Self-Definition**

“You had no right to make those decisions,” he yelled at me while the four White males he had surrounded himself with looked on. It had never crossed my mind that I had “no right.” With a Ph.D. in Romance Linguistics, many years of experience, and a book under my belt, I considered myself a well-educated person with the knowledge and the authority to make decisions about a program I was in charge of. I did not know there was another definition of me till that day—that I was only a Black woman. It dawned on me then that I had not been observant. It was so obvious. I had nothing in common with the people who had the “right” to know and the “authority” to make decisions. Well, some years later, a White student also said something very similar: “What gives you the right to judge me?” because I had evaluated her class participation and given her a grade.

As a Black African woman from Ghana who had grown up in a society where hard work and success were highly valued and rewarded, I had worked very hard to become the very best foreign language professor I could possibly be. In addition to fluency in some Ghanaian languages, I could speak and write English, French, and Spanish with ease. I had also studied and worked in Africa, Europe and the United States and had a world of experience I was very proud of. Well, as I found out that day, none of that mattered. That awakening was followed by years of excellent work and zero recognition in a hostile and stifling environment.

### **Marginalization and Oppression**

My successes were hated and aggressively criticized. “How could you possibly teach her to speak so much Spanish in one summer when others cannot produce that much Spanish even after a year of study?” he asked looking at me very sternly. I had dared to excel! I came to learn that I was supposed to either fit in the box or face their wrath. I always incurred their ire because I excelled, and that was not what they wanted. What they wanted from me was insignificance—their definition of me, and probably of all my people. After all, isn’t that what a Black African woman ought to be? Can she be anything else? “You have to do something else,” he said, as he looked at the book I had authored. My research was not right, because it was not what the others did. “We will never agree with that,” she

said, as she stormed out of my office. My classes were not right either, despite the excellent peer reviews and high student evaluations. “We have to take it away from her because she has turned it into an aristocratic society.” My service was not right either, although I had won national awards for it. I did not stand a chance if I was going to excel rather than maintain the status quo established by the people with “rights,” who constantly tried to sabotage my efforts as I was marginalized and oppressed.

But I was reassured by Camara Laye’s (1953) words in “À ma mère” (To My Mother): “Si loin, si loin, si près de toi!” (So far, so far, so close to you) that I was still as close to my roots as I could possibly be, and I could hold onto them. So I did, and I abandoned that “Department of No Rights” and moved to a new place where I have finally been able to secure some “rights” and soar with the help of a few good women and men, Black and White.

### **Social and Professional Integration**

I was subjected to certain language, images and behaviors that were culturally isolating for me, but I had no choice since I had to be there. I remember attending a gathering where I was obviously not noticed since the others carried on about some personal issues and did not bother to talk to me, which made it clear to me the reason for the favoritism and bias I had observed at the workplace. I was a total outsider and did not even know it, because it was shrouded in hypocrisy. Fortunately, I found a comfortable place among other faculty of color outside my discipline, who afforded me the opportunity to experience some social integration.

### **Mentoring and Support**

“You have to seem like the underdog, you know,” she said. That came from one of those I consider my mentors. “I was told I was a bright light in a dark corner, so I had to leave,” another one said. Their words came a little bit too late for me because I had already made some serious mistakes—I had not behaved like the underdog, and I had definitely been a very bright light in a very dark corner. As a product of my environment, I was grappling with many aspects of academe that were foreign to me. Mentoring and support have always come from people outside my disciplines. I have yet to find another Black African woman in Foreign Language Education. I am still finding my way, alone for the most part.

#### **Looking at a *Slant*—(History Professor)**

Wong is second generation Chinese American. She is Associate Professor of History and a specialist in modern Italian history with a concentration on southern question discourse, Diaspora, race, nationalism, and identity.

### **Identity and Self-Definition**

I grew up in the backs of restaurants in Chinatown in Portland,

Oregon and though that sentence seems to fit the first sentence of a model minority, pull-yourself-up-by-your-bootstraps, second generation family story, it isn’t. It’s just my story. And when it is your own story, there are no stereotypes, there are no assumptions, and there are no clichés. You own it. You live it. You are it. So though I grew up within this story that starts with my father’s immigration from China in 1968 and my mother’s from Hong Kong in 1971; that continues with the dizzying, heady oil smells of my father’s \$1.60 an hour graveyard shift repairing industrial engines; that celebrates a mother keeping a procrastinating daughter company in the long night cram sessions, a father who shows his stubby fingers worn down by rewiring, black from industrial chemicals, one sacrificial finger at a time, “This one was to put you through school, this one to put Baba through school, this one to put Geen-Wai through school . . .” – this is not some hackneyed story of the American Dream. This is just my story and my sister’s story and my brother’s story and my mother’s story and my father’s story. And each of their stories is different from mine and a bit the same. But it is what makes me the woman I am, the woman of color I am.

### **Marginalization and Oppression**

I am an historian of modern Italy. And I have been told often I should study my own skin. Despite my fluency in Italian, the work and research I have done, the years in the field – I have too often had other scholars point at my hand, my arm, my face, and been told, “You should study your own skin.” What does this mean? And yet why is it so meaningful that my eyes well up in tears? Why with all the pedigree and degrees and blood, sweat, and tears – why do I still feel the need to justify my presence? I have not heard medievalists told, “You did not live in medieval times, you can’t possibly study the Middle Ages.” I have not heard colonialists told, “You did not come over on the Mayflower, you can’t possibly study colonial America.” And yet, I am told, time and again, “There is no racism in Italy” and “You should study your own skin.” Just who do you think you are?

### **Social and Professional Integration**

I have been told by some people that I do not count. At some universities, Asian Americans “don’t count.” At some universities, we don’t appear in the statistics. We are invisible. We are invisible students. We are invisible faculty, staff. We are confused with international people from Asia. We speak “beautiful English” despite the fact that it is, *in fact*, our native language. We are asked, “Where do you come from?” And when I reply, “Oregon,” I am asked, “No, where were you from before?” I have been asked by students, “Isn’t it weird for an Asian woman to be teaching European history?”

And I have also had students and colleagues who remember and forget at the same time. Who see me as scholar, teacher, colleague, and friend? But who also see that this face I have, this identity I own is not something that can be compartmentalized into different boxes I can check off,

Chinese American – check, woman – check, Europeanist – check. I am simply all those at all times and some of those some of the time. I don't ask that they remove my race, my gender, my field of study – I ask that they see all of it, the totality of it as simply me. To forget and to remember. To see.

### **Mentoring and Support**

The professor I am goes back to my first history class at Amherst College. Our final examination consisted of one question. After a semester's work of arguing about storytelling, history telling, and one question: *What can Amherst College do to improve the college experience for students?* Politically active for the first time, determined to make change in the world, I was fired up writing my answer. And in the end, after rereading, arguing with my friends, I threw my sermon away. I started over. And my answer was simple. There was nothing Amherst *could* do to make the college experience better. There were things that it *had to do*, just as there are things that I believe all faculty members, regardless of their race, gender, sexual orientation, should do. There is the responsibility of resolutely demanding multiculturalism in the curriculum, the imperative of diversity within the administration, faculty, and students. There is the promise that the university will protect all students from discrimination, that it will guarantee free speech and intellectual freedom.

But those are not things that the college *could* do; they are things that the college *MUST* do, promise, pledge to do as an institution of learning. My answer was simple. What could Amherst College do to improve the college experience for students? Nothing. Because if they do everything right, if they do what they are *SUPPOSED* to do, then the rest is up to us.

### **Creating Identity-- (Professor of Architecture)**

Jaddo is an Iraqi Turkumani Moslem. She is a contemporary artist with work about her ethnicity and issues of the psyche and freedom; currently, she is an associate professor in architecture where as artist and architect, she teaches design in architecture combining architecture with art.

### **Identity and Self-definition**

My ethnic background is Middle Eastern. I am Turkumani of the Moslem faith. I was raised in Iraq, a country that was mostly Arab with 15 ethnicities. My ethnicity spoke a Turkish dialect. I initially identified as a Middle Eastern woman. A woman in that part of the world started her life by marriage, by belonging to a man, and having his children. Her identity was supposed to come from the extension of people around her and not from any achievement of her own. My parents were one of the first groups of people in Iraq who found themselves highly educated and affluent. I was the eldest daughter and was encouraged to get an education and find a profession.

My life events led me away from the Middle East, not through an effort of mine but through my husband's effort in furthering

his education. I found myself in this country, married, continuing my education, having children and serving the family. With time, I found myself limited and losing professional chances because of my dedication to the family. At the same time I got disillusioned with my union with a person who expected me to hold on to the old ways and did not facilitate change and freedom. I started my life on my own, raising my children and going after the life of the mind. I found no women of my culture to help me self-identify in my new role. With time, I found my identity through trial and error. Currently, I identify as a *liberated Middle Eastern/American woman*.

### **Marginalization and Oppression**

In my social community that I had nurtured with my husband, I was marginalized and learned really fast to separate myself from others. I could not co-exist with the Middle Eastern community socially because I was not married to 'one of them' any more. I lost my "old country" support group.

As an architect looking for work in Lubbock in the mid eighties, I was looked at as a nonprofessional and impossible to hire. These handicaps directed me to go back to school to keep my mind busy and to be productive while I waited for things to change.

### **Social and Professional Integration**

I saw myself as an outsider in my own culture, and an outsider in the Lubbock culture. I could not figure out how to find my own people. I was an emigrant across the world from her homeland, unable to fit in anywhere. When I went back to the old country, I found their way stifling and limited. When I settled in Lubbock, I found myself different from the people of the city, and I felt marginalized.

### **Mentoring and Support**

I learned to create alliances with people like me, people who pursued the life of the intellect. People, who applied all aspects of freedom in their lives, people who were outsiders to the culture of this city. Professional integration, mentoring, and support happened through working with people who believed in what I stood for. My allies, the outsiders, drew me into the teaching field. Some were already professors who saw the value of diversity. Others saw potential in my work. These co-workers assisted in mentoring me, thus helping me to see my own possibility.

In my work environment, males prevail by 80%. For many years, I chose to separate myself from the people around me at work to safeguard my identity. I had to prove my worth time and time again. It took a new leader in my college, a leader with vision to help me move forward, get tenure.

I was 43 when I started teaching, 48 when I got on tenure track (and it took me three tries to get on), and 54 when I got tenured. I have no profession to show for before my teaching record except for being a studio artist. I do have my two kids and art work.

Today I perceive myself as an important part of my work place. I have managed with time to find an identity, a work identity that uses my strengths. I find myself content with where I am professionally as I work creatively on my own as an artist, teaching architecture students; participate in administration in my college, and in my Arab organization at the University. The only aspect of my life that finds itself dissatisfied remains to be in missing the old culture I came from. I try to satisfy that missing by traveling back to the Diaspora of my ethnicity around the world. I travel to places that contain a higher number of people who had originally been in the cultures of Iraq before the destruction. And I spend time with my people speaking the language, eating the food, participating in festivals. It all helps the missing.

#### **Where's the Revolution? (Bilingual Educator and Dean)**

Santos-Hatchett is currently a Dean and Bilingual Educator. As a multiheritaged person, she identifies as a multiculturalist from a mixed binational, bilingual background.

It is 2010! Another U.S. census underway! More affirmation that the United States of America is a culturally and linguistically pluralistic nation with many social, educational, and financial issues affecting its highly diverse population. Tons of research, tons of criticism leveled at our educational system, teachers, professors, and others. Failed education policies like No Child Left Behind and its "test 'em to death" strategies have not even made a dent in creating greater social justice, improving intercultural, interethnic relations, creating more employment opportunities for people of color, or a greater diversity of faculty of color across academe.

For over a decade, I have been a university administrator at several predominantly-White institutions and even at a Hispanic-serving institution. Although each university has *tried* to include in its mission and strategic planning the hiring and retention of faculty of color, the reality *on the ground* in the individual colleges where faculty hiring committees and promotion and tenure committees are charged with making personnel recommendations to their deans, can be quite drastically different than the official word of presidents, provosts, and deans. Behind the scenes, cliques and bands of like-minded faculty in varying disciplines, more often than not, seek out colleagues much like themselves, and exhibit the same kinds of fears and prejudices about potential colleagues as experienced in the individual cases herein presented. I know of what I speak because I have been both a victim of these residual *Jim Crow* codes of behavior, and a vocal advocate and mentor against them.

My own story as a young professor moving up the ranks was rather uneventful; I surmise it was because of my green eyes and Anglo phenotype. It didn't hurt being attractive either in a *good ol' boy* system where most of my chivalrous mentors

were males and sensitive to the plight of females in the academy. However, being a multiculturalist from a mixed binational, bilingual family background, who lived, breathed, and embraced a linguistically and culturally pluralistic lifestyle, and who deeply believes in the *dream* of unity in diversity and is willing to do battle for it, I would like to weigh in to provide yet another perspective on the plight of my sisters of color in academe.

Having heard many colleagues over the years say things like: *We can't find any qualified minority candidates*, or *we will only hire the most qualified*, have made my blood tingle. An interesting and pointed article about how people *dodge the dialog on cultural diversity* (Pewewardy, 2003), further describes defensive tactics and avoidance behavior. Truth be known, it is not difficult to delve into the pipeline or work with associations or professional groups to build a diverse applicant pool. It is a matter of will and commitment. In each university where I worked, I have used creative methods to build a diverse faculty and student body with great success.

It appears to the uninitiated that diversity is a hot topic in academe as evidenced by the plethora of programs, new *diversity* positions and job titles at the highest institutional levels, inclusion in accreditation criteria, the rise of new organizations, recruitment, retention and fellowships (Brayboy, 2003). Interestingly, *The Chronicle of Higher Education* devoted all of its Section B to *Diversity in Academe* (October 16, 2009), with its lead article foreboding a scaling back of efforts due to fiscal entrenchment. On the one hand, I haven't noticed any cutbacks in athletics or the race toward Tier One status at a number of contender universities, but when it comes to putting issues of race, class, and gender in proper perspective, that is not happening.

What never seems to change are the attitudes, interpersonal dynamics, and knowledge about historic exclusionary practices negatively affecting the retention and success rates of underrepresented populations in higher education. The essays presented in this article reflect trauma to the psyche of talented women. Feelings and attitudes cannot be legislated, so any improvement in the status of women of color in the academy needs to be reflected in tangible and sensitive ways from upper administration. And yet, the recent literature on issues affecting female faculty of color or female administrators, in general, continues to reflect cases not unlike those included here (Berry & Mizelle, 2006; Glaser-Raymo, 2008; Hendrix, 2007). In 2009 and 2010, as a poignant reminder, two highly qualified women at major research universities in Texas were unseated as the first-ever females to head their respective institutions. Reasons? Who really knows? The fact that these two short-lived presidencies died before their expiration dates should give us pause that something went very wrong at the highest levels. Lack of mentoring, perceived vulnerabilities, professional jealousies, political expediency, trust issues, who knows?

On the issue of tenure, the literature is replete with examples of

faculty of color who give their heart and soul to their students through advisement, teaching, community service, and mentoring, but, due to the fact that there are only 24 hours in a day and they may have no colleagues as writing partners, those faculty members are often not able to produce the quantity of refereed journal articles or a book (in some disciplines), to meet the preferences of the P & T committee (Aguirre, 2000; Chavez, 2009; Fenelon, 2003).

I would like to propose that every dean and department chair read the literature about the aforementioned issues and take to heart the benefits to this nation of exposing students to divergent points of view, varying ethnic backgrounds, linguistic diversity, and diversity in sexual orientation and racial and gender identities. Likewise, anyone in a supervisory position needs to go out of their way to support underrepresented faculty and staff associations, make time to know the issues and feelings of faculty, attend community meetings, take a real interest in minority-oriented research, support community service projects, and be a co-participant. Only then can we make a move toward solving the devastating undercurrents of the hidden agenda of perpetuating the hierarchy of the status quo in the nation's leaning towers of ivory soon to topple under their own weight of tradition.

What we need *now*, and have needed for a long time in academe, is a real revolution of values, thought, attitudes, feelings, and behavior. How can the educated and creative class help move a nation forward, when it itself is in need of a dose of reality, humanitarian common sense, and the will and commitment for progressive change for the betterment of all? It is up to each of us to do our part so that we do not continue to hemorrhage by sacrificing our best and brightest.

### Discussion

For us as women faculty of color, navigating the higher education terrain and finding identity and self-definition in the academy have been complex and painful. Marbley, Wong, Pratt, and Jaddo alluded to the need, importance, and the struggle to integrate their professional identity into their personal, gendered, and cultural identities. For them, this amalgamation became somehow a preordained, inevitable, yet natural need—a sort of closing the circle. For example, *Marbley* naively thought the professoriate would be a venue to reclaim her African American female identity that she had kept hidden most of her professional career.

Instead, she faced opposition on all fronts and encountered others who defined her identity for her. Similarly, Pratt confronted the public wrath of a White male colleague in the presence of four other White male colleagues, and shockingly discovered her identity had been reduced to being “*Only a Black woman.*” Wong’s professional identity that began with the immigration story of her parents from China in 1968 ended up having others in the work place taking unauthorized liberty to define it for her. Last, Jaddo found her *liberated Middle*

*Eastern American woman* identity through trial and error, sandwiched somewhere between her culture (her highly educated and affluent family who encouraged her to get an education and a profession and a traditional Middle Eastern marriage and husband), and her new role as a naturalized citizen in the United States.

Further, as women faculty of color, marginalization is often manifested in what Sue, Capodilupo, Torino, Bucceri, Holder, Nadal and others (2007) referred to as *microaggressions*. That is, those brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults toward people of color” (p. 271). In our narratives, microaggressions take the form of Marbley’s experiences of *silenced voices*, Pratt’s experiences of *nitpicking*, and Wong’s experiences of *pigeonholing*.

In the areas of social and professional integration, the themes *invisibility* and *outsider* radiate throughout our narratives. We shared multiple examples of feeling *invisible* and being on the *outside*; for example, outside of the mainstream (e.g., being excluded from social networks such as on the golf course and missed informal mentoring opportunities). Also, Wong felt like an outsider when she is unfairly defined by her physical features. Jaddo felt ostracized from both her old Middle Eastern roots and her new American culture, and Pratt felt invisible and an outsider because of the subtle messages she received from her colleagues that her research, teaching, and service were “not right.” Indeed all of us have had great White mentors and male mentors. Yet, mentors for our wounded souls have taken the form of spiritual kinfolk, peers, and faculty of color outside of our institutions and programs. Santos’ administrator’s perspective captures those same experiences.

In conclusion, in order to survive, our narratives say that we have had to develop a sense of creativity, capture our defining moments, return to our roots, and do better than our White and male counterparts. We have found that identity and self-definition, marginalization and oppression, social and professional integration, and mentoring and support are intertwined and necessary elements for our success in the academy. We believe that without recognizing the pedagogical experiences of women as one of the most effective means of providing support, mentoring, and inspiration and without acknowledging the intellectual and philosophical weight of women faculty of color who accentuate the importance of multiplicity and nomadism, universities CANNOT make good on its promise to graduate globally responsible, internationally aware citizens who are prepared to take on this brave new world.

Our recommendations are not to dictate the decisions or direction of universities, but rather to insist that administrators take the myriad and multifaceted roles and identities of women faculty of color as constructive, instructive, and productive.

From the lessons that we learned as women faculty of color and from our unique cultural and professional experiences and disciplines, we offer up the following recommendations to and on behalf of White women and women faculty of color and to institutions of higher education in an effort to frame discourse, structure processes, and create affirming and welcoming institutional environments for women in the academy, regardless of discipline.

1. White women and women of color must take responsibility for their multiple identities and integrate their identities into a framework that builds on their personal and professional experiences and situates them within their perspective disciplines.
2. White women and women of color must take a more active role in utilizing not only their unique identity as women, but other identities that define them—recognizing the valuable resources they bring to academia because of those other identities.
3. Because of the paucity of women faculty of color in many disciplines, such as foreign languages, institutions must make a deliberate effort to recruit and retain them.
4. Institutions of higher education must exemplify and demonstrate the *quality*, the *effort*, the *passion*, and the *embracing* of diversity as a way of life, a way of learning, a way of teaching, and a way of serving.

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