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Navigating Careers in the Academy: Gender, Race, and Class

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***Invited article. Revised version of remarks made at Butler Center's Roundtable III: Excellence and Diversity on Wednesday, April 24, 2019.**

****Invited article. Revised version of remarks made at Butler Center's Roundtable I: Work-Life Balance on Wednesday, September 18, 2019.**

EDITORS' NOTE

Inclusive Excellence: Challenges and Opportunities

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The Working Paper series, Navigating Careers in the Academy: Gender, Race, and Class which the Susan Bulkeley Butler Center for Leadership Excellence (Butler Center) initiated in partnership with Purdue-ADVANCE, Center for Faculty Success has been growing steadily. Starting from this issue (Fall 2019), the Co-Editors decided to write this note individually and alternate across issues. This arrangement became necessary because we are hard-pressed for time considering our responsibilities.

This issue of the Series comprises five articles - three of them emerged from our Roundtable series in spring and fall 2019 as invited articles and two of them are peer-reviewed submissions. All the authors discuss inclusivity and provide suggestions/strategies for addressing shortcomings. As I reviewed the articles, I was reminded of the job talk of our current Provost and Chief Diversity Officer, Jay Akridge as he spoke about his commitment to inclusion and respect. He said we need to change what was in the picture – all white men in a classroom - he had put up on the screen. We need to do this beyond the classroom and with greater intent and vigor. That is, we need to diversify faculty and ensure their inclusion so they can succeed. The articles in this issue also reflect the co-editors' vision outlined in the inaugural issue in spring 2018.

Sagar and Zanotti were invited to write-up the remarks they made at the roundtable series, organized by the Butler Center, to discuss diversity and excellence (April 2019 Roundtable). Both authors draw attention to institutional responsibility for recognizing the invisible forms of oppression and the dismissal of microaggressions as being trivial. There is an urgent need for 'walking the talk' that is address the gap between the ideal of diversity and the execution of related policy to avoid two contemporary and formidable faces of racism: aversive racism and microaggressions. Sagar suggests that at the institutional level, pro-diversity measures need to go beyond recruitment, hiring, promotion, and retention and be incorporated in/by teaching, research, administration faculty, and personnel development. She adds that administrators must be cognizant that "new visibility for faculty of color, the kind that comes with recognition and awards, for instance, could produce new racial resentment."

Zanotti similarly details four main strategies that institutions like Purdue can adopt. These focus on inclusive understanding of different kinds 'work' faculty do in achieving excellence and that

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can be considered for promotion. In a related vein, she calls on administrators in leadership positions to be attentive to and address service overburdens. Spaces and forums must be conducive for sharing concerns and administrators ought to be at them for listening and then acting on issues that arise. The action is as crucial as listening in order to foster change. Some efforts to make visible the experiences of women and women of color in Purdue's Archives is discussed by Watson and Morris in this issue.

Watson and Morris provide us an interesting glimpse into the journey of Purdue University Archives and Special Collections and specifically the Susan Bulkeley Butler Women's Archives. Explaining why archivists collect material, the authors discuss the shift in efforts to ensure inclusion of those who remain unrepresented. Obviously, these efforts have involved challenges for a variety of reasons. However, recognizing the absence of the experiences of some groups at Purdue is the first step in beginning to address the historical record of the institution. Continued efforts to diversify representation of disciplines – faculty and students – is much needed. One aspect of diversifying – gender – the discipline of aviation is covered by Sobieralski and Hubbard in their paper.

Sobieralski and Hubbard trace historical trends of people in aviation in higher education and industry and highlight the ways in which it is gendered. They discuss the barriers faced by women which includes lack of inclusion and that in turn impacts their success. The authors have planned a study that will further investigate the experiences of students and scholars in aviation. This study can provide useful insights about experiences and can serve as a basis to create specific initiatives to address them.

The final article in this issue emerges from remarks made by Megha Anwer at the Butler Center Roundtable on the topic of 'Work-Life Balance.' She comments on the very phrase, "work-life balance" noting that it gives primacy to work lives and which prioritizes work. Why not 'life-work' she asks. However, both phrases do not alter the fact that university professors engage in teaching and research as being integral components of their life. Anwer calls on us to think beyond the conventional notions of work-life balance being tied motherhood and children to think of single women, single mothers, and women who do not have children. Attention to be inclusive of the non-normative faculty members is much needed.

I hope the discussion about inclusion and the ways we can make that possible will continue in the Series as well as through action by the institution. As we have now opened the submission of abstracts to all students, staff, and scholars worldwide, we ask our readers to share the link to the Series with others who may be interested. Our committed editorial board members have contributed their time and efforts in reviewing abstracts and many of them have also reviewed full-length manuscripts. I also want to acknowledge and thank faculty members who do not serve on our editorial board but have willingly served as reviewers. In the spring 2020 issue, we plan to acknowledge and thank all those who reviewed full length papers.

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Institutional Climates and Women Faculty of Color: Overcoming Aversive Racism and Microaggressions in the Academy¹

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Diversity and inclusion statistics in higher education today point to a sobering reality: while the academy has seen success in the drive to recruit students of color, it struggles to build comparable ethnic and racial diversity among faculty. This gap is likely only to grow. Demographics signal that we will see increasing student diversity in future, but we have little reason to think that faculty diversity will keep pace. As the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) 2018 report on diversity among college faculty shows that faculty of color, and particularly women of color, continue to be remarkably underrepresented in the academy.²

In a further break down of these numbers, the NCES report mostly reaffirms the pattern whereby the number of college faculty of color and women shrink further with advancing rank. In Fall 2017, male and female American Indian/ Alaska Natives and faculty claiming two or more races comprised less than 1% each of two ranks: full professors and assistant professors. Black females comprised 2% of full professors and 4% of assistant professors. Hispanic females comprised less than 1% of full professors and 3% of assistant professors. Asian/Pacific Islander females comprised 3% of full professors and 6% of assistant professors. White females comprised 27% of full professors and 38% of assistant professors. Similar patterns emerge when the number of male college faculty is broken down by race and ethnicity. Black males comprised 2% of full professors and 3% of assistant professors. Hispanic males comprised 2% of full professors and 3% of assistant professors. Asian/Pacific Islander males comprised 8% of full professors and 7% of assistant professors. White males comprised 54% of full professors and 34% of Assistant Professors.

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¹ This paper grew from remarks I offered at a Roundtable on Diversity and Excellence at the Susan Bulkeley Butler Center for Leadership Excellence on April 24, 2019. I thank Dr. Mangala Subramaniam, the Chair and Director of the Butler Center, for organizing this excellent ongoing series and inviting me to submit a working paper based on my presentation and feedback. Thanks also to my fellow panelists for their powerful presentations, and to the audience for its feedback and lively discussion. Finally, my deepest thanks also to Nancy Peterson, Marcia Stephenson, and Mangala Subramaniam, for their invaluable commentary and suggestions on several drafts of this working paper.

² The National Center for Education Statistics report on "Fast Facts: Race/Ethnicity of College Faculty" offers the following key facts: "Of all full-time faculty in degree-granting postsecondary institutions in fall 2017, 41 percent were White males; 35 percent were White females; 6 percent were Asian/Pacific Islander males; 5 percent were Asian/Pacific Islander females; and 3 percent each were Black males, Black females, Hispanic males, and Hispanic females. Those who were American Indian/Alaska Native and those who were of two or more races each made up 1 percent or less of full-time faculty."

We cannot assume that faculty diversity will grow in proportion to student diversity. Worse, we cannot be sure even that we can hang on to the gains of the past. Stephanie Shields notes that “[w]hatever our victories, constant vigilance is needed to prevent not only our own backsliding but regression by the institution itself.” Shields cites three examples of such institutional backsliding: the decision by the University of California system to cut back on the hiring of faculty of color in response to legislation undermining affirmative action; the phenomenon whereby “old gender-based inequities reappear within a few years of administrative correction”; and the “equally chilling [...] fact that gains in diversifying faculty composition can vanish almost overnight” (2012:38). In his contribution to the collection *Black Faculty in the Academy*, Mark Giles voices a similar concern about the revolving-door hiring of faculty of color in higher education. He asks, “[A]s long as institutions loudly and publicly proclaim their good intentions (i.e., diversity missions, goals, and initiatives), do they really have to show meaningful and measurable results? If so, then to whom are they ultimately accountable?” (2015:20).

At predominantly white institutions (henceforth PWIs), the goal of achieving excellence through diversity calls for ongoing vigilance, as Shields implies above; it calls also for institutions to wean themselves from mere optics of the kind described by Giles (2015), and replace them with meaningful self-accountability. In this working paper, I look at forms of racism and sexism on campus that tend to fly under the radar and thus make it more difficult for institutions and individuals to be vigilant and hold ourselves accountable. Specifically, I examine the paradigms of aversive racism and microaggressions and the toxicity they can infuse into institutional climates. I offer both non-academic and academic instances and examples of various categories of anti-diversity behavior. I then go on to trace the impact on faculty of color of this behavior, and conclude with some thoughts on what efforts, at both the institutional and the individual level, can push back against aversive racism and microaggressions.

In keeping with Susan Bulkeley Butler Center’s mission to foster women’s academic leadership and female faculty success, as well as the excellent preparatory readings that were suggested for our roundtable, my particular concern here is with women faculty of color, a category within which I include non-Caucasian faculty from various nations of origin, making further distinctions between U.S.-born and non-U.S. born faculty as needed. In addition, while race- and gender-diversity are my primary focus in this paper, my thoughts on these issues have evolved over time with references to multiple forms of diversity (having to do with class, cis-gendering, sexuality, and ability, to name a few). I will refer to these other underrepresented (henceforth URM) faculty on occasion.

Campus Climate and Aversive Racism

In their impressive, large-scale and probing study of “Racial privilege in the Professoriate,” Uma Jayakumar et al. reach one particularly troubling conclusion: “not only does a negative racial climate impede job satisfaction for faculty of color, but, conversely, a negative racial climate is also associated with greater retention for White faculty” (2009:555).³ This academic version of white flight raises an unavoidable question: do white faculty, in significant numbers, feel personally disadvantaged when the institutional climate improves for racial others? Do they see

³ This essay was recommended as preparatory reading for the diversity roundtable.

diversity through a zero-sum lens, where gains for any one group can be imagined only as a loss for others? Such reasoning directly counters lessons that have emerged from within URM disciplines and activism themselves. For example, disability scholars emphasize that efforts to accommodate the needs of one disadvantaged group typically result in improved accommodations for all groups. White faculty fleeing an institution primarily because it has become more welcoming to faculty of color clearly do not buy into this logic.

We need more research fully to understand the scale of, and motivation behind, academic white flight, but if it is indeed a statistically significant and ongoing response to increasing diversity and inclusion, it might be explained in part through the theory of “aversive racism.” Samuel Gaertner and John Dovidio (2005) trace the term to Joel Kovel, who in 1970 proposed a distinction between **dominant racism** or overt bigotry, and **aversive racism**, where the racism goes underground in order not to threaten the racist’s cherished self-image as unprejudiced. Gaertner and Dovidio suggest that aversive racism thrives in societies and institutions that commit to “central principles of equality and fairness,” but cannot or will not counter “the daily operation of systematic prejudice and discrimination, at an individual and societal level” (2005:617). Unlike dominant racists, aversive racists consciously subscribe to the diversity and inclusion ideals proclaimed by their communities or institutions or nation; they therefore find it difficult to name, confront, or fight their own prejudice and racial animus. The distance between their professed beliefs and their unacknowledged racism causes them “anxiety and discomfort,” to the point that “interracial interaction” of any kind becomes difficult and they “try to avoid it” (2005:619). Academic white flight could arguably be seen as a dramatically avoidant form of aversive racism. Gaertner and Dovidio point to a second connotation of aversiveness at work here: given that aversive racists groups “consciously embrace egalitarian ideals, [they] would find aversive any thought or indication that they might be racist” (2005:619).

What is the impact of aversive racism on faculty of color in PWIs? I believe it is remarkably shortsighted to deem aversive racism a relatively mild and less damaging form of racism than its counterpart, dominant racism. Gaertner and Dovidio emphasize that “the consequences of aversive racism (e.g., the restriction of economic opportunity) are as significant and pernicious as those of the traditional, overt form” (2005:618). The material impact of aversive racism has been clearly documented, for example in research on inequities in workplaces. For diversity and inclusion to flourish in these spaces, we must also continue to focus on the psychological and physical toll aversive racism takes on people of color.

As a quick example of one such impact, let me mention “credentialing,” the process whereby aversive racists occasionally enlist people of color into crediting them as non-racists. In my experience, it is the aversive racists’ state of denial that drives them to seek such credentialing. I have been subject to this process to a limited extent, and find it dispiriting: for one thing, it leaves me wondering if my friendship or presence is sought mainly because I can be put to this use; for another, I know that in endorsing the aversive racists’ state of denial, I would be in effect endorsing the racism itself. It feels insulting even being asked. And that is when, as a faculty member born outside the U.S. and belonging to a so-called model minority, my approbation is not as valuable as that of faculty who have suffered a longer generational history of racial trauma in the United States. I have witnessed the silent call for credentialing being directed far more frequently to U.S. born faculty of color, and have often thought about the emotional labor it must

entail for these colleagues. I believe that call is louder in institutions that make unequivocal commitment to diversity and inclusion, such as public universities, but have been unable to address aversive racism in their community. In these contexts, especially, being *called* racist is sometimes deemed more hostile and antisocial than actually *acting* racist.

In the academy, the phenomenon of aversive racism might explain not merely academic white flight but also many apparently trivial, often invisible, and everyday ways in which some among an advantaged majority can—consciously or unconsciously—undermine efforts to improve the climate for diversity and inclusion. My own experience has been for the most part mild given my membership in a department and discipline that has been relatively welcoming of difference, especially over the last two decades, but I certainly have often witnessed and occasionally been subjected to these phenomena elsewhere. In what follows, I will look at the paradigm of microaggressions, which invites us to probe that apparently trivial phenomenon.

From Aversive Racism to Microaggressions

The theory of microaggressions helps us get to the core of the everyday acts of racial hostility discussed above, or the recurring and apparently trivial ways diversity and inclusion can be undermined. The term was coined by Chester M. Pierce, the African American Harvard psychiatrist, as early as 1977, and the theory itself continues to be elaborated and fine-tuned. In 1977, analyzing TV commercials featuring African Americans, Chester M. Pierce et al. found a series of “subtle, stunning, often automatic and non-verbal exchanges” that functioned as “put-downs of blacks.” They term such exchanges “microaggressions.” They note also that however “subtle” the microaggression, its impact was far from trivial; the “cumulative weight” of microaggressions produced a sense of “never-ending burdens” (1977:65). Two decades later, Derald Wing Sue Chinese American Professor of Psychology at Teacher’s College, Columbia University, along with a team of scholars (2007) analyzed microaggressions in contemporary real life settings, including white-collar contexts. In their most recent discussion of the term, Sue et al. define microaggressions as “everyday slights, putdowns, invalidations, invalidations that people of color experience in their daily interactions with well-meaning White Americans who may be unaware that they have engaged in racially demeaning ways” (2019:129). In these recent writings, Sue et al. also clear up the confusion surrounding the term and perhaps resulting from the fact that it, unlike aversive racism, is tossed around frequently in popular media. Most of the confusion has to do with the prefix “micro.” Sue et al. clarify that, following the usage of Pierce et al., “micro” does not signal that the aggression is lighter, or more unintentional, or less damaging than other forms of racial aggression; instead, “micro” signals that the aggression is “everyday” (2019:131). Recognizing this I hope demonstrates the falsity of the choice between macro and microaggressions—and the implication that in focusing on microaggressions we are inflating trivialities and neglecting weightier (“macro”) forms of racism. The distinction between micro and macro aggressions rests not on how damaging, blatant, conscious or intentional, the aggression is—but rather on how commonplace it has become. Worth noting here is that the very *everyday* nature of microaggressions ensures that they can easily be normalized and then routinely overlooked. An institution overtly committed to nondiscrimination, such as the U.S. academy, is fortunately likely to have measures in place to counter highly visible and no longer normalized acts of racial hostility. However, in my experience, most such PWIs (and well-meaning individuals) have not equipped themselves to handle or sufficiently prioritize more easily normalized, trivialized, and invisibilized acts of racial hostility. namely, microaggressions.

In the 2007 article in which they elaborate Pierce's study, Sue et al. divide microaggressions into three categories, microassaults, microinsults, and microinvalidations, thus offering us a finer and more discerning lens to understand acts of racial hostility. Below, I will outline Sue et al.'s definitions of these terms, and follow them with examples drawn from both non-academic and academic contexts. A careful look at microaggressions can give us a sense of what we are up against when it comes to hostile institutional climates.

The first category of microaggressions in Sue et al.'s schema is that of **microassaults**, which comprise "explicit racial derogation [...] a verbal or nonverbal attack meant to hurt the intended victim" (2007:274). Given that perpetrators here are well aware of their hostile intent, microassaults come close to "dominant racism" in Gaertner and Dovidio's schema. Examples of non-academic microassaults are easy to find, especially given the public and media attention they have attracted over the last three years. Especially today, cell-phone evidence has called attention to multiple well-documented attacks fueled by white racial resentment, including the verbal abuse and gratuitous reporting to the police of strangers of color who are merely occupying public spaces such as parking lots and grocery stores.

Many still consider such experiences unlikely on campus colleges, but that is far from the case. Notwithstanding the academy's frequent declarations of its commitment to diversity and inclusion, these acts of hostility have not even been forced underground even those that *can* be traced to the aggressor. As Purdue graduate student Rachel Scarlett has detailed in her contribution to the Working Paper Series, she was subjected to the gratuitous-reporting form of microassault on campus. She adds, "These are the common, and for some, daily incidents of surveillance that students of color deal with as we enter academic spaces" (2018:8). It is not only non-academics who somehow find their way to campus and perpetrate microassaults. At the time of writing, a tenured academic at a neighboring university has been widely broadcasting his openly racist, misogynistic, and homophobic views on social media. Evidently welcoming the notoriety that has resulted for himself and his university, and undeterred by public reprimands from upper administration, this person clearly embraces the role of serial microassaulter and anti-diversity *provocateur*. An equally striking example of microassaults in the academy comes from one of the articles recommended for our roundtable. Chavella Pittman's "Racial Microaggressions: The Narratives of African American Faculty at a Predominantly White Institution" (2012) is particularly illuminating on campus climate and microaggressions, addressing how African American male and female faculty contended with such hostility at an R1 midwestern PWI university.⁴ Pittman quotes an African American faculty respondent, who noted "there are a lot of Whites on campus who are tired of thinking about African Americans. [...] these Whites' sentiment toward African Americans is, 'You've been thought about, and changed, and apologized to. Enough of that sh!% [expletive]'" (2012:87). In the kind of microassaults mentioned above, the assaulters flaunt their aggression, seeking notoriety.

⁴ Researchers interviewed seven male and seven female African American faculty at a large R1 (Pittman 2012:86). Transcripts from the 1-2 hour long interviews were then studied "line by line" (86). Together, they showed instance upon instance of black faculty being subjected to negative person-to-person interactions and hostile campus climates.

But not all microassaults occur in the open. More than a decade ago, a lesbian colleague found a homophobic poster had been taped inside her locked office during a weekend. Such acts of hostility have been with us for a long time, although arguably the last three years have seen virulent outbreaks of anonymous microassaults in many institutions. At Purdue, faculty and students report walking into early morning classes and finding desks arranged in the shape of swastikas; overnight white supremacist posters go up around campus, and racist slurs are spray-painted on university buildings and sidewalks.

Let me note here, that because of the high visibility and outrage mobilized by microassaults, institutions can, if they choose, spring into action to counter them, for example, by ensuring protection for vulnerable groups. However, and especially in the last three years, many PWIs, including my own, have often failed this test. Highly disturbing in nature, microassaults can potentially be countered through tried and true methods. Unfortunately, few tried and true methods seem available at an institutional level to counter the next two categories of microaggressions.

The second category of microaggressions in Sue et al.'s schema is **microinsults**, which comprises "subtle snubs, frequently unknown to the perpetrator, but clearly convey[ing] a hidden insulting message" (2007:274). Ambiguity enters the picture here: the aggressors might not be aware of the insult in their own action (unlikely though that seems), but if so, *something* is "clearly" conveying the hidden insult, with the aggressor serving as conduit. That something can be unconsciously held beliefs and prevailing ideologies. Outside the academy, an often cited microinsult is the act of clutching one's belongings tightly in the presence of URMs, or (with a hint of surprise) calling a person of color "articulate." Examples of microinsults in the academy include those occasions when a URM faculty member is disparaged as an "affirmative action hire." Nearly three decades ago I learned of a senior faculty questioning whether African American studies were "too specialized" to be accepted by the Liberal Arts tenure committee as a legitimate field. Such ignorance might seem unthinkable today, and yet we still come across entire URM fields of scholarship being dismissed as facile and "trendy," with the implication that they lack scholarly worth. Unlike microassaults, such acts are less likely to arouse institutional concern and dismissed as individual aberration rather than a systemic problem; the fact that they might be unconscious is illogically taken to mean their impact is trivial.

Sue et al.'s third and final category, **microinvalidations**, comprises acts that "exclude, negate, or nullify the psychological thoughts, feelings, or experiential reality of a person of color" (2007:274). Familiar examples of microinvalidations outside the academy include the belief still held in certain quarters (though possibly voiced less often) that women are too subject to hormonal fluctuation to hold higher office such as the presidency of the United States. The MeToo movement has given us many variants of microinvalidations, when a victim's testimony is dismissed on the grounds that she was too emotionally overwrought to speak credibly on what happened to her. The very theory of microaggressions has been challenged on similar grounds: that from their position at the receiving end, victims lack the objectivity required to identify microaggressions—which, of course, is a microinvalidation in itself. Women and people of color frequently report having their comments ignored in official venues, only to see their colleagues applauding those same observations when voiced a few minutes later by their male and/or white colleagues—a microinvalidation we encounter both in and out of the academy.

Turning to specifics in the academy, I have come to believe that microinvalidations—the devaluing and ignoring of the minority target’s expertise, learning, qualifications, and emotions—might be the most common microaggression; sometimes working in tandem with the other two. The microassault noted in Pittman’s (2012) study and cited above, for example, functions also as a microinvalidation: when white faculty declare that there has been “enough” apologizing for racial injustice, they are unselfconsciously appointing themselves the final arbiters of how much justice is enough, and not conceding that victims of racism have a say—let alone the last word—on this question (2012:87). Another microinsult doubling as a microinvalidation is still common in the academy: women faculty, myself included, find our professional titles ignored in situations where they are clearly warranted. For example, in the classroom, undergraduates sometimes automatically address women faculty with PhDs by first name, or with the title of Miss or Mrs. rather than Professor or Doctor; in these same spaces, white male graduate students (noticeably at a much earlier stage of their careers) are addressed as Professors. My contemporaries and I have encountered this microinvalidation from the start of our careers, sought to dispel it, and still come across it (though over time we seem to have been promoted from “Miss” or “Ms.” to “Mrs.”). Microinvalidations come also from those who, unlike the students, cannot plead ignorance as an excuse. In the 1980s, when recognition for African American feminist studies was gaining ground, Black female academics sometimes had a peculiar response to papers they presented at academic conferences. White self-professed feminists in the audience would approach them after the talk to request their bibliographies as separate documents, but not the papers themselves. The field evidently was exciting enough for these attendees to want to appear knowledgeable in it, and perhaps even to teach, read and write about it. They saw Black presenters as providing a shortcut and passport to the “raw materials” they needed, in effect positioning the latter as their unpaid and uncredited research assistants—rather than fellow-scholars whose hard-earned expertise was worth seeking in itself. These and other microinvalidations spring from the same logic that discounts women’s and faculty of color’s knowledge, professional expertise, and accomplishments in more consequential moments in their professional lives, including publishing and tenure. Perhaps such microinvalidations appear trivial and isolated at first. But, as I suggest below, their impact, along with that of other microaggressions, is considerable and pernicious.

The Impact of Microaggressions

How can we assess the effect of ongoing microaggressions on faculty of color? Impact is the frontier on which microaggression theory has met with its greatest resistance. In their latest publication on microaggressions, Sue et al. quote from and take on various responses to their paradigm, including an irritated dismissal of the theory as “macrononsense,” a paternalistic concern that microaggressions tempt people of color to “catastrophize,” and, finally, a trivializing claim that they do not stem from power differentials or racism—and are indeed no worse than ordinary “incivilities” of the kind that we must learn to shrug off (2019:129). In response, Sue et al. cite extensive research addressing the “constant, continual [...] and cumulative” damage that microaggressions can inflict on the victim’s physical and mental health, emotional well-being, and self-esteem (2019:130).

Because of their mundane nature, microaggressions seem unremarkable, and this in turn makes it difficult to appreciate their full impact. Their subtlety, their mechanical iteration, and their

everyday rather than extraordinary *modus operandi* together ensure that microinsults and microinvalidations in particular can fly under the radar, appear unintentional and harmless, and get easily normalized. This also makes it possible for them to be “easily dismissed and glossed over” (Sue et al. 2007:273). Finally, their apparent inconsequentiality means they can be continually repeated without arousing concern or notice.

An equally important reason the impact of microaggressions is underestimated is the unsettling ambiguity and inconclusiveness that surrounds them. Because they can seem “automatic” (Pierce et al. 1977:65), and “unconsciously delivered” (Sue et al. 2007:273), they confer a cover, a kind of plausible deniability, on the aggressor. Microaggressors know consciously or unconsciously to launch an aggression only when its motivation can be blurred- and when it can be explained away as benign: in other words, when an explanation other than racism can plausibly be claimed for the act. Gaertner and Dovidio note that “an aversive racist can justify or rationalize a negative response on the basis of some factor other than race” (2005:620). Caught off-guard by the microaggression’s “sudden” eruption in the middle of an ostensibly non-hostile space—sometimes a space they share professionally or socially with the aggressor—victims are left uncertain about the intent of the aggressor, and often further nonplussed by “the nagging question of whether it really happened” (Sue et al 2007:275-6). Those doubts in turn undermine the ground from which they can call out and confront the microaggression. All responses become unsatisfying and tinged with self-blame. If the targets of microaggressions confront the microaggressor without being quite sure about the intent, they might feel they are overreacting (and then wonder if they are feeding the stereotype of people of color as oversensitive, inexplicably and permanently angry).⁵ If they choose *not* to speak, they might blame themselves for cowardice in letting an offense slide and not intervening in a powerful racist discourse that could inflict harm on other vulnerable people.

All of this is what makes microaggressions so debilitating—indeed, “stunning” (Pierce et al. 1977:65; Sue et al. 2007:273). Sue et al. memorably and convincingly describe their cumulative impact as a “sapping [of] psychic and spiritual energies” (2007:275-6). They reiterate this point in their more recent work: the “bombardment” of microaggressions culminates in “racial battle fatigue” (2019:128).

To understand the impact of microaggressions on faculty of color, institutions and individuals need to seek out and hear directly from those impacted. Recent studies such as *Presumed Incompetent: The Intersections of Race and Class for Women in Academia* (2012), edited by Gabriella Gutiérrez y Muhs et al., and *Black Faculty in the Academy*, edited by Fred Bonner II et al. (2015), are exemplary collections of narratives by those impacted, and they focus directly on

⁵ In this connection, see Mangala Subramaniam’s 2018 contribution to this Working Paper series. Subramaniam addresses the demand for “niceness” placed on women academics of color, and the false interpretation of their demeanor as permanently angry. She writes, “The seriousness that some women of color convey in their interactions is described negatively as having ‘rolled her eyes’ or ‘looks angry’ (similar to the well-known description of the ‘angry black woman’) because they do not fit in with the normative notion of ‘niceness’” (2018:8).

the experience of the oppressed rather than the motivation of the oppressor.⁶ To convey just a glimpse of the painful impact of microaggressions, let me invoke Angela Mae Kupenda's contribution to the y Muhs collection, and the diagnosis her mother offered for her feelings of utter exhaustion in the academy:

You are so tired because you feel like a clown. You smile when you do not feel like smiling. You bite your tongue and make no sound when you want to speak. You try to make the casual and watchful observers so comfortable with you, but now you are uncomfortable with this false self (2012:23).

Reading accounts such as this can be transformative for all, including those who trivialize the impact of microaggressions.

Pushing Back

For the various reasons cited above, microaggressions are difficult to recognize and counter. The first step to doing so, in my view, is to keep our focus on targets, and stop fixating on the intentions of the aggressors. Given that microaggressions can occur without the aggressor's awareness or willingness to own the act, I believe that the question of intent matters only if our primary concern is providing some kind of credentialing for the aggressor. Given also the debilitating impact of microaggressions irrespective of the perpetrator's intent, our focus should be on witnessing the damage, and supporting acts of recovery. Much as with the fake outrage over political correctness in the 90s, we obsess over the intent of aggressors at the risk of ignoring the cost to the target.

Let me offer a few additional suggestions on how institutions and individuals can push back against microaggressions. Institutionally, pro-diversity measures must continue to be a direct focus not just in recruitment, hiring, promotion, and retention, but also in pedagogy, research, administration faculty and personnel development. Administrators must anticipate that new visibility for faculty of color, the kind that comes with recognition and awards, for instance, could produce new racial resentment. For this and similar reasons, faculty of color must have access to safe grievance procedures, including anonymous reporting, as redress for microaggressions as much as for overt racism. Above all, the academy must remain true to its mission of generating learning and knowledge, and place a priority on supporting research on racism and diversity. It is important to note that though they might *appear* interpersonal, microaggressions draw from systemic racism—a racism that manifests not just in individual psyches but also in institutional structures, such as those of the academy. Therefore the academy must be especially mindful of institutionalized racism within its own walls. On a more positive note, it must also carefully track and record the specific forms of excellence that a diverse faculty has achieved for the institution: how it has impacted research, pedagogy, mentoring, outreach, and other missions.

⁶ Though my focus in this working paper is on race- and gender-based diversity, let me briefly note that microaggression theory, developed in the context of race, now is invoked in multiple arenas, including gender, LGBTQA, class, trans, and ability-related diversity and inclusion. Life-narratives that can challenge invisible and normalized privilege must be sought for all forms of diversity. In this connection, see Brianne Dávila and Francis Walker.

On the question of what individuals can do to counter microaggressions, let me turn to Sue et al.'s (2019) recent concept of “microinterventions, the strategic goals of which are to (a) make the ‘invisible visible,’ (b) disarm the microaggression, (c) educate the offender about the metacommunications they send and (d) seek external support when needed” (2019:124). Those who have suffered microaggressions and bring their own painful experience to visibility do difficult and important work for diversity, almost always at a cost to themselves. However, they should not be carrying this burden alone. Sue et al. emphasize the importance of “bystanders” and witnesses, who by intervening can transform themselves into allies when they do (2019:131). Ally groups do not claim membership in a minority group; indeed they apparently belong to, and are able to pass in, the majority. It is from this very position of privileged and comfortable invisibility that they can educate those who share their privilege. Allies stand beside those who struggle, and speak up when the latter cannot do so without risk to themselves. Sue et al. note that allies are impelled not only by their commitment to social justice, but also by a desire “to end the social disparities from which they reap unearned benefits” (2019:132). Their support can make a difference. As Scarlett points out, “Everyday practices that foster inclusion are not always implicit. At times, explicit validation of my value as an intellectual can counteract my feelings of ‘otherness’” (2018:9). I would add that the intersectionality of our identities means that each of us can potentially provide, and benefit from, such validation. Each of us potentially belongs to some majorities and some minorities and is therefore in a powerful position to serve as an ally in some contexts, even when we are the targets of others. Solidarity is needed as much today as ever.

Conclusion

In this working paper, I have argued that while the U.S. academy unequivocally commits to diversity and inclusion, it has not solved the problem of hostile institutional racial climates. The gap between the ideal and its execution, as noted earlier, creates optimal conditions for aversive racism and microaggressions, two contemporary and formidable faces of racism. I have suggested that though they tend to be trivialized, the effect of these racisms on victims—and on the institutional drive for diversity—is damaging. Those fighting microaggressions and racism today frequently experience sheer exhaustion, a term that has appeared a few times in this essay and is also a running motif in current discussions of diversity and inclusion on campus.

For example, in a September 2018 issue of *The Chronicle for Higher Education*, Mariam B. Lam, a faculty member and administrator at U.C. Riverside, identified the phenomenon of “diversity fatigue” in the academy even among “those most committed to diversity work”—and even in an institution such as hers, which is known as “one of the most racially diverse” campuses in the U.S. Lam urges an overhaul of how we think about diversity and inclusion: “Meaningful diversity work cannot be seen as something that is supplemental or remedial, or touted only in times of crisis or promotion. Diversity is not philanthropy. For diversity work to thrive, it needs to be part of everyday life on campus — for everybody” (Lam 2018).

Without taking aversive racism and microaggressions seriously, the academy cannot begin to answer the important questions that Lam raises. How can we forge meaningful institutional change and refuse to settle for individualized contrition and *mea-culpas*? How else can we ensure that diversity more than survives in some corner of the academy—and that it actually thrives as the “everyday” experience of all? What can help us recognize diversity not as

“philanthropy” for some, but rather a boon for “everybody”? A pressing need today is to create conditions for faculty of color to speak freely to these very questions, and to learn to listen when they do.

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Excellence and Diversity: Prioritizing an Inclusive Academy for the Twenty-first Century

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I am thrilled to have the opportunity to write up remarks made at the Butler Center Roundtable III: Excellence and Diversity for the Butler Center Working Paper Series. The focus of this article as well as the remarks I made at the in-person session both reflects the commitment of the Butler Center to consider pressing issues facing institutions of higher education as well as how and in what way faculty can contribute to these dialogues. The Roundtable Series is an initiative that seeks to make space for diversity and inclusion discussions on campus and provide forums in which these discussions can develop. In this essay, I hope to contribute in a small way to these conversations by conveying some thoughts on topics raised in Roundtable III.

As Purdue University celebrates its 150th anniversary of excellence in learning, discovery, and engagement, focal points of the university's past and present loom large. Drawing upon multi-decadal histories of ground-breaking innovations in space exploration, health and longevity, artificial intelligence, and sustainable economy and planet, this is an apt moment to reflect. To place into sharp focus the wicked problems our world is facing, such as gender equity, the biodiversity crisis, climate change, and food insecurity, amongst others, the *Ideas Festival* is the core organizing event that brings in speakers from around the world to incite provocative conversation and synergistic dialogues across the university campus.

Yet, commemorative moments are not only important for their celebratory power that can reignite shared senses of belonging by curating histories and current scholarship to enliven the campus landscape—but also can be an invitation to initiate difficult dialogues. Purdue has a particular charge as one of the land grant institutions in the nation to continue to serve our local communities, state populations, *and* to create an inclusive and diverse academy which is nimble enough to respond to and seek solutions for the global grand challenges that we all face.

I suggest we should not only celebrate during this commemorative time but also take stock of the challenges our institution faces thereby exploring how recognition and responsiveness to challenges will enrich, rather than diminish, our future. In other words, I am advocating for dialogue that will make a place for narratives that continue to build awareness toward an inclusive academy, recognize the changing demographics of the state of Indiana and the nation, respond to the dynamic international and multicultural communities on campus, reconcile with histories of colonization, and go beyond our nondiscrimination policy to value diversity. Students, faculty, and administrators can all play a part in ensuring that Purdue is an institution

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that serves multiple communities and citizenry. In just one example, the Butler Center has been a leader in cultivating spaces of visibility. During 2017-18, the center organized conversations about inclusion that drew so many people to sessions that registration had to be limited. These initiatives point to both a need and desire among Purdue community members to respond to and address the visibility of these issues across campus and beyond.

This is not a Purdue-specific challenge nor is it a new one. Much scholarship on institutions of higher education point to steep barriers in place that preclude a more inclusive academy (Williams, Berger, and McClendon 2015). In this short piece, I'd like to reflect on three domains relevant to an inclusive academy: historical legacies, structural and institutional conditions, and lived experiences. By no means are these exhaustive, however, they are meant to reignite just one piece of a conversation that is already many decades in the making. I do so by drawing from anthropologist Eric Wolf's approaches to power alongside feminist intersectional theories as orienting frames. Eric Wolf (1990:587 cited in Levy 1999:62) notes there is a distinction between four kinds of power: "(1) power as an attribute of a person, emphasizing potency or capability; (2) power as the ability to impose on another in a social action and interpersonal relations; (3) power that controls the settings in which interactions may take place, this is tactical or organizational power; and (4) power that structures the overarching politics economy, which shapes the 'social field of action so as to render some kinds of behavior possible, while making others less possible.'" Wolf calls this structural power. It is the latter two which I will engage with in relation to historical legacies of colonization and racial discrimination that continue to impact our campus life as well as the normative institutional barriers in place that serve to limit our university community to flourish.

As a feminist scholar, I also draw from intersectional approaches to identity and practice. Formulated by Crenshaw (1998 [1989]), these theories suggest that individuals experience interpersonal, institutional, and other relationships through the amplification or contraction of intersecting attributes, such as age, gender, class, ethnicity, race, sexuality and other hierarchies of difference. As Crenshaw (2019) explained in retrospective on her work, "Intersectionality is a lens through which you can see where power comes and collides, where it interlocks and intersects. It's not simply that there's a race problem here, a gender problem here, and a class or LBGTQ problem there. Many times that framework erases what happens to people who are subject to all of these things." Important to working with intersectional theory is acknowledging and addressing your own positionality. To this end, I want to be forthcoming in this piece as a white, cisgender, able-bodied woman of European descent, my experience in the academy has been one of privilege (see Jayakumar et al. 2009). As a feminist scholar and a faculty committed to cultivating excellence at Purdue, I continue to struggle to and seek ways in which I can be an ally for staff, students, and faculty, as well as do the critical work to constantly deconstruct my own epistemologies and ontologies that I embody in order to dismantle the entrenched institutional norms that serve as barriers to diversity and inclusion.

Historical Legacies

Since 1994, land grant institutions' mandate to provide accessible higher education for all expanded to include tribal colleges and universities (TCUs). At the same time, non-TCU land grant institutions of higher education have struggled to create programs to expand and support indigenous students, faculty, and staff on university campuses as well as draw attention to the

histories of Native American, American Indian, and Alaska Native Peoples—especially how those histories intersect or collide with the academy. To that end, programs which seek to enliven indigenous histories, thoughtfully craft land acknowledgements, and create programming to support indigenous cultures and students have emerged.

Cultivating awareness about local and regional histories of American Indian and Native American Peoples requires institutional effort to make visible that which is often not accessible or widely known. This is an important area for intervention during anniversary years. At Purdue, the Native American Education and Cultural Center (NAECC) and Dr. Dawn Marsh in the Department of History have worked tirelessly to have Purdue's proximity to pivotal moments in Native American and American Peoples' history acknowledged on campus and in the region. These legacies have always been part of the place, perhaps without many knowing it. For example, the name of the Wabash River comes from the Miami-Illinois language *waapaahšiiki*, translated as "it is a white-shining river" which refers to the striking geological properties of the dolomitic limestone found in certain areas (McCafferty 2000:227). Purdue also is just moments away from Prophetstown where Tecumseh and his brother Tenskwatawa made crucial diplomatic strides in uniting many Sovereign Nations, bringing communities together, and standing up for their livelihoods in the Battle of Tippecanoe. The prairies, riparian, and forested landscapes, many of which now serve as the lands of multi-generational farmer communities and Purdue's institutional home, were stewarded by many American Indian and Native American Sovereign Nations—these landscapes were centuries in the making.

Moreover, the NAECC is following other Big 10 universities, like the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and Northwestern University, by crafting a land acknowledgement. Although controversial, land acknowledgements serve a dual purpose of recognizing histories of Indigenous Peoples and prioritizing programs that welcome indigenous students, scholars, staff, and visitors. On the latter point, the NAECC offers ongoing initiatives such as the Sloan Foundation Indigenous Graduate Partnership and the Tecumseh Postdoctoral Fellows Program, amongst other programs, which continue to support new forms of inclusive campus life and scholarship that engages at once with reconciling historical legacies and supporting possible futures.¹

These are just a few of the institutional changes that can take place for recognition and reconciliation. Canadian institutions of higher education have led in this area, offering many resources and guidelines to working *with* and *for* First Nations Peoples. For example, Dr. Shauneen Pete (n.d.) has pulled together a document on *100 ways to indigenize an decolonize academic programs and courses* in an effort to specify multiple pathways for change. The American Indian College Fund (2019) also offers insights on how institutions can adopt policies and programs to support indigenous students. Reviewing some of these established documents and working with centers on campus that have already demonstrated leadership in these areas to working towards institutional change are just some of the transformation that can take place. On the administrative level, the Division of Diversity and Inclusion remains a stronghold in moving initiatives forward, and on the scholarly level, works like American Studies' student Jennifer Sdunzik's (2019) thesis, entitled *Mapping Whiteness: Uncovering the Legacy of All-White Towns*

¹ These observations are my own. I do not represent or speak for the NAECC community or the center leadership.

in Indiana, make critical contributions in addressing the racial politics and cultures of exclusion that have shaped and persist in Indiana.

Structural and Institutional Conditions

Institutional and scholarly practices of forgetting and invisibility are not just limited to historical legacies, but also are embedded in current university life. Recent high impact articles have highlighted the stark problem with representation and structural issues of exclusion. For example, Fenelon (2003) questions the normative dimensions of objectivity in the academy and hones in on the experiences of faculty who engage in racialized research. Specifically, Fenelon (2003:89) emphasizes symbolic representation—or the structures, environment, mascots, and other symbols—as one area that perpetuates oppressive systems. In this way, Fenelon (2003) expands on how, “structural issues of racism ... are linked to symbolic representations ... that extend from individual imagery to societally sanctioned iconography, ... constituting historically based and currently practiced racial systems.” Faculty can reinforce and reproduce these if they are unable or unwilling to make a change in visual communicative forms.

At Purdue, some institutional-level initiatives are in place to address symbolic homogeneity. For example, one of the recommendations of Purdue’s ADVANCE-(Purdue and Center for Faculty Success) program is to increase the representation of women and faculty of color within and across the signature spaces on Purdue’s campus. Landmark buildings such as the Purdue Memorial Student Union and Stewart Center are just two examples of places that have made some changes—more are needed. As a campus that has been recognized for its international student body—in 2015 Purdue ranked top in enrolling international students (Neubert 2015)—as well as one that draws from the a diverse national and state-based student body, Purdue has a range of alumni and leaders across Purdue’s campus to honor. Fenelon (2003:92) suggests an attentiveness to alumni donor groups and administration so to support change in symbolic representations as well as research which examines race and racialization as well as other intersectional identities in the academy.

While fixating on symbolic representation might be seen as a “soft approach” to structural change, much research has shown that the environments and conditions in which university faculty, student, and staff find themselves can either reinforce feelings of isolation and in- or out-group membership or encourage notions of belonging (Fenelon 2003). To be sure, however, symbolic representation is only one piece of a more complex landscape. For example, Jayakumar et al. (2009:538-539) have shown that the increase in faculty of color across college campuses continue to be “significantly underrepresented,” and faculty of color in tenure-track positions have “lower satisfaction” than their White counterparts. At Purdue, the 2018 COACHE (Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education) survey show similar results on climate and satisfaction for women and faculty of color (see also Peterson 2019). What is more concerning, Jayakumar et al. (2009:540) shows that while faculty of color might be intellectually satisfied with their work, ongoing “racist ideologies and racially discriminatory behaviors” persist.

We have much work ahead to meet the necessary conditions to be a responsive and competitive R1 institution in the 21st century. Continuing to address symbolic representations and campus climate head on will assist in making the transformations needed. As Wolf reminds us, faculty

and administration across the university can contribute to this organizational and structural change, shifting the normative dimensions of practice to shape both the settings of work (symbolic representation) and “the social field of action.”

Lived Experiences

Social science and humanities disciplines prioritize qualitative work that illuminates the lived experience and rhythms of daily life. This type of robust and systematic data at the individual and community scale provides contextual and nuanced information about interpersonal experiences, realities of institutional practices, and the attitudes and perceptions that accompany a diverse array of behavioral and decision-making conditions. Recent research on understanding the affective dimensions of faculty lives show that many institutional practices reinforce, rather than erode, inequity and injustice in institutions of higher education. For example, Fenelon’s (2003) research also finds that research cultures and academic cultures can struggle to come to terms with discriminatory practices or do not recognize them altogether:

“As constitutionally stated, most academics follow the general public and historical scholarship in either denying or downplaying systems of racial exploitation and oppression such as race-based slavery or indigenous genocide.” (2003:88)

“Thus, research, appearing to be neutral and scholarly, has important political manifestations, including the justification for racial inequalities that are replicated within the student and alumni bodies of institutions that may formally state that they value diversity even as all of their internal mechanisms reproduce exclusionary dominance.” (2003:91)

“Academic culture actually fosters these approaches by downplaying face-to-face encounters, exaggerating backroom committee work, and allowing external forces and multiple entry points.” (2003:96)

Other pieces highlight the outcomes and effects of institutional and faculty practices that intensify experiences of exclusion and racism. For example, in Pittman’s (2012) study on the lives of 14 African-American faculty, research findings show:

“...African-American faculty felt invisible, as through their credentials were challenge and that they received inadequate mentoring...they also expressed believing that they were assigned raced-based service assignments, an ambiguity about if microaggression were due to race or gender, and feeling self-consciousness about self-presentation.” (ibid.:84)

Interpersonal interactions, institutional mentoring practices, and microaggressions remain challenges and experienced forms of racial oppression. On an institutional level, Pittman’s findings illustrate the ongoing need to provide the environments in which faculty, staff, and students can be made aware of microaggressions and to be vigilant about mentoring structures for faculty. Again, Purdue has made steps in this regard in developing mandatory sessions for faculty on search committees to complete a workshop that covers, amongst other topics bias, assumptions, ethics, compliance, and diversity. Similarly, both the ADVANCE-Purdue and Center for Faculty Success program and Purdue’s membership with the National Center for

Faculty Diversity and Inclusion have been some of the pathways chosen to create mentorship structures for faculty experiences. The Butler Center is the lead of a new initiative on campus entitled the Coaching and Resource Network (CRN) to provide additional coaching and mentoring to faculty. This initiative reflects the Center's dedication to the promotion of women and women of color, particularly associate to full, such as the inaugural conference for associate professors, held in spring 2019, attests to.

Continuing to support these programs and working at multiple scales at once to innovate in this area – at the department/unit/program, college, faculty working groups, faculty senate, Office of Diversity and Inclusion, Office of The Vice President for Research, and with external organizations and actors, for example, can provide plural and overlapping options for faculty who experience forms of oppression while at the same time attempting to craft programs that tackle these challenges head on. This requires the entire campus community to engage in dialogues or training, regardless of rank or identity, to move toward this goal.

On the other hand, Pittman also observed:

“Faculty of color take on greater teaching, mentoring, service, and administrative/committee responsibilities than do White faculty. .. faculty of color are more likely to use active pedagogical techniques known to improve student learning. Faculty of color also more frequently encourage students to interact with peers from different backgrounds, engage in service-related activities and produce scholarship that addresses issues of race, ethnicity, and gender” (2012:539).

In this way, Pittman also shows that attentiveness to microaggressions is not enough; faculty of color experience scholarly life different than their White colleagues. This finding is also particularly concerning. As promotion and tenure at R1 universities rely upon demonstrated excellence in learning, discovery, or engagement, spreading faculty efforts across these three domains stresses their ability to achieve the needed goal of excellence in one during time-sensitive pre-tenure moments. Moreover, at the associate rank, this can delay time to full, and can also impact full professors' ability to manage their scholarly activity. On the other hand, lack of recognition of the work required for active pedagogical innovation that potentially improves student educational experience and outcomes is also problematic.

Purdue has sought to address some of these tensions and inconsistencies through making sure guidelines for promotion and tenure across the domains are accessible and clear. Faculty are required and encouraged to document their mentoring activities, such as mentoring undergraduate research assistants as well as their supportive activities, such as writing recommendation letters, in their annual review documents. Continuing to make responsibilities detectible in annual review documents, which are submitted to heads, deans, and other review committees, can have the dual purpose of acknowledging and recognizing this type of work while have multiple levels of comparative oversight on the different ways faculty are or are not overburdened in teaching, mentoring, service, and administrative duties.

This oversight is critical. 2018 COACHE results revealed that Purdue is lagging behind in promoting faculty of color and women, and programs need to be in place in order to mitigate

this. Making sure that deans and chairs have oversight over overburdening faculty of color and others with multiple teaching, mentoring, and administrative duties is critical and providing them the tools to intervene when there is a demonstrated need is critical. Yet, Pittman (2003) emphasizes that while institutional practices such as these are important, the interpersonal work that is required is also equally relevant to address racial oppression and emotional and mental health burdens and stresses that are ongoing.

Conclusion

Public and land grant universities have a mandate to serve their states, their diverse citizenship as well as the diverse staff, faculty, and student bodies that make up their communities and cultures. Ongoing work on excellence and diversity in the academy continues to highlight the multiple scales, affective and symbolic dimensions, and interpersonal levels at which institutions of higher education are falling short of formulating inclusive academies in order to maintain their excellence. In this piece, drawing from theories of power and intersectionality, I have highlighted three critical domains that remain acute: historical legacies, institutional constraints, and lived experiences.

First, I focused on historical legacies of Purdue presence/s in its state, and thereby highlighted the work the NAECC at Purdue to support recognition of past and present Indigenous Peoples. Land acknowledgements already published and crafted by peer-institutions, and curriculum changes proposed by Canadian Universities indicate that Purdue is behind the curve in thinking about ways in which to move forward, although the NAECC has been a frontrunner in creating programs and initiatives on campus. I hope that we can learn from these models and continue to address decolonizing principles so as to recognize, rather than forget, the histories of the Peoples who stewarded the landscapes which we have built this institution on and with.

Research reviewed also revealed the structural and institutional constraints that prevents building or sustaining a more inclusive environment at institutions of higher education. Symbolic representation is one, often overlooked, area that institutions of higher education should prioritize. Improving representation of the diversity of faculty, staff, and alumni experiences in different mediums across campus provides important contextual information and visual cues that create more inclusive environments. Purdue's long history of international exchange, retention of international students from all walks of life on campus, as well as diverse faculty can and should be celebrated, as appropriate. The ADVANCE-Purdue and Center for Faculty Success program and other initiatives are already in place to address some of these disparities, and continual funding for these programs and vigilance for improving and creating new programs and supporting varied mediums (including song, dance) – especially in high-profile areas and events on campus should be in place.

As a collection, the articles reviewed for this roundtable also illuminate how and in what way lived experience is played out at the individual, interpersonal, and community level (Fenelon 2003; Jayakumar et al. 2009; Pittman 2012). These are often hard to record forms of oppression on campus but just as relevant as those that are most visible. Microaggressions, demands on faculty time, mentoring, service, and administrative loads disproportionately burden faculty of color and cultivate climates of oppression and exclusion. There are points to several possible responses to this. The first is to make sure that promotion and tenure documents reflect the

different kinds of discovery, engagement, and learning work that faculty want to achieve excellence in (for example, pedagogical innovations). The second is to have both top-down and bottom-up mechanisms where faculty careers can be discussed. For example, those in leadership positions should be able to comparatively review faculty service and administrative requirements with an eye towards overburdens— as well as be able to take action when disparities are apparent. Faculty also should have mechanisms and opportunities to voice their concerns as well as have allies and advocates who can assist, if needed. In this way, there should be regular check-ins to see how to better distribute service and teaching loads and working with them to create discovery, learning, and engagement plan that is tailored to their professional goals. The third is to potentially create trainings, similar to the mandatory trainings for search committees, for all faculty and staff on microaggressions. A fourth strategy might be to provide the tools and administrative assistance to cultivate spaces where staff, faculty, and students direct the changes and create the programs that they want to see supported across campus. This would not solve, but draw attention to and raise consciousness about interactions that negatively affect interpersonal relationships and institutional climate.

Some of the most challenging facets of institutions of higher education today is taking a critical look at normative structures and practices that perpetuate inequity and injustice across institutional campuses. There are many scholars and staff who are well-versed in these issues and who have dedicated their careers to a more inclusive academy to continue to achieve desired excellence. While this brief reflection piece predominantly focused on faculty affairs, multiple different facets of institutional culture and structural, institutional, and intersectional arenas are ripe for intervention; for example faculty-student interactions, student experiences, and the state climate and cultures in which universities sit. Over the past 150 years, Purdue has demonstrated innovation and engagement, cultivating students and scholars who not only dream of the impossible but provide the world with the tools to make it happen. To extend this energy to build a more inclusive academy will reinvest in a challenge we are already committed to in order to continue to dynamically respond to the obstacles that are presented before us and make the changes necessary to do so.

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Resources

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https://chancellor.illinois.edu/land_acknowledgement.html

Northwestern Land Acknowledgement
<https://www.northwestern.edu/native-american-and-indigenous-peoples/about/Land%20Acknowledgement.html>

Success and Silences: Diversifying the Purdue Archives and Special Collections

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Archives exist to document and preserve the cultural and historical record for current and future generations. Despite the United States' increasingly diverse population, the bulk of archival records collected by archives, libraries, historical societies, and museums remain homogenous, reflecting the biases and privileges inherent in prioritizing the lives of those in power, which has overwhelmingly been white men of wealth and status. In this paper, we address how the Purdue University Archives and Special Collections staff are altering their practices as collectors of the historical record and forming partnerships with underrepresented communities to diversify collections. We begin by discussing how and why archival institutions and archivists collect materials, the implications this has for the representation of women and people of color in archives, and how these practices have excluded women's experiences in the Purdue Archives. We discuss the development of the Susan Bulkeley Butler Women's Archives as a response to the underrepresentation of women in the Archives, as well as how the collection is used to support teaching and research. Finally, we address how the initial focus of the Women's Archives on "notable" women led to the absence of minority women's experiences and the recent steps archivists have taken to address these silences and diversify perspectives in the historical record.

Purpose of Archives

Archival institutions house primary source records that document the history of society. These records are the original source documents used to understand and interpret people, their activities, and events of the past. Archival institutions collect predominantly unpublished materials such as correspondence, memoranda, speeches, lecture and teaching notes, early drafts of publications, photographs, scrapbooks, and audio-visual materials in both physical and digital formats. There are many different types of archival repositories: academic, government, and museum archives; historical societies and archives of religious orders; corporate and private archives; and more. Each has its own focus and intended audience or user base, but the common thread across archives is that they collect unique documents that record the past and are intended to remain valuable in perpetuity.

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An archivist's primary responsibilities are to identify and acquire collections that align with the collecting focus of their institution and to maintain those collections. This includes a multitude of tasks such as building relationships with potential donors; organizing, inventorying, and preserving those collections while ensuring they are easily accessible; and promoting their use through teaching, exhibitions, publishing, digitization, or other means.

The primary collecting focus of the Purdue Archives is to document and preserve all aspects of Purdue history and the people, places, and events represented in that history. The Purdue Archives collects papers of faculty, students, and staff; records created by Purdue's colleges, schools, and academic departments; and rare books. When the Special Collections department of the Purdue Libraries began, the precursor to the Purdue Archives and Special Collections, staff initially collected materials of noteworthy faculty and alumni, primarily upper-class white men, whose stories were deemed important to preserve. Purdue University's status as a land grant institution of higher learning also shapes the collecting focus of the Purdue Archives. Archival collections reflect Purdue's historical strengths in agriculture, engineering, science, and technology, which presents challenges for diversity when documenting predominantly "male" professions. This problem reflects the larger national problem of archives and special collections libraries primarily serving as places of reverence for "great men."

The materials preserved by archives and libraries in the United States do not reflect the nation's diverse population. In North America, records preserved in archival institutions overwhelmingly document white men in positions of power. In recognition of the need for archivists and archives to be inclusive, the Society of American Archivists (2018), known as SAA, lists diversity as one of its eleven core values for archivists. As the nation's professional organization for archivists, SAA (2019) has advocated that "the relevance of archives to society and the completeness of the documentary record hinge on the profession's success in ensuring that its members, the holdings that they collect and manage, and the users that they serve reflect the diversity of society as a whole." It is for this reason, the recognition of the absence of gender diversity, that women's archives in the United States increased in popularity in the 1990s (Mason and Zanish-Belcher 2013b). This trend of recognizing the absence of women's experiences, along with the support of alumna Susan Bulkeley Butler led to the formation of the Susan Bulkeley Butler Women's Archives at Purdue.

Establishing the Women's Archives

In 2006, University Archivist Sammie Morris gave a presentation on women in Purdue history as part of the University's Women for Purdue philanthropy programs. Susan Bulkeley Butler, alumna and trustee, attended the event, which included a small display of materials from the Purdue Archives. Morris explained that the exhibit on women in Purdue history was challenging to compile due to the lack of original source material documenting women. Morris' concern that women were being left out of Purdue's history resonated with the audience, which was comprised primarily of alumnae and supporters of Purdue.

As a result of the presentation, Butler expressed interest in helping the Archives develop a program to collect information on women in Purdue history. Butler was the first professional female employee hired at Arthur Anderson & Company in 1965 and she became the first female partner of Anderson Consulting, now known as Accenture. As a Purdue alumna who had broken

ground for women in business and witnessed first-hand the challenges they face in receiving recognition and support for their careers, Butler was and still is passionate about advancing women and recognizing their contributions. She pledged a \$1 million deferred gift to create a Women's Archives in her name, allowing the Archives to create programming centered around women in Purdue and Indiana history, acquire collections of key women's papers, conduct oral history interviews with women, and process and preserve these collections to prepare them for use in teaching and scholarship.

The Susan Bulkeley Butler Women's Archives was established in 2006 and Butler's gift was announced in press releases and at events launching the Women's Archives. Butler's generosity enabled the Libraries to hire an archivist to begin building women's history collections and raising awareness of the Women's Archives.

Early steps in starting the Women's Archives included identifying collections the Archives already possessed on women and bringing those together, as well as identifying women participants and leaders in Purdue's history who could be contacted about donating their papers. The first Women's Archivist, Stephanie Schmitz, began reviewing existing collections on women, which although sparse included some collections of well-known women such as those of engineer and mother of modern management, Dr. Lillian Gilbreth, and noteworthy pilot, Amelia Earhart.



Select materials from the George Palmer Putnam collection of Amelia Earhart papers, MSP 9.

Identifying other women in Purdue history, many of whom witnessed and participated in key events and eras, was challenging. There were no written histories of women in Purdue history to use, so Schmitz began reviewing existing books on Purdue history to identify women mentioned. She communicated frequently with Butler and other early supporters of the Women's Archives to help document the names and backgrounds of women alumnae, retired faculty, and staff who she could approach about donating collections. Through these connections, early supporter and advocate for the Women's Archives Betty Nelson provided the Archives with an unpublished manuscript about women in Purdue history. This manuscript was instrumental in identifying women to contact or deceased women whose families might still possess papers documenting their lives and work.

After thirteen years of collecting, the Women's Archives now possesses more than 140 collections documenting women in Purdue's history. The success of this initiative has provided scholars, faculty, and students with evidence of women's experiences at Purdue, which have been instrumental in the publication of women's histories and the development of course curricula.

Learning and Scholarship

Prior to the development of the Women's Archives, researchers had little documentation of women's experiences at Purdue and women were often overlooked in early written histories of the University. Professors teaching courses on women's history and gender studies had access to few primary source collections they could draw upon in their curricula.¹ Today, the Women's Archives collections enable scholars from across Indiana, the United States, and around the world to learn about Purdue women and their successes, resulting in the production of new scholarship on women in Purdue history and the integration of women's collections into student learning and assignments.

International scholars have conducted academic research using collections in the Women's Archives, culminating in the publication of theses, journal articles, blogs, books, films, and more. Papers created by women such as Dr. Lillian Gilbreth and Amelia Earhart, Purdue deans, students, and early suffragists have attracted researchers from Germany, Australia, the United Kingdom, and Switzerland, to name a few.² To encourage this type of far-reaching scholarship, we offer research grants to assist with travel costs for visiting scholars. These grants have enabled distant researchers to use collections for research on topics such as student sexuality, women's health movements, women in design, and more. Since 2015, we have provided research travel grants to four scholars, three of which have used our materials for external publications.³

Local researchers have also made use of the growing collections on women in Purdue history. Since the founding of the Women's Archives in 2006, Purdue University Press has published three books documenting the lives of women for its Founders Series and local authors have

¹ Only two significant collections existed. Most other women's collections contained a few of publications.

² Since 2010, the Archives has record of eight international scholars visiting to access collections in the Women's Archives. However, not all researchers provide their country of residence.

³ Not all researchers inform us of the publications they produce following their research.

written books that provide in-depth looks at women's roles in developing and furthering home economics, extension, and women's equality at Purdue and in Indiana.⁴

Purdue faculty have also utilized the Women's Archives to teach students about archival research. Archivists at Purdue regularly guest lecture for courses across disciplines to engage students with original primary sources and highlight women in Purdue's history. These courses have included Women and Health in America, STEM and Gender, Sexual Regulation, Issues with Feminist Research and Methodology, and more. Students are taught the basics of conducting primary source research, visiting archives, and analyzing historical documents while learning about women's experiences in Purdue's history.

In 2019, Dr. Nancy Gabin, Associate Professor of History and American Studies, along with the authors of this paper, used the Women's Archives to teach an Honors College research course on Women and the Gender Revolution at Purdue University. Students in the course were exposed to original documents and archival evidence that directly demonstrates the impact of gender disparities. This course would not have been possible prior to the establishment of the Women's Archives, as the source materials used in the class have primarily been collected over the last decade.

The Women's Archives has helped to give women a voice in Purdue's history. However, not all women are represented within our collections. Although the Women's Archives was established in an effort to diversify the Purdue Archives, our collections predominantly represent white, middle-class women and have not included many papers of women of color and diverse backgrounds.

Representation in the Women's Archives

Since its inception, the Women's Archives has focused on "documenting the pioneering women who helped shape Purdue and Indiana history" and placed special emphasis on "women who have succeeded in largely male-dominated professions" (Susan Bulkeley Butler Women's Archives n.d.). This collecting mandate aligns the focus of the Women's Archives with that of Purdue, placing special emphasis on women in science, technology, engineering, agriculture, and mathematics (STEAM). Collections acquired under this mandate include those of women in high-level administrative roles such as University President France A. Córdoba and collections documenting significant "firsts" like Purdue's first African American Homecoming Queen Kassandra Agee Chandler. The Women's Archives has also acquired papers documenting women in traditionally male professions and programs like the papers of firefighter Diana Hardy and records of women-centric curricula such as Purdue's Women in Engineering program.

The examples below provide a snapshot of the types of women represented in the Women's Archives: high-achieving, successful, predominantly white women with a strong focus on STEAM. However, the focus on notable or exceptional women and particularly women in male-dominated careers has left significant gaps in the collections, particularly in the College of Liberal Arts. There are only three collections of papers from female professors in Liberal Arts and few papers from alumnae. Though there are materials from programs within the college,

⁴ Publications include *Queen of American Agriculture* by Fred Whitford; *Divided Paths, Common Ground* by Angie Klink; and *The Deans' Bible* by Angie Klink.

such as the Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies program, the records of women students, faculty, and staff in the humanities and liberal arts are underrepresented.



Select materials from the Women in Engineering program records, UA 7.

Similarly, by focusing on collecting records of notable or exceptional women, we have captured what Gerda Lerner (2013:15) states is “the history of the exceptional, even deviant women” while missing “the experience and history of the mass of women.” Most women represented in the archives were either middle or upper-class women when they began their careers or women who were able to attain this status professionally. This has left the Women’s Archives with a gap in documenting the experiences of women who may not have succeeded in their careers, struggled financially after graduating, did not graduate, or worked clerical or service-level positions. As Lerner (2013:16) states, “women of different classes have different experiences.” Therefore, the records preserved in the Women’s Archives only tell part of the story of Purdue women, with gaps for the experiences of average, working class, or underprivileged women.

One of the most significant gaps is one of racial and gender identity. Nearly all the women represented are cisgender women of European descent. Less than five percent of the collections in the Women’s Archives represents women in non-majority groups such as women of color and LGBTQ+ women. The Women’s Archives has acquired some collections from significant African American women, such as Dean of Libraries Emerita Emily Mobley, entrepreneur and Purdue’s first African American Homecoming Queen Cassandra Agee Chandler, and freedom fighter and Purdue’s first female African American faculty member Helen Bass Williams, but these are the exception. Women from underrepresented groups are represented predominantly through the records created and donated by Purdue’s various cultural centers, which are often lacking in gender representation. Similarly, women in the LGBTQ+ community are seldom

represented in our collections. There are only two collections of papers from women who identify with the LGBTQ+ community and there is a small selection of relevant records in the Sisters for Health Education records, LGBTQ Center records, and the LGBTQ+ Student Alliance records. However, the latter two collections focus predominantly on male experiences.

There are many possible causes for the lack of non-majority representation in the Women's Archives. However, the most likely candidate is that Purdue has been and still is a predominantly white institution. Representation of women on campus has significantly increased since the 1930s, but major initiatives to increase racial diversity at Purdue did not occur until the 1970s. In the fall of 1989, minority enrollment constituted less than 15 percent of students across all Purdue campuses and there is no statistical information on how many of those students were women (Purdue University Archives and Special Collections 1989).⁵ Purdue continues to struggle with enrollment and retention of minority students.⁶

Traditionally, women belonging to minority groups have not reached out to offer their papers to Purdue. Archives staff typically receive collections passively, as donations from faculty, staff, and alumna who either know about the Women's Archives or learn of us from an acquaintance. These individuals often have positive feelings about Purdue, as former students who are proud Boilermakers or faculty who take pride in their research accomplishments. Individuals who have experienced discrimination by their peers, an institution, or institutional policies are less likely to offer their papers to us. Understandably, they may not have the same positive feelings or trust for the institution in which the archives is situated, or they may not feel that their stories and experiences would be valued. Finally, women's archives also tend to be associated with women's movements, which have historically left out women of color and women in the LGBTQ+ community due to discrimination within the movement (Caldera 2013; Mason and Zanish-Belcher 2013b).

These gaps significantly affect the learning and research potential of the Women's Archives and can negatively affect our research environment. Absences or silences in the Archives leave researchers with little information about non-majority groups and few if any records available for faculty and staff to use in courses about the history of non-majority groups. Archives that promote and regularly highlight their "noteworthy" collections of recognizable upper-class white people without applying the same time and resources to promoting their non-white collections contribute to feelings of marginalization in institutions that are already overwhelmingly catered to white users (Farmer 2018).

Building More Inclusive Archives

To establish a more accurate representation of women in Purdue and Indiana's history, archives staff must take action "to document gaps in the historical record... and not fall into the habit of collecting only what is easy" (Mason and Zanish-Belcher 2013a:133). Now that the Women's Archives is well established, it would be easy for us to passively collect papers that are offered;

⁵ Data retrieved from report by the Office of the Registrar for Fall 1989-1990. Minority enrollment includes Native American (196), Black (2,097), Hispanic (1,213), Asian or Pacific Islander (1,132), and International (2,338). Total student population (57,650).

⁶ Data available through Purdue Data Digest. For more information, see: <https://www.purdue.edu/datadigest/>

however, this would only perpetuate gaps that already exist in the collections. As Mason and Zanish-Belcher (2013a:134) argue, women's archives "must widen their scope, making it a priority to document hitherto neglected groups." Therefore, we are expanding the collecting focus of the Women's Archives, actively soliciting collections from minority groups, and drafting policies to address the inherent biases in archival work in an attempt to create a more diverse representation of women's history at Purdue and a more inclusive research environment for archives users.

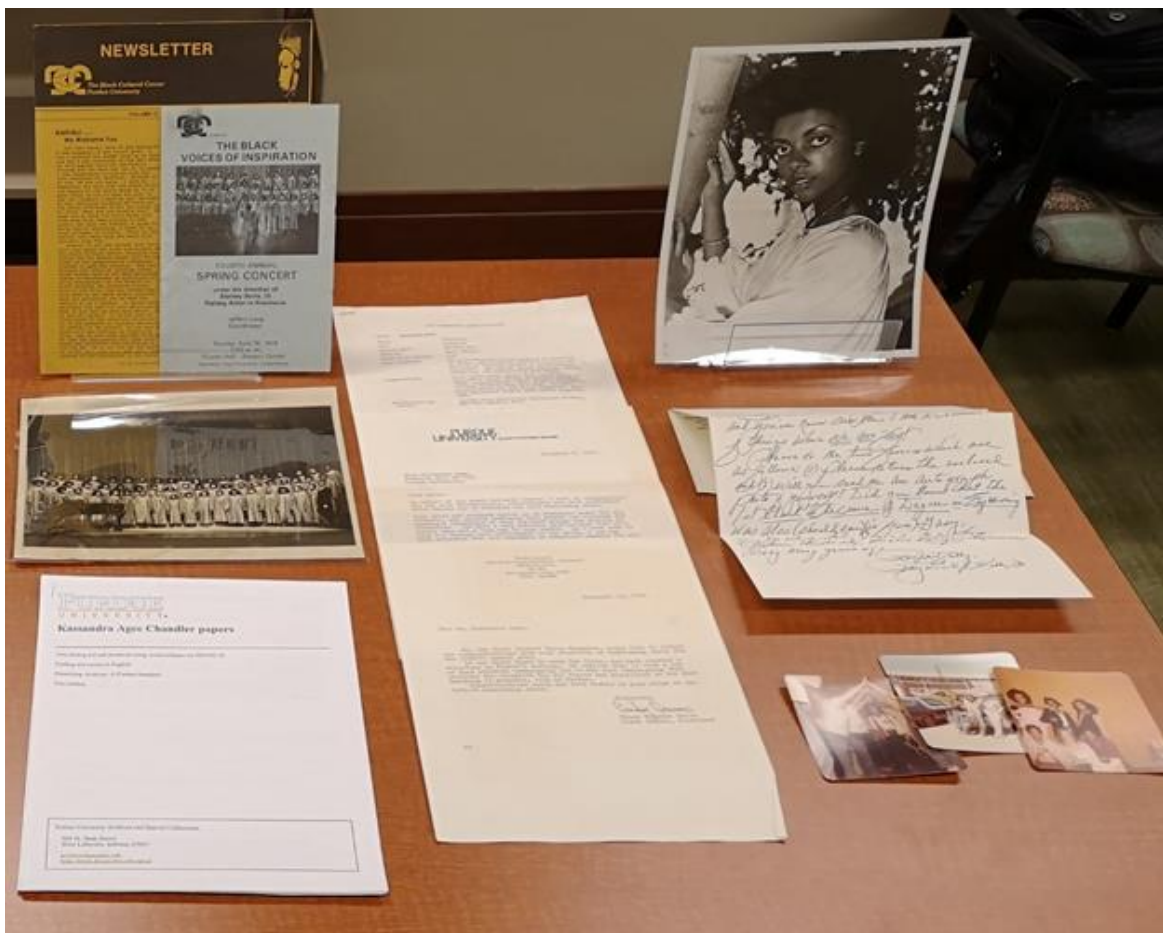
Collection development policies guide archival selection and acquisition by outlining collecting focus areas for archives. The collecting focus provides a road map for staff and donors to identify whether materials fit within a particular collection. The original focus of the Women's Archives was to collect records of "pioneering women... [and] women who have succeeded in largely male-dominated professions" (Susan Bulkeley Butler Women's Archives n.d.). Over the past year, we adjusted the focus to document "the often overlooked and under-represented stories of women and their communities in Purdue and Indiana's past" (Susan Bulkeley Butler Women's Archives 2019). The new focus also explicitly states that the Women's Archives collects records "that represent women from diverse backgrounds, women of color, women in the LGBTQ community, and women who have challenged traditional gender roles" (Susan Bulkeley Butler Women's Archives 2019). With the launch of a new Women's Archives website in 2020, the new collecting focus will be available to the public and may help encourage women from these groups to donate their papers.

We are also actively soliciting papers from women of diverse backgrounds and non-majority groups via direct contact and relationship building. Most archival institutions passively collect; potential donors contact the institution and the archivist decides whether or not to accept the collection. This type of passive collection is unlikely to help document gaps in collections; archival institutions are predominantly white institutions and are therefore more likely to attract white donors. Active collecting and outreach by archivists to individuals and communities "demands a significant commitment of time and energy on the part of staff" as it involves identifying members of non-majority groups and reaching out to them, explaining the institution's interest in their experiences, and convincing them to donate their papers (Mason and Zanish-Belcher 2013a:134). The Women's Archives has employed this process which requires us to conduct significant research to identify non-majority women in Purdue's history for whom little information exists; locate the appropriate contacts as individuals may have retired, moved, or be deceased; and draft convincing statements as to why the Women's Archives is the best place to donate their records. Rather than this work being accomplished in one or two exchanges, convincing donors to give their personal papers and records of their lives, work, and achievements can take numerous interactions. Relationship building is key in establishing trust between the potential donor and the archives.

Since early 2019, the Women's Archives has identified and reached out to six individual women from underrepresented groups to seek the donations of their papers. Three of these contacts were non-responsive: the contact information for one was incorrect and staff received no response from the other two. However, we received positive responses from three: two are currently reviewing their personal records to identify papers to donate and the third contact resulted in the acquisition of the Helen Bass Williams papers from Dr. Mary O'Hara. Williams was the first

African American woman faculty member at Purdue and a civil rights activist who advocated on behalf of black students, faculty, and staff. Purdue archivists were previously unaware that these papers existed, as Williams passed away in 1993 with no known relatives. However, after locating Dr. O'Hara's thesis on the life of Williams, we contacted her to ask if she still possessed the materials used to write her thesis. This resulted in the donation of four boxes of records including oral history interviews, correspondence, photographs, newsletters, genealogical records, and more documenting Williams' life, achievements, and career. Since its acquisition in 2019, this collection has already received significant interest from students, faculty, and staff, with plans for the Archives to collaborate with the Black Cultural Center (BCC) in raising awareness of the collection.

In addition to soliciting donations from specific individuals, Purdue archivists also engage in outreach initiatives to encourage women from various backgrounds to donate their papers. The Women's Archives participates in university-wide media campaigns, external filming requests, and community events; creates exhibitions; and advertises on social media and in traditional print to reach a wider audience. As part of this work, archives staff highlight non-majority groups when pertinent collections are available to show potential donors that the archives collects materials documenting women of all backgrounds. As one example, in 2019 Purdue



Select materials from the Purdue Women in Leadership Conference workshop on radical archiving, Kassandra Agee Chandler papers, MSA 363.

archivists participated in the Purdue Women in Leadership Conference where we provided photographs and biographies of women in Purdue's history for conference table displays and included women of African American and Latinx descent. We also presented at a workshop on radical archiving, highlighting materials in the collections while encouraging participants to think about how the records they collect will tell their stories to future generations.

These types of programs help publicize and raise awareness of the Women's Archives while providing opportunities for archivists to meet potential donors from various social classes and backgrounds. Since these events are visible and accessible to people across the community, they are more likely to reach a wider audience and encourage the donation of materials from diverse groups of women.

Purdue archives staff are also working toward promoting a more inclusive research environment by drafting guidelines to create more inclusive and representative descriptions of collections. The way archivists describe collections impacts how they are found and used by researchers. Archivists apply standardized subject headings to collections to increase their discovery across different catalogs and databases. Unfortunately, many official subject headings reflect the prejudices of the times in which they were created, potentially alienating and oppressing marginalized communities. Additionally, historical materials often include depictions or terminology that are offensive but were commonplace at the time.

As an example, after acquiring the Helen Bass Williams papers, it was evident that we needed to re-evaluate descriptive practices to include guidelines on how to describe collections containing derogatory terminology. Williams' papers document her work in the civil rights movement and reflect the backlash against it, including derogatory language used to oppress African Americans. Archivists are tasked with accurately representing the historical records in their care, which has typically been interpreted as transcribing titles of documents, publications, photograph captions, and audio transcripts verbatim. However, "in reproducing offensive language we are endorsing or perpetuating systems that have caused great injustice and harm" and this can create an unwelcoming, hostile research environment for people belonging to these groups (Find and Connect 2011). In response to these concerns, Purdue archivists are reviewing archival literature and soliciting input from the archival community on how to create descriptions that adhere to professional archival standards while also ensuring they are not perpetuating systems of oppression. We are currently preparing guidelines on local archival description practices that include creating accurate titles in place of discriminatory ones while still capturing original titles in a subsection of the description; adding disclaimers to descriptions of materials that contain derogatory, offensive, and racist terminology; and applying subject terms to descriptions of records that contain materials documenting oppression. These steps aim to provide users with accurate information without erasing the history of oppression represented in materials. Purdue archivists are continuing to identify the best language and techniques to use to warn researchers when materials contain offensive representations and how to locate materials in the Archives' collection documenting this history. This is a challenging area where the Archives seeks to distance itself from the derogatory terminology of the past (as represented in the collection captions, folder titles, and such) while also ensuring that the good intent of the archivists does not result in the loss of such historical evidence of discrimination towards marginalized communities.

Antiquated and inaccurate subject terms reflective of their times are still used to locate, for example, LGBTQ+ collections. The Women's Archives includes two collections of papers from women who openly identify as LGBTQ+, however currently there are no subject terms associating these collections with the LGBTQ+ community. Assigning subject headings that accurately identify individuals as part of the LGBTQ+ community is challenging due to the nuances of gender identity descriptions and the lack of fulsome standard subject headings. Archival literature critiques the lack of appropriate subject headings to describe the LGBTQ+ experience, and "in many collections, the sexuality of the creator or subject is not explicitly stated or documented in the materials, so the assignment of an LGBT subject heading is questionable" (Caldera 2013:235). Some donors also may not want their sexuality documented publicly. However, "the alternative is to not name, to not categorize, to continue the silence, and to perpetuate the invisibility" (Caldera 2013:234). It will take significant research and consultation with archivists, members of the LGBTQ+ community, and LGBTQ+ donors to address these issues properly. Though the Purdue Archives has not begun this process, staff recognize it as an area where they need to develop standards to ensure researchers are able to locate records associated with the LGBTQ+ community and to create a more inclusive, respectful research environment.

Many of the initiatives mentioned in this paper are works-in-progress and require consultation with both the archival community on professional standards as well as the communities of people represented in the collections. Both authors are white and the majority of professional archivists working in the United States are also white. It is therefore crucial for archives staff to connect with the communities they seek to document. Archivists at Purdue have established relationships with cultural centers on campus to seek advice on how best to acquire records documenting these groups. Connections with centers such as the Black Cultural Center and LGBTQ Center have enabled the Archives to acquire collections from women of color and members of the LGBTQ community. Archives staff are expected to participate in diversity and training initiatives and to make diversification and inclusion of collections and programs a top priority. Archivists are attuned to evolving standards and best practices and actively seek to identify emerging solutions in the field. These efforts ensure that staff continue to keep up-to-date on the changing needs of researchers, are cognizant of the research environment they create, and remain "ever vigilant about who is represented in [their] collections and who is not" (Mason and Zanish-Belcher 2013b:287).

The impact of the Women's Archives on learning and scholarship has already been significant, enabling the Archives to promote Purdue women's history through publications, international research, and in-class, experiential learning. However, we can only promote the use of collections that are available. The absences in the Archives have inadvertently silenced the diverse experiences of women. To continue to positively impact research and learning at Purdue, archives staff must continue to address issues of representation within the archives by proactively seeking collections that diversify their holdings, working with women in underrepresented communities to represent their experiences, and analyzing descriptive practices to accurately represent and create inclusive research environments for non-majority groups. These steps will bring the Women's Archives closer to creating a representative history of

women at Purdue, allowing faculty, staff, students, researchers, and the public to learn about the diverse experiences of women in Purdue's history.

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Women in Aviation: Identifying Trends in Industry and Higher Education

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Introduction

Aviation is of vital importance to the national and global economy. Air transportation connects people, supports economic development, and enables humanitarian missions around the globe (Belobaba, Odoni, and Barnhart 2015). Despite the global reach of aviation, the industry lacks diversity in every area including training, airline operations, and military aviation (Bridges, Mills, and Neal-Smith 2014; Sulton 2018). Globally, less than 5% of pilots are women and enrollment trends in aviation programs do not suggest there will be any significant diversity improvements unless a concerted effort for change is pursued. This underrepresentation exists despite the fact that broadening the field to welcome women would help alleviate the well documented pilot shortage and the shortages in other aviation professions such as mechanics and aeronautical engineers (Opengart and Ison 2016). Unfortunately, investigation into the factors impacting diversity in aviation has received little attention from researchers, unlike research regarding engineering, medicine and law (Carr et al. 2017; Hunt 2016; Marra et al. 2009; Trautvetter 2018). With the forecasted increase in travel demand over the next 20 years, the current and looming aviation labor shortages necessitates a more thorough understanding of these diversity issues (Boeing 2019).

Today women are more likely to earn a bachelor's degree than men, and women make up nearly half of the U.S. workforce (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2018a, 2018b). Nonetheless, underrepresentation exists in career fields characterized by high earnings and high stability such as STEM and legal fields. Women account for only 13% of total employment as engineers and 35% of lawyers (U.S. Department of Labor 2018). Given the anticipated growth in aviation careers with the expansion of global aviation, understanding the underrepresentation of women in aviation is of great importance. This importance arises not only from a diversity standpoint but also from a labor shortage, transportation capacity, as well as global trade perspectives. Therefore, this paper will provide the motivation and foundation for further research at the higher education level concerning the diversity issues observed in aviation. The first section will outline the current and historical gender trends in the aviation workforce at the national and industry levels. The second section will provide an analysis of gender in aviation programs in higher education and at Purdue University. The final section will discuss the previous research

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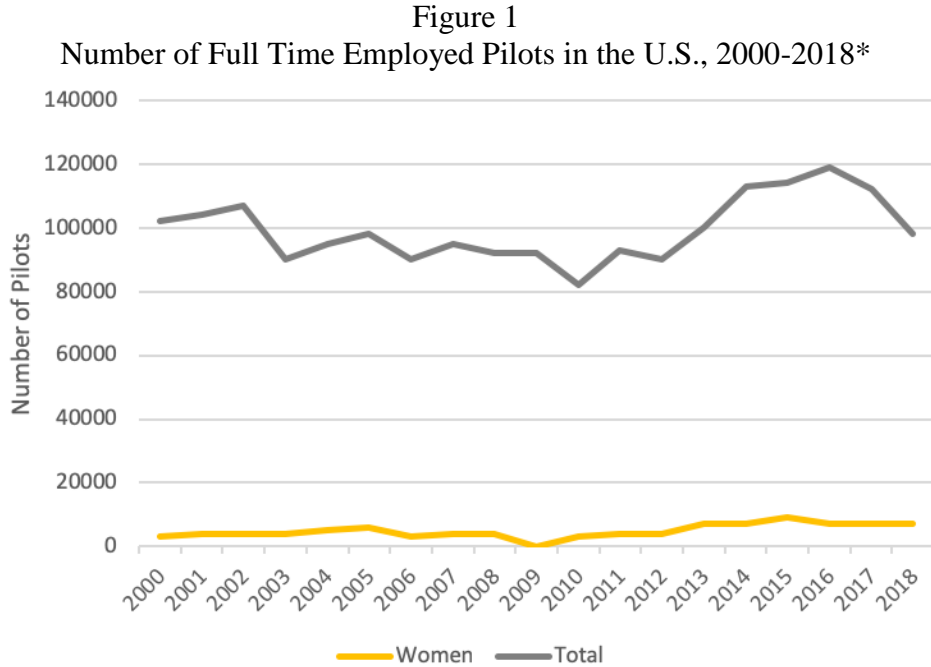
concerning women in aviation and male dominated career fields to provide a basis for understanding the existing gender disparity in aviation.

Gender Trends in the Aviation Workforce

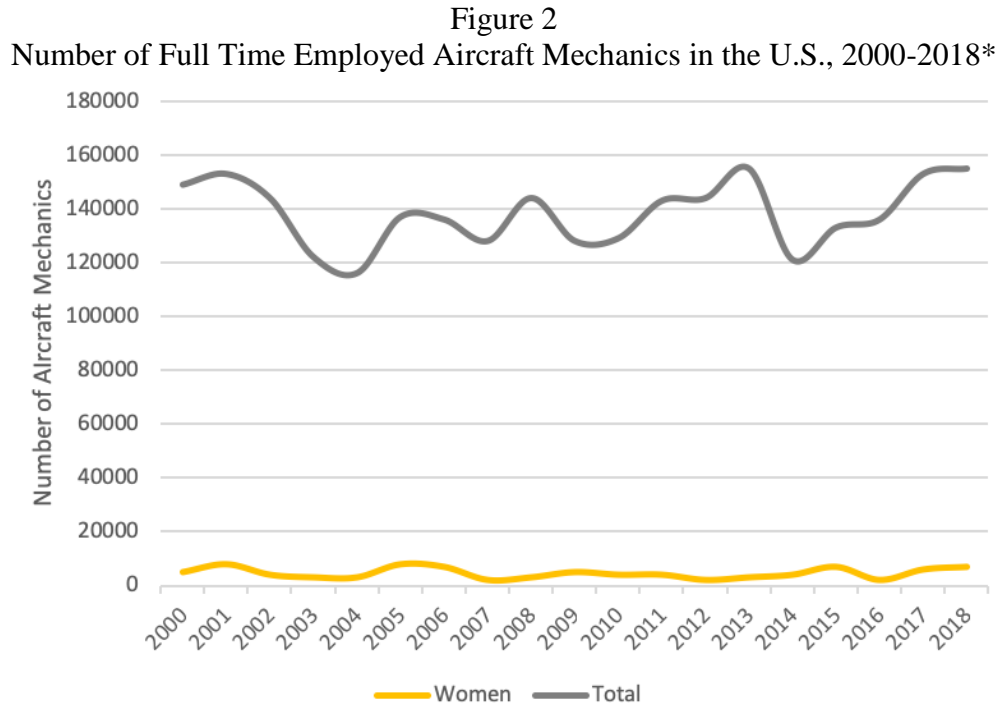
As the global travel demand increases, the demand for skilled aviation professionals in all aspects of air transportation will increase (Boeing 2019). Despite the aviation hiring boom following the Great Recession in 2008, the number of women has not increased as the pipeline grows. The trend for the past two decades has not been very promising for women in aviation. Military aviation is not immune to this issue and has also realized a gender problem exists in their ranks as pilot shortages plague the future of the Air Force (Keller et al. 2018). With the looming global aviation workforce shortages, the urgency to increase women's participation in the aviation industry is evident. Nevertheless, employment in many aviation careers is lagging. Five of the main career areas in aviation are classified by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and tallied during Current Population Survey data collection. Each of these careers are vital to the flow of air transportation both domestically and globally. The main career areas are aircraft pilots, aircraft mechanics, aerospace engineers, aircraft structures workers, and air traffic controllers. Using the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Current Population Survey dataset, employment and wage data with respect to gender can be examined for each career.

Aircraft pilots ensure the safe operation of aircraft for the transport of passengers and cargo (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2017). The aforementioned shortage of these aviation professionals is of great concern to airlines, flight schools and military air forces around the world. One of the strategies to correct for this shortage is to increase the number of women aviators (Opengart and Ison 2016). Despite the need to shore up the future dearth of pilots, few gains have been made in increasing the number of women pilots. Figure 1 illustrates the gender gap in the pilot career field. Between 2000 and 2018, women averaged only 4.8% of the full time employed pilots in the U.S. At 7% of the total employed pilots, 2018 had one of the largest shares of women pilots in nearly two decades. One possible explanation of this could be the decline in overall full time employed pilots as retirements (of more senior, male pilots) in the industry have increased.

In the aircraft mechanic career field, shortages are being reported and projected as older mechanics begin to retire (Wyman 2017). As the aircraft mechanic pipeline attempts to alleviate this shortage, women are again struggling to make gains in the workforce. Figure 2 illustrates the consistent gender gap in aircraft mechanics over the past 18 years. The data demonstrates the staggering gender gap in employment that exists in the aircraft mechanic workforce. The gender gap is on average worse in the mechanic career field than the pilot field at 3.3% versus 4.8%, respectively. The latest year's data (2018) show that women represent 4.5% of the full-time mechanics employed.



*Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics' Current Population Survey

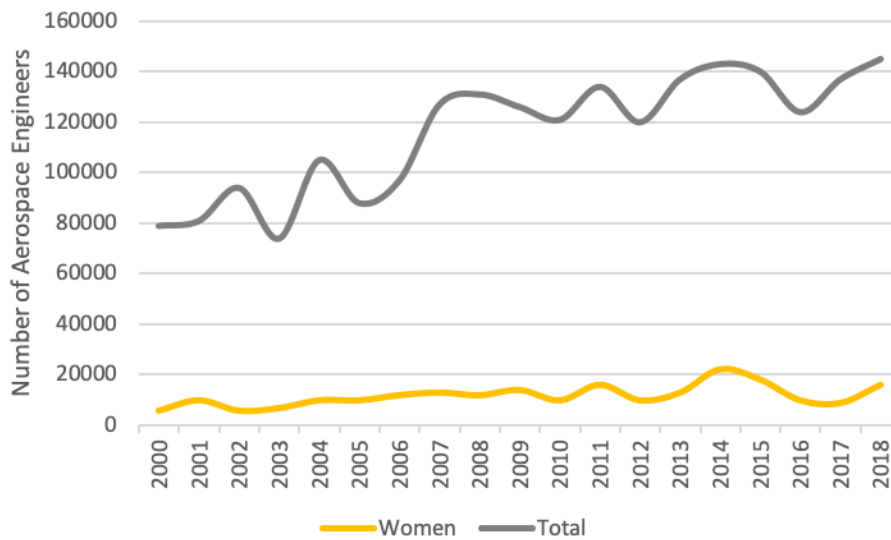


*Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics' Current Population Survey

Aerospace engineers are essential to continue the progression of air and space transport in the modern world. These professionals develop and improve the air transport capabilities through engineering improvements and breakthroughs (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2017). Wilkinson

(2007) highlights the struggle to fill the shortage of engineers in the aerospace industry and the gender gap that exists. The production of new aircraft driven by increased demand is constrained by the labor supply of qualified aerospace engineers. Figure 3 provides further evidence of the gender imbalance in aerospace engineering. As previously discussed, the engineering discipline as a whole faces its own gender issues and aerospace engineering is almost certainly evidential of this problem. Engineering schools are working to correct the imbalance (Griffith 2010); however, over the past 18 years women accounted for only 10% of the aerospace engineers in the U.S. In the most recent year (2018), women represented 11% of full time employed aerospace engineers. Despite the limited participation and inclusion of women in aerospace engineering, the field is faring better than the pilot and the aircraft mechanic career fields with respect to gender inclusion.

Figure 3
Number of Full Time Employed Aerospace Engineers in the U.S., 2000-2018*

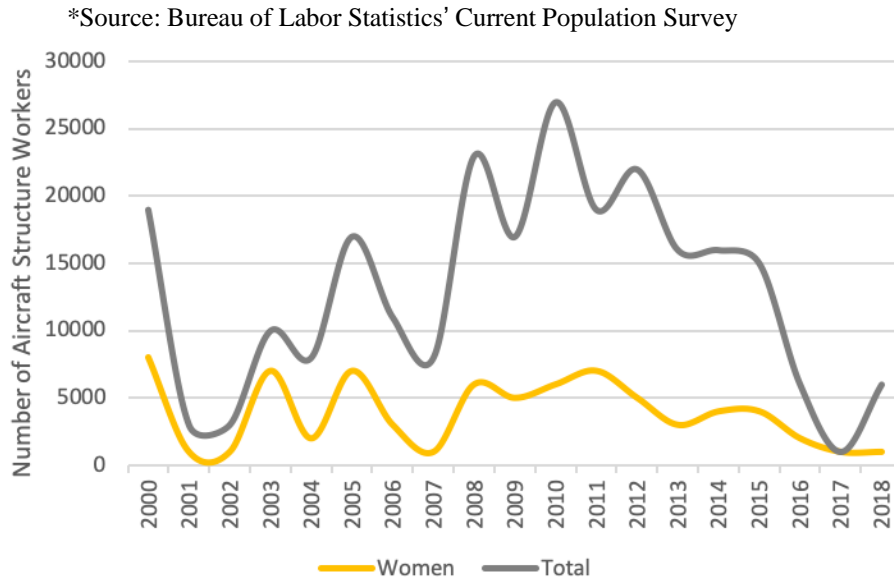


*Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics' Current Population Survey

Aircraft structure workers assemble aircraft and spacecraft and are vital to the production of these vehicles and continuance of air transport (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2017). Overall, this career field has one of the highest women-to-men ratios of all aviation careers studied. Figure 4 displays the employment data of aircraft structure workers. According to the data, the aircraft structures career field averaged nearly 30% women in its workforce from 2000-2018. This percentage of women is over six times the percentage observed in aircraft mechanics and three times that of aerospace engineers. Unfortunately, in 2018 the percentage was much lower with women comprising only 15% of the workforce.

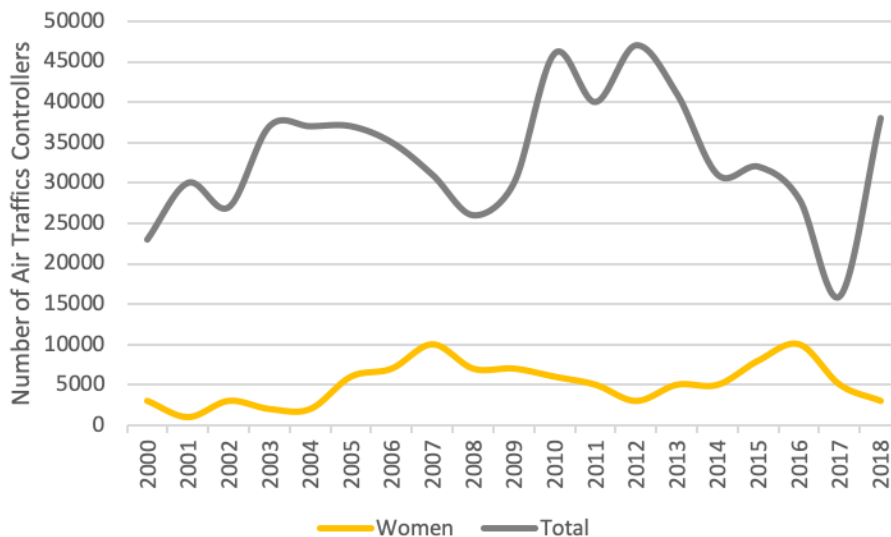
The final aviation career examined is the air traffic controller career field. Perhaps one of the most important professions in aviation, air traffic controllers keep the airways safe and allow for the efficient flow of air traffic through the nation's airways (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2017).

Figure 4
 Number of Full Time Employed Aircraft Structure Workers in the U.S., 2000-2018*



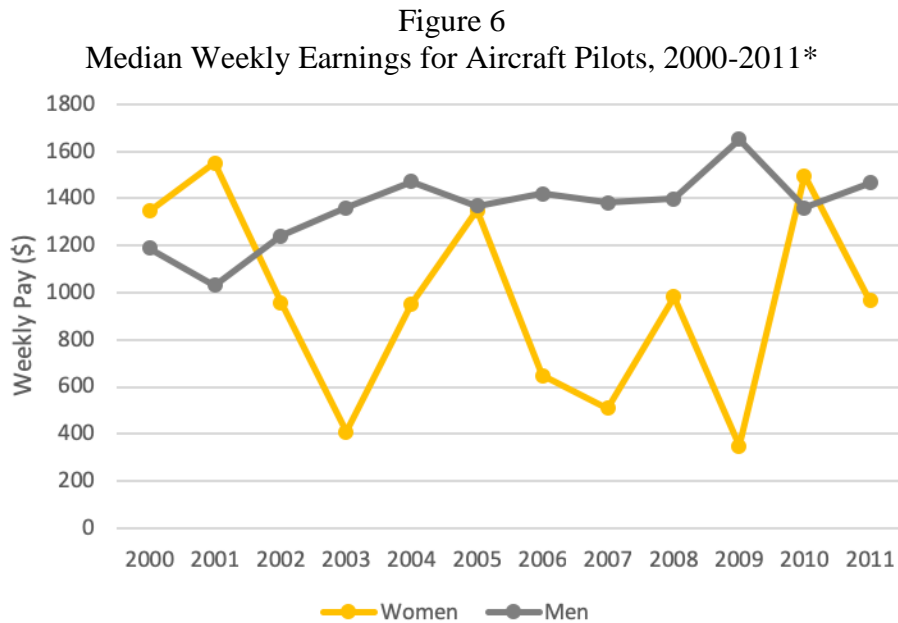
These professionals are currently being overworked, understaffed and face their own shortage as airport traffic demand increases (Smith 2015). The inclusion of more women into this important aviation career field could help to alleviate the strain on current air traffic controllers as well as the congested airspace. Figure 5 exhibits the trends in the air traffic controller workforce. Between the years 2000-2018, women averaged over 15% of the air traffic controller workforce. Most recently in 2018, women comprised only 7% of the air traffic controller workforce. The recent numbers are comparable to the pilot career field, higher than the mechanics career field, and lower than both the aerospace engineer and aircraft structures career fields.

Figure 5
 Number of Full Time Employed Air Traffic Controllers (ATC) in the U.S., 2000-2018*



*Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics' Current Population Survey

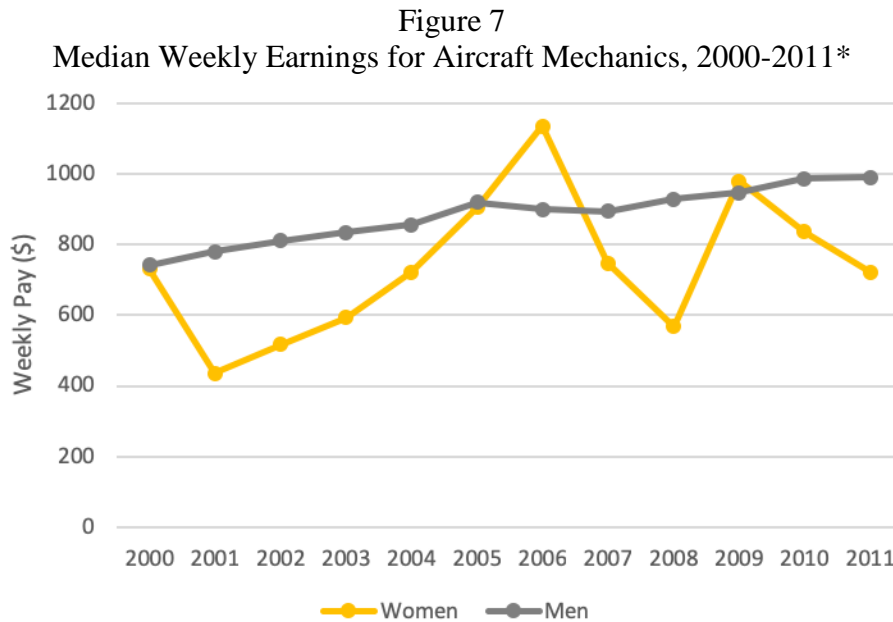
Median weekly earnings data for all professions in the U.S. exhibited a gender pay gap with women's-to-men's earnings ratio being approximately 82% in 2018 (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2018b). According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics's report, this ratio has remained nearly constant since 2004 (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2018b). When examining the gender pay disparity in the aviation industry, we again examine the main careers utilizing the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Current Population Survey dataset. The careers examined are high skill and high wage professions in the aviation industry. Figure 6 displays the trend in pilot pay for both men and women from 2000 to 2011. Aircraft pilots are one of the highest earning professionals in the aviation industry. The average weekly earnings for pilots exhibits an average women's-to-men's earnings ratio of 70%. This ratio is well below the national average for the gender pay gap; however, the authors note that many aircraft pilots fall under a collective bargaining contract and more investigation at the micro level is needed to ascertain the extent of the pay gap. One plausible cause of the observed pay gap is that female pilots tend to be younger and have less seniority, which is a significant factor affecting compensation. A possible explanation of the large variations in women's pay is that women may be more greatly impacted by economic fluctuations. This large impact could again be caused by the possible lower levels of seniority indicating that women are more likely to be laid off or furloughed than a more senior pilot.



*Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics' Current Population Survey

Aircraft mechanics are highly skilled workers requiring successful completion of an arduous education and certification process (National Center for O*NET Development 2019). Figure 7 displays the trend in aircraft mechanic pay for both men and women from 2000 to 2011. The average weekly earnings for aircraft mechanics has an average women's-to-men's earnings ratio of 84%. This ratio is slightly above the national average for the gender pay gap, but still exhibits a 16% pay differential for men in the workforce. Again, the authors note that many aircraft mechanics are subject to a collective bargaining contract and a deeper investigation is needed to

better understand the seniority levels and trends in women’s compensation in the mechanic career field.

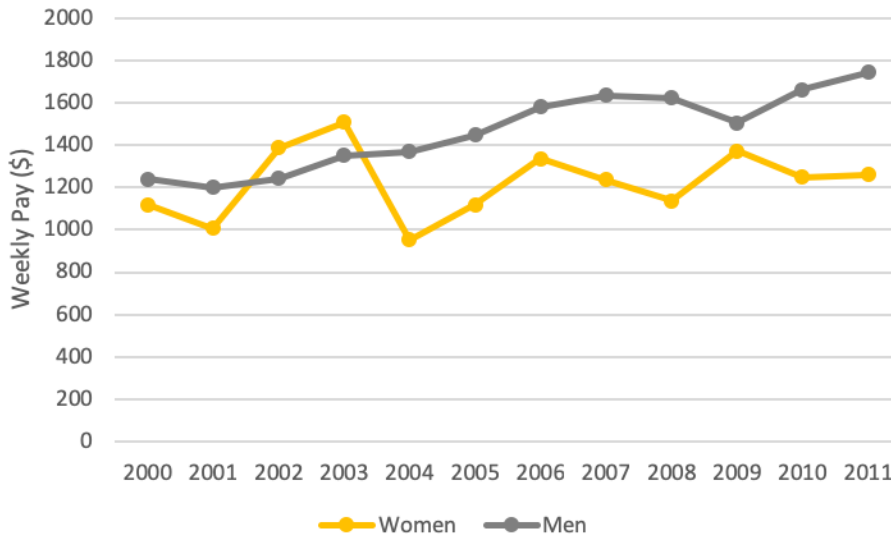


*Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics’ Current Population Survey

Aerospace engineers are highly skilled workers requiring successful completion of advanced engineering degrees (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2017). These professionals have the highest wages of all five careers discussed. This high wage rate is illustrated in Figure 8. Figure 8 displays the trend in pay for both men and women aerospace engineers from 2000 to 2011. The average weekly earnings for aerospace engineers has an average women’s-to-men’s earnings ratio of 83%. This ratio is similar to the national average for the gender pay gap and provides another example of a high paying career that exhibits gender pay inequity.

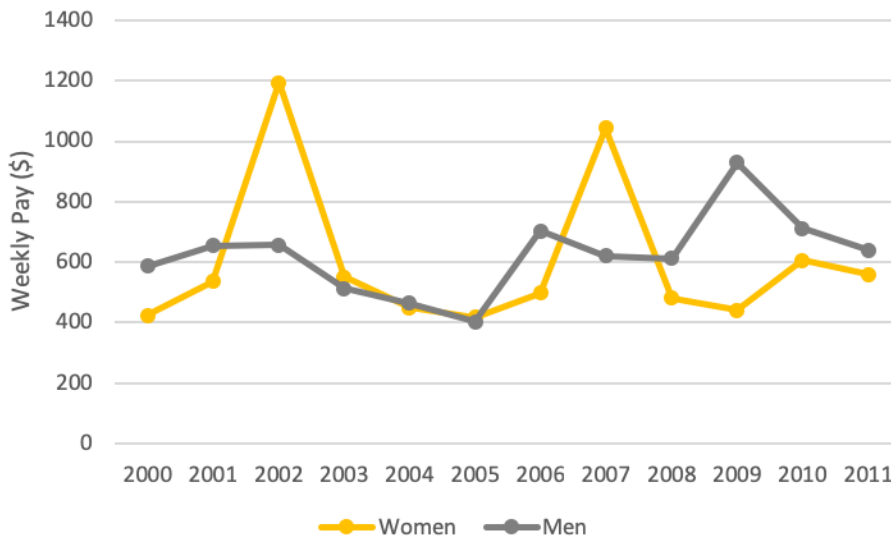
Aircraft structure workers are also highly skilled workers who must meet strict parameters in the production process of aircraft (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2017). Figure 9 displays the trend in aircraft structure workers’ pay for both men and women from 2000 to 2011. The average weekly earnings for aircraft structure workers has an average women’s-to-men’s earnings ratio of 96%. This ratio is well above the national average for the gender earnings ratio and could provide a positive example to the aviation industry for steps to achieving pay equity. One possible explanation for the spikes in women’s pay can be inferred from Figure 4. The share of women in the aircraft structures workforce declines during periods corresponding to higher pay for women in these occupations. These declines in the share of women occur when the economy is contracting and could coincide with layoffs at the less senior (and lower paid) ends of the worker distribution. This reduction would leave a pool of higher seniority (and higher paid) women in the workforce thus causing a spike in the average earnings for those remaining on the job.

Figure 8
Median Weekly Earnings for Aerospace Engineers, 2000-2011*



*Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics' Current Population Survey

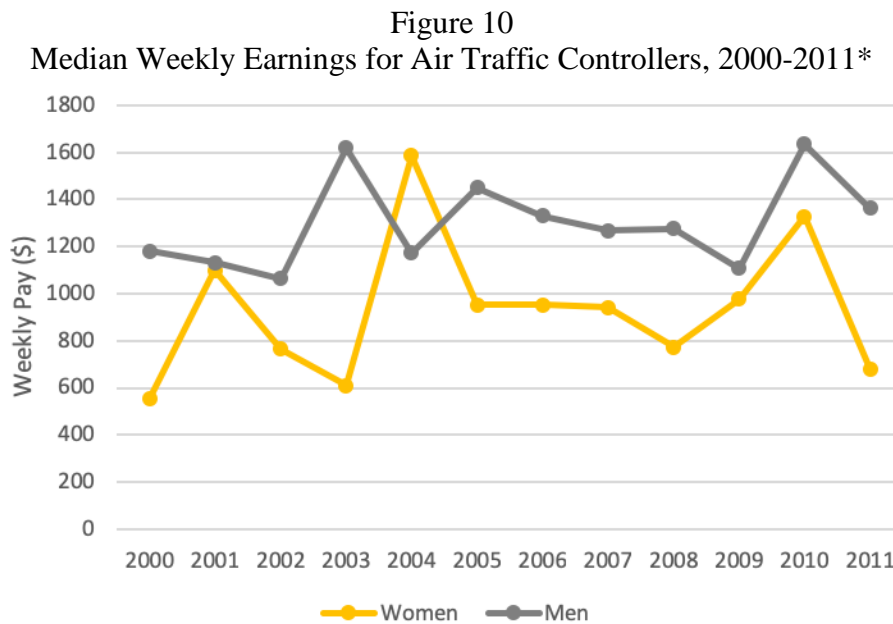
Figure 9
Median Weekly Earnings for Aircraft Structure Workers, 2000-2011*



*Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics' Current Population Survey

Air traffic controllers are among the more highly skilled workers requiring successful completion of a certification process and the ability to handle high levels of stress (Ćosić et al. 2019). The high level of compensation to these professionals reflect these high skill requirements and high stress environment. Figure 10 displays the trend in air traffic controller pay for both men and women from 2000 to 2011. The average weekly earnings for air traffic control has an average women's-to-men's earnings ratio of 71%. This ratio is well below the national average for the gender pay gap. These air traffic control professionals are public servants with union and

governmental job protections. Therefore, a more micro level analysis would be required to thoroughly understand the extent of the gap in earnings.

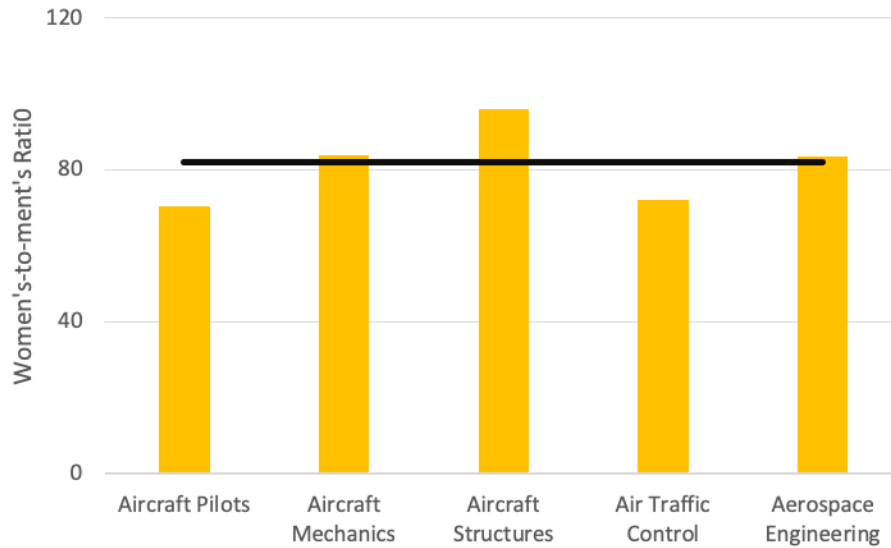


*Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics' Current Population Survey

The national women's-to-men's earnings ratio has persisted near 82% for roughly two decades (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2018b). In Figure 11, the horizontal line indicates the national average women's-to-men's earning ratio. Again, most aviation careers are at or below this national average indicating a more significant pay gap for women in comparison to their male counterparts. Further, women in the aviation industry appear to be impacted by economic declines more than their male counterparts. The one career that appears to surpass the national average at creating pay equity is the aircraft structures career field. These workers are typically employed by large aircraft manufacturers in areas such as Wichita, Kansas, Los Angeles, California, and Atlanta, Georgia. An analysis of these major firms' human resource practices could shed light on the best avenues to successful compression of the wage gap between men and women workers in the aviation industry. As the aviation industry continues to thrive and demand for air transport continues to grow, the industry has the unique opportunity to improve gender issues that exist in its career field ranks.

Overall, the data suggest the aviation industry has much improvement to make with respect to diverse employment and parity in earnings. These issues are quite visible when examining the data of currently employed aviation professionals. A more thorough understanding of the issues requires an examination of the pipeline to these positions. Most of these professions require training and education that occurs in higher educational institutions across the U.S. Therefore, an overview of the trends of women in aviation education programs will aid in generating a more comprehensive understanding of the gender issues in aviation.

Figure 11
Average Women's-to-Men's Earnings Ratio by Career, 2000-2011*



*Source: Authors' calculations of Bureau of Labor Statistics' Current Population Survey Data

Gender Trends in the Aviation Higher Education

Enrollment in aviation higher educational programs has seen a slight decrease in women's participation over the past two decades (Ison, Herron, and Weiland 2016). Programs have struggled to increase the number of female students as well as graduates. At Purdue University, one of the leading aviation programs in the U.S., enrollment rates for female students has varied across a seven-year period and in relation to comparable aviation higher education programs in the U.S. Utilizing the Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics database, total female enrollment at Purdue University can be compared with the average in comparable aviation programs in the U.S. Figure 12 highlights the relative reversal in women's enrollment of these comparison groups. Women enrollment at Purdue University lagged behind the average of its fellow institutions until 2015. The data for the years after 2015 reveal Purdue University as a leader in female enrollment in aviation programs.

When examining the enrollment data at Purdue University, the major subfields of study in aviation are important to note. Within the School of Aviation and Transportation Technology at Purdue University, students may elect to enroll in several programs including aeronautical engineering technology, aviation management, professional flight, and unmanned aerial systems. Students in aeronautical engineering are in a separate college and are not included in Figure 12. Micro-level data on the subfields in aviation are only available up to fall 2015. Therefore, these most recent data will be utilized to provide a closer examination of the enrollment of women in these higher education programs.

Figure 13 exhibits the women-to-men enrollment ratio for each aviation related major in the School of Aviation and Transportation Technology at Purdue University. In fall 2015, aeronautical engineering technology and professional flight had 14% women enrollment.

Figure 12
 Air Transportation Related Program Enrollment (Women): Purdue University and Average of other U.S. Aviation Higher Education Schools, 2010-2017*

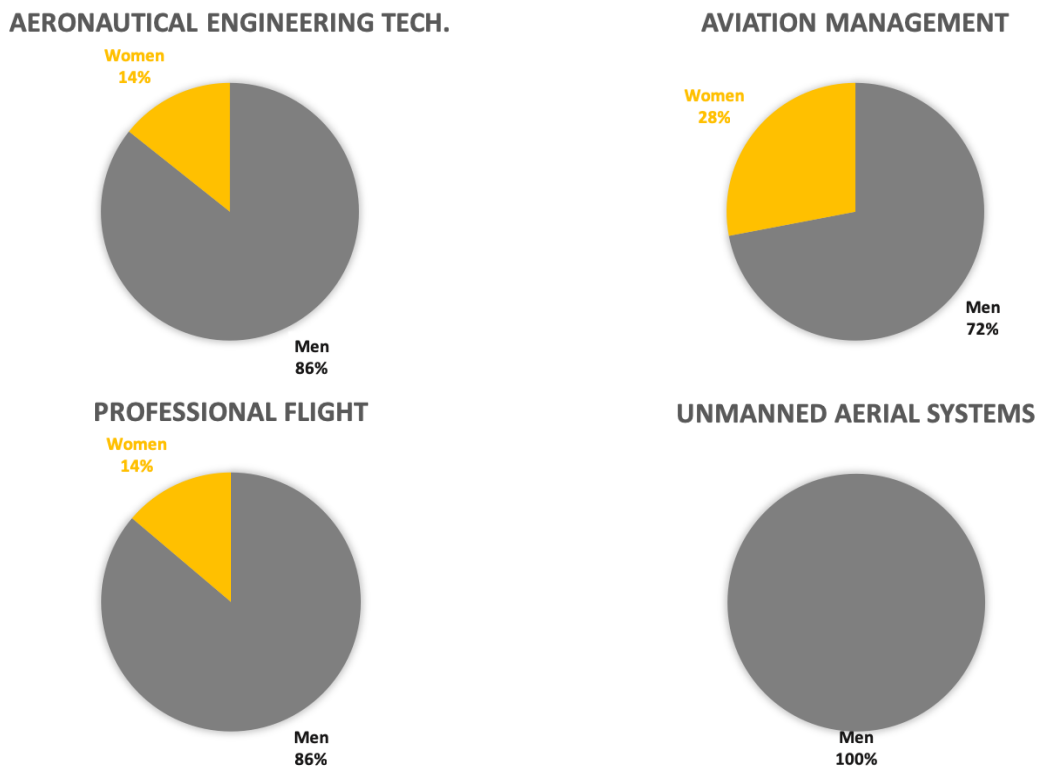


*Source: Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics.

Aviation management had the highest representation of women at 28%. The lowest share of women occurred in the newest major (and newest field) in aviation, unmanned aerial systems. In fall 2015, no women were enrolled in this program; however, given that unmanned aerial systems is a brand-new field in aviation, it is assumed to be unlikely to suffer from the historical biases that exist in other aviation fields. These rates, with the exception of unmanned aerial systems, are far greater than the full-time employment rates currently existing in the workforce data previously examined.

Despite the greater proportion of women in these programs in comparison with the current aviation workforce, women's enrollment in aviation programs at Purdue University are far below the 42.6% of enrolled students that are women at the University as a whole during fall 2015. As one of the leading aviation programs in the nation, Purdue University has a distinctive opportunity to further improve the situation of women in aviation by working to increase enrollment of women in these programs and developing methods of inclusion and retention that may be utilized by other higher education institutions with aviation programs. Therefore, it is important to understand the factors influencing these gender disparities in aviation. The following section will discuss the barriers faced by women.

Figure 13
Purdue University Aviation Related Major Enrollment, fall 2015*



*Source: Purdue University Enrollment Data.

Barriers for Women in Aviation and in Male Dominated Careers

Many studies exist examining the factors underlying the dearth of women in male dominated careers such as STEM, law, medical and economics careers (see for example Dasgupta and Stout 2014; Ginther and Kahn 2004; Schultz and Shaw 2003). These studies find several contributing factors affecting women’s participation in these fields. The main factors stem from the impact of implicit biases and discrimination. Gender norms are found to exist in the sciences and humanities and these lead to gender stereotyping casting men and women into gendered professions (Charles and Bradley 2009; Cundiff et al. 2013). These studies provide a clearer understanding of the factors impacting recruitment, retention and success of women in male dominated disciplines. Despite the academic knowledge of the disparity issues in professional fields, the recent American Economic Association’s Professional Climate Survey highlighted that gender biases and discrimination are still pervasive despite historical progress in even highly respected fields like economics (American Economic Association 2019).

In aviation, the research concerning gender norms, biases, and discrimination issues are still in its infancy. Bridges et al. (2014) discusses the phenomena of gender norms in Australian aviation. They observe that female commercial airline pilots are typically assumed to be cabin crew (i.e. flight attendants) when interacting with the flying public in uniform. In the Australian military, they find that female aviators were placed into gender appropriate “caricature” roles ranging from “seductress” to “mother” roles (Bridges et al. 2014). Additionally, a study

examining online professional pilot forums in New Zealand paints a similar picture of the pervasive nature of gender norms within aviation (Zheng 2016).

Another barrier women encounter in male dominated careers is the perception of a glass ceiling (Mitchell, Kristovics, and Vermeulen 2006). Earnings data in the aviation sector highlights the pay disparity that women experience. Figure 2 shows the unstable and lower wages of female pilots in comparison to their male counterparts. Moreover, the second-generation biases created by the lack of women leaders in aviation have thickened the glass ceiling perceived by many women aviators (Hynes and Puckett 2011). The premier global aviation trade association, the International Air Transport Association (IATA), has formed a commission to better understand the leadership barriers for women in the aviation industry (International Air Transport Association 2018). The results of the IATA study are scheduled to be released in 2019, which will provide a more comprehensive analysis of the issue at an international level. For the female aviation student this shortage of women mentors and leadership is also present. Women represent a fraction of the aviation faculty at U.S. higher education aviation programs with only 8% of aviation faculty being women (Ison 2010).

Despite the gender issues in both higher education and industry levels, improving diversity and inclusion are top priorities for all aviation stakeholders. This paper has developed a foundation and motivation for further research into these gender inequalities. Future research could identify factors that contribute to the successful integration of women in aviation higher education programs. A study of Purdue University's efforts to increase inclusion could prove to enrich the recruitment, retention and success of women in aviation. This future examination could serve as an evolving process to improve policies, procedures and practices at the university level to increase the participation of women in aviation programs. The results of a future study would provide value not only to one of the highest ranked aviation programs in the country, but also to other institutions that wish to improve the diversity of their programs. The improvements in diversity at the higher education level will ultimately lead to improvements at the industry level thus reducing the level of inequality currently present in the aviation field.

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Work-Life Balance in the Neoliberal University¹

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Conversations about striking an appropriate work-life balance for faculty in academia have acquired considerable traction in the last decade or so. Many qualitative and quantitative studies that investigate this equation focus on causes for why university professors experience an increased difficulty in integrating their personal and professional lives. Most notably, these causes are traced back to changes in policy and social status of higher education; shift in the demographic of students enrolling in universities, which requires a lot more time spent mentoring a diverse student body; the pressure on faculty to keep pace with rapid technological advances; the “publish or perish” imperative; a reduction of administrative support and an escalation in the administrative responsibilities that professors have to fulfill; lack of job security, promotion opportunities, or support from colleagues and superiors (Sliskovic and Sersic 2011; Thorsen 1996; Winefield et al. 2003; Kinman and Jones 2008). These are just some of the factors that contribute to a generalized sense of anxiety that many faculty, across disciplines, universities, and even countries, have acknowledged as the leading reasons for why their work hours take over their evenings and weekends, resulting in a compromised sense of well-being.

The second most dominant body of scholarship regarding academic work-life balance is invested in offering strategies for attaining this desired goal. This solution oriented research posits and encourages strategies whereby faculty can learn to juggle their competing duties by learning to “say no” to tasks that detract from their primary responsibilities; choosing to delegate (the advice given by University of Oregon’s Holden Leadership Center); advance planning and time management and having clarity about tenure procedures and the rules that effect their job. In addition, may be about focusing on the pleasure of their labor; reconfiguring their cognitive responses to the challenges they encounter at work; avoiding the guilt and shame of unproductivity; and by deliberately factoring in leisure and personal time, incorporating exercise, focusing on emotional and physical health etc. – what has, in common parlance, come to be known as “me-time” – into their schedules (Owens et al; Drexel University’s Office of Faculty Affairs).

In this short essay, which has emerged out of the comments that I made at a Butler Center roundtable on “Work-Life Balance,” I adopt a slightly different approach. My goal here is neither to add to the array of causes that contribute to faculty burnout nor offer practical strategies for fending off the burnout. Instead, I pose three theoretical and philosophical

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questions that might help us reconfigure the work-life equation, even as we begin to comprehend the ways in which our intersectional identities under a neoliberal academic regime complicate any easy one-stop-shop type of strategizing for solving this surmounting sense of imbalance that pervades the lives of academic faculty.

Reconfiguring the Problem or Why the Phrases We Use Matter

In some ways, the phrase “work-life balance” is itself a function and symptom of the very neoliberal ethic that it hopes to draw attention to and rectify. It is innate to the neoliberal impulse to permeate every facet of our life, to become a central organizing ethic of society that shapes the way we live, think and feel about ourselves, and each other (Brown 2015). The funding cut-backs in higher education alongside the rampant corporatization of universities, which values only market-controlled notions of productivity, are the paramount reasons why increasingly professors find themselves taking their work home. The neoliberal university thus usurps not only work-time labor but also faculty’s time at home; the home functions more and more as an extension of their office-space. In this extended office-space, faculty end up performing a huge chunk of their professional duties like grading, course preparation, research, and catching up on the ever-proliferating backlog of emails, because their time at work is taken over by classroom teaching, office hours, mentoring students, faculty and committee meetings, and other administrative and service responsibilities.

In this regard, the phrase “work-life balance” is a testament precisely to the primacy of faculty work-lives, their laboring selves under neoliberalism. Instead of encouraging us to remember that work is a subset of life, the coinage, by placing “work” before “life,” ironically ends up prioritizing work. In as much as the language we use to understand our problems frames our perception, our affective responses, and our imagination of the solutions we can envisage, “work-life balance” only reinstates/re-inscribes the problem rather than posing a challenge to the imbalance between work and life that most university professors experience. As a counterpoint, and this is something Karen Kelsky and Kel Weinholt (2019) articulate in their discussion of work-life balance, as best practice, we might want to shift to reframing the issue as “life-work balance.”

At the same time, though, both coinages – “work-life” and “life-work” balance – are blind to the fact that for most university professors, their work – teaching, mentoring, and research – is integral to their self-conceptualization and the ways in which they make meaning of their lives. Work, then, is not separate from life, but an integral component of what gives meaning to one’s sense of a rich, fulfilling life. Not only do these phrases continue the neoliberal illusion that work and life are meant to be two discrete realms, and perpetuate the myth that a separation of the two, under the current economic regime, is the ultimate and an achievable goal. They also do not consider the uniqueness of academic labor that entails, more often than not, a disruption of neat boundaries between work and personal labor. The question before us, then, is how we may theorize the overlaps between work time and personal time entailed in the lives of faculty, without making that flexibility subservient to the neoliberal impulse where all aspects of their lives are inadvertently an extension of a marketized doctrine.

Considering Non-normative Lives in Discussing Work-Life Balance

A few months ago, I was complaining to my colleague-friend about feeling increasingly drained – a generalized tirade about things seeming out of sync, feeling over-worked and sleep-deprived. His response produced an important moment of insight. He asked me what, in particular, it was that I found most challenging, and it was in answering his question that I first realized the primary cause of my own disgruntlement – that when I came back home from campus, often after an 8-10 hour workday, it was to an empty apartment. The ritual of cooking and eating dinner alone, of having no human interaction at the end of a long work day was taking a toll, such that even though my work, despite its hectic rhythms, was incredibly rewarding, my overall sense of wellbeing felt tarnished. It was, however, my colleague's rejoinder to my response that added a whole new dimension to my understanding of struggles that academics face. His eyes brightened as I mentioned my empty apartment and my solitary after-work routines at home and said that the idea of a quiet evening sounded blissful. Instead, he had to immediately segue out of his teacher-mode and into his husband and dad mode. We both laughed at the all too obvious "grass is greener on the other side" narrative we had exchanged about our lives, but the moment allowed me to arrive at an important realization.

Invariably, most discussions that highlight the paucity of personal time for university faculty frame the "life" component of the work-life balance equation in terms of family-time. What this means is that our conceptualization of "life" is more often than not hijacked by a normative understanding of how non-work hours are spent or ought to be spent. A truly intersectional conversation about work-life balance, would emphasize not only that people with traditional family situations also need non-familial time to themselves (as in the case of my colleague), but even more importantly, that there are several faculty whose personal lives do not adhere to normative domestic frameworks/living situations in the least.

I have been thinking more and more about what quality of life means for people living in university towns without families and traditional support structures. Single people, especially women, international scholars with their primary family and friends still in their home countries, people in long-distance relationships, queer, fat, disabled faculty often choose or find themselves in living situations that are non-normative. This can be particularly hard in a society that is fixated on romantic partnerships; in which the traditional family unit is the primary model for personal sustenance.

In thinking about work-life balance, then, it is imperative that we begin to consider an intersectional conceptualization of the lives that faculty lead, that we start to comprehend the ways in which some people have access to structures of care, while others struggle much harder to find community and a sense of belonging. While substantial empirical studies exist on the particular challenges that women faculty face (Aguirre 2000, Samble 2008, August 2006), a comprehensive and ethical discussion of work-life balance must take into account the innumerable ways in which gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity and nationality, and physical capacities of faculty contribute to their ability to integrate their work and personal lives.

Working Towards a Work-Life Balance

It is important to note that the predominant strategies advocated for achieving work-life balance put the onus for addressing and rectifying structural pressures that faculty encounter on

individual faculty themselves. This individualized mode of addressal is part and parcel of the neoliberal shifts in higher education. The neoliberal ethic “encourages people to see themselves as individualized and active subjects responsible for enhancing their own well-being” (Larner quoted. in Rottenberg 2014:421) In this new regime of morality, collective forms of action or well-being are eroded, and emphasis is placed on self-reliance, efficiency, and the individual’s capacity to exercise his or her own autonomous choices. These individualized coping mechanisms, however, only bandage over transformations that actually require collective addressal. To lay the responsibility of managing better the innumerable responsibilities that faculty undertake singularly upon their shoulder might seem like an obvious and practical survival technique, whereby faculty must accept their new, neoliberal work conditions and find strategies of resilience within it. However, these individualized strategies only work to play catch-up rather than alter structures that undermine faculty wellbeing.

What structural alterations require, first and foremost, is a reconceptualization of faculty agency in demanding institutional support from higher echelons of university administration. It requires faculty from across disciplines and with different levels of seniority, and – in the long run -- across universities, to advocate collectively for an alternative ethic for assessing faculty productivity and impact. Faculty have to insist on institutional responsibility towards faculty wellbeing, rather than accept the demise of this possibility and finding alternative, entirely self-referential and self-reliant modes of compensating for structural loss.

And finally, faculty must explicitly initiate difficult conversations about who is best placed to make these demands from the university administration. This can only happen in the context of an acknowledgement that vulnerability is differentially distributed among faculty. Un-tenured faculty, faculty of color, international faculty occupy a far more tenuous position in the academy compared to tenured faculty from majority racial and ethnic groups, who may thus be best placed to spearhead these demands. This may seem like a daunting task, of imagining the impossible. And yet, beginning with ensuring the security of culturally and racially minoritized, pre-tenure and contractual faculty, can go a long way in moving towards enhancing work-life balance. When those most precariously placed in the university are granted dignity, agency, autonomy and security, it establishes a work culture that is interculturally sensitive, and promotes an academic environment that is attuned to the work conditions in which everyone thrives – both in their professional and personal capacities.

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