



R.E.A.L. (Racialized Experiences in Academic Life) Talk: a Curated Conversation with Four Black Fellows

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Abstract

This article presents a candid, curated conversation among four Black organizational scientists, who are fellows of multiple professional societies, about the experience of being Black in the academy. It aims to promote awareness of the uniqueness presented by their racial identity, the ways in which their careers parallel those of non-Black scholars, and the present and future of becoming an inclusive academy. The conversation was edited to maintain the anonymity of the colleagues, students, and institutions referenced while seeking to maintain the authenticity of their experiences. The fellows identify competence affirmation, access to scholarly development, mentoring, and sponsorship, overcoming bias, institutional and location fit, and identity affirmation as issues they have encountered on their journeys from doctoral students to senior faculty. The article concludes with the fellows' insights on how they forged their professional paths and suggestions for how the management/OB and I-O psychology fields should move forward based upon their conversation.

Keywords Race · Racism · Black Lives Matter

The Foreword

Within the field of applied psychology, the purpose of a Fellow distinction is to honor and recognize those in the field who are considered to have made outstanding and significant contributions to science and practice. While this distinction has been conferred to hundreds within the field, the number of Fellows from underrepresented racial groups is considerably low. Collectively, the authors represent the majority of the African Americans in our field (I/O, HR, and OB) who have earned the Fellow distinction across several professional organizations, including the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology; the Society for the Psychological Study of Culture, Ethnicity and Race; the Academy of Management; the American Psychological Association; and the Association for Psychological Science. Given the

uniqueness of their career experiences, the purpose of this article is to explore their perspectives on being Black in the Academy. Through their discussion, several key themes are distilled that have great relevance to the success of Black academics. The themes discussed include (1) access barriers to doctoral programs, (2) competence affirmation, (3) scholarly development, mentorship, and sponsorship, (4) overcoming bias, (5) institutional/location fit, and (6) identity management. In the following sections, each of the themes is introduced and relevant excerpts from the fellows' conversation are included.

Access Barriers to Doctoral Programs

The initial theme of the discussion revolved around the degree that doctoral study is accessible to Black students. Regarding access, recruitment research draws attention to racioethnic differences in the use of recruitment sources. Generally speaking, Black job seekers tend to utilize more formal recruitment sources (e.g., employment agencies and the Internet) than their White counterparts, who tend to use more informal means to access jobs such as employee referrals and friendship networks (Kirnan et al., 1989). Even when informal network utilization is similar, returns

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are not, leaving Black job seekers disadvantaged relative to White ones (Pedulla & Pager, 2019). Because friendship networks tend to be racioethnically homogenous (McPherson et al., 2001), individuals with greater inside knowledge of firms (e.g., current employees) are more likely to invite White than Black jobseekers to apply for available positions. Importantly, referred job applicants tend to be prescreened by organizational incumbents, have more realistic expectations of a job/organization, and therefore, are more likely to be successful and persist on the job (Phillips, 1998). Similar dynamics as those described above may explain Black-White differences in the propensity to apply to doctoral programs. Notably, members of the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology (SIOP) and the Academy of Management (AOM) are overwhelmingly White. Given the likelihood of social network homophily (Ibarra, 1992, 1995; McPherson et al., 2001), which suggests that individuals' social networks will tend to include more similar others, the implication is that prospective Black students are less apt than their White counterparts to have access to friendship networks linked with doctoral programs in management/organizational behavior or industrial-organizational psychology. Accordingly, Black prospects may not only be less apt to apply to such programs, but when they do, they may lack in-depth knowledge of PhD program characteristics, faculty expectations, and research requirements.

Another barrier to Blacks' access to doctoral programs is universities' usage of standardized test scores (i.e., Graduate Record Examination [GRE] and General Management Aptitude Test [GMAT]) as part of the admission process. Extant research indicates that Black test-takers receive significantly lower average scores on cognitively oriented examinations, such as the GRE and GMAT, than do White test-takers (Roth et al., 2001); however, investigations of racioethnic bias on college admissions tests (e.g., Scholastic Aptitude Test) have shown that such tests are equally predictive across racioethnic groups and that Blacks' (and Hispanics') test scores overpredict their college grades (Mattern & Patterson, 2013). Though various explanations of such overprediction exist (e.g., racism, financial difficulties, and negative attitudes), Zwick and Himelfarb (2011) observed the extent that admission test scores overpredict Black students' (and Hispanics') college grades was markedly reduced upon controlling for the socioeconomic status (SES) of students' high schools. Potentially, preparatory deficits (due to lower educational quality in high school) hamper lower-SES Black students' academic performance in college. Therefore, doctoral programs that utilize GRE and GMAT scores to admit applicants to their programs may reduce the likelihood that racioethnic minority applicants will be admitted relative to White applicants. These notions of reduced access to doctoral programs via social networks and test score barriers are discussed in the following excerpts:

“Typically, when we hear the pipeline issue (*i.e.*, *the notion that there aren't enough talented Black folks to supply a representative portion of our field*), it's because people haven't diversified their sources. They keep just going back to the same well over and over again, which they believe makes sense in this case (*pertaining to fellowship*) because fellows beget fellows, right? Accordingly, if there are few of us, there are likely to be few students as well, because there's not much diversity in people's networks. Hence, we hear the argument about the pipeline being limited.” (Fellow 1)

“I agree that our networks are exclusive and homogeneous, and information gets shared and disseminated within those networks. It creates an additional barrier over and above things like exposure and credentials and test scores for us – just learning about the informal organization, the hidden curriculum about how you navigate graduate school, how you navigate these professional organizations and get awards, get grants. If we really do want to make a difference, we have to be intentional and strategic. Within our colleges or universities, we must find ways to incentivize breaking those boundaries. But I do also believe when it comes to the evaluation of outsiders and people of color and LGBT folks, that we're just navigating different waters. We are held in some ways under suspicion – if we're on campus or off campus. We have, I think, a higher bar to jump and we're scrutinized more. All those things contribute together to us being excluded (from fellowship).” (Fellow 2)

“I think there's a supply problem even in the field. I don't see a lot of us (*i.e.*, *Black people*) proportionally going to doctoral programs if I'm not mistaken. And years ago, I remember the SIOP membership for minorities, particularly Blacks, was largest at the master's level – I think terminal master's. So, there is a barrier to us even pursuing the PhD in the field at all. I mean, there's inequality getting into a doctoral program. A big part of this is overreliance on test scores and, then not having the same support process after that if you do get in. And then you have the not making the first hurdle problem with the tenure track process. I mean, that's another issue altogether. I'm sure a lot of people who could be fellows probably derail during that process too and, after that first appointment failure, people kind of moved to more balanced or teaching-oriented schools or kind of fade away. And so there's another issue with that. And so mentoring, once people get into the profession as an academic anyway, are they going through the pipeline to jump the hurdles, to become “fellow-worthy” (*which traditionally involves an assessment of sustained excel-*

lent research contributions), whatever the heck that means.” (Fellow 3)

“One of the issues in the pipeline that absolutely drives me crazy is figuring out how to create awareness within the folks in our community who are incoming first year or second year students, because what I found over and over and over again is that folks who looked like me that were first-year college students were overwhelmingly interested in either medicine or law. Outside of that, there was a sprinkling of folks who were thinking about engineering, but trying to get people to consider the business school or trying to get people to consider psychology just wasn't on their radar as a first or second choice. I had a couple of students who said ‘I can't convince my parents that that's what I should be doing.’ And so what would happen is the comparable white students would come in and they were in somebody's lab second semester, freshman year or first semester, sophomore year. And now, all of a sudden, you start to see that head-start really begin to accumulate.” (Fellow 2)

“I can remember visiting Spelman and Morehouse and talking to the students there and having them say, “well, nobody ever told me about IO. I just didn't know that this was a thing. Or, you know, I was interested in psychology but then I started doing this business thing.” So I just wonder, how is it that we create that awareness because yes, there are absolutely people in the field who are not looking *to us* because we don't fit the prototypes that they're used to, but we also aren't aware that this is a profession *for us*.” (Fellow 4)

Fellow 2 noted that some academic recruiters steer Black doctoral student hopefuls away from nonscience, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) degree programs. This is an important concern as relatively higher incomes associated with such STEM disciplines may draw the vanguard of high-aptitude Black students away from OB/management and I-O doctoral programs. This access barrier to Black students enrolling in OB/management and I-O doctoral programs is highlighted in the comment below:

“I had a slightly different experience because I wanted to be in business. There was a minority engineering program at my university led by a black guy who was very good at recruiting. And I just wasn't trying to hear his spiel in high school. And he asked, well, what do you want to do? I said, ‘I want to go into business - particularly accounting.’ He replied, ‘you'll never be successful.’ Well, I just happened to go to that university and visited his office to point out my success to him every single year. I even continued to contact him until I finished the PhD and he was like, “please stop contacting me.” (Fellow 1)

“What I learned was our community' emphasis on medicine and engineering is very outcome driven, right? Like you won't be able to be in the talented 10th or you won't make this kind of salary if you do not go into, you know, engineering or medicine, etc. And, I know I was driven by the passion, the love for it. And now it just so happens that I've found a way to craft some outcomes, some success, so I can live pretty comfortably. And it's interesting because as a result, I get all of these people in the field, both minority and majority who have a student who they see a glimmer of potential in and perhaps think they could go and get a PhD, and they refer them to me because they want me to tell them something about this lifestyle. They want me to tell them how they can ball out (*i.e., live a lavish life*) rather what we do, what the profession is about. I mean, we are involved in science, right?” (Fellow 1)

These conversations suggest that Blacks have lower access to doctoral programs than Whites due to (1) less contact with others familiar with such programs, (2) mean disparities in standardized tests scores disfavoring them, and (3) recruiters who steer them away from management/OB and I-O psychology disciplines. Importantly, these reasons raise the possibility that management/OB and I-O psychology PhD programs face barriers to attracting a segment of high-achieving Black students to pursue doctoral study in these domains. In response, management/OB and I-O psychology doctoral program directors should devise targeted recruitment strategies for top-caliber Black students to both familiarize them with their programs of study and tout the financial and nonfinancial rewards of academic careers in these fields.

Competence Affirmation

Upon entering their doctoral programs, the fellows identified competence affirmation as an initial burden they had to overcome. Competence affirmation refers to the process of establishing one's proficiency in a domain as perceived by others, particularly those with authority and power (Steele, 1988). Because Black faculty are highly underrepresented in management/OB and I-O psychology doctoral programs, advisor-advisee racioethnic dissimilarity is the norm in nearly all doctoral programs in the aforementioned disciplines. Yet, research shows demographic dissimilarity in dyads to be associated with lower perceived similarity, liking, and trust between parties (Byrne, 1971). Supervisors also tend to render lower evaluations of job performance to racioethnically dissimilar subordinates (Judge & Ferris, 1993; Stauffer & Buckley, 2005). Stereotyping research has shown that Blacks are viewed as lower in competence (and

warmth) than their White counterparts (Fiske et al., 2002; Ridgeway, 2014), and that people who are thought of as highly competent and warm tend to receive greater active facilitation (or assistance) from others. In contrast, those deemed less competent (and warm) may engender behavioral reactions from others best characterized as benign neglect (Cuddy et al., 2007).

In doctoral programs, a doctoral student's faculty advisor is a key arbiter of developmental opportunities, mentoring, and sponsorship and must ultimately sign off on a student's dissertation to enable her/him to complete the program. Stereotyping research findings imply that Black students may be considered to be less desirable advisees than their White classmates, thus resulting in advisors providing them with less active support and sponsorship. Further, Black students may be challenged to continuously attempt to demonstrate their research competence and earn an advisor's investment in their scholarly development. Still, as advisors sometimes erroneously judge Black doctoral students' potential and performance and subsequently withdraw their efforts to develop those students, they may contribute to the perpetuation of a self-fulfilling prophecy of underachievement. These concerns are articulated in the following excerpt from the fellows' conversation:

"Well, there's the big point I want to see now that you opened the can of worms, I want to talk about it. And here's the number one reason to me. I'm going to be the heavy here because you know I like to do that. We're not interested in science a lot of times. I mean, if you look at it, most people in our field, even some of the ones that so-called 'look up' to all of us, they're full of it. That is one of them (issues) - they just seem to want to wear nice suits. And I remember a panel we were on where participants were looking in shock that we've probably submitted hundreds of papers to get the pubs we have. But, that's the grind (*i.e., demands of the job*)."

(Fellow 3)
 "I hear you. We need to be more transparent with people about what is needed to be a high performer in our field without reinforcing restrictive definitions of success." (Fellow 1).

"And they look at us like we're crazy. This is work. There's no interest in it as a passion. It's very extrinsically driven and that comes out. And I think that derails a lot of us in the doctoral programs, because I have the sneaky suspicion that, if we're seeing it, their professors see it too. And what do they (the professors) do? They abandon them (the students). I've heard that story so many times. It's being left off on the side of the road because they're of no use to me. And yeah, they'll do that. If you're going in there masquerading and you don't want to do the work and be an asset

to your advisor and work with them, what are they supposed to do with you? Deep down, I think a lot of people get into this profession with insufficient understanding of the research requirements." (Fellow 3)

"This is not a teaching degree. This is a research degree and you happen to teach. If you want to be a teacher, you could go practice and come back as an MBA and teach as an adjunct and save yourself five years. They don't want to walk through that fire, but they'll always give you the lip service. "I want to be like you guys" they'll say, but you're not grinding (*i.e., working hard*) like we are. And there's the problem. They don't want to put that work in. They just want to live large (*i.e., live a lavish life*) and look like they're living a great life." (Fellow 3)

"Let me ask this: is there a room then for graduate students who don't want to be you? I mean, is there space for students who want to go to teach at a Morehouse or a Spelman?" (Fellow 4)

"There is, but they're probably not going to become fellows. I mean, we're talking about the vanguard of the field but if you look at us, I can't name 20 full professors at Research 1 schools that look like us." (Fellow 3)

"True, but it is a heck of a lot better now." (Fellow 1)

"So I want to complete that thought because I think you hit on something that's important, but there's two sides to that, right? Because you talked about how a lot of faculty make these snap decisions about people's potential and people's work ethic. And I think that sometimes they may get signals that suggest that this person is not going to put in the work, but sometimes those signals are not necessarily things that we do. I'll speak for myself. I remember in graduate school, some people made some pretty quick judgments about what I was all about. I nearly got kicked out of my graduate program and the same people who were about to put me out of there, are now congratulating me when they see me in public." (Fellow 2).

"So I think that we have to be careful about making these snap judgments on the basis of what we think are indicators of people's interests or potential or motivation or work ethic. Because the more I've talked to people who look like us, who've been successful, the more I hear a similar story: "You know, people looked at me, they sized me up. They didn't think that I was this. It just so happens that there was this one person who believed in me and then I was able to show everybody else what I could do. And then you have all the, you know, the Johnny-come-lately folks who catch the vapors (*i.e., when a person receives accolades from initial naysayers after she/he has succeeded*) and all of a sudden now it's, 'Oh, we always loved you.' They

were ready to help you pack your stuff just a year ago.” (Fellow 2)

“So I, think that we want to be balanced in our treatment. There are certainly some of us who get into it for the wrong reasons. There are certainly some of us who don't put our best foot forward initially, but there are also people who are really, really quick to write us off without a whole lot of evidence that we deserve to be written off. And they're also people who will give folks who don't look like us at every opportunity to crash and burn and crash and burn and crash and burn whereas they will not give us any real opportunity until we have demonstrated that we can fly as high as the best.” (Fellow 4)

The discussion identified two major concerns that may undermine Black doctoral students' success in PhD programs. First, it is incumbent upon recruiters to clearly articulate the nature of doctoral program expectations. A primary message should be that doctoral study requires close collaboration with advisors on research and that failure to fully participate in research has the potential to undermine a doctoral advisor's investment in a student. This could result in the derailment of a student's scholarly development. Second, doctoral advisors should refrain from judging a student's competence too early and should take a student's research familiarity and prior academic contexts into account. For instance, many Black students may have had college experiences with limited exposure to research. Accordingly, they may require a longer incubation period (and learning curve) to develop research proficiency. Further, to lessen the likelihood of students being abandoned during this incubation period, doctoral programs may be redesigned around a multi-advising model in which students work with and are evaluated by different faculty. This approach may help to reduce a faculty member's sole influence on a student's competence appraisals and increase the likelihood of their comprehensive development as scholars.

Scholarly Development, Mentoring, and Sponsorship

Optimally, doctoral faculty advisors should provide their advisees with opportunities to develop as scholarly researchers, as well as mentoring and sponsorship, to develop as faculty members. Early on in PhD programs, advisees work as research assistants and engage in research activities such as literature reviews, collecting and analyzing data, and writing scholarly articles. Over time, advisees should develop proficiency in independent scholarship, including initiating, conducting, and writing up research studies aimed at journal publications. As the relative publication success of doctoral

students determines their marketability in the academic job market, a key determinant of doctoral student success is access to quality developmental activities and mentoring relationships. Mentoring is a process whereby a mentor or experienced individual provides instrumental or career support (e.g., developmental opportunities and sponsorship) and psychosocial support (e.g., personal advice and friendship) to a protégé (i.e., a person with less experience in need of development). Research on mentoring indicates that mentors tend to select protégés who are deemed competent (Allen et al., 2000) and perceived as similar in values to mentors (Brown et al., 2008; Eby et al., 2013), thereby increasing the likelihood of a high-quality mentoring relationship (Ragins & Cotton, 1999). Furthermore, protégés in racially/ethnically dissimilar mentoring dyads tend to report receiving lower career support (Sosik & Godshalk, 2000) and psychosocial support (Thomas, 1990).

Owing to Black doctoral students' racial/ethnic dissimilarity to doctoral faculty advisors, they are likely to be at a disadvantage in terms of access to scholarly developmental opportunities, mentorship, and sponsorship. Relative to their White classmates, Black students are apt to be less well-prepared for the academic job market with downstream consequences for career success. Importantly, doctoral program prestige, doctoral students' publications, and the publications of their dissertation chairs (usually a student's advisor) are positively and significantly related to the prestige of students' first faculty positions (Judge et al., 2004). Furthermore, the prestige of the first job is positively and significantly correlated with faculty members' publications in their careers, current salary, the prestige of the current institution, membership on journal editorial boards, and career publication citation counts and job prospects (Bedeian et al., 2010; Judge et al., 2004). Interestingly, the facilitative effect of doctoral program prestige on external career success variables (e.g., salary, faculty rank, and prestige of current institution) hold even after controlling for faculty members' research productivity. Therefore, these findings underscore the pivotal role that doctoral advisors play in jumpstarting doctoral students' faculty careers and subsequent long-term career success. As shown below, the fellows' conversation expounds upon the above notions:

“Another contributing factor is that some of the people in the field who have been entrusted with developing students and identifying talent don't have the skills to do that. I've seen instances where somebody (a student) produced something that wasn't high quality and they were quick to be written off. And really, what it took was an analysis into whether or not this person can really do the work. Has this person been given the mentoring or the guidance to be able to know how to do it in the way it should be done? Can we be the talent

managers we study (although we know that we're often horrible at the stuff we study)?" (Fellow 4)

"So all the things about being able to identify talent and manage performance and all that – people aren't practicing what they study. They're not walking the talk, so that makes it even more challenging because there are limits to that. They're being entrusted with bringing the next generation along, but we don't really get coaching on teaching. You teach a class in grad school and they're like, 'okay, great.' But unless you consciously seek development as a professor, you don't get taught how to teach. So, it's the same kind of thing. You don't get taught how to mentor and develop. So it's this systemic thing that a lot of us get just in the middle of, and with all the forces working against you, you then fall by the wayside." (Fellow 1)

"Well, one of the things that I saw consistently was when students show up who look differently than the majority of the faculty, they had to fall a hundred percent in line in terms of the types of questions they ask and the populations that they studied. I mean, it was a process of homosocial reproduction. You had to replicate the faculty to be seen as credible. Even though we say that diversity is valued and needed, it's only needed on a very surface level, which is why so many of them ended up working with me even if they didn't come in as my students. And I think that's persistent. It's probably at a lot of places and it's probably within the society as well. You know, do we have the bandwidth to really integrate people who are coming, from a variety of backgrounds and may be asking different questions because of that?" (Fellow 4)

"The point about homosocial reproduction is a big one because it's not just key for development, but then it also becomes really instrumental in terms of networking. I think about the networks that I have accumulated over the years and I think a lot of people attribute that to something about me and I'm quick to say, no, no, no, no, no. That was because I went to the *right* schools and I had the *right* mentors and they introduced me to the *right* people. And now those people remember me because of who I was introduced to them by. It isn't anything about the strength of my personality or me being some type of super extrovert. But if you don't have mentors and folks along the way that buy into you and believe in your potential and your capability, then they're not going to sponsor you." (Fellow 2)

"They're not going to introduce you to people. At our stage in the game, we read a lot of letters (i.e., letters of recommendation and referee letters for promotion & tenure) and there's a lot of variability in what people will say. And these letters, I mean, recently I saw somebody write a six-page letter for somebody

I thought was pretty darn mediocre. And you know, what that says to me is you've got some kind of connection with this person, leading you to be an extreme outlier in terms of the amount of information that you're putting forward to try to make me interested in this person. And if we are having difficulty getting folks to buy into us just enough to invest what we need to get through the program, then how much of a crippling factor is that moving forward when it comes to getting a job or getting letters. What is it that we can do or would advocate, or kind of level the playing field with respect to the social networks?" (Fellow 2)

"It seems to go back to the developmental issue - is the person prepared to even make the connections? I mean, if you've been a bad advisor and have not prepared your student, making that connection doesn't take anyway. So, it goes back to the original problem that if you've never mentored the person, how can you be a successful advocate knowing they can't carry the ball once it's handed to them? Have they been prepared to utilize a connection that's made and make the right impression? If the advisor has been hands-off and aloof with them, maybe not. So I guess that's the question ...what kind of mentoring went on? Because it ultimately would be just the visibility piece, "Hey, meet my student. This is such and such." And if they've been trained in a way that they should be trained, then that should be an easy progression for them in terms of at least getting a chance to show what they can do. But I think it's that the lack of mentoring can undermine even that process." (Fellow 3).

Overcoming Bias

Typically, Black doctoral students and faculty members occupy institutional environments wherein they are non-prototypical. Social identity theory and research suggests that members of identity groups (e.g., race/ethnicity, gender) experience heightened identity salience (i.e., high cognitive accessibility of one's salient identity) in contexts where their groups are proportionally rare (Hogg & Terry, 2000; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). In addition, threats to identity, such as biased treatment (i.e., disparagement perceived based on one's group membership), are associated with increased identity salience (Sanders Thompson, 1999). Research on relational demography suggests that people whose identity groups are underrepresented in work environments tend to experience higher scrutiny of job performance (Reskin et al., 1999), report greater instances of race/ethnic discrimination (Avery et al., 2008) and lower job satisfaction (Niemann & Dovidio, 1998), perform less well on the job (Joshi et al., 2006), and have higher turnover likelihoods (Zatzick et al.,

2003) than do those whose identity groups are highly represented. Irrespective of organizational demography, Black workers also tend to face attributional ambiguity as well. Driven by negative stereotyping, Black targets face a higher threshold than White ones for evaluators to attribute their favorable performance instances to internal factors (e.g., ability and motivation) versus external factors such as luck, assistance from others, etc. (Biernat & Kobrynowicz, 1997; Greenhaus & Parasuraman, 1993).

The preceding implies that Black doctoral students and faculty members are often situated in institutional environments that pose potential threats to their identities. For example, Black scholars may experience biased treatment in the form of advisors who under-prepare, devalue, and disinvest in them as compared to their White counterparts, which can translate into career achievement barriers. These factors are discussed in the following excerpts from the fellows' conversation:

“You know, we create these systems that are vulnerable to all kinds of bias, even though we know better. For instance, I've struggled with the promotion and tenure process trying to standardize the letter that goes out to external references. I want four set prompts and a page limit because there's all this other stuff that infiltrates that letter. There are a lot of ways that you can push someone forward just by choosing someone who might be a more experienced letter writer or who knows the right words to use. Every department can't have their own way of doing things. Our responsibility as leaders is to derail the opportunity for bias to infiltrate these processes.” (Fellow 4).

“And what I found a lot of times as people of color, you know, folks are like, “Hmm, I don't know them.” If they don't know the name, that person doesn't exist. And literally in our field, we know there's like the four of us and maybe like four other people, otherwise they don't exist. And so what I've found is that I've had to lead in the sponsorship and the networking. If I'm going to introduce someone, I have to let their work lead first. So I have to share something that they've done. And then people were like, “Oh!”, and then, you know the name, then they want to know more. It's like the hustle, you got to give them a little bit.” (Fellow 1)

“They're trying to locate them in their mind, but just because they can't, they're adding some kind of valence to it. It shouldn't – that's just saying you don't know the person – but for people in our field, if you don't know a person or people who know them, they conclude that they're a nobody. Like they're not worth knowing. But when you lead with the stuff that does matter, then people want to know those people. It's a shame to have to do it that way, but it takes a different form. It's

almost like negotiating with the field in order to pull people along.” (Fellow 1)

“Yeah. We have to go that extra mile to be validated. If you look at us, we're all pedigreed *in that way*. I mean, all the top minority faculty that you think about it, we all look the same. We're like paper people, you can predict who is going to do well because they have the pedigree. But the problem is, a lot of us don't have it. We're not coming from those farm clubs that produce major leaguers. So the question is: How do you pull people from the Triple A Club (*i.e., the level below the major leagues where talent is groomed until deemed ready for the major leagues*) because there is a mainstream system that we're not a part of.” (Fellow 3)

“Here's something that drives me crazy: By and large, when you see white folks graduate from an elite level of school, they land a job at another elite level school. Yet, there are so many times where, you know, I see the congratulatory emails go out in our community announcing that such-and-such got their PhD from an elite institution and is taking a job at Southwestern State (*i.e., a lesser-known institution that is not considered on par with a student's doctoral-granting institution, thus representing presumed 'under-placement'*) and I'm like, wait, what?! What just happened here?” (Fellow 2)

“And as I've started to dig a little bit, what I have found is that oftentimes the ball gets dropped when we get into these elite level programs, because the faculty are, in many instances, more concerned with getting us through than getting us ready. And those two things are not the same. And people feel as though they've done their job and they can check the box if they got us through. They feel like, ‘Oh, look what I've done. I graduated this black PhD.’ And then you find out later that that person hasn't been put on projects, they haven't been given comparable opportunity. They haven't been taught how to do this stuff. And so yes, your student's got credentials that should help open some doors, but it was really incomplete.” (Fellow 2)

“And I don't know what we do with that. Because some of those people (on the receiving end) have really been misjudged. I meet them and talk to them for 30 minutes and think to myself: ‘Oh my gosh, you could be great. But somebody just didn't see it.’” (Fellow 1).

“I hear you. I've provided friendly reviews to people from great schools, thinking, ‘wow, you get to work with such-and-such’ only to end up shaking my head and wondering how did this happen from a good place? I don't know what that disconnect is, where there's not an investment in them learning.” (Fellow 3)

“Oftentimes for underrepresented students, what I've noticed is that they're not working with multiple fac-

ulty the way that other students are. And so, especially if you're the lone minority faculty member and now you're mentoring minority students, those students are 100% reliant upon you and they're not getting the breadth of opportunities that other students are getting. And I think there's a potential barrier for them in regard to how faculty perceive them in determining 'are they going to be worth my time?'" (Fellow 4)

"There's also a thing where the faculty talk to each other about students and their progress. And I went to grad school thinking, "I want to work at a research 1." And I had a faculty member who was like, "okay, here's what your CV needs to look like when you come out on the market." And I worked with one or two faculty and then the next year I worked with one or two, but I feel like there were some secret conversations going on in the faculty meetings where they were deciding if I was legit. Ultimately, more of them were willing to or wanting to work with me because I sufficiently proved myself. I suspect that my colleagues didn't have to do that – or at least not to the same extent." (Fellow 1)

"And then, it was the same kind of thing for tenure, because I was at an institution that didn't think necessarily that you earn tenure. They thought that they gave it to you. You were you, you had proven yourself enough and senior faculty were still like, "Okay, now what?" Even at the third-year review, it's about: 'do I see a glimmer? You know, do I see potential? Does it look like he or she is going to make it?' There are all of these prejudgments that go on that stack the deck either in favor or against someone and the messaging you've gotten earlier on will influence how resilient we are." (Fellow 1)

"You know, I was hazed in grad school so my hazing as a faculty member didn't matter. I was used to it. But I was then resilient and able to determine: 'Oh, I know what this is. I know what this looks like, because that was part of the training.' I've seen students who wanted to be in an R1 and then realized that it wasn't a fit because of the publish-or-perish environment. And I'm telling them: 'this is what you signed up for. I didn't think I said it was puppies and rainbows.' So, I think there's this mentoring, coaching, and development of not only publishing and doing the work, but just being able to deal with that nonsense." (Fellow 1)

"You raise a good point. I think about it like artistry or music – all these things that look sexy from afar. I think it looks good to people from the outside and they see the end of it and don't understand what it takes during the process. I think they really underestimate it. I mean, doctoral students notoriously underestimate time horizons for research, thinking 'Oh, I can

start with the dissertation at that time.' No, you can't because you're going to lose your (data collection) site. In our field, we're often dealing with good students and because of that, they overestimate their ability to do research well and treat it like it's another form of school not realizing how much variance there is, the amount of uncertainty, and things that are out of their control. They really have this high sense of agency that almost sets them up for failure because they underestimate the obstacles in-between where they are and where they want to be. They just see us and think, 'Oh, of course, I'm going to do it.'" (Fellow 3)

The discussion delineated the importance of faculty investment in Black doctoral students to their subsequent career success. It is particularly troubling that some Black students, who gain admission to the top doctoral programs in the USA, graduate with preparatory deficits (e.g., insufficient methodological and writing skills) that undermine their publication success and placement prospects relative to their White classmates. Such biased treatment in the form of differential preparation as scholars may partially explain the inordinately low representation of Black faculty at Research 1 institutions. Consequently, doctoral faculty advisors and PhD programs overall need to develop a sharper eye and commitment toward equity of scholarly preparation and career outcomes among their alums. Merely graduating Black students from doctoral programs, absent sufficient preparation, not only perpetuates negative stereotypes regarding their competence but undermines career success.

Fit with Institutions and Locations

Nearly 30 years ago, Nkomo (1992) lamented the nature of explanations given for why racioethnic minorities report less favorable organizational experiences than their White counterparts. She noted that the prior explanation explored in extant studies was the "difference-as-deficit" hypothesis, which suggests that minority disadvantages in organizational settings are functions of deficiencies within racioethnic minorities. By extension, such logic absolves organizations for their roles in perpetuating institutional systems (e.g., biased selection and appraisal systems, discriminatory treatment, and exclusion) that undermine minority success in work settings. Voluminous studies have chronicled how racioethnic minorities (and Blacks in particular) report more instances of racioethnic discrimination (Avery et al., 2008), reduced access to developmental opportunities and advancement networks (James, 2000; McGinn & Milkman, 2013), view firms as less supportive of diversity (McKay et al., 2007), and have higher turnover likelihoods than their White counterparts (Hom et al., 2008).

Conversely, human capital theory (Becker, 1993) asserts that individuals who make investments in building their human capital (i.e., education and/or training designed to enhance one's job-related knowledge and skills) increase employees' likelihood of success in work roles and value proposition to firms that hire them. In this respect, individual human capital stratifies the available labor pool based upon individuals' projected contributions to firm success. For this reason, high-performing organizations seek to not only hire but retain high human capital personnel, who are perceived to make higher contributions to firm effectiveness (Becton et al., 2017). Accordingly, high human capital personnel tend to have a strong influence on the work process within workgroups (Kehoe & Tzabbar, 2015), enjoy pay premiums (Mackey et al., 2014), and possess high mobility between organizations (Kwon & Rupp, 2013). In essence, human capital is a nontrivial differentiator between personnel in organizations with downstream consequences on workers' productivity and perceived value to firms.

Furthermore, racioethnic relations vary by the demographic representation of various racioethnic groups with a specific geographic location (Quillian, 1996). Research on residential choice indicates that White preference declines as the proportion of Black residents increases (Havekes et al., 2016; Lewis et al., 2011). In addition, incidents of racial discrimination and antiblack racial violence increase in predominately White locales, as the proportion of Black residents in such areas increases (Green et al., 1998). In line with such threats of mistreatment and violence, Black Americans report a preference for living in mixed-race areas (i.e., those with some White residents) owing to their desirable neighborhood amenities, such as access to high-quality schools, low crime, and resources dedicated to general maintenance and upkeep (Meyerhoffer, 2016). Yet, Black individuals communicate an apprehension to living in exclusively White neighborhoods due to fear of White hostility against them (Havekes et al., 2016; Meyerhoffer, 2016). This trepidation is also fueled by physical and psychological safety concerns as research reveals that Black residents of areas with high economic racial stratification (i.e., racioethnic minority status is inversely related to income) and residential segregation encounter more racial profiling and social isolation than those living in less stratified regions (McKay, 2020).

Drawing from the above review, we portend that Black faculty also have to navigate the challenges of fitting into institutions and their broader locales. Institutional fit can be enhanced as a function of (1) an institution's support of diversity and policy infrastructure that supports fairness, equality opportunity, and inclusion, and (2) faculty human capital investments to support and facilitate productivity and communicate their perceived value to institutions. Location fit will likely be influenced by the extent to which

institutions are located in regions low in racial stratification and residential segregation, as such areas offer the option of residing in racioethnically mixed neighborhoods with some Black representation. However, in regions not characterized by such diversity and integration, location fit will be influenced by the amount of institutional support to enhance Black faculty members' work-life balance. The Black fellows expounded upon this logic in the following excerpts from their conversation:

“Interestingly, if you think about the narratives that people enjoy the most though, it's the struggle narrative. Like ‘I almost got kicked out of my program’ or ‘I was discriminated against and harassed and I had to do this. I had to deal with this.’ And yet, when we see each other at conferences and people ask: ‘Hey, what's going on?’ You'd be like, I'm about to lose my mind. I've got 50,000 things to do. But without that struggle narrative, people think that it's easy. So then the question is - why do you have to make it look hard? I mean, what we do is hard. It's been difficult to move along our trajectory. But do you have to give them ‘scratching and surviving’ (*from the theme song of Good Times*)? It seems you need to have that narrative or otherwise people get lulled into a false sense of security, like ‘Oh, I can do that, too.’” (Fellow 1)

“Well, but then there's a catch 22. Because the folks that you're in large part dependent upon for their evaluations and their promotion are expecting you to walk on water and when you don't walk on water, it's like, ‘Oh, she's not who I thought she was.’ So I agree that it's a balancing act. You're not supposed to be like, ‘I can walk on water with no effort.’ You've got to be like, ‘let me walk (grunt), let me walk on water.’ Like you're working really hard at it.” (Fellow 2)

“I think that's the other issue too, that emotional management part of it that people don't realize goes with the burden of being the only, or even one of few. And I guess also the social milieu might matter as well. Some of these college town environments are not really built for us. When there isn't a significant black population, it's quite limiting. So, I think that's another thing our folks deal with that programs may not be aware of.” (Fellow 3)

“You get to a point where you've accomplished a few things and then, people start to reach out to you about opportunities. The thing that has always been interesting to me is I am by far the most attractive to places that I have the least interest in going.” (Fellow 2)

“Yep. Same here. Places out in the cornfields and I'm not going to go live there.” (Fellow 3)

“Some of these places feel like they're just not an option. And on the one hand, I want every place to be

interested in folks who look like us, if we're talented. So I'm not trying to say, "Oh, they should stop." But why is it that so many of these places that would be high on our radars are just not all that interested when you would think that the pressure from the external stakeholders for them to have folks who look like us will be higher than for some of those other places?" (Fellow 2)

"That's a good question." (Fellow 3)

"I think one reason might be just the geography itself. Those are usually more diverse areas so they don't see a need for it versus the places that lack it." (Fellow 1)

"Yeah. I think those institutions have had difficulty retaining people of color. And so the more they lose folks, the more they have to put money behind getting new folks that they hope they can keep for some level of time - just enough to attract more people to come in. But what I think is really interesting is that there are black folks who really want to come to a smaller town. They want to ride their bike to the building in the morning. They want to take their cloth bag and do local grocery shopping or whatever. So, I think we have to be mindful that we are more diverse sometimes than we give ourselves credit for. And I think there is a fit for everyone." (Fellow 4)

"I agree and there's probably a career stage and life stage thing to it too. In smaller places, I can get anywhere in 10 minutes and there is just a value for people. When you go into a restaurant or something and people know you. There's just some small-town things and I've completely leaned into that. At early stages, folks may be thinking, I don't need to be in the city because I need to get tenure." (Fellow 1)

"Going back to the point about having people long enough for them to recruit others, there is an assumption that we are a monolith. And so, what they do is take the people who are already there and say, 'Hey, talk to these new people we want to recruit and tell them all about your life and how great it is.' And it doesn't really allow for our diversity. They just think that if we get a person of color, their life is going to be the same as all the other people of color - whatever they do, the meetings they have, and the places they go." (Fellow 1)

"And, and that's the catch 22, especially in recruiting senior faculty is that you're in that stage of life where you kind of want to live a little bit I mean, I remember at one institution they had like a major metropolitan city an hour away and they just kept me in town. Look, I need to go see the city to try to sell this thing at home. So, I just had to check it out myself and it actually was kind of nice. They ultimately under-delivered on the offer, but it was just funny how they

had such tunnel vision about the local area. You have a major city an hour away and I'd probably be there all the time. Add that to your pitch and you should recruit students that way too." (Fellow 3)

The above discussion highlights several key points regarding institution and location fit. First, the fellows noted how faculty and administrators who evaluate them for tenure endorsed a "struggle narrative" akin to the "difference-as-deficit" model that is pervasive in the study of racioethnic differences in work experiences. Evaluators may presume that Black faculty will find it difficult to succeed in tenure-track positions at research-intensive (Research 1) institutions; however, these fellows serve to debunk the above presumption as each was well-positioned with regard to human capital (e.g., earned PhDs from top institutions and trained by supportive doctoral advisors) to perform well in such contexts. The conversation also highlighted that the burden of competence affirmation persists at the faculty level, as described by a feeling of having to "walk on water" to achieve tenure and promotion. To address these issues, school administrators (e.g., department chairs and deans) and faculty should devise explicit, clear tenure-and-promotion standards that are fair and equitable. Furthermore, department chairs and senior faculty should offer junior Black faculty members equal access to mentoring and offer feedback on ways to improve their scholarly profiles. These developmental activities will help increase the odds that these faculty members will successfully navigate the tenure track.

Second, the fellows identified a key blind spot among many faculty colleagues and administrators: the assumption that places are equally hospitable to faculty members irrespective of racioethnicity. As McKay (2020) observed, locations and neighborhoods that White faculty members find desirable may be hostile toward their Black colleagues with respect to racial profiling, harassment, and the threat of violence. Accordingly, it would behoove faculty search committees, department chairs, and deans to become better attuned to the race relations of their university locations. They can help enhance Black faculty members' location fit by performing some research to identify high-quality neighborhoods that are welcoming to Black residents. Moreover, Black faculty members themselves might consult the city data website (www.city-data.com) to examine a location's racioethnic demography, median household incomes, median home and apartment prices, proximity to metropolitan areas with large shares of Black residents, and learn more in-depth information about locations, interracial dynamics, and what it is like to reside in particular neighborhoods and nearby locations. More generally, universities need to adopt the mindset that Black faculty

are not monolithic and invest in recruiting activities that values candidates for their unique identities, talents, and interests.

Identity Affirmation

Owing to Black faculty's underrepresentation in management/OB and I-O psychology departments, it is equivocal as to whether their racioethnic identities will be affirmed in their academic departments and schools. A person's social identity group is affirmed to the extent that she/he feels that members of their group are recognized, valued, and free to express their unique perspectives in contexts they occupy (see Shore et al., 2011). In recognition of racioethnic minorities' identity affirmation concerns, Cha and Morgan Roberts (2019) studied how people navigate their identities in organizations. In a sample of journalists (sixteen of whom were Black), the authors noted that Black journalists grappled with negative stereotypes of their competence and intelligence and sought to defy them by showing their prowess. Also, the journalists challenged their colleagues (and sources) by pressing to write stories that defied rather than reinforced negative stereotypes about their racial group. In fact, the journalists leveraged their unique insights into the Black culture to provide a voice to Black concerns that are typically excluded from media coverage. The authors also observed that the journalists wrestled with tensions related to being pigeonholed (e.g., Black journalists being asked to cover only race-related stories), viewed as activists (e.g., being perceived as disruptive for challenging media coverage that denigrates Blacks), questioned about their objectivity (e.g., perceived as lacking objectivity and being positively biased toward one's racioethnic group), and contributing to perpetuation (i.e., fear that one's work will corroborate negative stereotypes about her/his racioethnic group and perpetuate views of their group as lower in status). These insights offered by Cha and Morgan Roberts (2019) dovetail well with the fellows' conversation with respect to identity affirmation as highlighted in the following excerpts:

“I think at some point there were probably years where my acceptance was dependent upon my performance as a faculty member - being all in on promoting the culture of the program, even though I was always the one doing the weighty stuff. And I think all of us, you get to a point where you're like, ‘yeah, this isn't worth it.’ I did not want to kind of go along with the status quo anymore and kind of pushed back against it. You said, the major part of that being black, but I didn't always see my black male counterparts having the same kinds of experience that my black female counterparts had. And when I think about my students,

my black male students, my God, you have to fight people off from them. And then I would have brilliant black women working with me where it's like, why isn't anyone talking to them? You know, why are they having so much difficulty getting a job? Why are they not attractive for collaboration? So, I think there was this additional layer of race and gender that I saw.” (Fellow 4)

“Well, I was trying to think how to frame mine. It's me having to present myself in a way that was balancing my authenticity with people getting my point. Being able to effectively communicate, interact, et cetera, with people, but do it in an authentic way. Early on in my career, I had a white female student threaten to file a class action discrimination suit against me and students reported me every semester based on their dissatisfaction with their grades. But, I had very supportive senior faculty, and I knew that, so I knew that it wasn't going to necessarily amount to anything.” (Fellow 1). “Part of my experience could have been being an assistant professor, so they know that they can challenge me a bit. But even after that, people were just trying to treat me a certain way. It was about me having to know that there were biases at work and how do I deal with those while getting my point across or making sure that my voice was heard, but in a way that I'm kind of gentle and not aggressive. I had to figure out very creative ways to use my words. I've had to figure out all these unique ways of doing that, which still maintain me. To feel that I was heard, but I'm also acting in a way where I maintain my network and I maintain my reputation and all of those things. So that balancing act has probably been the most challenging because it's the most consistently frustrating and tiring aspect of my career.” (Fellow 1)

“Yeah, I guess my biggest hurdle is the combination of John Henry-ism (i.e., *John Henry was a storybook figure who perished in his attempt to show that he could assemble railroad tracks faster than a machine. John Henry-ism reflects expending inordinate amounts of effort to prove one's competence and prowess at the expense of one's health and wellness*) and dealing with imposter syndrome (i.e., *self-doubt about one's prowess and legitimacy in occupying a job/position*) considering my trajectory. I kind of started from nowhere and here I was always trying to kind of show that I belong. I mean, I'm sure some of it was self-imposed, but I think it's a matter of the system being the way it is and expecting it to underrate me. So, I felt like ‘I've got to overproduce to not be underrated’ and always felt the sense of being a representative (of all Black folks) that I probably shouldn't have taken on. I think that kind of led to my John Henry-ism and then it didn't help

that, in a lot of those environments, the contexts were just so negative in terms of the community racism.” (Fellow 3)

“I know for me it's been the authenticity piece. It's a question of how much I get to take my mask off. And the tough part for me is that I have a group of people in academia and they're overwhelmingly Black, that are my mentors and people I really trust. It's interesting because people within that group are always pushing me to take the mask off more. They're like, ‘Oh, you gotta be out there. You gotta say this, you gotta do this, stop making these white folks so comfortable, you know, shake them up a little bit. Now you've got their attention. You can punch them in the gut a little bit more.’” (Fellow 2)

“So, I'm constantly feeling this internal battle because I know what the expectations are. And I got to this point by being really good at toeing lines and not being that “habitual line stepper.” And I know that the whole point of getting to this point is now to be able to take these calculated gambles, but I don't feel like every one of them is my fight. And so that's the really, really tough part is figuring out, like, is this the Hill (*i.e., metaphorical hill to die on in battle*)? But, there's a battle every day. Every day, something will come to my office or to my inbox like, ‘Hey, you know, this is happening.’ And I'm thinking, yeah, that's really jacked up – that shouldn't be happening, but... is this that one?” (Fellow 2)

People do all this sense-making, particularly when we're in the positions we're in and every move becomes scrutinized and people want to do interpretation.” (Fellow 1)

“I think, you ultimately find that thing that matters so much to you that you can't control yourself. You're going to have to speak up and the mask just comes off. And I think, you know, as I said this year (2020) was a part of that. And, we all have the things that are most triggering for us. The other thing I think you all talked about wanting to be in the Academy. I didn't go to graduate school to be in the Academy. I mean, that was a last-minute flip. And so I've always felt like, ‘eh, I can go do something else.’” (Fellow 1)

“Well, I can remember going to the Academy meeting several years ago to say goodbye to everybody because I was done. And I knew exactly what I was going to do. I had already lined up things and I literally got kidnapped by a couple of folks I mentor and they locked me in a hotel room until three in the morning where they convinced me that the field needed me in ways that I didn't see. That brought me back because at the time I was just so burned out on the whole ‘publish or perish’ thing. I had just gotten promoted to full (pro-

fessor) and I was so excited about being able to do some other things, because that was the map I had seen. You get to that point and then you branch out and start doing other things and you can write a book or you can...” (Fellow 2)

“And my Dean at that point was on some Janet Jackson stuff (*i.e., The statement is a reference to her hit song, “What have you done lately?”*, which recognizes how employees are evaluated upon recent versus past performance). I'm thinking - I'm not an assistant professor; this is not the same dance that I'm supposed to be doing. And he was like, ‘look, we're putting everybody on variable course loads. And the variable course loads are going to be based upon your productivity. So you've got this 3-year window and you can take your foot off the gas if you want to, but you might wake up teaching six classes a year. And I was like, ‘Oh no, no, no...not doing that.’ And it just changed everything. I lost the love for it because I published a paper, for the first time in my career, that I didn't love. I mean, I did that paper just because I knew I could get it into a top tier journal.” (Fellow 2)

“And I felt like Biggie (*i.e., hip hop artist Notorious B.I.G.*) and Jay-Z (*i.e., a hip-hop artist and record label mogul*) in how they used to always talk about making each project like your first project. That you've got to do this for the love. And yet, I did that one for the paper and I just felt really, really dirty about it. And I thought, ‘I'm getting out.’ And that moment (when I was kidnapped) really helped me see, it helped me redefine. It was like, okay, I'm not doing this for another paper in this journal, I'm doing this because I can help to develop a junior scholar who can now get their voice out there. I think I made the right call, but I just wonder, am I the only one that had that mid-career identity crisis where it was like, ‘what am I doing?’” (Fellow 2)

“[Another well-established Black scholar] and I had a conversation years ago. And we were like, ‘what's the incremental return on investment for a pub?’” You get hype when you get the acceptance letter and then you're like, now what? So we were thinking, there's got to be something else. And then he found administration and I found a spot where they just left me alone. I was dabbling in a little bit of everything but realize that I was trying to figure it out. I was doing a lot of consulting, so much that I could hardly handle it, but I kept thinking, “is this the thing?” At the same time, people kept trying to pull me into administration, which in my heart, I knew was not for me. I got my PhD because I love school. I literally want to go to school every day for the rest of my life and if I can get paid for it – great! Doing research makes me feel like

I'm in school every day. But I didn't have the space to do that. Now I do and I find myself thinking, 'Oh, I've got more ideas!' But I do feel like I had the midlife crisis thing. I had to struggle with the feeling 'what am I doing?' It had lost its fun. I lost my fire." (Fellow 1)
 "I fell in love. I fell in love with being a faculty member and then got into research. But I thought I was going to consult and I was thinking, "Okay, I still might." (Fellow 4).

"It's kind of playing for legacy. Now the generativity motive is huge. Now it's about giving to other people. Getting one more 'notch in the belt' (*i.e., adding one more top publication to an extensive record of such publications*) doesn't really mean much anymore, but it does mean something when a student or junior faculty member who needs it gets it. So it's that same thing. I went through the same struggle you all described, but it's really that generativity motive that makes it worthwhile." (Fellow 3)

"I mean, I see Black students doing incredible things every week and I want to make sure people know. Make it so these graduate programs see that they need to just come in and swoop them up. There are Black undergraduate and graduate students having remarkable success." (Fellow 4)

The conversation included concerns about how perceptions of singular Black faculty reflect upon the perceived competence of other Blacks in the professoriate and in general. Furthermore, the fellows' expressed their attentiveness to Black doctoral students' and faculty members' achievement outcomes, as they too may be viewed as indicative of Black prowess in the academic realm. Accordingly, their thoughts aptly acknowledge that (1) Black faculty members' are proportionally rare in the management/OB and I-O psychology realms, (2) negative stereotypes persist regarding the aptitude of Black faculty in the academy, and (3) a sense of duty to defy negative stereotypes about Black people, represent them well in the professoriate, and assist Black doctoral students and faculty members in their efforts to succeed in academia. They also highlight the struggle for self-actualization while striving to maintain the performance standards that have been attributed to them while fulfilling service expectations and helping others. Extrapolating from these concerns, universities need to be watchful of the service and other burdens placed on Black faculty relative to their peers and work to create more equitable divisions of responsibility, including protecting Black faculty (particularly, junior scholars) from being assigned and held accountable for any and all programs and initiatives related to race (e.g., internal diversity initiatives, advisor to multicultural organizations, etc.). To effectively engage Black faculty at all career stages, department chairs and administrators should also work to

offer opportunities congruent with their needs and interests rather than based on perceptions of what might be important or affirming to them.

Final Thoughts

We wrote this article in an attempt to provide insights into how we became Fellows and the challenges (unique and shared) we had to overcome to achieve such a distinction. In our discussion, we identified competence affirmation, access to scholarly development, mentoring and sponsoring, overcoming bias, institutional and location fit, and identity affirmation as key issues that we grappled with during our journeys from doctoral students to becoming senior faculty members and SIOP Fellows. To conclude, we express our gratitude to each other for the individual and collective influence we have had on our careers and the field and offer some final words regarding how we forged our respective paths in our careers. Also, we present suggestions for what the management/OB and I-O psychology fields should do based upon our discussion. To start, the following excerpts from the fellows' conversation describe the pathways that were taken to get to this point as well as the ways in which we have inspired each other:

"One of the last things that I wanted to get to is the ways we have either created or defined our own pathways to success because we haven't all done all the same things and we haven't all done them in the same order or in the same way. And so I will start, you know, one of the things that I found that I did all the time, and one of the reasons I was so excited about being able to have this conversation is to tell each of you how much you have inspired me throughout my career. I am a very competitive person, but I'm also not a hater. And so the two things work together really well for me in that I have identified people that I look up to and then I emulate the things I really respect about them." (Fellow 2)

"So I would watch y'all and think, 'Oh, you know, she's really great speaking and she does this this way. Okay, I'm going to do a little bit of that.' One of you would get a big pub and I'd think 'Okay. I see you and I'm coming. Cause now I've got to get one too.' I'm not calling anyone here old because we're all in the same bracket. I'm just saying I love the way you handle your business. And I think that for so many of the younger folks, they admire the things that come from the work that makes the people who they are in this space. And the thing that I love is that, in getting to know you guys, I get to see the work that goes into that. And it inspires me to do my thing, to figure out where my

space is and how to create my legacy, whatever that will be. So, I thank you for being people who inspire me and my message to the folks that we're talking to now is you've got to put your constellation together and make sure that you're emulating the right people because emulating the wrong people will never get you where you're trying to go. So, thank you all for being my people.” (Fellow 2)

“I say the same thing. I was raised with a sense of relativism and to be comparative. I think sometimes people are choosing referents out of convenience versus strategy. I like to choose those that pull me a little bit, so I don't want to choose easy ones. Watching you guys had me thinking, ‘Oh gosh, she dropped this (*i.e.*, *published a paper*). I gotta get working hard and try to do my part and try to represent.’ I think it's part of my upbringing. My dad was a (*term removed to protect author confidentiality*) and preached that you've got to make your mark on the world and do something positive. So I think that was a big driver. And I guess this is my *motive* (*word changed to protect author confidentiality*) at this point. I think this is my way to contribute to the world.” (Fellow 3)

“Comparative others and wanting to leave a legacy, make a mark. I think for me, it's been more about the students and building our community. I'm the one who introduced two of you (to each other). I think having that network of people at other institutions, people with whom I could be honest because we weren't sharing that day's experience on the same campus was really critical. I don't know if I would have been able to kind of get through those early years without that.” (Fellow 4)

“So, when I think of the three of you, I think of breadth and depth. I appreciate you embracing me from day one. I appreciate the connection of being able to talk and dialogue and be friends aside from being black, but just having shared experiences in the field. And being able to have this diversity conversation in a very broad way. I feel like I just know that much more from our interactions and that has made me very broad, which has served me well. People talk about being interdisciplinary, but I think it's about having this meaningful connection with other people and understanding what they do and how you meaningfully relate to what they do. But then one of the things that I admire about each of you is the way you speak via your research or you speak via your teaching. That's your impact and your service to the field. You can write some letters and all those things, but the things you do in terms of mentoring students and the way you think very thoughtfully about how to have an impact so that it's multiplicative in terms of role modeling and inspiration. It's not just

about the pubs because we can do all of that, but how do you do things in a way where you are continuously helping our community. And so those have been my mantras, the things I think about in trying to consistently be broad *and* deep because they go together. They're both important to be able to do this and do it well.” (Fellow 1)

We also reflected on the amount and quality of talent that exists among Black faculty within the fields of management and I-O psychology. From our vantage point, there is much untapped potential that could be realized with some changes within departments, universities, and the field. To help capture this potential, the following recommendations were offered:

“My suggestion borrows from a famous scene in the movie, *The Matrix*, when the focal character Neo is asked whether he wants to take the blue pill and remain blissfully ignorant or the red pill, which will force him to confront some very unpleasant facts about reality. As awful as this sounds, we've got to start slipping people the red pill. Force feeding facts to those in denial doesn't work, but neither does allowing them to continue living in this meritocratic fantasy they've bought into. As much as it stings to realize that you've benefitted from privilege, it is unquestionably worse to have been held back because you aren't a member of the privileged group. Our field must be committed to learning and promoting what may be challenging scientific truths (e.g., racism is real and impactful – inside and outside the academy), even if it makes folks uncomfortable (including some of us). At the same time, we need to continue searching for more compelling ways of enlightening those who remain unaware of these inconvenient truths (whether consciously or unconsciously).” (Fellow 2)

“I would like to highlight an urgent need to broaden the definition of success for our field. Typically, success is gauged by how productive one has been as a scholar, being appointed at a top university, and being viewed as a leader in one's field; however, all of this can transpire within a contextual backdrop that is psychically noxious and toxic for one's soul. The process of having to prove one's mettle, time and time again, along with being viewed (wrongly) as an exemplar for one's entire racioethnicity is emotionally taxing. Moreover, all of these work-related demands for outstanding achievement can be juxtaposed with a social environment wherein you are proportionally rare, experience racioethnic discrimination, and therefore, may lack socioemotional supports to cope with the demands of the profession. So, I ask that Black folks who choose to enter our profession to be mindful of professional

demands, socioemotional challenges, and sacrifices required to excel in our field. To institutions, I say be empathetic to your Black faculty, who are often one of few in work and/or location contexts, and provide resources that provide instrumental and/or social supports (e.g., developmental opportunities, fairness in service requirements, inclusion, socioemotional support, etc.). By and large, people are at their best when they achieve a sense of integrated functioning, such that they strike a healthy balance between their work and non-work lives.” (Fellow 4)

“My call for action is for the field to embrace change. This should not be a foreign concept given that the vocational and avocational aspects of our profession center on explaining why and/or how phenomena occur. In doing so, we strive to demonstrate how our work *builds upon and extends* prior research in a specific area. Yet, when it comes to professional norms and the climate of our field, we are content to rely on the same conceptual foundations that have been used for the past 75 years. Consistent with our constant reminder to business leaders that the world is changing, and their enterprises must change as well in order to remain competitive, we need to practice what we preach. The next generation of scholars have come up through a society that is more diverse, complex, technologically advanced, etc. As such, there is much to learn from them as well as the potential for new insights and contributions to our field. However, we have to be willing to acknowledge that while we may be experts in a certain body of literature, we do not ... (brace yourself) ... know everything. We need to seek collaborations with those who do not look like us, think like us, or work like us to *build upon* our personal bodies of knowledge and *extend* our relevance and skills for operating in the dynamic environment that we study and strive to understand. Just imagine if we embraced the change surrounding us rather than fighting so hard to maintain the status quo ... perhaps we would advance the culture of our field like we advance the literature.” (Fellow 1)

“My hope is that this piece might motivate those in positions of leadership in our professional organizations to engage in a process of deep and extensive self-reflection as individuals as well as organizations. How did we get here? In many ways, my recommendations might be healer, heal thyself. As a quantitative social science, in what ways do we use the ample data related to our membership to seriously consider the satisfaction and engagement of all groups, even those annoying intersections despite their sometimes small numbers? In what ways might exit data be collected and used to consider how our organizations

communicate their espoused diversity values and prioritizing creating not only inclusive workplaces, but organizations that are actively anti-racist? Certainly a self-study is warranted, but it is past time for an external audit and to engage our colleagues who have excelled in creating diverse and inclusive organizations to provide a thorough assessment. For example, how might national leaders in Counseling Psychology or Social Work evaluate our attempts to not only become a more diverse and inclusive organization, but critique our organizational structures, graduate program selection practices, faculty expectations, teaching and mentoring practices from the lens of professional communities that unapologetically center anti-racism and social justice in their work? Honestly, I can hear every argument and attempt to push back on this suggestion. Ultimately all of them reflect the deeply entrenched elitism of our professional community to be different, to be separate and ultimately a smug satisfaction with who we are and desire to remain. I hope we can move beyond today’s performative diversity strategies and find ways to embrace, grow and develop scholars of color and value their contributions, even if they don’t resemble those of the past. Yet that all depends upon our willingness to hear from our colleagues in allied disciplines. My fear is that because they don’t look like who we are and who we value, their assessments cannot be ‘heard’ even if they are requested. Are we ready for a transformative reinvention? Like every good psychologist, I’ll say it depends. That can only occur when we’re willing to shine a light on our historical roots, so that we can understand who we are today, but you have to truly want change.” (Fellow 3)

“To my young colleagues, I simply say this: Keep a healthy level of detachment and a free agent mentality. Do you desire a legacy or a label? It is easy to be seduced into believing there is only one way or there is one best way. The end result though is that you may end up excessively laboring in ways that reinforce someone else’s worth or agenda while yours becomes a distant memory. Work with the end result in mind: Who are you seeking to serve, to give voice to, to partner with? What is the legacy you want to leave? Mentors and colleagues who center you in the accomplishment of your goals for your own career will listen and support rather than object, derail and redirect you.” (Fellow 4)

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