



# The Black Woman Faculty Experience

## Encouraging Change in Institutions

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# Welcome & Introductions

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# The Background



## **BLACK WOMEN FACULTY**

- 1. Are underrepresented in community colleges and when represented, experience barriers to promotion and tenure**
- 2. Are often paid less than their white faculty counterparts**
- 3. Experience exclusion even amidst diversity, equity and inclusion policies touted by their community colleges**



The Problem

## Details of the Study

- Research Question:


- What is the Black woman faculty experience with promotion/tenure, wage equity, and inclusivity as a reflection of race and gender equity within two-year community colleges?

- Methodology

- Post-Intentional Phenomenology Vagle (2018)

- Theoretical Frameworks:

- The Strategic Race Equity Framework* (Garces & Gordon da Cruz, 2017)
- The Black Feminist Epistemology* (Collins, 2000)



Black Women Faculty  
Experiences with  
**Promotion/Tenure, Wage  
Equity, and Inclusivity**

“...It is not our role to speak to the people about our own view of the world, nor to attempt to impose that view on them, but rather to dialogue with the people about their and ours...”

(Freire, 1970/2009, p. 96).

# Participants

Updated Pseudonym	Position	Years of Teaching Experience	Number Colleges Taught In	Region of the USA	Discipline
Badera	Full-time	3	3	Northeastern	Sciences
Serena	Adjunct	3	3	Southeastern	English
Janet	Full-time	4	2	Northeastern	Social Sciences
Juanita	Full-time	16	1	Southeastern	Health Sciences
Cynthia	Full-time	11	1	Southeastern	English
Mahelia	Adjunct	18	2	Southeastern	Speech Communications
Rashida	Formerly Full-time	12	5	Northeastern	English
Denise	Adjunct	12	2	Southeastern	TSEOL
Lateefa	Full-time	21	4	Northeastern	English
Jamie	Adjunct	13	8	Pacific	TSEOL

## Participant Selection:

- Current faculty or taught in the past one or two years.
- Identifies as a Black woman, regardless of ethnicity or gender identity.
- Participants must be from the United States of America
- Participants must work or have worked at a two-year community college.



# Findings: Code Book

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## Category: Promotion/Tenure

Themes	Description
<b>Lack of Transparency</b>	When institutions fail to provide <b>clear paths</b> for promotion and tenure. This can include, but is not limited to, setting clear steps online or in workshops but using <b>hidden criteria</b> to hire, promote, or provide tenure to faculty.
<b>Siloed</b>	When institutions fail to create environments where Black women faculty can <b>thrive</b> and reach goals, such as improving teaching ability, achieving promotion, and/or tenure.

# What did the Research Highlight?

## Promotion/ Tenure

- **Vagueness** of the promotion and tenure process
- Length of **time between promotions**
- **Arbitrary selection criteria**, which create barriers for faculty who may desire higher positions in the professoriate or in administration
- **Lack of mentorship and growth opportunities**
- Benefit of white allies in leadership positions

## Wage Equity

- **Black women faculty often overworked and under-compensated**, while white faculty offered opportunities at equitable rates of pay
- **Negotiation** allowing college leadership to pick whom they wanted to grant equitable pay, with the subjectivity of negotiation, allowing for bias
- **Process for granting extended and full course release problematic**; mediocre white faculty ("**mediocre Mary**") being tapped for opportunities or provided release with Black women faculty micromanaged or granted release semester by semester

## Inclusivity

- **Gross levels of disrespect**, isolation, and other microaggressive behaviors towards women and students of color; feeling disrespected; respect and value synonymous
- **Problems with Black women leaders**, who may be the same race but choose to isolate themselves, sabotage promotions and tenure, and even seek to end careers
- **Antiquated policies** that are not tested and do not protect Black women faculty
- **Retaliation against Black women faculty** for standing against inequalities, which negatively impacts advancement and other opportunities

# PROMOTION/TENURE

- *Lack of Transparency*

"[M]y former institution does a really good job...on their public-facing documents, making it seem like they're doing all the right things... For instance, if you look at the institution's website, they have a very detailed description of all the buckets and criteria you need to get a promotion. But the part you don't see is...when you're a faculty of color ...the opportunities to fulfill the criteria to get promotion and tenure. They are less likely to come to you, so you must create your own."

- *Siloed*

"In my division, I don't really feel a community with other faculty members unless they are siloed themselves. So, unless they are the odd kid out, then we kind of mesh and share ideas. I often find a more positive rapport with faculty members outside of my subject matter."

# Findings: Code Book

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## Category: Wage/Pay Equity

Themes	Description
Undervalued & Underpaid	Instances where Black women faculty <b>efforts are not valued or compensated</b> compared to white faculty, which could result in BWF being <b>overlooked for opportunities</b> , being <b>underpaid or not paid at all for projects</b> , not offered the same extended-release as their white counterparts.

# WAGE EQUITY

- Cynthia and the hiring Committee: Black Single Mother vs. White bread-winner, husband
- Negotiation: "Pretty Sufficient"
- Extended Course Release: Rashida's dilemma

# Codebook: Inclusion

<p>Workplace Hazing of BWF</p>	<p>The act of inviting Black Women Faculty (BWF) to <b>know their place</b>. These actions are ongoing and can include but are not limited to <b>imposing bizarre rules</b> that White faculty are not required to adhere to and excluding them from opportunities.</p>
<p>Institutional support specifically for BWF</p>	<p>The <b>solutions created by Black women faculty to improve the conditions</b> for themselves and other Black women faculty within educational institutions.</p>
<p>Unprotected &amp; Abused</p>	<p><u>Unprotected</u>: When institutional <b>policies fail to protect BWF from hazing, abuse, including microaggressions, overt racism</b>, lack of equitable treatment within their positions, and failing to create mentally and emotionally safe working conditions.</p> <p><u>Abuse</u>: <u>Overt, implied micro and macro aggressive</u> racist behaviors towards BWF, which cause emotional, mental and/or physical harm.</p>
<p>Respect</p>	<p>Each BWF expressed her feelings about the level of respect she receives in comparison to white faculty.</p>
<p>Self-Protection &amp; Creating Our Support System</p>	<p><u>Self-Protection</u>: Things <b>that BWF do or say to themselves to keep their sanity amid racially abusive and toxic work environments</b>.</p> <p><u>Support Systems</u>: When BWF <b>build support systems</b> and networks, which include people who understand their struggle and are ready and willing to empower, encourage and fight alongside them.</p>
<p>Every Skin Ain't Kin</p>	<p>When <b>Black women or other people of color fail to support BWF</b>, by either creating cliques, blocking promotions or opportunities for BWF to excel.</p>

# INCLUSION

- Mahelia and prison
- Jamie: Tears after five years
- Lateefa: Cultivating your own tribe
- Respect: "Hell No! And you can quote that!"-Cynthia



Activity



# Building Courageous Colleges

## **The Courageous College**

### **Walks the Walk**

- Reward accomplishments in the same manner that other faculty are rewarded and valued.
- Move beyond equity statements to equity actions.
- Address antiquated policies and test new policies to see if it would truly protect Black women faculty.

### **Does Diversity Purposefully**

- Hire faculty that are representative of the location and the student body and ensure that the environment is conducive for everyone.
- Create plans to ensure that more Black women are in leadership positions within the institution.

### **Provides Internal Support for Black Women Faculty**

- Treat Black women equitably. Institutionalize and fund intentional mentoring, retention, and support programs for Black women faculty.
- Affinity groups for Black women, so we can have a safe space to talk and support each other.
- Show value and respect through equitable pay, transparent hiring decisions, and equal and equitable access to extended-release time.

# Questions to ask when developing policies

- Who benefits? Who does this policy protect?
- Were Black women faculty considered when this policy was created? What does a policy that protects Black women faculty look like?
- Are the policies only known when an issue arises or are they embedded in the fabric of the institution?
- How frequently are the policies updated?
- Do your policies pass the cultural, environmental, and time period fit test?
- How does your organization handle microaggressive behavior?

Questions?





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