

# Women Faculty of Color: Stories Behind the Statistics

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**Abstract** In this qualitative study we address two primary research questions: What are the experiences of women faculty of color (WFOC) who departed the tenure track at predominantly White, research universities? Using the modified lens of the newcomer adjustment framework, what socialization factors may have contributed to the WFOCs' departure? Through a longitudinal, in-depth examination of three WFOC who left their university prior to earning tenure, themes of gendered and racialized tokenization and isolation, a need for a more intrusive style of mentoring, and poor institutional fit were identified. Implications for future research on faculty members' social identity and promising practices for faculty development are shared.

**Keywords** Women faculty of color · Tenure · Socialization · Faculty development

Women faculty of color (WFOC) remain underrepresented at all levels of the professoriate in US colleges and universities (Fries-Britt et al. 2011; Gasman et al. 2011; Kelly and Fetridge 2012) and remain an understudied population in the quantitative and qualitative literature (Turner et al. 2008). Such underrepresentation exists in the context of a historically gendered (Maranto and Griffin 2010) and racially biased academy (Perry et al. 2009). For example, many challenges that WFOC face are the result of an academy that has historically served White men and

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is still largely made up of White male faculty (Agguire 2000; Gregory 2001; Ware 2000). Moreover, full-time WFOC—(i.e., defined as Black, Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander, and American Indian/Alaska Native)—at degree-granting institutions comprised only 10 % of all assistant, 7 % of all associate, and 3 % of all full professors (US Department of Education 2012). Thus, the purpose of this study is explore one dimension of gendered and racialized disparities in the professoriate by giving voice to WFOC who did not earn tenure at predominantly White, research universities and whose voices are often buried within studies that report results under categories such as “faculty of color” or “women” (Turner et al. 2011, p. 200).

To analyze WFOCs’ departure from the tenure track, we applied the newcomer adjustment model (Bauer et al. 2007) from the organizational socialization literature. Because the model serves as an exemplar for employee retention, among other positive outcomes such as job satisfaction, we deemed the model an arguably useful lens through which to understand why the WFOC in this study departed their institutions prior to earning tenure. Aside from a separate study of ours on the WFOC who did earn tenure, this model has not been used to understand faculty members’ tenure track experiences. Therefore, consideration of the model provides a unique contribution to the literature on faculty life. Additionally, the model does not account for the impacts of identity on socialization, such as gender and race. Subsequently, we modified the model to consider gender and race, as the literature on WFOC showed how their experiences in the academy are shaped by gender and race. Specifically, we address two primary research questions: What are the experiences of WFOC who departed the tenure track at predominantly White, research universities? Using the modified lens of the newcomer adjustment framework, what socialization factors may have contributed to the WFOCs’ departure?

## Related Literature

WFOC remain an understudied population in the quantitative and qualitative literature (Turner et al. 2008). Within the literature that addresses the experiences of WFOC in the academy, the majority of studies attend to only gender or only on race versus a both/and approach (Leggon 2006); fewer studies examined the intersection of gender and race for WFOC.

### Barriers for Women Faculty

Barriers were also a theme in the literature on women’s experiences in the professoriate. Common barriers include a sexist climate (Greene et al. 2010; Marschke et al. 2007), gender inequity (Amey 1996; Gardner 2013; Rosser 2004), and an absence of mentoring (Tierney and Bensimon 1996). Also, women are often viewed as more caring and available to students (Kelly and Fetridge 2012; Park 1996). Consequently, women are asked to teach and serve more than male faculty (Gardner 2013; Kulis et al. 2002; Misra et al. 2011). This gendered culture and gendered division of labor in academe can result in low job satisfaction among

women faculty members and lead to their departure from the tenure track (Gardner 2013). In addition to gender, race functions as a compounding mediator of women's experiences in the academy.

### Barriers for Faculty of Color

Much of the literature on faculty of colors' experiences within US predominantly White institutions (PWIs) focuses on barriers and challenges that impede success in the academy. Common barriers include racism and tokenism—meaning, “being defined by the color of their skin to benefit the institution” (Garrison-Wade et al. 2012, p. 105), a lack of mentoring (Diggs et al. 2009; Stanley 2006; Stanley and Lincoln 2005), the absence of a critical mass of other faculty of color (Stanley 2006), and the devaluing of faculty of colors' teaching and scholarship due to the frequent focus on race-related topics (Garrison-Wade et al. 2012; Jayakumar et al. 2009). In addition, faculty of color are often assigned excessive service responsibilities (Agguire 2000; Baez 2000), encounter higher demands for diversity-related teaching and/or service (Garrison-Wade et al. 2012), experience threats to credibility and authority in predominantly White classrooms (Bavishi et al. 2010; Ford 2011; Moore et al. 2010; Perry et al. 2009; Pittman 2010), and receive lower teaching evaluations relative to White counterparts (Garrison-Wade et al. 2012; McGowan 2000; Smith and Anderson 2005; Vargas 2002). Additionally, Tierney and Rhoads' (1993) analysis of faculty socialization into the professoriate identified weak anticipatory socialization—meaning, poor socialization throughout one's graduate education—as a widespread contributing reason for why faculty of color depart from the academy.

### Multiple Marginality: Gender and Race

Although some understandings of WFOCs' experiences can be interpreted from the literature on women faculty or faculty of color, literature on WFOCs' multiple marginality as both women and persons of color yield additional understandings of faculty life. For example, although Gardner (2013) focused on White women and did not cite race as a “salient issue” (p. 367) for the women in her study, more research that addressed both gender and race was recommended. One primary theme from the extant literature on WFOC is that they experience the academy as the “Other” because of how they differ from both the White and male norm around which the academy was built.

For example two studies focused on WFOC as the Other in the PWI classroom. Vargas (1999) studied 34 women of color teachers—22 of whom were assistant, associate, or full professors—to understand women of colors' experiences in predominantly White classrooms. Vargas (1999) found that, at times, White students perceived teachers' attempts to encourage critical thinking as “white culture bashing” (Vargas 1999, p. 366). Vargas (1999) also noted that some student resistance was enabled by White faculty members' treatment of WFOC. One WFOC participant explained, “being perceived as other by colleagues creates a permissive climate for student resistance to the Other Teacher's authority” (Vargas 1999,

p. 369), and some students were resistant to foreign-born WFOC who also had a foreign accent (Vargas 1999).

Several Latina scholars also discussed how their experiences as women intersected with their racial identity in diversity-related classrooms at PWIs. For example, Duarte (2009) and Castañeda (2009) noted PWIs' interest in the "intellectual capital" (Duarte 2009, p. 262) of Latina scholars and their contribution to structural diversity being in tension with the challenges that teaching Chicano/Latino Studies entails—in part, due to a lack of structural diversity at their respective institutions. Mata (2009) elaborated on how her dual roles of being a woman and person of color pushed back on "pre-conceived notions of what a scholar/professor looks like" (p. 272) and interrupted a "Black/White binary that characterizes most conversations on race" (p. 272).

In a qualitative study based on data from the extant literature and from Turner's (2002) experiences as a WFOC, Turner (2002) described the "lived contradictions and ambiguous empowerment" (p. 75) that WFOC face in the academy—meaning, though WFOC earn academic positions, their Othered race/ethnicity and gender can "limit their authority" (Turner 2002, p. 75) as a faculty member. Turner (2002) recommended that institutions "provide professional development experiences that assist a new faculty woman of color to overcome challenges of multiple marginality" (p. 85)—such as a mentoring program that can help faculty to navigate campuses that expect White men to be the face of faculty life. Turner (2002) also urged administrators and policymakers to be much more aware of how campus climate and structural diversity can impact persistence of WFOC. The theme of the Other was also found in narratives by Marbley, Wong, Santos-Hatchett, Pratt and Jaddo (2011) who asserted that WFOC "often find themselves not fitting in and able to climb the academic ladder to success" and needing to decipher "more creative ways" for how to survive the academy because of the "Eurocentric and male lenses" that are used "to frame standards and dictate certain cultural, behavioral, and professional norms" (p. 166). In order to create an environment where WFOC have a better chance to succeed, Marbley et al. (2011) recommended that colleges and universities "must make a deliberate effort to recruit and retain them (WFOC)" (p. 172); and that "White women and women of color must take a more active role in utilizing not only their unique identities as women, but other identities that define them (e.g., race/ethnicity)—recognizing the valuable resources they bring to academia because of those other identities" (p. 172).

The concept of WFOC as the Other was further addressed in Ford's (2011) qualitative study on 21 WFOC. Ford (2011) concluded that WFOCs' bodies "represent a series of raced and gendered contradictions in academia" (p. 472) relative to a White male norm and that working within raced and gendered stereotypes "impinges on the performance, retention, promotion and tenure of WOC (women of color) faculty" (p. 473). Ford (2011) called for more research that accounts for WFOCs' multiple marginality as both women and persons of color and argued for an empirical study design, in that "the literature must expand beyond individual narratives" (p. 466) in order to "advance the discourse on the bodily (gendered and raced) experiences of WOC faculty" (p. 466).

In addition, Turner et al. (2011) contributed a qualitative study on 51 WFOC from research extensive, PWIs that focused on WFOC as the Other. Turner et al. (2011) argued that WFOC experience “marginalization, subtle discrimination, racism and institutional racism, gender-bias and institutional sexism, and difficulties with students who do not expect to be taught by women of color” (p. 209). Turner et al. (2011) recommended that institutions must recommit to the success of diverse faculty through department and institution-wide campus inclusion policies and supports.

Finally, in another qualitative study, McClellan (2012) discussed her experiences as a Black woman relative to the Black men whom she interviewed in her research. In McClellan’s (2012) analysis of how her identity shaped two “critical incidents” with Black men, McClellan (2012) argued that, when in a predominantly White environment, it can be difficult to discern whether race or gender affect her interactions more than the other; but, among Black men, McClellan (2012) found her gender to be more salient. Nevertheless, McClellan (2012) maintained that both her gender and race “intersect daily” (p. 97) in her exchanges with others.

Although previous literature addressed some aspects of WFOCs’ experiences, more research is needed that accounts for the impacts of gender and race. Also, much of the literature on WFOCs’ multiple marginality is written based on data collected from one point in time as compared to an empirical, longitudinal study on faculty members’ experiences on the tenure track specifically. Our attention to gendered and racial experiences on the tenure track, longitudinal data from in-depth participant interviews, and consideration of an underused conceptual framework—newcomer adjustment—contributes to gaps in the literature on WFOC.

## Conceptual Framework

Organizational socialization theory informed the conceptual framework for this study. According to Bauer et al., (2007), organizational socialization is defined as “the process by which newcomers make the transition from being organizational outsiders to being insiders” (p. 707). For the purposes of this study, insider status is considered being a tenured faculty member, and one’s transition to this insider status is commonly referred to as newcomer adjustment (Bauer et al. 2007). Based on the model, more role clarity, self-efficacy, and social acceptance theoretically lead to desired outcomes, such as intentions to remain in one’s position, job satisfaction, high job performance, and lower turnover (Bauer et al. 2007). For our study, role clarity, self-efficacy, and social acceptance provided a basis for analysis in order to identify any common themes (Denzin and Lincoln 2011) for how the WFOC experienced the tenure track. In relationship to this study, role clarity is defined as how clear or uncertain WFOC were about tenure requirements; self-efficacy relates to WFOCs’ belief in their ability to accomplish the necessary tasks to earn tenure; and social acceptance addresses to what extent WFOC felt validated by organizational insiders such as senior faculty and administrators, students, or other colleagues.

We modified the newcomer adjustment model to account for the mediating impacts of context in the women’s experiences—namely, gender, race, at a

predominantly White university. Given the context of WFOCs' place in the academy as part of marginalized gender and racial groups relative to their respective institutions and academe in general; and, because organizational socialization models—including the newcomer adjustment model—do not account for the impacts of social identity (Allen 1996; Sallee 2011)—we wondered to what extent the WFOCs' socialization was mediated by gender and/or race.

## Methodology

We sought “to understand human behavior as constructions determined by the social contexts, such as culture” (Yi and Shorter-Gooden 1999, p. 18)—specifically, how the WFOC in this study constructed their realities as both women and persons of color in the context of a predominantly White, research university. Therefore, we employed a constructivist framework to foreground WFOCs' voices and experiences from their perspective on the tenure track (Guba and Lincoln 1994). Constructivism involves examining how participants make meaning of events in natural settings and recognizes that there are multiple realities or perceptions of events (Denzin and Lincoln 2011). The constructivist framework, paired with the longitudinal research design, allowed us to pinpoint experiences that were meaningful to participants each year on the tenure track and ground the data in their perception of reality.

## Participants

Participants were selected via intentional sampling (Patton 2001) from a larger, longitudinal *Women in the Academy* study. Participants for the *Women in the Academy* study (seven WFOC and 15 White women faculty) were recruited from two public, research-extensive, PWI universities in the US. Our subsample was important to our investigation as there is disparity of tenured women faculty at research-extensive universities, where “only one-fourth of tenured faculty were women” (Philipsen 2008, p. 1). The primary goal of the larger and present study was to understand critical incidents that shaped women's tenure track journeys. Critical incidents were defined as experiences participants reported as key indicators of their progress on the tenure track (e.g. successes or disappointments related to teaching, research and service). The participants in the present study included only the three WFOC who did not earn tenure at their original institution. Thus, out of the seven WFOC in the larger study, we included two Black women (Collette and Amanda) and one Asian woman (Geraldine). The decision to focus on the WFOC who did not earn tenure was made to address the research questions and uncover the participants' perspectives of why they departed. We were unable to analyze WFOCs' experiences based on discipline due to the small number of women participants in each field at these universities, differences within fields, and a lack of women from more racial and ethnic identities, as only Black and Asian women participated in this study. However, we believe this intentional sample allowed us to examine the role of the newcomer adjustment framework in faculty who leave their

institution without tenure. We address the experiences of the four WFOC who did earn tenure in a separate study with a different focus on what factors may have led to their success on the tenure track (Kelly and McCann 2013).

### Data Collection and Analysis

A semi-structured, interview with seven questions served as the primary means of generating data (Torres 2003). On an annual basis, beginning in their first or second year on the tenure track, WFOC participated in an hour-long, one-on-one, semi-structured interview related to their experiences as tenure track professors. Thus, on average, participants had 4–5 interviews each over a 4–5 year period. Because of the study's longitudinal design, transcripts were reviewed in order to modify the next year's interview protocol and to develop follow-up questions for each WFOC. This review process helped to increase the trustworthiness (Denzin and Lincoln 2011) of the study and build trust and rapport with participants. All interviews were tape-recorded, transcribed verbatim, read, and re-read as a preliminary stage of analysis before coding. In the first stage of coding we tracked critical incidents that emerged for faculty during their tenure track journey. Because we projected that the newcomer adjustment framework (Bauer et al. 2007) might surface reasons why the WFOC did not remain in their institutions and earn tenure, the second stage of coding (Denzin and Lincoln 2011) focused on how each WFOCs' experiences were mediated by a presence or absence of role clarity, self-efficacy, and social acceptance. Because gender and race were implicated in some of the WFOCs' critical incidents gleaned from the first two rounds of coding, the third round of coding involved determining themes across the three WFOCs' experiences in relationship to gender and race (e.g. instances of sexism and/or racism encountered on tenure track).

The three rounds of coding produced separate themes for the WFOC who earned tenure compared to those who did not. A White woman faculty member who differed from the researcher's social identity served as an additional coder for the data, and we relied on intercoder agreement to increase credibility of the study (Denzin and Lincoln 2011). For example, after coding the first transcripts separately, we met and came to agreement on what code was assigned to key passages in women's transcripts. Themes that emerged from coding WFOC transcripts were the basis for the findings reported for this study.

### Researcher Positionality

Our identities as women of color were essential to our positionality as we collected data, analyzed, and wrote-up this study. One author, Dr. Kelly, experienced being the only faculty of color in her program and navigated gender and race throughout the tenure track process. She documented her tenure track journey (Fries-Britt and Kelly 2005) in a separate study. The other author, Ms. McCann, a South Korean-American doctoral candidate, was located both inside and outside of the data. As a person of color, the Ms. McCann identified with some of highlights and challenges that women in the study experienced; yet, she did not hold the position of a tenure

track faculty member and did not identify as closely with that socialization process. In addition, a White woman faculty member engaged the researchers in a dialogue about the data and findings. Thus, our ongoing researcher reflexivity and data analysis strategies enhanced the trustworthiness and credibility of the study (Denzin and Lincoln 2011).

## Major Themes

Because the data used for this study was collected over the course of the WFOCs' entire tenure track journeys, the findings highlight key benchmarks in the WFOCs' experiences: (a) WFOCs' experiences during their first year on the tenure track; (b) WFOCs' mid-tenure experiences (year three or four); and (c) WFOCs' final year as an assistant professor. Although the final year on the tenure track would typically be year six, because the WFOC in this study departed their original institutions prior to earning tenure, the final year for Collette was year four; for Amanda, year three; and for Geraldine, year five. Guided by the modified newcomer adjustment model, our findings foreground WFOCs' voices and illustrate how their socialization experiences were impacted by varying challenges to their role clarity, self-efficacy, and social acceptance and how their gender and race often compounded these challenges.

In their first year on the tenure track, challenges to social acceptance in the form of gendered and racial isolation was the most prominent theme across the WFOCs' experiences. By mid-tenure, challenges to WFOCs' self-efficacy and role clarity were the most salient—particularly in relationship to the type of mentoring in which the women were or were not engaged by organizational insiders. By the WFOCs' final year in their tenure track journeys, the women determined their mismatch with their respective institution given past challenges to their social acceptance, self-efficacy, and role clarity. In addition, each woman reported that they would have been the first WFOC—or one of the first in many years—to be tenured by their program or department. Though each WFOC's experiences were nuanced within each theme, our focus on commonalities rather than differences across the WFOCs' experiences allow us to emphasize factors that could relate to other WFOCs' experiences and could influence other institutions' competencies around the retention of diverse faculty.

### Year One: Challenges to Social Acceptance

During the WFOCs' first year on the tenure track, each woman experienced a lack of social acceptance from organizational insiders such as senior administrators and/or students. For example, Collette's social acceptance was challenged in that she felt tokenized for her status as both a woman and Black faculty member. In relationship to her gender, although Collette received documents that explicitly outlined the importance of publishing in specific journals for her mid- and final tenure reviews, she was appointed by her department chair to co-advise an undergraduate business club and to serve on a search committee. These appointed gendered service



responsibilities were in direct tension with other messages that prioritized research for tenure. Also, in relationship to her race, Collette questioned whether she was asked to serve because of her scholarly expertise or because of her social identity as a token racial minority. Collette described the following about her service:

At the end of the [search committee] meeting she [a tenured White, woman faculty] goes ... ‘Can I ask a question? Why is Collette here?’ And it was to provide diversity, which I already knew ... and I know that’s part of the reason why—like for some of the club events, that the other co-advisor wants me there, because, well, we get along very well ... but I think the other part is the, ‘Here, we have diversity.’

Although Collette speculated that her female colleague on the search committee questioned her involvement because her time should be protected from service to focus on research for tenure, based on her female colleague’s tone, Collette was concerned that a White woman—someone from whom she expected a degree of support—deemed Collette unqualified to serve on the hiring committee. This lack of social acceptance from a female senior faculty colleague was compounded by racial tokenism and resulted in feelings of both gendered and racial isolation in the department for Collette.

While Collette was not accepted by her White woman colleague and was conditionally accepted to serve on a committee because of her status as a WFOC, Geraldine did not perceive that her White, middle- and upper-class students accepted her as both a woman and of color faculty member. Geraldine communicated “apprehensions about being a teacher of color” to her students, and though they were at first “uncomfortable”; later on, however, many students explained, “But you’re our teacher and we just see you as our teacher, not a person of color.” Students’ colorblind interpretation of Geraldine’s identity led to “a lot of discussion points” in class throughout Geraldine’s first semester on the tenure track, as she wanted her students to understand the impacts of “personal history” in relationship to the course topic. Also, in relationship to her lack of social acceptance for her identity as a person of color, Geraldine explained, “I also feel isolated (on campus) in the sense that—in terms of ethnicity—I feel—I look around a lot for people who would share the same issues I would.” As a buffer against the isolation Geraldine experienced in the classroom and on campus, she participated in regularly scheduled meetings for tenure track professors where she “gravitated a lot toward faculty of color.”

Also, Geraldine’s status as an international woman faculty member of color exacerbated the lack of social acceptance that Geraldine faced on her predominantly White campus. For example, during Geraldine’s first year on campus, there was a backlog for her and other international faculty members’ visas. Geraldine communicated this problem to her dean and department chair, and she was told that the backlog was, in part, due to the processing of faculty visas alongside a much higher number of student visas. Geraldine described, “I am experiencing the least support (from the university administration). ... I feel strongly that if (the university) is starting to open its doors to faculty of color... the faculty should not be part of the international student processing.” Throughout year one, Geraldine

remained concerned about her ability to remain employed in the US and provide financial stability for her family as the “sole breadwinner,” as she felt a gendered obligation to be the caretaker of her family. Geraldine elaborated, “It’s (the backlog of visas) like in my bubble it’s in the back of my mind all the time. These others are the challenges I can cope with, but this one I can’t because it involves my family.” Therefore, her institution’s failure to provide job security led to feelings of negative social acceptance for her status as an international woman faculty of color among a majority of US-born faculty. The mental energy these issues consumed encroached on Geraldine’s time for research and writing.

Unlike Collette and Geraldine, a lack of social acceptance in the form of gendered and/or racial isolation was not at the forefront of Amanda’s first-year experiences. For Amanda, “what’s helped out” were her connections with other assistant professors within and outside of her institution. From various informal meetings, she gained advice from WFOC who were farther along on the tenure track, such as, “‘Oh I went through that. Don’t worry about it. Do this.’ ... or, ‘You need to keep up with this part of it or ask about this.’” In addition, Amanda was aware of her department’s overall gender and racial demographics. Amanda knew, for instance, that her department recently hired “a lot of women” and planned to hire “three female” faculty the following year, in addition to “minorities”—the latter of which her department was “slowly trying to bring in” in light of budget constraints. Therefore, the presence (for Amanda) or absence (for Collette, Geraldine) of social acceptance from students, organizational insiders such as senior administrators, and/or other peer colleagues played a significant role in each of their formative experiences as newcomers to the tenure track.

### Mid-tenure: Challenges to Self-efficacy and Role Clarity

By mid-tenure—in addition to a continued lack of social acceptance—low self-efficacy, believing they could do what was needed to earn tenure, was a salient theme. A decrease in self-efficacy appeared to be impacted by specific dynamics of the mentoring relationships in which two of the women (Collette and Geraldine) were engaged and by the compounding gendered and racial isolation that all three women experienced. For example, Collette was assigned a White male mentor through a university-wide mentoring program for tenure track faculty; however, after her first year, the mentor changed unexpectedly to another White male based on differing “research interests.” Collette named the situation as “messed up,” as Collette did not have any input in the switch, and the new mentor did not provide feedback on her writing. Collette needed writing support in order to work toward her goal of tenure. In relationship to her increasing doubts about her ability to continue on the tenure track in conjunction with gendered and racial isolation, Collette stated:

It feels like a lot of time I’m just spinning my wheels and just not getting anywhere [with writing and publication]. ... it [her department] does feel a bit isolating, because there was a visiting professor who was a woman in the department, and she officially ended her appointment at the end of the

semester. There's another woman in the department who is never around. ... So it's very isolating. Being one, the youngest, and then two, you know, a woman ... and then three, being Black.

In an attempt to buffer her low self-efficacy toward an ability to write and publish in order to meet the research requirements for tenure, Collette sought out other women faculty of color at a different institution to, “chat and vent” about their challenges in academe. Given her increased role clarity around what was needed to earn tenure, Collette also expressed that she was “toying with the idea of moving into administration,” as “several people” believed she “would enjoy administration more.” However, Collette doubted her ability “to make that transition” and linked her uncertainties to an absence of strong mentoring during her doctoral studies. Collette explained, “Even during my dissertation process I didn't feel like I got the guidance I should have ... I missed a big major chunk that I should have done (during her doctoral studies) that they (her doctoral program faculty) didn't catch and I didn't catch.” According to Collette, “part of the reason why the process of research” was one that she “intellectually” knew but did not feel as comfortable executing on her own as an assistant professor was because she lacked modeling of how to do research in her doctoral journey and now again in her faculty role. Thus, Collette's low self-efficacy toward research and writing could be attributed to a lack of strong anticipatory socialization and mentoring once she entered the tenure track—particularly around research and how to navigate her predominantly White institution as a WFOC.

Similar to Collette, Geraldine experienced challenges to her self-efficacy and role clarity by mid-tenure. In terms of role clarity, after feedback on her research in her mid-tenure review, Geraldine realized that she erroneously “thought that teaching and research were at par with each other” and “didn't internalize that the research had to go first, before the teaching.” She stated that her chair had not “pressured” her to publish and instead she was “given new courses” to design and prepare. Geraldine explained, “I realize that because I was new in the system, and I was given new courses. I needed to develop courses, and that took up a lot of my time—research time—and I wasn't able to spend very much time on the writing.”

Though Geraldine's contract was renewed, her mid-tenure reviewers and her new dean of color recommended she take a “junior sabbatical” for one semester to focus on writing. Geraldine described being “in a panic mode” after her mid-tenure review and resolved to publish as much as she could to “catch up” on her publications and try to begin a new strand of research to better connect her teaching and service with new scholarship. Though Geraldine noted a female mentor figure who “gently pushed” her to find venues to present her research, the mentor did not address strategies for successful publication.

Additionally, with regard to self-efficacy, Geraldine questioned whether she could do what was required of her to earn tenure—focus strictly on publication—when she was also expected to design and prepare new courses, and when her family experienced significant overt racism in their community. For example, Geraldine's child faced racism in school, and her husband experienced “verbal abuse, racial profiling, social isolation, discrimination, and bigotry” from past co-workers.

Geraldine elaborated, “When we submit our tenure papers, they don’t really ask you to talk about your family. ... it’s sort of assumed that your family is fine, and they don’t really consider that the path of a faculty of color is different from the path of the mainstream.” Though the new dean supported Geraldine’s junior sabbatical, she did not serve as a highly involved mentor dedicated to Geraldine’s socialization on the tenure track and did not help Geraldine make sense of the conflicting experiences she was having with home and work life which could have led to greater role clarity and self-efficacy toward earning tenure.

In contrast to Collette and Geraldine, Amanda experienced higher self-efficacy with regard to her ability to earn tenure. For example, strong mentoring relationships (assigned by her department) helped Amanda gain more clarity around tenure expectations. Amanda explained, “I’ve gotten more mentoring actually here..., since they’ve really been trying to change the tenure process. I think they’ve just gotten a lot better about telling us stuff ahead of time.” Also, of her mid-tenure review, Amanda mentioned, “they’ve (mid-tenure reviewers) been giving me feedback,” such as reframing some of her articles, working on her “writing style,” and turning some of her service commitments into research opportunities. Therefore, unlike Collette and Geraldine, Amanda did not experience as much self-doubt toward her ability to meet publication requirements for tenure.

Another unique difference in Amanda’s story was, unlike Collette and Geraldine, low self-efficacy toward earning tenure was not compounded with low social acceptance in the form of gendered or racial isolation. For example, by mid-tenure, Amanda noted the relative critical mass of faculty of color (four Black faculty including herself) and female faculty (two) within her program. Amanda viewed the increased representation of faculty of color in her department as a rare phenomenon:

So it’s a different dynamic with this [faculty demographic]. I don’t think they [graduate students in the program] realize. They haven’t grasped the concept. It’s a total different dynamic because, first of all, you don’t find too many minority faculty anyway, and then in counselor [field] you really don’t find any—to have that number here I don’t think the students have grasped the concept.

Therefore, although Amanda: (a) benefited from a type of mentoring that reinforced the basic expectations for earning tenure; (b) received more guidance for research and publication; and (c) worked with more like-race and like-gender colleagues than did Collette and Geraldine, Amanda’s increased role clarity about her role on the tenure track resulted in her questioning whether she wanted to grapple with other ongoing politics of the tenure track, given other potential options to be hired at the associate level. Examples of “politics” included working in a college that had not tenured a faculty member of color for 15 years and the requirement to publish in specific journals that generally counted more for tenure but were not necessarily journals in which Amanda preferred to publish. Amanda reasoned, “People don’t realize that (racial) minority faculty get recruited a lot heavier so I mean why should I go through this whole thing of tenure here when I can walk in and get tenure (somewhere else)?” In summary, Collette and Geraldine experienced more challenges with mentoring and role clarity that were, to varying

degrees, compounded by low self-efficacy, ongoing gendered and racial isolation. Amanda struggled to rationalize the politics she faced as a Black female assistant, tenure-track professor and realized that she might have other options in the academy. Amanda's mid-tenure turning point relates to WFOCs' experiences in their final year on the tenure track: social acceptance, self-efficacy, and role clarity in relationship to institutional fit.

### Final Year: The Decision to Depart

By the end of their tenure track journeys, each WFOC developed a clearer sense of what was needed to earn tenure at her respective institution (role clarity), and such requirements did not align with a belief in their ability to meet tenure requirements (self-efficacy) and/or with an institution type and campus climate in which they felt supported on the tenure track as WFOC (social acceptance). As stated, by mid-tenure, Amanda realized she might have other options, given her status as a Black female who was performing well on the tenure track. Despite helpful mentoring relationships, Amanda departed the tenure track at her original institution largely due to "so much pressure to publish, publish, publish" under unclear publication expectations from year to year. Shortly after the mid-tenure point, Amanda was recruited into a clinical tenure track position at a different institution where she appreciated the different tenure system and felt "needed." Amanda explained how much clearer tenure expectations were at her new institution: "You get to set-up your own goals and you get reviewed based on your own goals"; whereas, her former institution "wanted emphasis on research grants and they wanted more research articles. ... everything had to be explained in their terms." Though Amanda produced as much scholarship in her new position as was expected of her at her original institution, the new institution's tenure system was "just different" and did not involve the pressure she faced in her original tenure track position. Also, Amanda noted that her former tenure track position had not yet been filled, due to "the numbers, minorities and stuff and supposedly nobody fits."

Although Amanda did not mention experiencing overt racial bias during her time at her original institution, in her final interview after she departed she spoke to the gendered and racial homogeneity of the master's students at her original institution. Reflecting on the racial campus climate, she shared that one incoming class was "all female," and their program did not "have enough (racial) diversity" or "the best reputation for it (racial diversity) anyway." Amanda noted a lack of social acceptance for diversity courses by her majority White female students who were "tired of diversity" due to the program's new focus on diversity-related issues. Amanda also discussed her "horrible" teaching evaluations from the cohorts who were not admitted under the program's new diversity focus and consisted of majority White females relative to other cohorts; and, she discussed how her original institution has "problems trying to keep minorities (faculty)". Nevertheless, Amanda believed, "they're really making an effort (to increase a diversity of demographics among enrolled students)", and I think that's just the most important thing is to make an effort. Unlike Amanda, however, Geraldine and Collette did not believe that their institutions were working to be more diverse, and their clarity

around what was required of them to earn tenure at their institutions contributed to their decision to depart.

Geraldine's decision to depart the tenure track was crystallized by year five, and she accepted a new tenure track position at a teaching focused institution with more racial diversity and more opportunities for support for research and publication. Of her new institution, Geraldine said:

Already, some colleagues are trying to network with me asking me about research ... I feel that there is going to be that kind of support. I've been told that there is a mentorship program and so that's one of the first things I'm going to do is find my mentor and share my goals ... I also feel that there's a dean in that institution that seems to be very supportive of his faculty ... I do already sense that supportiveness or the collegiality from that group ... so I don't feel like I'm ignored or disregarded. I'm already welcomed as part of their circle.

Thus, although Geraldine did not gain the role clarity for what was required of her to earn tenure at her original institution before it was too late, she was able to apply that knowledge to her new position. Additionally, Geraldine's decision to depart was compounded by "how institutionalized racism is" and the "many barriers that keep a person of color growing within such an environment." Geraldine emphasized the lack of social acceptance that was compounded by the racism: "It just did not feel like we were welcome ... And, it could be we looked so (racially) different, but the thing is ... it's damaging our self-concept, our identity." Therefore, Geraldine's and her family's lack of social acceptance on campus and the wider-community also led Geraldine to depart from her original institution. Compounding Geraldine's decision to depart was also her gendered obligation to care for her family as a mother and partner in an environment that was more welcoming and inclusive.

Ultimately, role clarity concerning institution-driven tenure requirements was a determining factor in Collette's decision to leave her tenure track position, as well—not only in terms of her original institution being a PWI and a doctoral university but also in terms of the academy in general. According to Collette:

So the third year of the tenure track process they do the third year review, and it was at that point that they decided that I was not on track ... they were not gonna renew my contract, which was perfectly fine with me because I didn't want to stay because there had been a shift in the culture there, and there was beginning to be questions as to whether or not our department would even continue to be our department as it was. Cause some classes were being eliminated and—especially in the graduate level.

Though Collette was not on track to earn tenure, primarily due to lack of publications, she was required to remain in her position for a fourth year, which she described as "painful" and would "go just to teach class and then I would leave." Also after Collette was deemed not on track to earn tenure, she decided to apply to Master of Fine Arts programs, per an ongoing interest in the fine arts, and she eventually took a new position as a visiting faculty member at a new institution.

Yet, Collette did not feel any more accepted in the academy and believed she was trying to “force-fit” her role as a faculty member. Collette added, “I will be more careful next time about what I decide to invest my mental energy in... and emotional energy, as well as the culture of a place.” After departing her new institution, Collette pursued career opportunities related to dance and creative writing, and reflected on previous interviews where she discussed the possibility of artistic endeavors being a better fit for her professionally than the faculty role.

## Interpretation

Each WFOC’s experience on the tenure track was impacted by nuanced challenges related to their adjustment as newcomers on the tenure track. Thus, we cannot reduce the WFOCs’ tenure track journeys to one explanatory story. However, the lens of the newcomer adjustment framework allowed us to identify themes across their experiences in relationship to role clarity, self-efficacy, and social acceptance, and these themes predicate critical implications for future research on faculty life and for practices related to faculty development. Moreover, our modification of the newcomer adjustment framework—accounting for the context of gender, race, and the backdrop of a predominantly White university—resulted in an ability to make meaning of the WFOCs’ experiences on the tenure track in relationship to their departures. The participants’ status as both women and persons of color differed from the White male norm of their universities and impacted how they constructed their realities on the tenure track.

Also, we argue that WFOC do not need to experience “equal” parts sexism and racism in each and every interaction for both to be impactful, as the women were always both a woman and person of color whether one facet of their identity was more prominent or not. According to Ford (2011), “Although one identity may be more or less prominent depending upon the social context, the women recognize that their bodily experiences are markedly different from those of their White female *and* White *and* non-White male colleagues” (p. 453). Furthermore, McClellan (2012) explained that though both gender and race influenced her daily interactions with others in a PWI, at times—such as during her exchanges with Black men—gender was more salient. As with the women in this study, although both gender and race were not ostensibly “happening” simultaneously in every interaction, both were significant to their experiences on the tenure track over time as evidenced by the modified newcomer adjustment framework.

### Challenges to Social Acceptance: Isolation and Tokenization

In part, because these WFOC were seen as Other relative to the White male norm, they experienced challenges to social acceptance on the tenure track. To earn tenure at a research university, success is determined by publishing research (Park 1996), and in Collette and Geraldine’s journeys, energy used to manage low social acceptance diminished their energy for writing. Though Amanda’s authority as a faculty member was accepted in one venue—publication—she still needed support

systems to navigate the politics of her tenure track journey; and, arguably, such navigation could have been facilitated by a type of mentoring that attended to that issue. Likewise, Collette and Geraldine could have benefitted from mentoring that helped them navigate the gendered and racialized challenges on the tenure track.

Overall, isolation and tokenization served as primary inhibitors to the WFOCs' social acceptance among organizational insiders—such as senior faculty and administrators—and/or among peer colleagues and students. As shown in the literature, women and faculty of color are often given excessive service responsibilities (Agguire 2000; Baez 2000; Gardner 2013; Kulis et al. 2002; Misra et al. 2011). For faculty of color, such service is often diversity-related (Garrison-Wade et al. 2012) and used as a means for departments to achieve structural diversity. Thus, one interpretation of Collette's service on the diversity committee was that she was being used to meet structural diversity goals in her predominantly White university and department but was not offered the support to navigate the challenges of being "Othered" on campus (Castañeda 2009; Duarte 2009; Garrison-Wade et al. 2012). Also, Collette's experience relates to WFOC being viewed, first, in terms of their visible identities alone rather than their role as a member of the academy alongside their intersecting identities (Marbley et al. 2011; Turner 2002). For example, Geraldine perceived a lack of social acceptance largely because of the racial isolation she felt in her classroom among her majority White students. Moreover, the time that WFOC spent managing gendered and racial issues was time not spent on research and writing needed for publication—issues of which can "drain their (WFOCs') energy" (Turner 2002, p. 75).

### Challenges to Role Clarity: Mentoring

All three WFOCs' lack of specific types of mentoring shaped their view of the tenure track and contributed to their reasons for departure. Though the WFOC in this study knew overall *what* they needed to accomplish in order to earn tenure by the time they departed their institutions, they could have benefited from more guidance from a mentor in terms of *how* to accomplish those tasks in order to be successful on the tenure track. For example, the mentors could have helped the WFOC navigate the mixed messages they and other WFOC receive (Kelly and Fetridge 2012; Park 1996) in terms of knowing that research is the most important for earning tenure yet are assigned a heavier service or teaching load. Therefore, in addition to the WFOCs' challenges with social acceptance, challenges to their role clarity served as further reason to depart rather than persist on the tenure track.

For example, Amanda's relationship with a White male mentor helped her to gain more clarity around basic expectations for research and added to her sense of overall acceptance by colleagues in a PWI. Yet, Amanda departed her original institution despite such support. Arguably, mentoring that focused more on strategies around the "politics" of writing and publication while on the tenure track would have been useful.

For Collette, one might wonder whether the negative messages Collette received along the way—such as her assigned mentors' lack of interest in her as a scholar and her gendered and racialized tokenization on service committees—exacerbated



Collette's underlying doubts about her fitness for the academy. In addition, Collette's weak anticipatory socialization—such as weak mentoring during her doctoral program—did not contribute to her success on the tenure track, and such weak anticipatory socialization is another barrier for the success of faculty of color (Tierney and Rhoads 1993). Arguably, had Collette's anticipatory socialization clarified the faculty role at a research university for her, she might have pursued a faculty position at a different institution type or not pursued a career as a faculty member at all.

Geraldine, too, could have benefited from a strong mentor—not only for guidance with publishing but also for navigating a racist climate and a gendered role of family caretaker. Overall, Geraldine felt unable to voice her concerns about her family's struggles due to racial oppression in the wider campus community, and she regarded her tenure track experience as different “from the mainstream” or White male experience. Given Geraldine's lack of success in writing and mentoring, it appears Geraldine could have benefitted by a more intrusive form of mentoring that was specifically targeted toward the publication process from the outset of her time on the tenure track rather than year four when she perceived it was too late to make up for lost time.

#### Self-efficacy: Institutional Fit

Finally, institutional fit impacted WFOCs' realities at their institutions and further lowered their self-efficacy toward persistence on the tenure track. For example, again, Amanda struggled to accept the “politics” of publishing in only select journals. Perhaps, Amanda was troubled by senior faculty members' interest in the journal quality rather than the quality of her research. This focus on quantity over quality points to additional ways that gender and race compound experiences for WFOC. Also, according to Marbley et al. (2011), “for women faculty of color in Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs), their survival is largely dependent on academe defining in more creative ways what it means to be a scholar” (p. 167). Perhaps, the way that Amanda drew upon her creativity to define what it meant to be a scholar entailed moving to an institution that sustained an equally rigorous, though less traditional, tenure system.

Moreover, Amanda and Geraldine did not believe they could thrive at their institutions, in part, due to the racial campus climate. Both women commented on the lack of structural diversity among the students they taught. Such experiences reflect the tension between WFOCs' and the racial climate of PWIs (Bavishi et al. 2010; Castañeda 2009; Duarte 2009; Garrison-Wade et al. 2012; Perry et al. 2009). In addition, Geraldine rendered her campus and wider campus community experiences in terms of institutional racism and lack of attention to family issues. Geraldine realized that she could not persist at an institution that maintained a racial climate that negatively affected her and her family's ability to thrive. Geraldine's difficulties with institutional fit could, again, relate to the lack of a critical mass of faculty of color and WFOC on her campus (Stanley 2006), wherein a critical mass might have spurred the wider campus community to pay more attention to how the needs of WFOC might differ from the dominant, White male norm.

Additionally, Collette's belief that she had to "force fit" herself into a place in the academy perhaps related to a more dramatic institutional fit mismatch than mere institution type; for, unlike the other two women who went on to academic positions at different institutions in hopes of having a different tenure track experience and campus climate, Collette realized she was not invested in research, teaching, or service whatsoever. Thus, although we could only capture limited facets of the three WFOC's three, four, and 5 years journeys on the tenure track, several implications for higher education research and practice can be taken from our findings.

## Implications

Through the lens of the modified newcomer adjustment framework, we gained an understanding of why some WFOC depart the tenure track. Although known percentages of WFOCs' representation in the academy are useful, attention to the lived realities behind such percentages are needed in order to illustrate the nuanced reasons for why and how WFOC face challenges to success in the academy.

### Implications for Research

Because, WFOCs' experiences are often subsumed in research on women *or* faculty of color (Ford 2011; Leggon 2006; Turner 2002), we recommend more research that addresses the impacts of both gender and race. Also, we were unable to focus on other aspects of participants' social identity due to the type of data that was generated from this study; therefore, future research that includes analysis of other aspects of social identity should be considered. Furthermore, more longitudinal studies could contribute to existing gaps in the literature on WFOC in the academy. For example, through our longitudinal study design, we were able to confirm central themes since some of the themes were repeated over time. Thus, the literature on WFOC could benefit from more varied approaches to research. Also, based on Collette's experiences with weak anticipatory socialization, more research on women of color doctoral students could add another dimension of understanding for WFOCs' experiences in the academy.

### Implications for Practice

Based on the WFOCs' collective experiences, we identified a need for more attention to faculty development at the program and department level and at the university level in order to reinforce a campus climate that offers more buffers to the isolation and tokenization that WFOC in this study faced. Although the importance of mentoring for the success of WFOC is not a new insight, as existing literature points to the importance of mentors for women and faculty of colors' success on the tenure track (Diggs et al. 2009; Stanley 2006; Stanley and Lincoln 2005), our analysis indicates that the *type* of mentoring WFOC experienced was what impacted their departures rather than the mere presence or absence of a mentor. In light of our

findings, one promising practice for PWIs would be for each new tenure track member to have an assigned, senior faculty member who is willing to take a more intrusive approach in the mentee-mentor relationship in terms of research and writing for publication and in terms of navigating a predominantly White and male-oriented campus as an Other faculty member. Moreover, it cannot be assumed that strategies helpful for White faculty or White women faculty address all challenges that WFOC would face, as the women in the this study made it clear that race was also a mediator of their experiences. Therefore, the multicultural competencies of mentors and other senior stakeholders in the hiring and promotion of WFOC should be addressed within programs and departments. Also, department leaders should be mindful of gendered service assignments—such as high service and new teaching loads—especially for WFOC at research extensive institutions where publishing is paramount to gaining tenure. Last, mentors should address mentees holistically, including space to discuss families.

## Conclusion

The stories of the WFOC in this study alluded to the need for support systems as buffers to the gendered and racial isolation they experienced at a research PWI, and this need is reflected in the literature (Stanley 2006). Moreover, the widespread support of organizational insiders—such as senior faculty and administrators who hold more hierarchical power on the tenure track—could contribute to the promotion of “a welcoming, diverse campus climate through their support of interventions addressing ethnic/racial/gender inequities” (Turner et al. 2011, p. 210).

Thus, deeper understandings for how WFOC are marginalized for their gender and race need to be considered for future success of tenure-track WFOC. Attention to WFOCs’ experiences on the tenure track is important because their stories are not often told and because the stories expose inequities in the tenure system that lead to viable implications for higher education research and practice (Garrison-Wade et al. 2012). We cannot say for sure whether the WFOC would have remained in their positions and earned tenure if they experienced fewer challenges to role clarity, self-efficacy, and social acceptance; however, we argue that they could have had a better chance to be successful on the tenure track if these aspects of newcomer adjustment were paid attention to in a gendered and racialized context at a research PWI. Our hope is that research on WFOCs’ experiences on the tenure track compels higher education researchers and practitioners to consider how the academy can cultivate a campus climate that takes seriously the importance of faculty development as a way to retain more WFOC.

## Appendix: Women in the Academy Interview Protocol

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Thank you so much for meeting with us ... participating in the study....

Describe your position at this university?

Probe for Research, Teaching, Service?

What have you learned this year about being a faculty member in the academy?

What did you most want to accomplish this year? Why?

Any surprises? How so?

Please draw a professional highlight from this year.

Please describe the drawing for us

What does this represent for you?

Please draw a professional challenge you encountered in the past year.

Please describe the drawing for us

What does this represent for you?

Are there other critical incidents that define, for you, this academic year?

Where have you received your greatest support over the past year?

In what form has that support come?

Have you sought it out on your own?

*If time...*

What strategies have you employed to be successful this year?

In thinking about next year, what are you most looking forward to and why?

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