

# Moving the Needle on Equity and Inclusion

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*This article, adapted from an invited lecture given by the author, addresses intersectional inequalities in U.S. higher education, particularly as they impact faculty. With a focus on structure, culture, and climate, current data is presented, highlighting the variety of ways in which academia remains stratified. These patterns contribute to continued inequality, inequity, marginalization, and discrimination, particularly for women faculty. A secondary focus is on change, on “moving the needle,” exploring specific strategies for how institutions can transform and individuals can labor as change agents for equity and inclusivity.*

**Keywords: equity, inclusion, change, faculty, higher education, campus climate, race, gender**

I would like to start with some important qualifications about the topics I address herein. First, these are difficult and sometimes uncomfortable issues with which to grapple. Second, these are critical topics with which to grapple. Third, the process of being reflective about your institution – and your place within it – is vital if we are going to be serious about equity, equality, and inclusion across higher education. That means those of you – those of us – with varying levels of privilege must engage. The issues of discrimination, marginalization, and inequity are not someone else’s burden; they belong to all of us. And that means that all of us, as a community, need to engage in contesting practices that debilitate, demoralize, and disenfranchise our colleagues, our students, and coworkers.

This article provides an overview of the research on (in)equity in higher education that lays a foundation for identifying some of the issues with which many campuses are contending. Then I focus on strategies for change, for moving the needle for increased diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice.

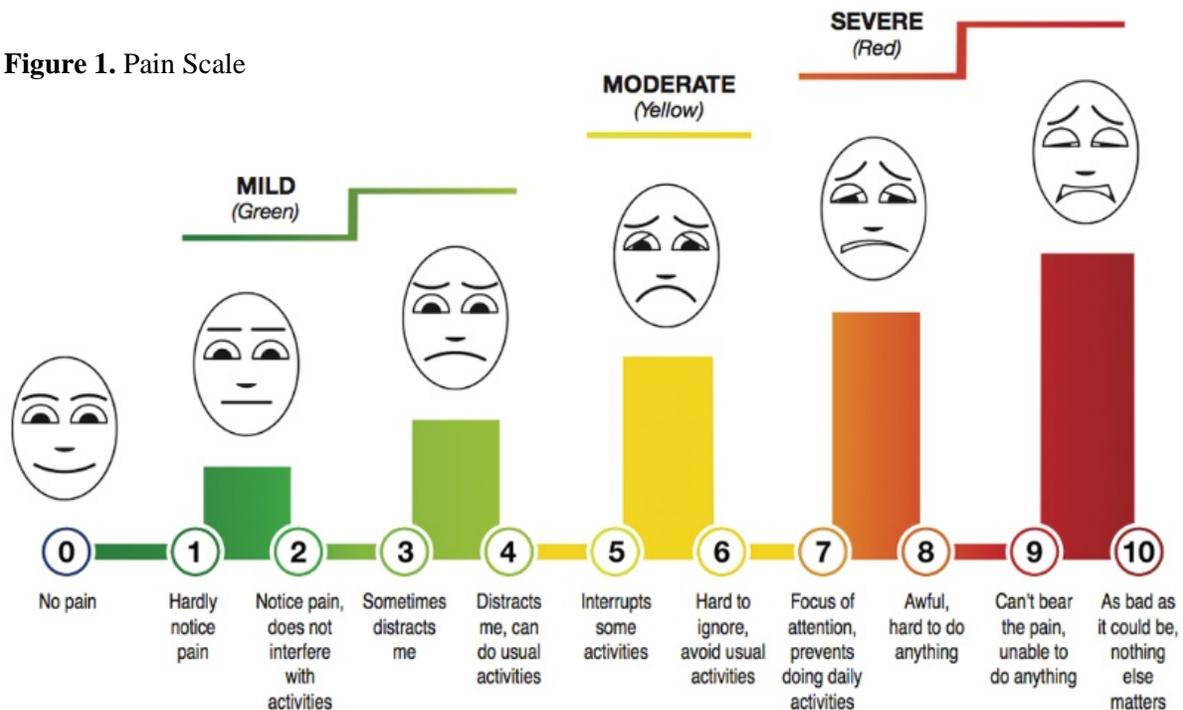
To begin, I am going to encourage a reflective activity in which the reader takes their campus temperature, so to speak. Consider the following

question: “*How competent are [your campus] leaders, faculty and staff to create inclusive campus environments that support the retention and success of the full range of people on [your] campus?*” (Obear 2016). To answer this, we can use an adapted version of the universal pain scale (Figure 1), which might seem comical, but is actually quite appropriate. Issues related to lack of inclusivity actually do inflict pain on many of our colleagues, while others experience no pain or have the freedom to ignore the injustice around them. In fact, the racism that results often in trauma for faculty of color (Davis, Ofahengaue, and Scales 2015) can interfere with the ability to complete tasks, demonstrate daily competence, and advance in one’s career. The question asks about your campus, though we must consider also the broader context of higher education.

To be sure, higher education has changed dramatically in recent decades, and in many ways progressively:

- The diversity of faculty and students has increased, particularly with race and ethnicity, and in some cases dramatically. However, the diversity of students is increasing at a much faster pace than the diversity of faculty (e.g., Myers 2016)

Figure 1. Pain Scale



Source: Defense and Veterans Pain Rating Scale (<http://www.dvcipm.org/clinical-resources/pain-rating-scale>) adapted from the Wong-Baker FACES Pain Rating Scale.

- Interdisciplinary and social justice focused scholarship is gaining prominence, resulting in much more linking between higher education, public policy, and social change
- Responding to changes in the gender/sexuality composition of the academy, many campuses increasingly have robust family friendly and work/life policies (e.g., Bryan and Wilson 2015; The WorkLife Law Center n.d.), domestic partner benefits, gender neutral facilities, and support for non-binary pronoun usage
- Pedagogy, research, and leadership approaches are all benefitting from innovations that are shared widely, particularly with technology and social media that are also changing the landscape of communication and public advocacy.
- Corporatization and creeping academic capitalism promotes and rewards disciplines and projects that have the capacity to derive profit (e.g., Metcalfe and Slaughter 2008; Rhoades and Slaughter 2004). This is a result of dramatic decreases in subsidies for higher education. In the nearly absolute embrace of neoliberal ideology and praxis, the notion of higher education as a public good has all but disappeared in public sentiment (Lucal 2014)
- The disinvestment in higher education coincides with its diversification (see Carlson 2016)
- Threatened faculty autonomy and academic freedom
- Reliance on contingent faculty labor at the expense of full-time, benefitted, reliable positions (e.g., Barnshaw 2015)
- Legislative mandates often target social sciences and humanities, the very backbone of a liberal education

However, there are also concerning trends in academia that complicate and burden our institutions:

- Striving institutions are focused on increasing their status, rankings, and generating external funding, with often deleterious effects on faculty (e.g., Gardner 2013; O'Meara and Bloomgarden 2011; Twale and De Luca 2008)
- Increasing student debt.

These changes—positive and negative—create uncertainty, increased workloads, suspicion, and even competition, all of which trickle down to those who are most vulnerable in academic work environments: those early in their careers, and those who are marginalized because of their identities, research, or status in the academy. In fact, it is precisely because of the diversification of and increased access to higher education that we are having difficult and important conversations about vulnerability and marginalization in the academy, slowly recognizing that inclusivity is imperative if we are going to strive for excellence: individually, institutionally, even nationally as a vibrant democracy.

This article draws from my scholarship on gender in higher education, and more specifically *Disrupting the Culture of Silence: Confronting Gender Inequality and Making Change in Higher Education* (2015), which I co-wrote and co-edited with Andi Stepnick of Belmont University. The ideas for this book were born a decade ago. My co-editor/co-author and I began this project by hosting interactive workshops at conferences about how to manage problems facing women academics. These were not sessions that featured empirical research, but more hands on, change oriented workshops. We started by gathering a handful of narratives of “hostile or discriminating workplace situations” from women faculty (using various listservs we were on), removing identifying information, and then “work-shopping” them with attendees to provide concrete solutions and possible resources for women in the case studies as well as for participants. We knew we wanted to create spaces where these issues were talked about

openly and productively. These were not venting sessions, despite the often desperate need for those. Instead, the goal was to have us all thinking about strategies for survival, tactics for change, and self-defense in the academy.

We were stunned by the stories we received, and the volume of narratives women sent to us. Clearly, what we were receiving was well beyond the foreseeable criticism of these stories being “hypersensitive protesting” on the part of disgruntled faculty. This was real, it was pervasive, and it was alarming. We repeated this process for at least two more years during which time we heard from dozens of women academics. We decided to expand the project and make our process into a book that featured the narratives as well as empirical research chapters, and a “toolkit” for change.

We secured approval to collect data, developed an online survey, and then set out to collect the most diverse possible narratives (some quoted here). We located 80 discipline-specific listservs for women academics such as the Coordinating Council for Women in History or Women in Science and Engineering, and wrote the listserv administrators asking them to post our “call for experiences.” This “CFE” explained our project and provided a link where their members could share their stories. We wanted to know (De Welde and Stepnick 2015:2):

1. What women classified as challenging/ inequitable workplace environments and how that varied by race, ethnicity, rank, sexual orientation, academic discipline, and so on.
2. How do structures and cultures work independently and in tandem to foster such workplaces?
3. What actions can we take—at multiple levels—to create change in the academy and help people survive, even thrive in their workplaces.

Our goal was to document the range of challenges facing women academics so as to spur action. The book also was intended to validate

these experiences because the ubiquity of discrimination, inequity, hostility, and silencing is not necessarily apparent to those experiencing these issues, to those “in the thick of it.”

We commissioned 17 chapters on a variety of topics including pay inequality, challenges of eldercare, contra-power harassment<sup>1</sup>, perceptions of academic women of color, faculty incivility and bullying, lesbian faculty invisibility, contingent/adjunct faculty work conditions, and other topics. The book offers also, as did our initial workshops, strategic actions for change with a focus on intersectionality as well as the primary levels within which academia operates: structural/macro level, cultural, climate/ micro level. This is the scope of the book, which documents some of the effects of the current landscape of higher education on women faculty.

A primary theoretical framework for the book and my research in general is that of gendered organizations: “To say that an organization...is gendered means that advantage and disadvantage, exploitation and control, action and emotion, meaning and identity, are patterend [throughout]” (Acker 1990:146). Further, gender is essential to the “organizational logic;” practices, attitudes, values, and guiding principles (Acker 1990:147) that follow dominant gender ideologies. In effect, what the book chapter authors demonstrate and what the narratives highlighted in the book illustrate is that in academia, faculty roles are gendered, and hierarchies of inequality are reproduced. These hierarchies also evidence intersectional inequalities, which allow us to see how gender, race, social class, physical ability, etc. “intersect” to produce differential outcomes.

### Structural Inequalities

Data about broad demographic and employment patterns in higher education provide a valuable context for understanding structural inequalities. Structural inequalities include the “unique organizational arrangements of the academy” (De Welde and Stepnick 2015) that reflect problematic demographic patterns as well as the ways in which academic careers and faculty life are organized to perpetuate inequalities, at least implicitly. Some of this may be familiar, even taken for granted. However, I review these patterns here because too often those experiencing negative outcomes are unable to see the structural mechanisms at play in their own experiences, and thus it is important to make these visible.

One structural phenomenon important to understand is *vertical segregation*: women are overrepresented in contingent (part-time and non-tenure-track) and lower paying positions in the academy such as in 2-year institutions, despite their 109.7 percent growth as a share of the professoriate between 1993 and 2013 (Finkelstein, Conley, and Schuster 2016).<sup>2</sup> In fact, men faculty outnumber women at all institution types except for those with least prestige, fewest resources, and lower status (U.S. Department of Education 2013). Members of minority groups comprise less than a quarter of ranked faculty at 4-year institutions, and this representation decreases as one moves up the academic hierarchy: 22.9 percent of assistant professors, 21.1 percent of associate professors, 16.1 percent of full professors (The *Chronicle of Higher Education* 2016). Only 9.1 percent of women faculty are at the full professor rank (Finkelstein et al. 2016). Some would explain this away as a “cohort effect,” (or “demographic inertia,” see Lowell and Long 2002) suggesting that these disparities result from women and people of color being relative newcomers to

<sup>1</sup> Contra-power harassment is “a situation in which an individual with less institutional power (e.g., a student) harasses someone with more power (e.g., a professor)” (Lampman 2015:241).

<sup>2</sup> Selected data and literature has been updated from my original presentation to reflect the most recent information available.

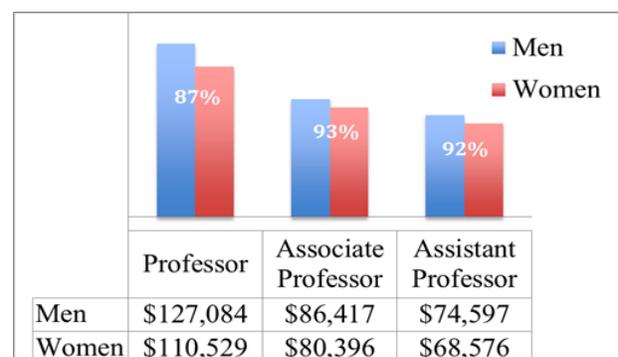
academe and that it will take time to see us represented in higher ranks and in leadership.

To some extent this might be a plausible argument. The growth of underrepresented minority faculty<sup>3</sup> between 1993 and 2013 was 142.8 percent, which is three times the growth of white faculty in that same period, and the growth of underrepresented minority women faculty was nearly 190 percent (Finkelstein et al. 2016). According to the argument of demographic inertia (Lowell and Long 2002), “it takes the length of a career” to see a group fully represented in faculty ranks, particularly at the level of full professor (p. 54). However, a 2007 study on women faculty at a research university, showed that without any sort of intentional and aggressive intervention to hire women, we would *never* reach numerical gender equality (Marschke et al. 2007). With a hypothetical “equal hires... [which is] exactly equal probabilities of [hires,] advancement, attrition, and retirement...,” numerical equality (50 percent) for women would take 57 years (p. 19). We can confidently speculate that the time frame for underrepresented minority faculty to reach equality would be considerably longer. We will not achieve parity by staying the course.

This segregation impacts earnings, too. Studies indicate that a considerable gender wage gap persists even after accounting for rank, human capital differences, and other forms of variance with wage setting (Hironimus-Wendt and Dedjoe 2015). At the highest end of the hierarchy, this translates into a nearly \$17,000 difference annually (Figure 2; Barnshaw and Dunietz 2015). Hironimus-Wendt and Dedjoe (2015) call this a *wage premium* for men. These same authors identify *gated communities* as an additional mechanism maintaining unequal pay. That is, the gender composition of an academic unit is a significant predictor of wages, and there are exclusionary practices (i.e., gatekeeping) that limit women’s representation in certain

disciplines, and often these are higher status and

**Figure 2.** Vertical segregation of men and women faculty and impact on earnings. Percentages reflect women’s to men’s earnings.



Source: 2014-15, AAUP, Annual Report on the Economic Status of the Profession.

better-funded disciplines.

This links to another structural pattern evident within higher education: *horizontal segregation*, which reflects significant gender gaps across disciplines and sub-disciplines. For example, women are stubbornly underrepresented in some Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) fields such as engineering and physics (e.g., Sapna et al. 2016; De Welde and Laursen 2011). We see similar patterns for underrepresented minority faculty, who make up 7.3 percent of science and engineering doctorate degrees, a pattern that has persisted for the last 10 years (Figure 3; NSF 2015). It is not coincidence, as evidenced by the *gated communities* theory (Hironimus-Wendt and Dedjoe 2015), that these are the fields that have the highest pay, thus furthering the gender and racial pay gaps (CUPA-HR 2015).

These two effects help us better understand patterns of gender and race in academic leadership. According to *The Chronicle of Higher Education Almanac* (2016), almost as many women as men were appointed provosts in

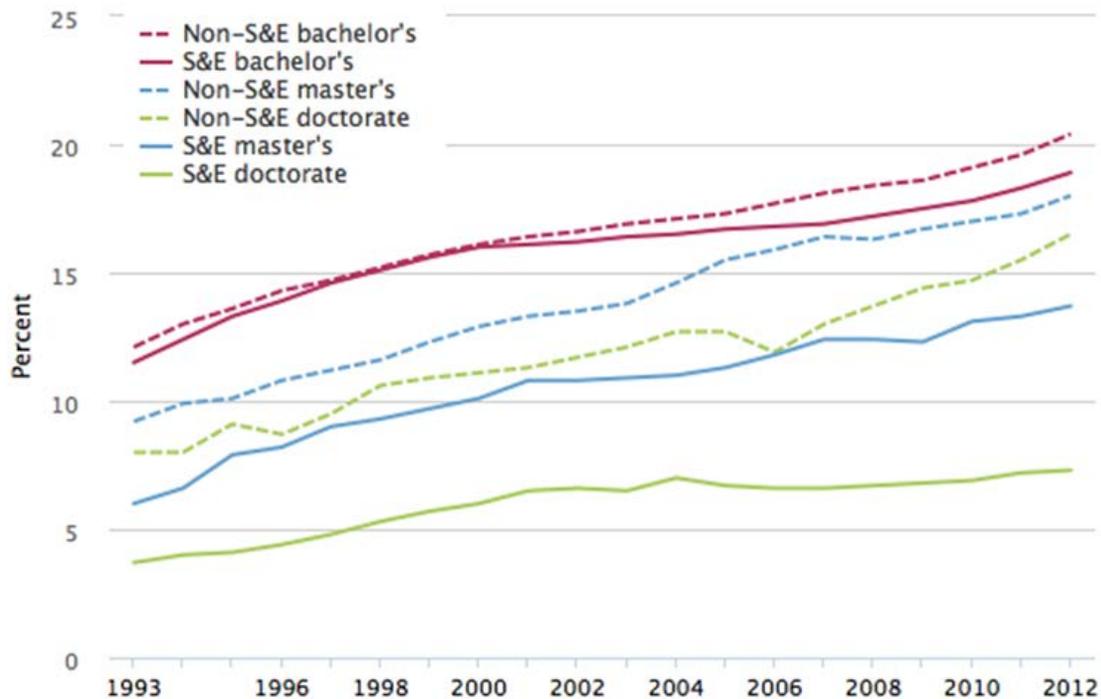
<sup>3</sup> Finkelstein et al. (2016), drawing on data from IPEDS, distinguish between underrepresented minorities, born and educated in the U.S., and Non-Resident Aliens.

2015-2016 (49 percent), and 39 percent of new deans were women (down from 42.8 percent in the previous year, *The Chronicle of Higher Education* 2015). In 2015-2016, 34.4 percent of new presidents or chancellors appointed were women. However, much like the vertical segregation in full-time faculty positions, women are more likely to be executives, administrators, or managers at two-year institutions. And most of these women leaders are white. Twenty-one percent of all executive, administrative, or managerial positions are held by members of minority groups. Women of color faculty and administrators tend to be concentrated in “associate” level positions (i.e., associate professor, associate dean), often with responsibility over diversity-oriented initiatives or curriculum (e.g., Castro 2015; Aguirre 2000).

Aspects of the ways academic careers are structured compound the patterns discussed

above. For example, the timing of tenure and promotion can be an obstacle that collides with biological rhythms for women interested in having biological children (e.g., De Welde and Laursen 2011; Williams and Ceci 2012; Martin 1994). Moreover, academic mothers have disproportionate responsibilities in their families (Kmec, Foo, and Wharton 2015; Jacobs and Winslow 2004). The intense expectations of academic life, and particularly of obtaining tenure, conflict with parenting obligations as well as eldercare responsibilities (Leibnitz and Morrison 2015), another gendered phenomenon that typically intersects with women’s prospects for full professorship, though often later in their careers. These rhythm-oriented conflicts presume a linear, traditional, and uninterrupted career path, the path that the “ideal worker” (gendered as masculine) would have (Acker 1990; Williams 2000).

**Figure 3.** Degrees earned by underrepresented minorities 1993-2012



Source: National Science Foundation, National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics. 2015. Women, Minorities, and Persons with Disabilities in Science and Engineering: 2015. Special Report NSF 15-311. Arlington, VA. Available at <http://www.nsf.gov>

Furthermore, academic career success often is predicated on strong mentoring, collaborating, and networking, activities from which women and minority faculty are routinely excluded (e.g., Baldwin and Griffin 2015; Castro 2015; De Welde and Laursen 2011). Many faculty of color in particular experience underrepresentation, and thus isolation, as structural, organizational realities at their institutions. Professional isolation can result in adverse career outcomes: dearth of collaborators for publications or externally funded grants, lack of information about tenure and advancement expectations, leadership opportunities, and circumscribed professional socialization.

### **Cultural Inequalities**

The above are structural or organizational aspects of the academy that perpetuate inequalities and inequities. Additional stratifying mechanisms include the ways in which institutional cultures operate to reproduce bias. Institutional cultures are linked to organizational structures of academic careers, but are more localized and vary across institutions and across units within a single institution. “Culture includes – but is not limited to – beliefs, values, norms, language symbols, stories, rituals, and other practices that influence its members’ thoughts and actions” (De Welde and Stepnick 2015:153). For instance, women and men of color contend with the notion of the “ideal professor” (Hirshfield 2015) or the “ideal worker” (Williams 2000). The “ideal professor” in the gendered structure of academe is gendered masculine, and raced white. This ideology influences expectations within an institutional culture (as well as organizationally) including relationships with colleagues, interactions with students, promotion and tenure decisions, interactions in meetings, and so on, all of which comprise institutional culture.

In addition to cultural norms of an institution and its units, academics navigate professional disciplinary expectations, which also are

gendered (Chech 2015), and especially so in masculine-dominated STEM fields (e.g., Britton 2017). These shape the professional identities of faculty members in ways that extend beyond immediate institutional cultures, but that reinforce broad academic, structural inequities; they operate at both levels. Though beyond the scope of this paper, disciplinary norms tend to reinforce the double bind women face: we are either feminine OR competent (e.g., Jamieson 1997). Competence is gendered masculine, while femininity is – at least with respect to dominant expectations – perceived to be the opposite of competence. Through this dichotomy we can see how inequality is reproduced through a differential valuing of genders. Women must consistently submit evidence that they are rational, professional, and competent (Jamieson 1997). And let’s be clear, while white women are not assumed to be competent, women of color are “presumed incompetent” (Gutierrez y Muhs et al. 2012). Hirshfield (2015) quotes a woman in her study of gender in the academy that illustrates these issues:

...I had [students] say I was really tough, and I kind of like that. I took pride in that because I see myself as a softie, and getting students to sort of take me seriously when I started out, when I was younger [was difficult]...now I’m feeling older, but looking young, and being a woman, and being a woman of color, there are always these issues of ‘How qualified are you to teach me?’ (P. 208)

As women move into leadership positions, and recent evidence suggests this is a positive and ongoing trend, our demonstrated competence has the potential to disrupt this bind within institutional cultures. But, considerable research evidences that a critical mass of women in, for example, leadership roles or departments, is not sufficient to shift culture (e.g., Hillard et al. 2014; Rosser 2004). Beyond gender, institutional cultures regularly abnegate LGBTQI faculty, which results in their being invisible,

marginalized, and for lesbian faculty in particular “their intersectional characteristics and experiences are unconsciously distorted to conform to those of more prototypical identities” (Bilimoria and Stewart 2015:221).

Another aspect of unequal institutional cultures is how service and teaching are distributed. The division of academic labor results in women performing a disproportionate



share of these activities (e.g., Park 1996). Even though these are critical necessities, institutions typically undervalue teaching and service. Further, faculty of color experience “cultural taxation” or what Castro (2015) calls the “diversity double-duty.” This is the invisible labor of mentoring students of color, being appointed or invited to serve on myriad committees, task forces, initiatives, etc., particularly when themed with “diversity.” Castro (2015) explains this trend:

Women of color continue to carry disproportionately the burden of diversifying academia... That is, although academia has recognized the need to diversify the faculty (and student populations), and have acknowledged the importance of implementing multicultural/ heterogenous curricula, the responsibility rests on people of

color, especially women, to carry out these mandates and do the heavy lifting of institutional change. (P. 182)

While a more diverse faculty could ease the burdens on individual faculty, there is also the hurdle of administrative recognition of this work. In their book on faculty incivility, Twale and De Luca (2008) suggest that it “borders on incivility” to encumber faculty of color with “diversity” service commitments. Beyond incivility, the relationship between slower advancement and greater share of service duties is well established. Pyke (2015) critiques the “just say no” adage that early career faculty are encouraged to use to protect their time and energy, as if they are actually free to say “no” to their chairs, deans, and other senior members of their institutions. There are better ways to more equitably meet

service needs of a unit without obliging the lowest status, most vulnerable, least networked faculty to say “yes” and potentially suffer long-term consequences, or say “no” and be considered un-collegial (see Monaghan 2017).

### Climate and Inequities

“Campus climates are microlevel work environments that differ across (and within) institutions, are imbedded in cultures, and are reflective of broader social, economic, and political contexts” (De Welde and Stepnick 2015:17). While the climate is a reflection of institutional practices and policies, it is also a reflection of choices we make daily: Whom do we invite to eat lunch with us? Whom do we interact with, and are they different from us? Whom do we seek out to mentor (students, early

career faculty)? With whom do we share important advice? Whom do we consider when creating committees?

Because implicit bias and incivility can manifest through individuals interacting, these can be considered as part of the climate of our institutions. Implicit bias is the notion that our expectations or assumptions about others are based on stereotypes about physical characteristics related to race, gender, age, or ethnicity, for example (see Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity 2015). People who intend to be fair bias *unintentionally* precisely because biases operate implicitly, outside of conscious awareness. In the study we conducted for our book, we received multiple examples of implicit bias from women faculty. For example, Joan<sup>4</sup>, a 35-year-old in a STEM field, reported a strong example of this:

...while I was a graduate student, I was sent to recruit a potential student. While showing him around campus, he suddenly tells me, 'you are so lucky.' I asked for clarification on what he meant. He tells me women have an easier time getting into graduate school because they are treated preferentially. (P. 35)

In other words, the implicit bias is that she inherently was not qualified to be admitted, but because of her gender, she was given a pass.

While this is generally considered to be at the level of individual interactions, there also are ways in which implicit bias manifests within the institutional culture, such that practices disadvantage some populations more than others. For example, an institution might opt to not align university calendars with school year calendars because of the implicit assumption that dedicated academics will find a way to manage schedules. This can result in faculty pitted against each other because those without children are expected to pick up the slack when parents are tending to family obligations. Implicit bias tends to

manifest also in hiring, promotion, tenure, and advancement decisions, as well as in determinations about who is suitable for leadership positions.

Microaggressions or micro-inequities are interactional phenomena that impact women and faculty of color in ways that are often obscured to majority faculty (men and whites). Microaggressions are routine, subtle, verbal and non-verbal, often unintentional messages that generally well-intentioned members of dominant groups inflict on marginalized groups (e.g., Sue et al. 2007). In the context of race, these "communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights" (p. 273) though microaggressions can reflect messages about gender, age, physical ability, sexual orientation, and other social identities. Some examples include expressing surprise when a member of a minority group deviates from a stereotype, or asking a person who presents as a woman repeatedly when she will get married and have children. These are perhaps well meaning, but they inflict harm and they communicate both invalidation and lack of belonging. Furthermore, what we hear less about are micro-advantages, which are the ways in which members of dominant groups (e.g., men, whites, heterosexuals, the physically able) face fewer obstacles, slights, insults, questioning, and invalidations from colleagues that allow their daily lives to proceed unencumbered by these "interruptions." I like to explain this to my students by using the analogy of paper cuts. A single paper cut is annoying, it stings, everyone gets them, and somehow we always have to slice lemons or tomatoes when we have one. But, the oppression that comes with thousands and thousands of paper cuts is debilitating, disorienting. This is the reality of living daily with microaggressions.

Despite the seriousness and relentlessness of racial, gendered, sexualized (and so on) microaggressions, we should not lose sight of the resiliency required to persist despite these constant slights. In fact, many Black and Latinx

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<sup>4</sup> All names used are pseudonyms.

scholars have embraced the notion of “outsider within” (Collins 1999), the unequal and inequitable social locations of underrepresented minorities within an academic hierarchy. These scholars produce scholarship from the “border spaces” (Collins 1999:86) and in spite of their marginalization. They not only survive, they thrive, acutely aware of organizational inequities and navigating them skillfully. This resilience deserves acknowledgment and deep respect.

Other aspects of institutional climates that inflict harm on those who are most vulnerable in the academy are incivility and mobbing (which is bullying done by groups to humiliate, isolate, silence, and threaten others). These behaviors are, at their root, about power and they are generally more intentional than implicit bias or microaggressions. Using an intersectional lens, we might expect certain individuals to be its targets more than others: untenured faculty, faculty of color, women, non-tenure-track faculty, LGBTQ-identified faculty, etc. In the study conducted for *Disrupting the Culture of Silence* (De Welde and Stepnick 2015), Mary, a 42-year-old faculty member in a Criminal Justice department, described her experience of bullying:

My chair and his administrative assistant had refused to allow me to have ink for my printer, forcing me to work in student computer labs. I was often kept out of department meetings...my chair refused to have my photo placed on our departmental website...[In the process of hiring new assistant professors] I was informed of interview times and places only to show up to empty rooms. (P. 234)

And Jean (no additional information provided), described the effects of the mobbing she experienced, including hindered advancement and personal stress as a result,

[My] being exhausted and battered down is the goal of these bullies. I have spent so much

time away from what I should be doing in academia, and my personal life in the physical and emotion reactions as well as responding to incidents, not to mention the additional workload when students suffer from the neglect or being targeted [themselves]. (De Welde and Stepnick 2015:236).

These examples of injustice should be in academic history. Yet, they endure. Why, despite decades of legislation, policy, intentional interventions, active resistance, and substantial success in most fields increasing the representation of women and faculty of color, do these disparities exist? And of course discrimination, blocked advancement, and hostile work environments are not unique to academe. Our lives as academics are privileged, autonomous, flexible, agentic and rewarding in myriad ways. So we should be compelled to ask “what can be done? What can I do?”

### **Moving the Needle**

One of the most significant challenges to organizational change is “the tendency for organizational practices to resist change over time” (Stepan-Norris and Kerrissey 2016:9; see also Hannon and Freeman 1984). Older institutions may have institutional barriers that integrate gender imbalances into the organization because younger institutions (e.g., those founded during or post-Civil Rights era) tend to reflect fewer inequalities (Stepan-Norris and Kerrissey 2016). Thus, moving the needle has to occur at all levels: institutional, cultural, climate, and it must be a long-term commitment. At the institutional level, as Ferber (2015) suggests, most faculty members do not have the skills or training to initiate effective change. And yet, with a clear framework, we can move forward. For example, Ferber (2015) describes the multicultural organizational development model that is based in principles of democratic change for organizations that strive to be more inclusive

and socially just. Ferber (2015) writes that the multicultural organization is:

[One that] values the contributions and interests of all members; members reflect diverse social and cultural groups throughout all levels of the organization; acts on a commitment to eliminate all forms of oppression within the organization, including racism, sexism, heterosexism, ageism, classism, ableism, religious oppression, etc.; includes all members as full participants in decisions that shape the organization; and follows through on broader social and environmental responsibilities. (P. 305)

This model recognizes that individuals and organizations go through stages in order to achieve broad and desired change. Furthermore, change inevitably is uneven and different units within an organization may be at different stages. The ultimate goal is to foster multiculturalism and a celebration of difference that is imbued throughout an institution (or a single unit). From the curriculum to policies, interactions to hiring and promotion decisions, members of the organization commit to and practice inclusivity.

But, there is no single path for institutions to follow and there are many theories of change in higher education (e.g., Allen 2015; Kezar 2008). Any intervention must be responsive to institutional culture, its history, the role of faculty in governance, the geographic context, the pace of growth, funding, and so on. Change agents should be aware of the literature on factors that make diversity and inclusion efforts more or less successful, because often strategies are based in spurious connections between causes and solutions. For instance, an increasingly popular strategy at academic institutions is diversity training for faculty and staff, which generally provides information about antidiscrimination laws, attempts to increase cultural competency, and offers behavioral alternatives to reduce bias, microaggressions, and stereotypical thinking. But studies suggest that while this kind of

education can reduce bias, it also can activate stereotypical thinking and backfire (e.g., Kalev, Dobbin, and Kelly 2006; Bielby 2000; Reskin 2000). Because the majority of workplace bias occurs via unconscious mechanisms, the task is “not to eliminate ‘stereotypical thinking’ (it can’t be done), but rather to minimize its *impact* on personnel decisions” (Bielby 2000:122, original emphasis). This can be accomplished via proactive policies and accountability structures *in addition to* education and bias mitigation training.

Organizational policies and structures established for discrimination redress can be misconstrued as advancing diversity goals simply by complying with EEOC and affirmative action policies. One reason that structures and policies on their own are minimally effective is because they are disengaged from daily practices and routine decisions are made in ways that allow for implicit bias to transform into disadvantages for women and underrepresented minorities (Kalev et al. 2006; Reskin 2000). However, both mandated and voluntary policies for increased equity are effective for leveraging accountability. As Bielby (2008) suggests,

Research studies show that the effects of stereotypes, in-group favoritism and out-group bias on evaluative judgments such as those involved in recruitment, hiring, job assignment, compensation, promotion, and assessments of skills and qualifications can be minimized when decision-makers know that they will be held accountable for the information upon which the decisions are based, and for the consequences their actions have for equal employment opportunity. (P. 68)

Increasingly, academic institutions embed progress on diversity goals into the regular reviews of deans and department chairpersons (e.g., Case Western Reserve University, according to Laursen and Austin 2014).

In addition to education and awareness training, proactive policies, responsive organizational structures, and embedded accountability measures for increased equity and inclusion, there are a number of evidence-based strategies that can be effective in academic settings. These include regular climate studies (Ferber 2015; Bielby 2008), periodic organizational assessment of inequity or gender, race, and ethnic segregation in “job assignments, pay, promotion, performance assessment, and turnover” (Bielby 2008:71), networking and mentoring programs for women and minority faculty (e.g., Austin and Laursen 2014), targeted recruitment or “cluster hires” (Urban Universities for HEALTH 2015), comprehensive, practical work/family policies (e.g., Bracken, Allen, and Dean 2006; The Center for WorkLife Law n.d.), equitable and transparent tenure, promotion and advancement processes, and increased visibility of women and minority faculty accomplishments. Also, appointment of a committee, task force, office, or full-time staff person with the responsibility for specialized diversity and inclusion goals is more effective than decentralized approaches (Kalev et al. 2006). At the level of interactions, and to address the “proximate” causes of discrimination, institutional leaders (provosts, deans, director, and chairs) can work to create heterogeneous groups that develop cooperative interdependence in working on tasks (Reskin 2000), require regular diversity training that stays focused on protected and marginalized groups (Kalev et al. 2006), and reward teaching, scholarship, and service commitments that advance institutional diversity and inclusion goals.

An additional best practice for any institutional change includes goal setting: Where are you going? What path will you take? How will you know when you get there? This begins with attention to an organization’s vision, mission, guiding principles, and strategic plans. These not only provide direction, but also accountability. A clear infrastructure to lead and

guide change is needed; a roadmap, of sorts. Change agents also need to allow for “course correct,” for the possibility of changing directions, perhaps even revising the intended outcomes. I like to think that the handy routing iPhone app “Waze” offers a good metaphor here. When you use this app, you enter your destination and the app provides the fastest route to it. It monitors your progress, providing a destination ETA and warnings of possible “obstacles” ahead such as an object on the road, a stalled car on the shoulder, a hidden police car checking speeds, etc. The important feature in my metaphor is that it changes the course if there is an unexpected traffic jam or accident, always finding the least encumbered path to get to where you are going. It forces you to be nimble, correcting your course because of unforeseen challenges. You will eventually get to where you are going, but you may have to take a longer or unforeseen path.

Any change initiatives must also be visible, legitimated from the top of a hierarchy, faculty owned or endorsed, and inclusive of allies. Making diversity and inclusion an institutional priority via sustained commitment from institutional leaders is an effective strategy for minimizing the effects of workplace bias (Bielby 2008). Also, if this becomes “women’s work,” it will be cast as “institutional housekeeping” (Bird, Litt, and Wang 2004).

More specifically, there are a range of interventions that institutions can undertake for organizational change, including: curriculum review and revision to be more inclusive of race, ethnicity, gender, disabilities, trans\* issues, and other historically marginalized groups, identification of critical issues facing faculty, staff, and students via “listening sessions” or “difficult dialogues” (see <http://www.difficultdialoguesuaa.org/handbook>), faculty development programs, grants to individual faculty to jump start their research programs, in-house conferences related to intersectionality scholarship, mentoring and networking activities, review of standards related

to service assignments, review and revision of work/life policies, and enhanced visibility for gender and racial issues through highlighting women scholars and scholars of color (see e.g., Laursen and Austin 2014 for examples of institutional change initiatives via NSF ADVANCE projects). Several institutions have used their teaching and learning centers to develop faculty book clubs around books like *Disrupting the Culture of Silence* or *Presumed Incompetent*, so as to foster dialogue about inequalities in higher education and create spaces for faculty to share their experiences. Other important activities include conducting a climate study and a salary equity study. Much of this can be accomplished without much funding. In fact, as Daniels (2014) suggests, “More than funds, these efforts require a transformation of consciousness about the value brought into a department [or institution] by the principles of inclusion, equity, and representation” (p.472).

Also at the level of the institution, there should be a commitment to inclusive recruitment, hiring, and retention of a diverse faculty and staff. Any search for excellence cannot be exhaustive unless it welcomes applicants of all types – *diversity is intrinsic to excellence*. We now have strong examples of interventions at the level of search committees where institutions educate committee members with respect to addressing the committee composition, use of inclusive language in job postings, reducing bias in decision making, managing interview conduct, etc. Several universities have implemented “Equity Advisors” (Stepan-Norris and Kerrissey 2016; Laursen and Austin 2014) who participate on search committees to ensure inclusive recruitment and hiring. More broadly, Equity Advisors also work on markers of institutional equity and equality such as salary disparities, the equitable advancement of women and faculty of color, early- and mid-career mentoring, or diversified award nominations. And, while inclusion in terms of faculty is acutely important, attention to administrative staff, and their needs in serving students, is often overlooked as critical

(White 2016), despite their direct contact with many of our students, particularly those seeking mentoring, advising, or a role model.

The institutional structure should be responsible for establishing this infrastructure, ensuring that individuals’ commitment to inclusivity is consistent. But this comes down also to our individual reflexivity about these issues. For example, if you are in a position to hire or make recommendations for promotion, be aware of the structural inequalities that potentially are in play for your colleagues. Work against them so that inclusion is not an afterthought in hiring, retention, and promotion efforts. Instead, this is front and center. If you are on a search committee, do some research on the availability pool (e.g., recent Ph.D.s); does the applicant pool match? Is more intentional recruitment in order? It is important to know what the gender and race distributions are in availability pools because when participants in the hiring process are not aware of imbalances in the hiring pool versus the availability pool, they are less likely to actively work to achieve balance in gender, race, or ethnicity. National-level data is available through IPEDS (Integrated Post-Secondary Education Data System) or the National Science Foundation Annual Survey of Earned Doctorates, for example. Search committee chairs should strive to recruit a diverse applicant pool (see The National Registry of Diverse and Strategic Faculty). And we need to be vigilant that the institutional commitment extends beyond recruitment and hiring. It is irresponsible to hire faculty (or staff) with openness to diversity and a rhetoric of inclusion, and then not build in mechanisms for success in tenure, promotion, and advancement. Retention efforts should be just as robust. Otherwise, the advancement and career successes of these faculty are further hindered or delayed if they find the need to change institutions as a result of discrimination or marginalization.

With respect to leadership, it is important to develop a rotation system that allows for new perspectives, ideas, and ways of getting things

done. Here is a place where demographic inertia (Lowell and Long 2002) makes a significant impact. Long-term faculty can have a tendency to create an “old guard” that fiercely protects the status quo, even if it is dysfunctional. Institutions can create “leadership fellows” programs, and encourage leadership training. These can be internal if the in-house resources are available, or external if not. There are many quality leadership programs for women and minority faculty (e.g., American Council on Education Spectrum Aspiring Leaders Program, Higher Education Resource Services (HERS)). Institutional leadership can create mechanisms to value equitable behaviors.

Departments or colleges should consider unambiguous policies to combat bullying and mobbing, including processes for grievances, sanctions, and actions for redress. A study of women university leaders in Sweden showed that broader representation of women leaders (“demographic feminization”) was a necessary condition for more women academics to step into leadership roles and act as agents of change (Peterson 2014:407). The catch here is that women promoted into leadership positions are expected to act as change agents, and make positive contributions to transform leadership. But, they can find themselves vulnerable to the “queen bee syndrome” (e.g., Peterson 2014). Women in leadership positions do not always support other women, and women can (and do) create hostile climates, engage in bullying, and mobbing behaviors. Regardless of a perpetrator’s gender, we need mechanisms to interrupt them.

At the level of institutional culture is where we can address smaller units such as colleges or even departments. This is a critical locus for change. First, this level is more flexible, more conducive to change, and less entrenched than institutional policies or academic structures in general. Second, empirical research suggests that satisfaction at the departmental level and feelings of belonging are critical to women’s satisfaction, retention, and advancement (e.g., Latimer et al. 2014). While inclusive recruitment efforts are

underway at the institutional level, and these will take time, department chairs and deans can focus on policies and practices in their units.

Specifically, a unit can attend to mentoring as a mechanism to prohibit marginalization and isolation. Institutional leaders can ask: Do we have a meaningful mentoring program that addresses the full person? Do we have a mentoring program that attends to specific career goals and responsibilities, such as mentoring on teaching or mentoring on scholarship? There are a myriad of successful models for mentoring and coaching (e.g., Laursen and Austin 2014; National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity). Effective mentoring programs can lead to stronger advancement for women and faculty of color in leadership positions as well as in areas of persistent underrepresentation (e.g., some STEM fields).

Bias workshops and educational programs such as invited speakers, webinars, and workshop series also can improve departmental culture. However, to authentically engage in this work, we must be prepared to revise the image of ourselves as not biased. It probably is worse if we think we are immune to bias. As a sociologist, I know, and I teach, that we create our society and culture just as it creates us. So I ask, “What kind of culture do I want to be responsible for creating?” And, make no mistake, we create the culture in our department/college/ institution even (or especially) through *inaction*.

This kind of reflection naturally moves us toward a more micro focus, the climate or immediate work environment that we navigate daily. Members of dominant groups (e.g., gender, sexual orientation, full-time faculty status) should strive to know more about the experiences of colleagues who are differently marginalized. Those who want to be an ally must learn (and they must learn that they need to learn). Allies must listen, and *without defensiveness*. This requires reflection on discomfort with certain topics, and reflexivity to act differently. It is helpful to participate in webinars, educational workshops, or book clubs that read books about

marginalization, discrimination, and non-dominant experiences.

We need to summon the courage to interrupt oppressions. Silence in the face of a microaggression or incivility communicates approval (Rockquemore 2016). One strategy is to participate in bystander intervention training. While this is currently being adopted as a means to intervene in potential sexual assault, it is relevant in many other contexts.

And, reading up on the experiences of marginalized groups is not just helpful for allies. For example, *Black Faculty in the Academy* (2015) is grounded in narratives of black faculty experiences. One contributor (Moore 2015:31) suggests that his awareness of racial and gender microaggressions allowed him to taxonomize encounters, which gave him, an untenured faculty member, a sense of “power and control in an environment where [he] was powerless and perceived as meaningless.” Without the ability to identify and understand the indignities he faced, his experiences would have been far more difficult. The process of writing *Disrupting the Culture of Silence* was in part to validate my own less-than-equitable experiences early in my career. The book serves to validate those experiencing hostility or inequitable treatment to let them know that they are not the only ones. Regrettably, these experiences of marginalization, isolation, microaggressions, discrimination, and indifference are pervasive.

Lastly, we must engage our students as allies, and listen to their unique needs. Recent examples of racial justice movement on campuses across the U.S. are effective reminders that students have the power to demand change and justice.

### Concluding Thoughts

I am an activist and an academic. I used to think that I had to choose between these identities. But Morley and Walsh (1995:1) tell us that (feminist) activism is both “politics and self-care.” That is what I am striving to inspire within readers of this piece. We cannot underestimate

small acts of resistance and allied behavior. We must all critique racism, sexism, and all “isms” in the academy, and we must also labor to transform our institutions, to advance social justice where we live and where we work. We need to learn from each other how to listen, analyze, work for change, and resist. But, change will not happen quickly, nor will it unfold linearly. We must remember that this process of transforming the academy has “no identifiable end point;” it is “both a means and end” (Ely and Meyerson 2000:113). And eliminating bias or “moving the needle” is not the work of one office or one committee. This needs to be a campus priority. It is up to each of you, each of us. I do believe that a better academy, an equitable and inclusive academy, is possible. It’s why I toil in writing about change, and risk a great deal in demanding change. Will you, too, be an agent of change?

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