

Introduction

Written/Unwritten: The Gap Between Theory and Practice

Patricia A. Matthew

Montclair State University

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—Fred G. Wale, 1940s¹

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They need that for when students get upset about race issues or general ethnic stuff. It allows the faculty and administration to point to it and go, 'Everything's going to be okay, we have formed a committee.' People find that very relaxing. It's sort of like, if you had a fire, and instead of putting it out, you formed a fire committee."⁵

It is clear from Haynes's confrontation with the college president that he has been hired not so much to fill a position (specialist in African American literature) as to fill a role (Black male academic) and, moreover, to fill that role in the language and affects that already fit his white colleagues' image of what it means to be a Black male academic. It's an image that Haynes thinks his former institution will undoubtedly see in Mosaic Johnson, the new hip-hop scholar hired to replace him: "You're hired to be the angry black guy. . . . You're here so you can assuage their guilt without making them actually change a damn thing. They want you to be the Diversity Committee. Because every village needs a fool."⁶

Pym's first chapter almost perfectly encapsulates the multiple issues that bubble up to the surface when the processes of evaluation and the issue of race intersect: the erosion of faculty governance; the narrow subject position academics of color are expected to occupy; the fact that while faculty of color might be hired because of an institution's stated commitment to diversity, that commitment often buckles under the need to only reward with tenure those who conform to their institutions' preconceived notions of what it means to be a successful academic. And as the first chapter ends and Haynes begins (descends into) his journey, Mosaic Johnson is at the beginning of the tenure-track journey that every person of color in the nonfiction world knows is fraught with complicated expectations, sets of opaque policies, conscious and unconscious individual bigotry, microaggressions, and institutional racism.

Written/Unwritten is a collection of tenure-track journeys recounted by faculty of color from humanities departments around the country. The scholars here theorize about identity politics and ideologies of immigration at the same time that they discuss the nuts and bolts of working within academic systems that are often structurally hostile to diversity. They are pointed, angry, sometimes funny, and often poignant. They hold the academy to account, but they do so from the vantage point of those committed to its success. Taken together they illustrate the wide gap between the language of diversity (the written) and practices of individuals and institutions that work against its goals (the unwritten). This

is not a new problem, and, as I discuss later in this introduction, there is a pattern to how this gap is maintained, even as we see signs of progress. *Written/Unwritten* joins a series of conversations about the experiences of faculty of color and extends that conversation by showing precisely what faculty of color have contributed to the academy and, in some instances, the price of those contributions.

For marginalized faculty in *English, Power, Race and Gender in Academia: Strangers in the Tower* (2000) was, perhaps, the best book to begin the most current conversation around diversity and inequity in higher education. It invited many of us to understand our personal experiences in the context of patterns that cut across race and gender. Moreover, it provided substance to the inchoate sense that faculty of color had that everything was not as equitable as everyone claimed.⁷ Since its publication in 2000, the conversations about inequity in higher education have been a mix of the theoretical, the confessional, and, with a growing sense of urgency, the practical. In my review of *Mentoring Faculty of Color: Essays on Professional Development and Advancement in Colleges and Universities* (2013), I note that the Michigan tenure denials "mark a shift in the structure and tone of books and anthologies about the experiences of faculty of color in higher education."⁸ The titles are telling. The books about diversity in higher education published before the Michigan cases have milder titles with an eye toward offering context and naming the problem: Christine Stanley's *Faculty of Color: Teaching in Predominately White Colleges and Universities* (2006), Stephanie Evans's *Black Women in the Ivory Tower: 1850-1954* (2007), and Deborah Gray White et al.'s *Telling Histories: Black Women Historians in the Ivory Tower* (2008). There is a sense of urgency and anger in anthologies and collections published following those cases: *Tedious Journeys: Autoethnography by Women of Color* (2010) edited by Cynthia Cole Robinson and Pauline Clardy; *Racism in the Academy: The New Millennium* (2012), a collection of essays that grew out of the American Anthropological Association's Commission on Race and Racism in Anthropology (2010); Sarah Ahmed's *On Being Included: Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life* (2012); and *Presumed Incompetent: The Intersections of Race and Class for Women in Academia* (2013), an encyclopedic recounting of the trials women of color face. This shift is due in large part to the high-profile nature of the Michigan cases and, as I discuss in this anthology's conclusion, the way social media is shaping the narratives of faculty of color during tenure battles, even if it doesn't change the outcome of those struggles. *Mentoring Faculty of Color* joins

guides such as the almost canonical *The Black Academic's Guide to Winning Tenure—Without Losing Your Soul* (2008) and pushes the notion that the academy is a minefield that can be successfully navigated. The most recent anthology, *Beginning a Career in Academia: A Guide for Graduate Students of Color* (2015), makes clear that at the same time that faculty of color are, indeed, successfully climbing the academic ladder, those on its lower rungs need help understanding what it really takes to successfully navigate each rung. It's a sad and frustrating truth that in addition to the superearly professionalization that all graduate students face, graduate students of color face that process while being forced to battle assumptions by professors in their programs and disciplines that they are only in the programs because of white liberal guilt and assumptions by peers who assume that white liberal guilt will result in job opportunities they might not otherwise deserve. They will think this despite any number of studies that suggest that it's the lack of jobs and not an increase in minority applicants that shapes job markets.

Of course, to invoke numbers is to suggest that they can offer us concrete evidence about the state of diversity today. The problem is that tracking diversity with any nuance is not a major goal in higher education. Take, for example, the most recent numbers from the National Center for Education Statistics. In that counting, 4 percent of full professors are Black, but they don't designate how many are women and how many are men. If we could track attrition rates of faculty of color across the country and have a concrete number, then we might gain a greater scope of the problem. Although everyone seems to know that attrition is a problem, what Marcia Chatelain explains about her experience in Oklahoma seems to happen at many schools around the country: "No one had a conversation about why people were leaving. The assumption was that faculty of color don't want to live in Oklahoma, but a lot of us enjoyed our lives in Oklahoma." This is part of the reason why instead of large-scale studies we have snapshots that usually only emerge after cases such as the Michigan Women make troubling patterns public.

Consider what we learned about DePaul University when Namita Goswami, a philosophy professor, and Quinetta Shelby, a chemistry professor, were denied tenure in 2007.⁹ We learned that in the 2008–09 academic year, seven professors from marginalized groups were denied tenure; in 2009–10, five of ten marginalized faculty of color were denied tenure. In 2011, six faculty of color were denied tenure. In 2012,

University of Southern California (USC) International Relations Professor Mai'i K. Davis responded to her tenure denial by working with USC political scientist Jane Junn to collect data (see Appendix B). Their findings show that between 1998 and 2012:

Ninety-two percent of white men in the social sciences and humanities were awarded tenure.

Fifty-five percent of women and faculty of color were awarded tenure.

Eighty-one percent of white junior faculty (this includes men and women) were awarded tenure.

Forty-eight percent of faculty of color were promoted to associate professor.

Sixty-six point seven percent of white women were awarded tenure compared to 40 percent of Asian-American women.

The USC numbers are stark, and they reveal troubling institutional practices that hide behind languages and processes that seem neutral. They suggest that the problem of substantive diversity is an institutional problem and not one that might seem like a series of coincidences or a reflection on the candidates up for tenure. The USC data show where the commitment to diversity ("USC is an AA/EO employer and is seeking to create a diverse community") bumps up against practices of discrimination, and the analysis shows the difference between theory and praxis by pointing out the gap. According to USC's manual of the University Committee on Appointments, Promotions, and Tenure (UCAPT): "UCAPT's recommendations are made individually on a merit basis. Analysis of the data between 2005 and 2009 shows no statistically significant difference between minority and non-minority candidates in success rate for promotion to tenure. (The success rate for minority candidates happens to be five percentage points higher.) During the same period, over a quarter of UCAPT's members were themselves minority."

But as Cross and Junn show: "These figures are inconsistent with results of tenure cases in the Social Sciences and Humanities at USC College observed during this time period. Between 2005 and 2009, there were [forty-two] cases, of which [twenty-six] were white scholars and [sixteen] were minorities. White junior faculty were awarded tenure at a rate of 88.5 [percent], while 56.3 [percent] of minority junior faculty were awarded tenure. The relationship between race and being awarded tenure during this time is statistically significant at .017."

In 2013, *Insider Higher Education* reported that of the fourteen professors who went up for tenure at the University of Texas–Austin, five out of six faculty members from interdisciplinary programs were denied tenure. Although the university did not release information about race or ethnicity (they cited privacy concerns), faculty confirm that all six were from marginalized groups. At a university where twenty-three of thirty-six of the faculty working in the Center for Asian American Studies are not on the tenure track, the loss of even one faculty member is a problem. Critics of the institution’s decision note that the problem in these cases was partly structural. The faculty up for tenure were not assessed by the interdisciplinary centers and institutions that relied the most on their work. They could provide letters of support but could not contribute to the review process. This, in addition to budget cuts, undoubtedly contributed to the drop in tenure rates from 81 percent in 2012 to 57 percent in 2013. A letter in response to these decisions sums up what the numbers here reveal, but only to a limited degree: “In these deliberations, important venues of interdisciplinary and ethnic studies, such as Centers and Institutes, did not have the opportunity to contribute their views and enrich the discussion and decision-making of the College Tenure and Promotion Committee. Unfortunately, this process remains limited by the boundaries of disciplines and departments; while at the same time the University publicly highlights the value of innovation and interdisciplinary research.”¹⁰

While the temptation might be to begin a discussion about diversity in higher education with an overview of affirmative action, given that this is a book about patterns rather than policy, it’s more useful to consider key moments that shape how we think about diversity in the academy today. The first PhD earned by an African American was awarded in 1876 to Edward Bouchet in physics at Yale. The first African American woman to earn a doctorate was Sadie Tanner Mossell Alexander in 1921 in economics. It would take another twenty-six years for an African American scholar—William Boyd Allison Davis—to be appointed to a permanent position. Hired as a professor of education at the University of Chicago, Davis earned tenure in 1947—just seven years after the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) moved to make tenure a more integral part of hiring and retention practices.¹¹ According to James D. Anderson, “Until 1941 no African American scholar, no matter how qualified, how many degrees he or she had earned, or how many excellent articles and books he or she had published, was hired in

a permanent faculty position at any predominately white university in America.”¹² In 1942, Berkeley statistician Jerzy Neyman tried to hire mathematician David Blackwell but, according to Blackwell, the university wouldn’t hire him because he was Black. A few years later, in 1954, he was hired and went on to be the first Black professor tenured at the university.¹³ In 1945, Fred G. Wale embarked on a project to place African American faculty in predominately white colleges and institutions (PWIIs). In the late 1960s, amid protests against Vietnam and for women’s liberation, African American students demanded that humanities curricula represent a broader world experience, specifically their own experiences. As a result, the first Black Studies Department was founded at San Francisco State University in 1968. The following year, Harvard University’s law school, partly in response to protests by Black students, hired Derrick Bell. He went on to become the first tenured law professor of color in the law school in 1971 and, through protests of his own, ensured Lani Guiner’s tenure in the law school in 1998.¹⁴ It took until 2010 for an African American woman to complete the tenure track in the College of Arts and Sciences at Washington University (founded in 1853).¹⁵ Not until 2015 did Princeton University approve a bachelor’s degree in African American or Africana Studies.

Of all of these milestones, it is Wale’s project that offers perhaps the most useful way to think about how some of the same ideas and attitudes against hiring faculty of color in the 1940s remain in place today, especially when tenure is at stake. Wale’s campaign was launched at a historical moment of promise, at a time of progressive change on the national level and in institutions of higher education. A constellation of events informed his optimistic view that an integrated military could lead to and be a model for an integrated professoriate. It was, after all, the same historical moment that saw the founding of the Tuskegee Airmen (1941) and Executive Order 9981 (1948), the law making segregation illegal in the military. In 1940, the AAUP moved to codify tenure processes that resemble what most colleges and universities practice today. Four years later, the Serviceman’s Redistribution Act of 1944 (the GI Bill) was passed. It’s tempting to see the evolution of tenure and the first move to integrate the faculty of PWIs as an accident of history, but tenure and the push for diversity in higher education increased because of an influx of white World War II veterans using the GI Bill to fund their college educations.¹⁶ According to Anderson, in the first forty years of the twentieth century, enrollments in higher education

increased 529 percent. This was at a time when the nation's total population increased by only 73 percent, and the population of college-aged citizens increased by 63 percent. This influx of new students resulted in a need for more faculty, particularly in English departments (Anderson shows that there was a demand for 142,982 new faculty), and the AAUP argued that a shorter tenure clock would be a compelling inducement to recruit faculty.¹⁷ Wale saw in the shortage of faculty an opportunity to convince presidents, provosts, and deans at PWIs to hire Black faculty, hoping that the integration evidenced in the military could be replicated in colleges and universities.

With funds from the Julius Rosenwald Fund,¹⁸ Wale compiled a list of African American scholars with the credentials he believed would make them competitive for faculty positions at PWIs.¹⁹ He sent letters to 600 presidents of PWIs with a list of 150. A third of the presidents replied. As chronicled through his correspondence with the presidents, his efforts showed that—even at a time when an increase in student enrollment meant more professors needed to be hired—college presidents found a variety of reasons why hiring faculty of color wasn't feasible: institutional needs, geography, population, and local community attitudes. Almost to an administrator, the claim was that the lack of faculty of color was not by choice or design but by accident: "We have no negroes on the Bryn Mawr faculty at present but we should be glad to consider candidates on the same terms as any other," the president explained to him. The president of Pennsylvania State University promised, "In appointing members of the faculty we shall continue to try to select the best person irrespective of color, race, or religion." The acting president of UC Berkeley responded, "I assure you that the university has steadily sought to choose its faculty, and its students as well, solely on the basis of their qualifications and without regard to race, ancestry." The responses continue along those lines, almost without fail. As Anderson explains, Wale's project allows us to see the "interrelationship of race, meritocracy, and institutionalized discrimination"²⁰—a trio still at work today in colleges and universities across the country. While a few college presidents were candid enough to tell the truth—the president of Heidelberg College in Tiffin, Ohio, said plainly, "Our college is not ready for it yet"—most fell back on the opaque language of false meritocracy. It must have been difficult, if not impossible, for them to face the fact that foundationally and structurally their institutions might be

hostile to diversity. It's not that different today, but instead of institutions resisting hiring faculty of color, they are hostile to awarding them tenure, even as they benefit from the unique contributions faculty of color make to those institutions. The list of reasons the presidents came up with in 1945 are still used today, especially the rhetoric of meritocracy. It's not difficult at all to imagine why it took more than a hundred years for an African American woman to make it through its tenure process at the college of arts and sciences at Washington University.²¹ It suggests that underneath all of the diversity initiatives and the "we are an affirmative action institution" and "women and minorities encouraged to apply" statements, that despite all of those diversity committees, the academy still hasn't figured out how to maintain meaningful diversity.

In part this is because, even though personnel processes are inherently subjective at every level, those who are part of those processes deploy the language of meritocracy in the belief they are being objective. Words such as "merit" evoke notions of fairness. The "best" or "most qualified" person is offered the tenure-track position, and evaluation processes rely on words such as "excellence," "rigorous," and "innovative." These ideas and words are not in and of themselves discriminatory, but they are more subject to cultural forces than many in the academy will allow. In much the same way that race is a social construct, so are notions of excellence, and those notions are constructed by people who often unknowingly seek only to acknowledge and reward those qualities they see in themselves or wish they possessed.²² This is not to suggest that the idea of having standards is racist, but when those standards are invented by the majority culture, it is a mistake to assume that diversity gaps are a result of a lack of qualified faculty of color. On one level, we know this, which is why personnel decisions are made by committees. This structure acknowledges that multiple viewpoints are necessary when it comes to assessing faculty, but it still ignores that terms meant to indicate merit are often used uncritically and, whether they want to or not, committees reflect the same biases that shape the larger culture's view of people of color.²³

As Anderson points out in his discussion of Wale's project, "Usually meritocracy is viewed as the antithesis of racism, ethnic, and religious prejudice, and related forms of exclusion and discrimination. . . . The practice of proclaiming one's devotion to meritocratic principles, while actually perpetuating traditional patterns of ethnic discrimination and exclusion, transformed theoretical enemies (i.e., racism vs. meritocracy)

into pragmatic friends.” However, he continues, “Over time there developed in the American academy an ethic which held that African American scholars were justifiably excluded from faculty positions because somehow there was always a mismatch between their circumstances and the particular needs of the white-dominated academy.”²⁴ Washington University’s Shanti Parikh is right to say, “I’ve worked very hard, and I do feel honored. However, I think it’s a bit embarrassing for Arts and Sciences that this is only happening in the year 2010.”²⁵ An anthropologist with degrees from the University of Virginia and Yale, she has sterling credentials, but that isn’t always enough, and, worse “enough” can be a vague, moving target. One wonders how many academics of color were hired before she was but failed to make it to tenure not because they were lacking in any substantive way but because the institution has been caught up in fixed ideas of what merit looks like and has convinced itself that those ideas don’t need to be examined.²⁶ Perhaps its personnel committees comforted themselves with the same argument that W. C. Giersbach, president of Pacific University in Forest Grove, Oregon, used in 1945 when he claimed that his institution “had no written or unwritten rules concerning the employment of colored folk.”²⁷

Of course this wasn’t true then, and it’s not true now. The academy thrives on unwritten rules. Personnel processes in the academy are particularly opaque at almost every stage—from the processes departments use to decide what areas they want tenure-track positions in, to the composition of search committees, to mentoring of junior faculty through the tenure process. In many instances opacity is a result of trying to accommodate for the different reasons why faculty are hired in the first place; departmental needs tend to be specific, while institutional evaluative measures are more broad, and this gap widens when the time comes to evaluate tenure candidates. In addition, curricular discussions (which courses count toward a degree and which are electives) and institutional cultures build up and tear down faculty (sometimes actively and sometimes simply by neglecting them) based on a complicated code that can be impossible to crack. In the essay “Women and Minority Faculty in the Academic Workplace: Recruitment, Retention, and Academic Culture,” Adalberto Aguirre makes a claim that, on the surface, seems self-evident: “The academic workplace is characterized in popular thinking as a place of enlightened thought and discourse that is immune to influences from the outside world. Its perceived immunity to the outside world has resulted in a perception that the academic

workplace is free of conflict and stress. The reality, however, is that the academic workplace is characterized by struggles over the definition of knowledge and about what it means to be a knowledgeable person. To survive in the academic workplace, faculty members must align themselves with and participate in institutional networks that define one’s position in a knowledge hierarchy.”²⁸

The challenge for untenured faculty is to figure out which networks matter and—more important—how to read the individuals who make up those networks. Navigating those networks can be difficult for anyone, but add race to the mix and it is all too easy to end up in a minefield with colleagues and administrators who use tenure not to reward accomplishment and potential but as a way to weed out those who simply don’t fit in intellectually, socially, or culturally. The first landmines can appear as soon as the interview process begins. Graduate school can teach all manner of important skills (in and out of the classroom), and job workshops²⁹ can help with cover letters and teaching portfolios, but there is no class on how to respond when someone says to a candidate of color, during a campus interview, “While we’d like to diversify the department, we will make an appointment on merit, and will look for the best candidate,” a statement made to a Black South African assistant professor of psychology during a campus visit. It can’t teach faculty members how to respond to jokes like the one told to an African American associate professor of education who reports: “While walking with another colleague of color to a faculty meeting, a colleague said in jest, ‘This side of the hallway sure is looking darker lately.’ My colleague and I exchange[d] glances with each other. This same colleague observe[d] the noticeable exchange and trie[d] to make light of the comment. ‘You ladies know I was just kidding, don’t you?’”³⁰

This exchange highlights several tensions that can bubble up when faculty of color come up for tenure. The problematic “is looking darker” while telling is perhaps less interesting than the final question, “You ladies know I was just kidding, don’t you?” It’s not a question at all, of course, but a kind of dare, one that marginalized people face all the time. It demands that statements that are problematic at best and racist, sexist, or homophobic at worst be given a pass by the very people who rightly feel they are its target. The “ladies” are put in charge of managing the moment, and it’s not only possible but highly likely that if they don’t laugh it off or “let it go,” their colleague will be offended and uncomfortable around them, and if this colleague has any part of their personnel review,

this discomfort will shade his evaluation of their work. Their very subject position as “racialized other” can trigger anxiety and a kind of racist Tourette’s syndrome in white colleagues who haven’t done the work of thinking carefully about race. Moments like this are not just annoying or demoralizing to academics of color and their allies but, the case can be made, they lead to statements like the second epigraph to this introduction: “I don’t know if I want to work with a black on a permanent basis.” This statement is not startling just for its blatant racism but for how much it reveals about how a candidate’s tenure file is reviewed. At the end of the day, merit had little or nothing to do for this vocal member of a review committee and more about whether or not this member is willing to “work with a black” for the long term. Perhaps even more stunning is the fact that he felt wholly comfortable making this preference clear to his colleagues.

In response to an anonymous column written by a Black woman for *Insider Higher Education* about the “gray balloon” feeling of being reduced to a statistic, a commentator writes: “Thank you for writing this with such feeling. Unfortunately, I was recently part of a hiring panel where I was the lone vote for hiring the *most experienced, educated, qualified* candidate for our university. Instead, I listened to my fellow panelists tout the least qualified candidate and eventually hire her, I am certain, because she is African-American. In addition, her attitude has proven out to be ‘you owe me.’ This is how the gray balloon is inflated time and again, but the bigger impact is that I’ve lost all respect for my colleagues.” (*emphasis added*).³¹

It’s not difficult to imagine how this anonymous commentator treats the African American colleague and what this attitude could mean for her tenure review. Is that anger carefully masked? Does it leak out in ways she doesn’t quite understand? If the commentator is not simply being hyperbolic and actually no longer respects the personnel process, what does that mean if her tenure case comes to a departmental vote? More important, can she ever do enough to overcome that initial resentment? When people like this commentator genuinely believe the bar has been lowered to hire faculty of color, then those faculty are viewed suspiciously and even external reviews and evaluations from the commentator’s colleagues won’t be enough. Hired under a cloud she had no part in creating, this new faculty member faces obstacles that cannot be overcome by any amount of publishing or collegiality or any number of external reviews or professional accolades. For at least one colleague, her

tenure case has already been decided. And the cruel irony is that while her colleague will claim with conviction that she was only hired because she is African American, he will also claim he only finds her unworthy because she is not “qualified.”

Given how much of the tenure process is kept from candidates up for review, it is all too easy for the resentment that soaks this comment to hide behind language that seems neutral on the surface. Since “higher education institutions are greatly influenced by, and cannot be analyzed apart from, the larger social, historical, and cultural context,”³² and we have documented evidence that faculty and administrations hold problematic attitudes like the one on full display in the comment under discussion, how can they fairly evaluate their colleagues of color? Further, how can they value the unique contributions faculty of color make, especially when those contributions are not easily quantified? When faculty of color are hired, they are expected to accomplish different things than their white counterparts: to “diversify” institutions with their very presence, to serve as role models for students of color in particular and for the student population in general, to represent an alternative perspective on matters ranging from curriculum development to faculty governance by serving on an array of committees, and to represent the concerns, habits, and histories of whatever ethnic group to which they happen to belong.³³ Unfortunately, in the bean-counting model of evaluating faculty, these contributions don’t really count. Denied tenure by USC’s religion department, Jane Iwamura explains, “There are certainly additional demands on faculty of color. We are asked to serve on more committees, help out students groups, and mentor and serve as role models to graduate and undergraduate students, because of our unique experience and positionality. . . . It can be a real balancing act, since it is work we obviously feel is important and necessary,” she continues, “but oftentimes, such work is not ‘counted’ by the university as far as tenure is concerned.”³⁴ At the same time, they are expected to fit in to the department’s and institution’s dominant culture and not raise any difficult questions or they run the risk of being labeled “uncollegial”—academic jargon for calling an uncooperative person hostile or angry.³⁵

Some of the work that faculty of color are called on to do is the bridge-building work of simply being present. Sometimes the institution needs them to do the kind of work that is easier to ignore or easier to place solely on the shoulders of faculty of color. Take, for example, a list of duties included in a 2006 report recommending the approval of a bachelor’s

degree in African American Studies at Princeton. Forty-three years after the first Black Studies program was founded, Princeton was on the verge of making it possible for students to major in the subject. The authors of a five-year plan advocating for the major explain some of the duties of faculty currently affiliated with the certificate program: "Our faculty will have to conduct multiple searches, enrich the University's certificate program, oversee renovations to the Program's physical home, and assist in fundraising." They know it's a lot: "That is a tall order."³⁶ At the 2010 symposium "Race, Tenure, and the University: A Public Forum," Cynthia Young, also denied tenure by USC, talked about being hired by Boston College to resurrect a floundering Black Studies program. In his report on the symposium, Liam Drislane notes Young's claim that "scholars in Ethnic studies do an inordinate amount of program building." Program building in emerging fields of study is part of the workload for many academics, but the preponderance of emerging fields of study are organized around questions of race and developed by faculty of color. The time and energy to do this work means time away from building and maintaining a research agenda. More important, while this work requires a great deal of effort, it often does not count in any meaningful way toward tenure, and it is rare to find a department of colleagues who will argue for valuing that work—not because whole departments are racist but because the work of building diversity, especially at the curricular level, is hard, thankless, and largely invisible (see Appendix C).

At the same time, if, as is often the case, faculty of color work in new or emerging fields of scholarship such as Ethnic Studies, Latino/a history, Afro-American literary studies, or new areas in existing fields, their colleagues in more traditional fields may lack the basic understanding necessary to accurately and fairly evaluate the quality of their scholarship.³⁷ When these elements are part of evaluative processes that are largely invisible, vagueness rather than clarity reigns. In other words, while faculty of color often rightly feel they are being held to different standards than their white counterparts, the language of evaluation is so opaque as to leave these professors and their allies confused, frustrated, and, worst of all, paralyzed. Although the subjective nature of evaluation makes fair reappointment and tenure reviews difficult, charges of unfairness are difficult to prove. There has yet to be a denial of tenure that begins, "We are denying Candidate X tenure because she is Hispanic" or "Because Professor X is Black, we'd rather not grant him a lifetime appointment." Terry L. Leap explains in the essay "Tenure, Discrimina-

tion, and African-American Faculty" that "most accusations of race discrimination are difficult to prove because of their subtle nature."³⁸ This is, in part, because tenure cases are rarely black-and-white. Even when race is a clear factor in tenure denials, it is rarely the only reason. When the four women of color at the University of Michigan–Ann Arbor were denied tenure in 2007, it's unlikely that the departments blocking their path to tenure saw this as anything more than a coincidence. The data we have for USC is not widely available at other institutions. It is lucky then that Reginald Clark happened to overhear the consideration of his tenure file in 1984 when a colleague said, "I don't know if I want to work with a black on a permanent basis." It's lucky that this comment was one of a string of incidents that proved to a court's satisfaction that he was being discriminated against. According to court records and Leap's reporting, Clark, who has a doctorate in education from Wisconsin–Madison, was told by his department chair at Claremont University Center that he should focus his research on issues of multiculturalism. Hired in 1979, he was the only Black faculty member at Claremont and published and developed courses in the area. When he came up for tenure, five scholars in his field praised his publishing record and recommended tenure. His teaching reviews were mixed, but no other potentially mitigating factors were mentioned in the tenure file. The court decided in his favor, awarding him \$1.4 million. They list six reasons, including the fact that two other non-minority faculty with "inferior" publishing records received tenure and "Claremont used unwritten, changing publication standards to justify its denial of tenure to Clark."

Evaluation processes are, however, often hidden, especially at private colleges and universities,³⁹ but Lisa Sánchez ("In Search of Our Fathers' Workshops") found the paper trail that detailed her tenure process. She utilized the Freedom of Information Act, and one of her colleagues had an attack of conscience and sent her the e-mails a nemesis had been circulating about her to derail her tenure review and her attempts to find another position. Sometimes carelessness on behalf of the committee opens a window for the candidate. When a member of the tenure committee reviewing Vassar professor Kiese Laymon's tenure file inadvertently sent an e-mail about his file to the wrong person, Laymon learned that his colleague was investigating his credentials to see if he had earned the degrees listed on his vita,⁴⁰ even though his pre-tenure reviews were overwhelming positive. Absent damning evidence, sometimes a proven pattern of tenure denials can spark questions.

It is not exaggerating to say that every academic of color has a story about how their subject position clashed with an institution's vision of itself. And while the temptation might be to place the blame solely on an academy dominated by white men, white women in the academy can be as oppressive as their male counterparts, even though we might assume that Women's Studies departments are more inclusive than traditional departments. Given the activist history of Women's Studies and the oppression that white women face in the academy, it can feel counterintuitive to see women as enacting the same discriminatory practices they have worked against, but as Audre Lorde explained in her address to the National Women's Studies Association conference, it can be precisely because white women face sexism that they are blind to their own oppressive conduct. In 1981 she posed a challenging question: "What woman here is so enamored of her own oppression that she does not see her heel print upon another woman's face?" It's a question that women of color still ask today as they report a lack of support or aggressive hostility from white feminists who purport to share a common struggle. This results in blind spots that force women of color to wrestle with explicit racism and microaggressions under the additional burdens that come with the call for solidarity that characterizes mainstream feminism. An assistant professor at a small, Midwestern liberal college shares how her department chair and dean responded to poor teaching evaluations: "Neither woman, both putatively concerned with inequality, used their sociological imaginations to interrogate why a young, African American female professor who, through their own admissions, had never displayed what was being described in course evaluations from white middle-class students who, as one expressed to me in class, thought it 'weird' that he had an African American woman for a professor. Indeed, it was not until three years later, and in a comment directed towards someone else, that my chair said that she thought that my evaluations were shaped by the constellation of my race, age, and gender."

Despite numerous studies that prove that women of color are viewed more harshly than white men and white women,⁴¹ this assistant professor's white female colleagues saw no need to use their intellectual and academic training to understand the gap between what they knew about her and how students perceived her. They are perfect examples of what Mariana Ortega describes in her essay "Being Lovingly, Knowingly Ignorant"; white women who "are actually involved in the production of

knowledge about women of color—whether by citing their work, reading and writing about them, or classifying them—while at the same time using women of color to the perceiver's own ends."⁴² What this suggests is that in all corners of the academy, even those spaces that explicitly work to reveal systemic oppression, faculty of color face obstacles that disrupt their research agendas, teaching, and service to their institutions.

The narratives here offer snapshots that are proof of larger patterns at work. As the blog that extends the project beyond traditional ink and paper publication shows, there are more stories to tell, more questions to ask. While the stories here fall under the broad categories of race, gender, and sexuality and also take on the issues we've come to associate with conversations about diversity, I have paired them based on how their narratives reflect the different modes and models of academics of color so that we can better understand not only what they bring to the academy but also what the academy demands of them.

Foundations

In an interview with Ayanna Jackson-Fowler ("Responding to the Call(ing): The Spirituality of Mentorship and Community in Academia"), Houston Baker recalls his first year at Yale in the 1960s when, in response to a trio of graduate students who told him they "need[ed] him for a revolution," he decided to apply his training as a Victorianist to the study of African American literature. In addition to recalling the different communities that have helped him from his time at UCLA to his current position as Distinguished University Professor in English at Vanderbilt, Baker reflects on the progress and challenges of diversity in humanities in and out of the academy.

Rashida Harrison ("Building a Canon, Creating Dialogue: An Interview with Cheryl A. Wall") recounts her conversation with Cheryl Wall, the Board of Governor's Zora Neal Hurston Professor of English at Rutgers University, whose career has both shaped and followed the contours of the rise of African American literary studies. In the early 1970s, when Wall joined the faculty at Rutgers, discourses and methodology about African American literature were in their formative stages. Wall simultaneously broke new ground in the classroom and in the field. As she remembers it, "I would tell students in the African American course that there were not shelves of books or a consensus

about what we were teaching. All our opinions were valid as long as they were based in the text. . . . Part of my role as a teacher was really to help create a critical language that would allow the text to be discussed.”

Navigations

Leslie Bow (“Difference without Grievance: Asian Americans as the Almost Minority”) argues that Asian Americans hold a precarious place in the American imagination and within academic institutions as well. The simultaneous erasure and celebration of cultural difference, its uncertain capital, and the ambiguity about where Asian Americans stand in the history of social injury and its redress are, Bow explains, all inseparable from the ways in which they are located on American campuses. In her essay, she explores the ways in which this climate might impact the ambiguous place that Asian Americans inhabit within academia as “overrepresented” minorities.

Lisa Sánchez González (“In Search of Our Fathers’ Workshops”) explores the highlights and lowlights in her journey from kindergarten to tenure as a Boricua feminist scholar deemed “radical” in U.S. academia. Her essay charts the challenges that she (and many other Latina girls identified early in their education as “gifted”) overcame in public schools and the pattern of racial, class, and gender stereotyping that perpetually repeated itself in her academic career, as well as how it uniquely deformed the shape of her first tenure review.

Identities

In her essay (“Tenure in the Contact Zone: Spanish is Our Language Too”), Angie Chabram charts her negotiations of higher education, her own brand of cultural politics, and her interdisciplinary path toward bilingual Chicana/o Studies and interdisciplinary cultural studies to winning tenure. Rather than overpersonalizing her story or providing celebratory closure, she invites readers to consider how the language and tenure struggle that intersect in higher education reflect the struggles of everyday people in different geopolitical and educational venues.

Andreana Clay (“‘Colored’ is the New Queer: Queer Faculty of Color in the Academy”) and a small group of queer faculty of color reflect on E. Patrick Johnson’s experiences at Amherst College, which are re-

counted in his essay “In the Merry Old Land of Oz: Rac(e)ing, Quee(r)-ing the Academy,” as they discuss how things have and have not changed for LGBTQ faculty around the country. In addition to the challenges that all faculty of color face, this essay shows the struggles unique to queer faculty—from coming out in the classroom to being viewed as super minorities, to working in departments all too willing to ignore the invisible labor they do as they work to build communities in and out of academia.

Manifestos

The overall inquiry of the essay by Jane Chin Davidson and Deepa S. Reddy (“Performative Testimony and the Practice of Dismissal”) can be understood as an investigation of the tyranny of dismissing women of color in Women’s Studies communities by silencing them. This essay looks empirically at specific experiences in Women’s Studies for what they are—attempts to delimit voice, speech, naming, and ultimately, contestations made by minority women in the community. Chin Davidson and Reddy conceive of “dismissal” as a practice that is inextricable from the speech act and through a consideration of Crenshaw and Derrida seek to renegotiate actions that subordinates expression, participation, and membership in a community that is called “women’s studies,” the name itself signifying a particular, narrow membership that fails to recognize the shifting constituencies that make up its community.

Written in the wake of her tenure case at the University of Michigan (“Talking Tenure: ‘Don’t be safe. Because there is no safety there anyway’”), Sarita Echavez See’s essay reflects the various subject positions she has held in the academy from untenured and therefore vulnerable assistant professor to a powerful advocate and organizer calling for institutions to closely interrogate what is at stake when faculty of color face tenure battles. Reflecting the challenges of writing about the unwritten record of racism and sexism in the United States academy, this essay documents and juxtaposes two radio segments with the radio collective “Asian Pacific American (APA): A Compass”—a rant and an interview—that See did as part of two national tenure justice campaigns on behalf of women of color academics that she helped organize at the University of Michigan in 2007–08 and at the University of Southern California in 2010–11.

Hierarchies

With an essay that challenges the notion that processes can ever be neutral (“Still Eating in the Kitchen: The Marginalization of African American Faculty in Majority White Academic Governance”), Carmen Harris addresses the issue of bureaucratic racism and the resultant marginalization of African American faculty in historically white colleges and universities through processes of faculty governance. The essay illuminates the consequences of tribalism and bias masquerading under the guise of professional objectivity in an environment in which overt racism is frowned upon but also one in which systems intended to thwart inequality are applied by members of the majority to the disadvantage of people of color.

In his essay (“Contingent Diversity, Contingent Faculty: Or, Musings of a Lowly Adjunct”), Wilson Santos, a relative newcomer to the academy, discusses how he came to understand the exploitative nature of contingent faculty. Santos’s narrative is more about class than race, though his writing and teaching reflect his experiences as a man of color. Folded into Santos’s stories are the experiences of two other adjunct faculty. Doctoral Candidate X, a queer Black woman, talks about how the intersection of class and sexuality shape her choices as she considers whether or not to continue her academic career, while Dionne Bensonsmith discusses how she has fashioned a scholarly community for herself so that she can forward her research agenda even though she doesn’t have the resources enjoyed by tenure-track and tenured faculty.

Activism(s)

In her essay (“Balancing the Passion for Activism with the Demands of Tenure: One Professional’s Story from Three Perspectives”), April Few-Demo demonstrates what is possible when senior faculty work with junior faculty throughout the tenure process. She discusses the challenge of balancing her commitment to diversity and social justice with the demands of tenure and reflects on how racism and sexism within the classroom have defined her professional identity as an activist scholar. Her colleagues Fred P. Piercy and Andrew J. Stremmel discuss how they advised her throughout this process, and they ask us to think more carefully about how we assess junior faculty, providing a model for how to make the case for faculty of color who might feel a different pull toward activism than their white counterparts.

“When you get to my age,” E. Frances White told me in the months before she retired, “you can tell your history in many different ways.” In this essay (“Cast Your Net Wide”), White’s history and reflections are juxtaposed against the questions and aspirations of two junior scholars—Ariana Alexander and Jennifer Williams—who are developing academic careers on and off the tenure track at a time when student protests demanding more diverse faculty are moving from campus to campus at the same time that wealthy universities are announcing multimillion dollar programs to develop diversity. The essay poses more questions than it answers but addresses the question Alexander poses as she completes her doctorate: “How can I see my intellectual work manifest itself in real ways?”

The anthology concludes by looking forward and considering how social media, especially Twitter, is shaping how faculty of color manage their careers by discussing the possibilities and risks of engaging with complicated ideas and taking on the work of activism outside of academia while in full view of those who evaluate our work.

As historian Deborah Gray White notes, “Things have changed, but some things have only been altered and there is a big difference between change and alteration.”⁴³ With an increased presence of faculty of color on campuses, it is easy to confuse alteration for change. It is easy to ignore how many faculty of color are clustered in contingent ranks, often as diversity fellows, visiting assistant professors with short-term contracts, or untenured assistant professors.⁴⁴ In these precarious positions, they often struggle more than those who fit the traditional profile of an academic to gain tenure-track positions, tenure, and promotion. Hired for their difference, they are often penalized for not being like their white peers, not only on the level of identity politics but also for the roles they are often expected to take on in their departments and for the methodologies and focus of their scholarship. The result has been a tenuous diversity, and as the specter of the economic crisis continues to erode the budgets of colleges and universities, it is more important than ever to attend to the persistent problem of bias in the evaluative process and its effects on sustaining a diverse professoriate. This collection shows that the academy is somewhere between two poles. At one end, it seems as if Derrick Bell’s claims about Black people still apply to those who have done the hard, often isolating work of earning the chance to write, teach, and work in American colleges and universities: “Black people are the magical faces at the bottom of society’s well. Even the

poorest whites, those who must live their lives only a few levels above, gain their self-esteem by gazing down at us. Surely, they must know that their deliverance depends on letting down their ropes. Only by working together is escape possible. Over time, many reach out, but most simply watch, mesmerized into maintaining their unspoken commitment to keeping us where we are, at whatever cost to them or to us."⁴⁵

At the other end, there are successes—just as there were in 1945. Fred Wale's campaign resulted in twenty-three faculty of color joining predominately white institutions. Some of the presidents said yes, and there are moments of positive diversity today—invariably these moments happen where faculty of color are spread out among the ranks, when there are senior faculty to mentor junior faculty, and where they have helped institutions move beyond the limits of their racial imaginations. There are programs designed to prepare future graduate students from marginalized communities for the culture of academia: the Moore Undergraduate Research Apprentice Program (MURAP) at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, African American Literatures and Cultures Institute at the University of Texas at San Antonio, and the Rutgers English Diversity Institute (REDI), cofounded by contributor Cheryl Wall.⁴⁶ More than just offering the kind of intellectual engagements that all scholars are expected to perform, these programs aim to demystify processes and practices that might seem like second nature to many academics. As faculty face increased pressure to publish more and faster in a tight tenure market, programs for faculty of color are becoming more common. The National Center for Faculty Diversity and Development offers a broad array of services for new faculty who can afford the annual membership fee of \$480 or \$3,400 for four months of coaching via the web. Duke's Summer Institute on Tenure and Professional Advancement (SITPA) is the most promising and is a program that should be replicated around the country. Hosted by Duke's Center for the Study of Race, Ethnicity, and Gender in the Social Sciences and funded by the Mellon Foundation, the program pairs new faculty in their first or second year on the tenure track with senior faculty in their fields for twenty-four months. It is unrealistic to expect that the gap between the written and the unwritten will ever be completely closed; institutions rely on methods of exclusion to distinguish themselves, but it is possible for institutions to understand their own fallibility so that they can develop fairer processes—perhaps to let diversity committees do meaningful work.

Notes

1. Anderson, "Race, Meritocracy, and the American Academy during the Immediate Post-World War II Era," 6.
2. Leap, "Tenure Discrimination, and African-American Faculty," 104.
3. Stanley, "Coloring the Academic Landscape," 722.
4. Johnson, *Pym*, 8.
5. *Ibid.*, 18.
6. *Ibid.*, 20.
7. See Braman, "Minority Hiring in the Age of Downsizing."
8. Matthew, Review of *Mentoring Faculty of Color*, 283–84.
9. Several of the DePaul professors won their discrimination suit. See Flaherty, "Women and Tenure at DePaul."
10. Straumsheim, "Interdisciplinary and Out of a Job."
11. According to Ryan C. Amacher and Roger E. Meiners, the current model for tenure went into effect in 1915, but 1940 marks the date when the AAUP worked to change the probationary period from ten to seven years, which is the period at most colleges and universities today. See Amacher and Meiners, *Faulty Towers*.
12. Anderson, "Race, Meritocracy, and the American Academy during the Immediate Post-World War II Era," 4.
13. David Harold Blackwall, "National Visionary"; Grimes, "David Blackwell."
14. In 1988, the Black Law Students Association occupied the outer office of the dean of the law school: see Gold, "Black Students End Occupation."
15. Levitt, "Wash. U. Finally Gives an African-American Woman Tenure."
16. While the 1944 GI Bill has been touted for the access it provided World War II Veterans to an array of resources (money for a college education and money for housing), the intentions of the law could not move around a host of legal and socially constructed practices designed to limit African Americans' access to education and stability. For a full accounting, see Mencke, *Education, Racism, and the Military*, and Katznelson, *When Affirmative Action Was White*. I am grateful to Ta-Nehisi Coates for pointing me toward a more nuanced understanding of the law in his post "A Religion of Colorblind Policy."
17. Anderson, "Race, Meritocracy, and the American Academy during the Immediate Post-World War II Era," 6.
18. Belles, "The College Faculty, the Negro Scholar, and the Julius Rosenwald Fund," *Journal of Negro History* 54(4) (1969): 383–92.
19. The candidates he put forward had doctorates from elite institutions, including Columbia, the University of Chicago, Northwestern University, the University of Pennsylvania, Harvard University, the University of Wisconsin, Oxford University, and Yale University.
20. Anderson, "Race, Meritocracy, and the American Academy during the Immediate Post-World War II Era," 5.
21. Marcal, "Tenured Professor Overcomes Obstacles of Race and Gender."

22. Jaschik, "Hiring Themselves."
23. A contributor to Christine Stanley's study on the connection between racism as a system of institutional oppression explains: "As do all institutions of higher education, the university I joined reflects the majority culture. Historically excluded from the academy, minority faculty have been admitted as guests within the majority culture's house . . . expected to 'honor their hosts' customs without question, keep out of certain rooms . . . and . . . always be on their best behavior" (Turner, "New Faces, New Knowledge," 85). Minority faculty are subject to the expectation that they will think and act as do their white colleagues.
24. Anderson, "Race, Meritocracy, and the American Academy during the Immediate Post-World War II Era," 16. See also *Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, "No blacks in the pipeline: The standard explanation for low percentage of Black faculty continues to be much of a red herring."
25. Jaschik, "Hiring Themselves."
26. To be clear, Parikh is the first African American woman to succeed all the way through Washington University's tenure process as an initial hire. According to university officials, faculty of color who have received tenure in the past have been hired from other institutions.
27. Anderson, "Race, Meritocracy, and the American Academy during the Immediate Post-World War II Era," 173.
28. Aguirre, "Women and Minority Faculty in the Academic Workplace," 3.
29. Cornelius et al., "The ABCs of Tenure"; Baez, *Affirmative Action, Hate Speech, and Tenure*; Evans, *Black Women in the Ivory Tower*; Laszloffy and Rockquemore, *The Black Academic's Guide to Winning Tenure*; Mabokela and Green, *Sisters of the Academy*; White, *Telling Histories*.
30. Stanley, "Coloring the Academic Landscape," 722.
31. Anonymous, "Not Just a Diversity Number."
32. Allen, "The Black Academic," 112-13.
33. See Baez, "Race-Related Service and Faculty of Color."
34. Banh, "Professor Denied Tenure Despite Decade of Service."
35. See Haag, "Is Collegiality Code for Hating Ethnic, Racial, and Female Faculty at Tenure Time?"
36. Princeton University Reports, "Program in African American Studies."
37. Drislane reports that David Lloyd (professor of English at USC) explains, "Decisions are being made not just by peers in [the candidate's] fields, but by committees and provosts who potentially know nothing about your field."
38. Leap, "Tenure Discrimination, and African-American Faculty," 103.
39. In a column for *Religious Studies News* published by the American Academy of Religion, Andrea Smith argues that the secrecy surrounding tenure processes can be especially damaging to faculty of color.
40. Laymon, "Recipe #150: How to Lay Claim to Dignity," kieselaymon.com/p=1697.
41. See Dukes and Gay, "The Effects of Gender, Status, and Effective Teaching"; Fries and McNinch, "Signed Versus Unsigned Student Evaluations of Teach-

ing"; Hendrix, "Student Perceptions of the Influence of Race"; Rubin, "Help! My Professor (or Doctor or Boss) Doesn't Talk English."

42. Ortega, "Being Lovingly, Knowingly Ignorant."

43. Conference marking the sixtieth anniversary of the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study's Arthur and Elizabeth Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America.

44. The National Center for Education Statistics reports that of 728,997 professors in 2013, 21 percent were Black, Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander, and American Indian/Alaska Native.

45. Bell, *Faces at the Bottom of the Well*, epigraph.

46. I have sent several students to the REDI program; all of them have gone on to graduate school.