

WOMEN

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The Same Old Situation: A Personal Essay About Sexual Harassment in the Academy

By Dr. Jennifer Cote

I began my career in education as a teaching assistant (TA) on September 12, 2001. This was a brutal day to begin anything, especially as a 23-year-old providing solace to hardly younger students on the day after 9/11. I was surprised to hold class at all.

Talking with friends who also began teaching then made me remember other things about my early years in the classroom, particularly one of the men I taught for and the sexual harassment that followed our two semesters together.

This story isn't a terribly novel one. I'm not the first teaching assistant to be sexually harassed by the person who ought to be mentoring her; superiors harass women on a regular basis. That I'd blocked this series of events out altogether surprises me completely.

Not long ago, reading dozens of Twitter posts on sexual harassment and assault retweeted by comedian Jen Kirkman, I thought about the subway creepers, the men who hollered at me in the park and the men who followed me almost home on a quiet street late one night. I didn't think once about how I'd been repeatedly harassed by someone I'd known quite well. A friend who studies German history and teaches Freud speculates that I'd repressed those memories. Maybe so. He also applauded me on my courage to continue my studies despite harassment—something I hadn't even considered. This article is for those women whose academic careers were cut short by harassment and assault.

How the Harassment Began

My graduate institution required three years of teaching assistantship as part of my graduate funding package. I became the TA of a postdoctoral student, John, a man in his early 30s. He was a charmer, a nice guy. But I found his insistence on having a traditional first-day lecture on 9/11 disturbing and that he compelled me to lead three discussions on 9/12 even more so.

My teaching year was relatively uneventful. I learned how to lead discussions. John offered very little help, in

contrast to other professors in the department who had stated learning goals and distributed the questions to their TAs. His approach wasn't a bad one, and I learned the ways to get a conversation moving and how to revive one that stalled completely.

After the semester ended, I received a message from John. He was leaving the academy and going into another industry. He'd been on the academic job market—notoriously bad, even 15 years ago—and he decided to go a different route. He asked if I'd meet up some time for a drink. Sure, I said.

The night we finally met, he continually leered at my breasts. It was the most uncomfortable drink I'd ever had; I scurried home afterward to the apartment I shared with my long-term boyfriend, Ben. It was a gross evening, but more importantly, the meetup delivered a shock: someone I generally respected as a peer, and superior, treated me as an object, an experience I'd never before had. I'd folded my arms across my chest all evening. I only unfolded them as I gestured while talking. His eyes wandered back. I never said a word.

Then, the phone calls began.

I answered the first few times and deflected John's requests for more interaction. I then let the calls go to the machine, hoping he'd get the hint. But John called at least once or twice a month. If I answered and rebuffed him firmly, it only increased his calling frequency. I gave up. The machine answered indefinitely. Eventually, Ben answered the phone and sternly told John that missed calls were a sign I did not want to talk to him. The calls—



Dr. Jennifer Cote

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more or less—stopped.

Less than a year later, I ran into John at a goodbye party for a mutual acquaintance, a man who had also been a postdoctoral student and friend of John's. I'd dreaded he'd be there since they'd been good friends, and, sure enough, he was. I sat as far away as possible. I had too much tequila.

The only people I ever told about this string of events were Ben and my closest graduate school friend, Monica.

These days I'm reflecting on why.

Leaving the Feminist Bubble

I went to a feminist women's college, Mount Holyoke MA, prior to graduate school. In those years, I'd only begun to dab my toe in the waters of feminism and gender studies. I also had lived in what we fondly called "the bubble." Inside Mount Holyoke, all was possible! Sexism vanquished! Eventually, we had to leave.

I went straight from Mount Holyoke to an enormous co-ed university, Boston College MA, and felt extraordinarily alone. I threatened to quit constantly. Graduate school can be an isolating business. In my excitement to live with my boyfriend and uneasiness about making new friends, I tended toward isolation. My first year, I felt intimidated by the men in my classes who routinely bantered about literary theorists I'd never read. When I confessed this feeling to my advisor, she counseled me that I "hadn't been taught to bullshit at Mount Holyoke." I stuck with school.

After my Mount Holyoke experience, I assumed I'd help fight the patriarchy. Yet when it stared at my breasts, I lacked the courage to say anything to it. I folded my arms in defense. I ignored the phone in deflection. I gripped to Monica. Since John had left the university, I never said anything to my professors or the administration. Even though I knew the repeated harassment was

not my fault, I felt I should have been a stronger woman. I should have said something to him. When I didn't, I felt weak and dirty. I was ashamed of myself when I needed to just be ashamed of John. I made his actions my problem, as opposed to seeing them as his, which added to my feelings of self-loathing and powerlessness. What made it worse was that it felt like my boyfriend had "solved" the problem; it took one man to make another respect the wishes of a woman.

The Commonness of Sexual Harassment

At the same time, I felt at least in part that what happened was so run-of-the-mill that I didn't see the point in letting others know about it. Harassment was what happened to women. What happened with John seemed within the bounds of normal, everyday harassment

experienced by women all the time, the sort of thing we see in movies and on television, sanctioned by our overall culture.

We hardly comment on harassment because many women accept it as part of the terrain, battles not worth fighting if we're to achieve our overall goals. Many women have experienced catcalling or men pressing themselves against them in enclosed spaces; some women say or do nothing.

Even when I'd tried to turn John's invitations down, he persisted, and that persistence was hardly worth noting. The cost of intervening is sometimes too costly to bear. Many women accept that being harassed is part of the process of getting by in this world. They put up with harassment so their careers stay safely out of the crosshairs of an enraged colleague with the ability to quash one's goals.

It was John's expectation that he could, as my just-recent superior, ogle me and call me continuously; such action affirmed that I was an object for him to pursue rather than a young intellectual nearly his equal. He operated on the assumption that I would not call the

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university administration or file a restraining order. In response, I could more easily see myself as a lesser scholar, though what I was was an intimidated young woman.

Likely I should have said something to someone at the university. Undoubtedly, John's listed his teaching experience at the school on his résumé, with his mentors as references. Who knows how many subordinates have also been on the receiving end of his attentions 15 years later?

I didn't quit in the face of such circumstances, given how much I'd wanted to bail to begin with. I persevered, and now I'm a tenured professor. I'm married. I have cats.

Academia as a system already presents women with a set of extraordinarily difficult obstacles that discourage many from staying, and only some women are able to get a tenure-track offer. Still more women (and men) make up legions of underpaid adjunct labor, which comes with an entirely more complex set of challenges. In both cases, perseverance alone doesn't always make the difference in


continued on page 12

Congrats, Marshall Scholars!

The British Parliament established the Marshall Scholarship Program in 1953. Funded by the British government, the Marshall Scholarships include enough funding for two years of study at a British university, plus travel, living expenses and books allowance for each recipient. The Marshall Scholarship Program is a "gesture of thanks to the American people for aid received under the Marshall Plan, the U.S.-financed program that led to the reconstruction of Europe after World War II." Since the beginning of the program, over 1,800 Americans have been appointed Marshall Scholars. This year, out of 40 recipients, 17 were women.

- **Bailey Anderson**, University of Texas at Austin
- **Rebecca Boslough**, University of Montana
- **Joani Etskovitz**, Princeton University
- **Nancy Fairbank**, University of Texas at Dallas
- **Taylor Harwood**, St. Catherine University
- **Sarah Koch**, University of Virginia
- **Faiza Masood**, Hunter College, City University of New York
- **Victoria Mousley**, College of the Holy Cross
- **Maille Radford**, Harvard University
- **Devika Ranjan**, Georgetown University
- **Debbie Samaniego**, Westminster College
- **Erin Schulte**, Arizona State University
- **Erin Simpson**, University of Chicago
- **Emilia Truluck**, Emory University
- **Bailey Ulbricht**, Carleton College
- **Alina Utrata**, Stanford University
- **Devin Weiss**, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

WIHE congratulates each of these young women on becoming Marshall Scholars.

Source: *Women in Academia Report*. 

Some Academic Disciplines Continue to Have Huge Gender Gaps

The National Science Foundation's annual *Survey of Earned Doctorates* showed that women "earned 46.2 percent of all doctorates awarded by American universities in 2015." Women earned over three-quarters of the PhDs in nursing science, school psychology, developmental and child psychology, special education, social work, art history, speech-language pathology, family and consumer science, environmental health and urban education. And yet, there are *still* academic disciplines with large gender gaps, where women only made up less than one-third of the PhDs awarded. The disciplines with the most serious gender gaps included organic chemistry, biophysics, finance, geophysics and seismology, atmospheric physics, computational biology, music theory, mathematics and statistics, physical education, medical physics, engineering, theology (Newswatch has a PhD in religion, so this is no surprise), astrophysics, theoretical chemistry, physics, computer science, acoustics and plasma physics. Did you notice a trend? Newswatch did. The largest gender gaps in PhDs remain within science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

—*Women in Academia Report* on Feb. 15, 2017

First Female Governors' Summit Tries to Get Girls Into Tech

Governor Mary Fallin (OK), Governor Gina Raimondo (RI) and Lieutenant Governor Kim Reynolds (IA) met with Girls Who Code, Facebook and Deloitte, a consulting firm, for the first Female Governors' Summit. Their goal was to figure out how to get girls more excited about computer science. Women only have around 24% of the technology jobs that exist. The tech gender gap is pretty serious (and echoes the larger STEM gender gap). Facebook COO Sheryl Sandberg said, "We need to harness the full talents of our population and this summit is proof that our female governors are committed to addressing and closing this gap." And yet, Newswatch would note that getting girls interested in tech is only the first step toward remedying the gender gap. A girl's interest and excitement can quickly fade if there's not an effort to address the structural reasons girls opt out of computer science. Generating interest can only go so far. Creating support for girls and women in tech would get us further.

—*Engadget* on Feb. 17, 2017

Students Vote to Make FSU a Sanctuary Campus

Students at Florida State University voted on a referendum to make FSU a sanctuary campus, which passed by "an overwhelming 66.9 percent, a landslide margin sure to strengthen the move to make the sanctuary campus decision official by SGA and the FSU administration." The statement emphasized "maintaining equality of access to higher education for all students." While sanctuary campuses have no clear legal backing, declaring campus a sanctuary allows for schools to enact policies that protect undocumented students, which can include disallowing FSU agencies from

giving information to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), preventing ICE from coming to campus, maintaining in-state tuition waivers and protecting tuition assistance from being taken away. Newswatch is proud of FSU, her alma mater, and hopes to see more schools declaring their campuses to be sanctuaries.

—FSU News on Feb. 22, 2017

UNCC Students Protest Immigration Ban

At the University of North Carolina, Charlotte, dozens of students filled the bottom floor of the Student Union to protest President Trump's executive order that "places a temporary ban on refugees coming to the United States." Speakers criticized and opposed the order, which is being called a Muslim ban because it focuses on seven predominantly Muslim nations. Muslim students noted that they worried about their futures in the United States and worried about leaving because they might not be able to return. Professor John Cox, one of the speakers who teaches in global studies, noted, "[W]e are all in the same human family, and when our fellow humans need refuge, we should open the door and not slam it in their face."

—WCNC on Feb. 9, 2017

Sweet Briar Chooses Next President

Sweet Briar College VA chose Dr. Meredith Woo, a former dean at the University of Virginia, to be its next president as the school continues to try and recover from its almost closure in 2015. Woo was previously the director of the higher education support program for the Open Society Foundations, which supported "liberal arts colleges in the former Soviet Union and ... higher education for refugee populations in Africa, the Middle East and South Asia." The road ahead of Woo will likely be bumpy due to challenges she'll face in fundraising, enrollment and curriculum. In an interview, Woo noted that she hopes to improve Sweet Briar's liberal arts curriculum, raise funds and build upon the fact that the school is one of only two women's colleges in the nation that has an engineering program.

—*Inside Higher Ed* on Feb. 7, 2017

Close the Gender Gap by Letting Employees Control Their Schedules

One of the primary reasons for gender gaps in pay and opportunity at work is employers' expectations that employees spend long hours at their desks. This expectation makes it hard for women, who are still expected to do most of the caregiving, second-shift work. Economists say that flexibility about both the time and place that work gets done could help close the gender gap. Werk, a new job search company, attempts to solve the problem by negotiating with employers for flexibility before a job is even posted. That way, employees don't have to negotiate.

The job positions posted at Werk are "highly skilled jobs that offer some sort of control over the time and place of work." Claire Cain Miller reports that Werk is "a limited experiment" but "it could provide lessons for how to improve work and make it more equal to a broader group." Werk's example could be particularly important to working mothers, of whom 70% reported in a Pew research survey that a "flexible work schedule" was "extremely important"

to them. When highly educated mothers leave their jobs, it's often because of inflexibility at work (Newswatch left a job for this very reason). Yet, workplace flexibility is good for workplaces too because it reduces turnover and work-family conflicts. Newswatch will be watching Werk and hoping their example leads to more flexibility at work, so women can control their schedules in ways that work best for them.

—*The New York Times* on Feb. 7, 2017

What Will Betsy DeVos Mean for Title IX?

During the confirmation hearings for Trump's nominee Betsy DeVos for secretary of education, Senator Bob Casey asked if she would uphold the 2011 Title IX guidance that pertains to campus sexual assault. In that year, the Department of Education offered "official guidance that interpreted Title IX's bar on sex discrimination to mean that colleges and universities *must* play a role in combating sexual assault on campus." While advocates of survivors praised the guidance, the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE), which DeVos' family foundation gave donations to, sponsored a lawsuit against the measure that supported students accused of sexual assault. DeVos wouldn't answer whether she would or wouldn't support the 2011 guidance. FIRE also supported the SAFE Campus Act that required mandatory reporting of sexual assault to the police rather than campus authorities. Rightly, there's concern about whether DeVos will ensure that Title IX will protect victims of campus sexual assault.

Michigan Daily suggests that DeVos' confirmation is a threat to Title IX enforcement, especially ongoing investigations like the one currently happening at the University of Michigan. President Mark Schlissel noted that the school has been cooperating with the Office of Civil Rights to make the campus safer and to support the survivors of campus sexual assault. Yet, there's still much concern about the fate of investigation because of possible changes at the Department of Education. While the Obama administration was serious about enforcing Title IX, the Trump administration could scale back enforcement. Newswatch is not sure what might happen to Title IX under DeVos but worries that the gains we've made to ensure safer campuses will be eroded.

—*Teen Vogue* on Jan. 18, 2017, and *Michigan Daily* on Feb. 6, 2017

The Motherhood Penalty in Academia

At *The Guardian*, an anonymous woman academic writes about how she was "made redundant" from her job at a UK university. After she announced her pregnancy, her main projects were handed off to other colleagues. After the birth of her baby, she was asked to turn over all of her data on a project. While the United Kingdom legally requires that women be able to return to their original job, her job no longer existed for her. Her story is not an unfamiliar one. Employers do reduce hours or force women out of jobs due to pregnancy, even though this is illegal. What's surprising is how surprised the author was that gender discrimination is still such a problem in the modern workplace. Motherhood changes the trajectory of working women's lives because of the competing claims of work and family life. Newswatch notes that studies show that employers judge mothers to be less competent and less-committed workers than women who are not mothers

and men who are parents or not. It's terrible that this woman lost her job due to motherhood. It's more terrible that she's just one of so many women who have also lost their jobs simply because they became mothers.

—*The Guardian* on Feb. 20, 2017

Youth Basketball Team Forfeits Season Rather Than Ban Girls

In a story that warms Newswatch's heart, a Catholic Youth Organization basketball team voted to forfeit its whole season so the two girl players could remain on the team. The league's director explained to the St. John's Chargers that they could not play as a co-ed team and that the girls had played illegally. The coaches and parents decided to let the kids vote. All 11 players voted to keep the girls on the team and forfeit the season because it wasn't a big deal for girls to be on the same team as the boys. These kids didn't see a problem with their co-ed team. Newswatch only wishes that the league's director would realize the same thing.

—*The New York Times* on Feb. 23, 2017

College Isn't the Great Equalizer?

While many *still* claim that college is the "great equalizer," a new study challenges that idea by showing that the economic impact of college is tied to the income of a student's family. Students from wealthy backgrounds earn more than other students, even when the study controlled for the competitiveness of the college attended. The study, appearing in *Social Forces*, analyzed the national Baccalaureate & Beyond Longitudinal Study of 1993 that collected large amounts of information about folks earning bachelor's degrees and their resulting career paths after. Wealthier students do better, partially because of the advantages and connections of their parents. Depressingly, the study shows that "social class mobility is far more limited ... and that higher education is not eliminating all the differences in wage outcomes that can be traced back to social class." This doesn't mean that low-income students don't gain advantages from attending college, but college isn't the equalizer that many tout it to be.

—*Inside Higher Ed* on Feb. 17, 2017

113 UC Employees Violated the Sexual Misconduct Policy

Newswatch is starting to wonder what exactly is happening at the University of California campuses. *The Daily Californian* reports that at least 113 UC faculty, staff and contractors have violated the UC sexual violence and harassment policy over the last three years. The newspaper obtained "hundreds of pages of UC documents" after a public records request, and most of the documents had not been publicly released. What they found is disturbing: "one-third of those who violated the policy are still employed in the UC system," while faculty make up 25% of the people who violated the policy. Kristen Glasgow, a grad student from UCLA, noted, "I know more women who've gone through it than haven't." Sexual harassment and violence appear rampant, which *The Daily Californian* rightly calls a "crisis." While UC has implemented reforms to how they handle complaints, there's been much criticism about light punishments and the cumbersome nature of the reporting process. Maybe making these documents and the number of violators public will cause faculty

and staff to *finally* stop harassing women.

—*The Daily Californian* on Feb. 28, 2017

Trump Administration Withdraws Guidelines That Protect Trans* Students

White House press secretary Sean Spicer indicated that the administration "will not be a forceful defender of transgender rights, saying that President Donald Trump believes that the issue should be left up to the states." The Trump administration planned to rescind a policy from the Obama administration that required any school that received federal funding to treat students' gender identities as their sex. While Trump claimed this is a states' rights issue, the Departments of Education and Justice, under Obama, emphasized that trans* students were "covered" under Title IX. This shouldn't be surprising, as Trump voiced his support of North Carolina's infamous HB2 law during the campaign.

BuzzFeed reported that Trump did indeed roll back the policy "designed to reduce anti-transgender discrimination in public schools." The Department of Education and Department of Justice tried to suggest that this "withdrawal" did not leave trans* students without protections, but Newswatch is seriously unconvinced. Luckily, states and local school districts can still adopt trans*-inclusive policies or keep their current rules in place. Newswatch's county decided to keep their school policies supporting trans* students, which was heartening considering the administration's bigotry.

—*Huffington Post* on Feb. 21, 2017, and *BuzzFeed* on Feb. 22, 2017

Trans* Students Matter

Amid the speculation and then reaction to the administration's rollback of protections for trans* students, Sara McBride, the national press secretary for the Human Rights Campaign and the first openly trans* person to speak at a major party convention, penned a letter to trans* students affirming their lives and their political power. She wrote, "But I want you to know that whatever happens in Washington, you are loved and you matter. No presidency, no discriminatory action, no hateful bill can change those facts." What's beautiful about this letter, and so many things are beautiful, is how McBride affirms that treating trans* students "with dignity and respect" doesn't harm the rights of other people. All human beings deserve to be treated with dignity and respect; gender identity shouldn't impact that.

The Chronicle of Higher Education interviewed Z Nicolazzo, the author of *Trans* in College*, about the rollback and the lives of trans* students on our campuses. This interview is a must-read because Nicolazzo describes what trans* students face at schools, which shows just how far schools are from being truly inclusive for trans* students. Nicolazzo notes, "If we were to focus our educational efforts on the most vulnerable populations that are on our campuses ... then what we do is create environments that work for those populations, knowing that ... these environments will work for people with more privileges as well." Helping trans* students will help create better, safer campuses for all students. And that should be our goal, right?

—*Teen Vogue* on Feb. 23, 2017, and *The Chronicle of Higher Education* on Feb. 23, 2017

—KJB

An Activist for Students: A Profile of Dr. Sara Goldrick-Rab

Student debt has reached almost stratospheric heights. A Harvard Institute of Politics study [found](#) that 42 percent of all American adults under 30 have student debt.

According to the Project on Student Debt, the Class of 2015 graduated with an average debt of \$30,100, leading them to postpone marriage, child rearing and home purchases. Rising costs have captured the attention of various constituencies, including academics such as **Dr. Sara Goldrick-Rab**.

A professor of higher education policy and sociology at Temple University in Pennsylvania, Goldrick-Rab aims to research ways on how to make higher education more accessible and affordable. Previously a tenured professor in educational policy studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Goldrick-Rab moved back to the East Coast after her Twitter responses to Wisconsin political decisions garnered her hate responses and death threats.

She ran afoul of supporters of Governor Scott Walker when she took him and other politicians to task for their proposed budget cuts and removal of tenure protection in state law.

"Life is good here," Goldrick-Rab said when asked how she was doing now. "It's amazing how much you can do when you're not being persecuted."

Identify Options, Move Forward

Although she grew up in a "solid middle-class home" in northern Virginia with a strong tradition of higher education—her grandmother was one of the first women graduates from the Medill School of Journalism at Northwestern University and her grandfather became a social worker thanks to the GI Bill—the 40-year-old Goldrick-Rab experienced tuition's upward trend personally.

"College prices were high enough that even the middle class was struggling a little," she said. Told she had to attend a state school, she chose the College of William & Mary to start her undergraduate work; she later received a tuition discount at George Washington University (her mother was an adjunct), where she finished her undergraduate degree.

The tuition discount "didn't make it affordable," she recalled. To save money, Goldrick-Rab worked as a waitress, was in only one extracurricular club and finished college in three-and-a-half years.

She earned both her master's degree and a PhD in sociology from the University of Pennsylvania.

One year into the tenure track at the University of Wisconsin, "I'm married and I want kids." Because UW did



**Dr. Sara
Goldrick-Rab**

Goldrick-Rab: "Get over the fact that everyone has to like you or that life is a popularity contest. It's not."

not have paid maternity leave, Goldrick-Rab organized both of her maternity leaves around research that she solicited funding for.

As the first woman in her department to have a baby while on the tenure track, she worked hard to balance her professional and family lives, even bringing one of her babies to nurse during faculty meetings (then comprised solely of older men and Goldrick-Rab).

Other than her children, Goldrick-Rab noted that she is the most proud of her new book, *Paying the Price: College Costs, Financial Aid, and the Betrayal of the American Dream*. Published by the University of Chicago Press, the book came out in 2016.

While writing the book, Goldrick-Rab was also going through the trials of divorce after a decade-long marriage. "That's what you do," she said about the competing pressures. "When I care about a thing, it has my full attention." She has since become engaged to another man who "knows I love my work."

While Goldrick-Rab may seem a bit like Superwoman, it's "technological support" that enables her to achieve some semblance of balance. She religiously uses her

Google Calendar and employs Facebook, rather than phone calls, to stay in touch with relatives and friends. She burns through a laptop every year.

"I've chosen this because I love my career," said Goldrick-Rab.

A "Scholar Activist"

Although she had been doing research on inequality since graduate school, Goldrick-Rab began seriously looking at the topic of affordability in 2008 when UW received a large grant. A portion of the grant funded a study that eventually led to her book.

She also founded the Wisconsin Harvesting Opportunities for Postsecondary Education (HOPE) Lab, the "first laboratory for translational research aimed at improving equitable outcomes in postsecondary education, and finding innovative ways to make college more affordable." She considers it her "third child."

The lab, which did "one-off" research, will close when funding ends in 2018 and reopen at Temple as the HOPE Center. The center will focus on "systemic change."

Calling herself a "scholar-activist," Goldrick-Rab defines the term as having a scholarly interest on a particular topic and acting on what is learned. She spends her time learning about those who serve homeless students as well as evaluating programs that serve them.

"I feel an obligation to homeless students," she said. "I personally can't live with it."

Goldrick-Rab is currently focused on researching food scholarships. "We don't study food insecurity in higher education," she said. By building a food pantry for students, how does that change a college's perception of itself?

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Women on the Move

As of March 1, 2017

- **Dr. Jean A. Bertrand** moves from assistant dean for academic affairs for the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences at the University of Georgia to associate dean for undergraduate studies for the College of Agriculture, Forestry and Life Sciences at Clemson University SC.
- **Dr. Erika K. Davis** moves from director of enrollment management and marketing for the School of Graduate Studies and Research at Delaware State University to director of adult and graduate admissions at Neumann University PA.
- **Nancy Strickland Fields** becomes curator and director of the Museum of the Southeast American Indian at the University of North Carolina at Pembroke.
- **Sandra Genelius** becomes chief communications officer at Amherst College MA.
- **Dr. Gina Sanchez Gibau** moves from associate dean for student affairs in the School of Liberal Arts at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis to associate vice chancellor for faculty diversity and inclusion at the school.
- **Dr. Idella Goodson Glenn** becomes special adviser on inclusivity and diversity at Hollins University VA.
- **Jennifer Green** moves from data librarian at the University of Michigan Libraries to dean of the library and academic information services at Barnard College NY.
- **Dr. Laura M. Haas** becomes dean of the College of Information and Computer Sciences at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, beginning Aug. 1.
- **Elizabeth Halloran** becomes executive VP and chief advancement officer at St. Catherine University MN.
- **Dr. Alyssa Hasty** becomes associate dean for faculty development for basic sciences at the Vanderbilt University School of Medicine TN, in addition to her previous duties as professor of molecular physiology and biophysics.
- **Brenda Hatton-Ficklin** becomes the director of alumni relations at Philander Smith College AR.
- **Kimberly Hewitt, JD**, moves from director of the Office for Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action at the University of Minnesota to vice provost for institutional equity at Johns Hopkins University MD, beginning March 6.
- **Elena D. Hicks** moves from dean of admission at Loyola University MD to dean of undergraduate admission at Southern Methodist University TX.
- **Missy Kennedy** becomes associate vice chancellor for university advancement at the University of North Carolina at Wilmington.
- **Dr. Mary Klotman** becomes dean of the Duke University School of Medicine and vice chancellor for health affairs at Duke University NC.
- **Dr. Lauren E. Lindstrom** moves from associate dean for research and faculty development in the College of Education at the University of Oregon to dean of

the School of Education at the University of California, Davis, beginning June 1.

- **Dr. Raina Merchant** becomes associate VP for the University of Pennsylvania Health System and director of the university's Center for Digital Health, in addition to her previous duties as assistant professor of emergency medicine at the University of Pennsylvania.
- **Kallie Bila Michels** becomes VP for communications at the University of Michigan.
- **Elizabeth Moje** becomes dean of the School of Education at the University of Michigan.
- **Dr. Cheryl Ney** becomes dean of the Charter College of Education at California State University, Los Angeles.
- **Dr. Susanna Pearlstein** becomes director of the Matanuska Experiment and Extension Center of the University of Alaska Fairbanks.
- **Lorena Peñaloza, JD**, moves from university counsel for Sonoma State University CA and Humboldt State University CA in the Office of the General Counsel of the California State University System to chief campus counsel at the University of California, Santa Cruz.
- **Debra Lee Polley** becomes VP for finance and administration at the College of Saint Rose NY.
- **Dr. Asha Rajagopal** moves from director of the Office of Technology Commercialization at the University of Texas at Dallas to executive director of the Office of Technology Transfer at Rice University TX.
- **Sonyé Randolph, JD**, becomes equal opportunity and Title IX investigator in the Office of Equity, Diversity and Compliance at Appalachian State University NC.
- **Abigail Rider** moves from assistant vice chancellor for planning and real estate at the University of California, Merced to VP for administration and finance at the University of Rhode Island.
- **Carmen Robinson** moves from assistant dean for student services in the College of Arts, Letters and Sciences at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock to director of undergraduate education at the University of California, Santa Cruz.
- **Lori A. Ross, JD**, becomes general counsel and VP for legal affairs at the University of Cincinnati OH.
- **Dr. Tomoko Sakomura** becomes associate dean of academic affairs at Swarthmore College PA, beginning Aug. 1.
- **Dr. Linda J. Sealy** becomes associate dean for diversity, equity and inclusion for basic sciences at the Vanderbilt University School of Medicine TN, in addition to her previous duties as an associate professor of molecular physiology and biophysics, cell and developmental biology and cancer biology.
- **Dr. Elizabeth Spiller** moves from dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University to dean of the College of Letters and Science at the University of California, Davis.

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Robertson Curates Educational History

As the curator/director of the Mary McLeod Bethune Foundation-National Historic Landmark, **Dr. Ashley N. Robertson** uses public history to inform the present and future. Housed in the Florida home of the late civil rights advocate and landmark educator (1875–1955), the museum inspires everyone from casual visitors to students and faculty at Bethune-Cookman University FL.

Finding Her Niche

As a college student at Bowie State University MD, Robertson majored in business administration with a concentration in banking and finance, with an eye toward the financial world. Despite her major, she piled on history courses—feeling a love for the subject but not knowing how she could make a career from it.

A professor/mentor opened her eyes to careers in history and guided Robertson through the application process for graduate school. After earning her MA in African American studies at Temple University PA and her doctorate in African diaspora history at Howard University DC, Robertson accepted a position at Bethune-Cookman University in 2013, where in addition to her museum duties, she is an assistant professor of African American history.

While doing her doctoral studies at Howard, **Dr. Elizabeth Clark-Lewis** advised Robertson to take an interest in the public history (museums/archives) minor. Clark-Lewis suggested she go to the Mary McLeod Bethune Council House in Washington, DC to volunteer. There Robertson learned about archival work and how to give tours. At that time, the Council House and the National Archives for Black Women's History were at one site. The volunteer work led to a paying job as an archives technician.

Her dissertation topic was Bethune's international activism—the founding of the United Nations; trips to Cuba, Haiti and Liberia; and the international studies she brought to Bethune-Cookman.

Preserving History

"The thing about a smaller museum is that your duties are [broad]. I'm not just a curator," says Robertson. "I'm in charge of preserving the collections here and I'm also in charge of training the staff and making sure that they have information to do tours. Also, making sure that we're doing new research, so that we can learn about different aspects of Mrs. Bethune's life."

"I've created several community programs here, including 'Books and Bears,' which is a literacy program in which we have children come every month and students from Bethune-Cookman are paired with the children to read with them and do various activities," she adds.



Dr. Ashley N. Robertson

Robertson:
"Right now is a very important time for people to understand history, become familiar with it and also use it as a way to move forward in the future and learn from the things of the past."

A sought-after speaker, she has also written about Bethune, including *Mary McLeod Bethune in Florida: Bringing Social Justice to the Sunshine State* (2015). In the book, Robertson included interviews with four people now in their 80s and 90s who actually knew Bethune. One was Bethune's grandson, 95, who grew up in the house that is now the museum.

"It was extremely important for me to capture their stories and preserve the memories that they had about Mrs. Bethune," says Robertson, who also hopes to turn her dissertation into a book. "Spreading her ideals, especially her ideas about living a life of service and getting involved in the community. Being involved here in Daytona Beach has been something near and dear to me as far as sustaining Mrs. Bethune's legacy."

The book also looks at the founding of Bethune-Cookman University in 1904 and Bethune's use of the school as a political space and the site of some of the first interracial meetings in Daytona Beach. Robertson uses it in her class, and last year it was the common reader for the freshman class.

Tools for Activism

Robertson promotes the museum and Bethune's legacy through lectures and presentations. She is also active on social media, seeing it as an important way to connect with young people.

"As a scholar, you would hope that everyone is going to read your articles and books or watch your documentary," says Robertson. "The great thing about public history is that historians are allowed to make everything in the books come alive. We're allowed to have a conversation about Mrs. Bethune through a re-enactment or we're allowed to take an object that belonged to Mrs. Bethune, such as her cane, and we can talk about the cane and where the cane has been."

Recently, Robertson wrote a grant proposal for the Florida Humanities Council to have an actress that portrays Bethune come to campus. The event kicked off Black History Month. People connect to history in a diverse range of ways, and the re-enactment was attended by children, university students and members of the local community.

"You're like an interpreter and you can translate things for people in a way that they're able to understand," she says. "Right now is a very important time for people to understand history, become familiar with it and also use it as a way to move forward in the future and learn from the things of the past."

Robertson sees museums as places where critical conversations about issues of the day can take place. She says it's important for museums to develop programs that address community issues.

As a young academic at a historically black university at

continued on page 13

Breaking Through the Boys' Club at NACA

As the face of the field of higher education continues to change, so do the professional associations that support its staff and practitioners. Among the more pronounced changes in leadership are those in the National Association for Campus Activities (NACA), where after a number of men board chairs, the forthcoming slate of leadership features two women (including the first chair-ship for an African-American woman). *WIHE* was lucky enough to speak with the immediate chair-elect **Dr. Lucy Croft** of the University of North Florida and her already-named successor **Demetria Bell Anderson** of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, about their path to NACA's upper echelon and what they hope to bring to the organization through their leadership.

This interview has been edited for length and clarity.

Congratulations to each of you on your impending steads at the head of the board of directors! How did you get involved with NACA originally?

LC: I started as an undergraduate attending regional conferences and connected instantly with the positive energy and leadership development opportunities. My first association volunteer position was the Virginia Unit cooperative buying (now referred to as block booking) coordinator.

DA: At my first convention (Boston 2010), I attended an ed session that provided an overview of the NACA volunteer opportunities. As someone completely new to NACA, the Leadership Fellows Program piqued my interest. I later became a Leadership Fellow, and Leadership Fellows Mentor, a general member to the board of directors, served as NACA treasurer and now serve as the incoming chair-elect!

As you were coming up the proverbial ranks, how did you perceive the association's take on women in leadership? Were they visible? Impactful? Seen as competent?

DA: Before joining the board of directors, I noticed many of our more visible volunteer positions at both the regional and national levels were held by women—which is not at all surprising given the demographic makeup of our profession. When I was elected to the board of directors, I believe there was one, maybe two women who were cycling off the board at that time, [which] was significantly larger than it is now. Our female presence on the board was not at all reflective of our general demographic presence as an association, let alone as a profession.

LC: I saw several strong women leading the association and I knew there were opportunities for me. Were they visible? Yes—however, until recently, women of color were not as visible in leadership positions. NACA is striving to increase diversity, and the Leadership Fellows Program is proving to be an excellent program to cultivate leadership diversity.

DA: In my first term, I had the privilege to serve with three other ladies (two of which were student members to the board who split their terms, and one professional staff member). In my second term, there were two other elected women, and our two guest board members were also women. Over time, our female voice and presence grew and grew. As sister-reps, we encouraged one another to be both visible and vocal at the board table. Our presence was definitely felt, noticed, welcomed and respected!

As you've spent increasing amounts of time in NACA leadership, and had the opportunity to develop more skills, which ones would you say you've developed that are especially helpful for women in leadership?

LC: Being mindful and intentional when leading and working with volunteers. Everyone has their unique talents and experiences they are bringing to the table, and it is critically important to acknowledge each volunteer as an individual and providing meaningful experiences where they can learn, grow and develop.

DA: I have amassed and enhanced skills related to strategic thinking, delegation (not trying to do everything myself, being more comfortable with trusting other professionals to do the work), trusting the process and, more importantly, being more comfortable with and confident in my no (cannot be all things to all people).

As a woman leader (and as a mom), my default response is to figure out how to get to yes, or to make sure that all (or most) are satisfied/pleased with the outcome.

What changes do you hope to make or support within NACA that will benefit women, including students, professionals, associates or even other board members?

DA: As we are in the final stages of bringing forth a new three-to-five-year strategic plan for NACA, I am tremendously excited about the projects and products that are on the horizon! Our next few years as an association will bring to the forefront many different opportunities to further the growth, development and prominence of the role and impact campus activities professionals have and play in higher education and the lives and development of our students, colleagues and members on all levels.

LC: [I want to] continue in the direction of being thoughtful, intentional, mindful and, most importantly, inclusive in how we recruit, retain and recognize our volunteers and members—[as well as] always being strategic and fiscally accountable when making decisions.

And finally, speaking more generally, what unique perspective do you think women can provide in leadership roles such as this?

LC: Women provide an emotional intelligence that I think comes naturally. When it comes to working with

Lucy Croft: "I saw several strong women leading the association and I knew there were opportunities for me."

continued on page 13

Meyer Helps College Students Understand the Power of Sport

Title IX may have arrived too late for **Jayma Meyer, JD**, to achieve her athletic dreams, but it has helped shape her career as an attorney. After years of representing clients on antitrust and sports issues, Meyer has brought her knowledge and perspective to her alma mater, Indiana University, where since 2014, she has been a visiting clinical professor in the School of Public and Environmental Affairs.

Meyer is still counsel at Simpson Thacher & Bartlett in New York, but each spring semester she returns to Indiana to teach undergraduates about sports law and public policy, issues impacting student-athletes, Title IX, amateurism and other ethical issues in sports. She also advocates for the power of sport to bring about social change.



Jayma Meyer

Relevant Topics

Prior to teaching at Indiana, Meyer had been doing pro bono work around issues of Title IX and other matters involving gender, sports and education, which she continues to do. Teaching allows her to motivate students to involve themselves with pressing issues. Her course is part of a law and public policy program.

"Sport is new to the program, but I feel it's very important because it has so many public policy implications," Meyer says. "We're hoping to expand the courses."

She tries to get her students to develop public policy solutions to issues, whether through the law or activism. The subject matter is diverse—from First Amendment issues to racial inequities to concussions—with the underlying message that inclusion, respect and fairness must be part of everything. Although the word "amateur" has a broad range of applications, Meyer mostly focuses on amateur and/or college sports.

As recent headlines have shown, sexual assault is still a pressing issue. "Virtually all universities have increased their education with respect to Title IX," Meyer says. "Here at IU, we have a lot of different avenues through which we educate freshmen particularly but also all students about the risk relating to sexual assault, how to avoid it and how to report it."

Another important issue is concussions, which Meyer sees as an ethical issue. She says we still need to develop much more information about the risks of head injuries, inform athletes of the risks we do understand and develop best practices to avoid those risks.

Time demands are also significant issues student-athletes face. Practices, film review, travel to competition and competition itself become increasingly time-consuming,

resulting in enormous pressures on student-athletes who take education seriously. Conferences with schools spread throughout the country, combined with pressure to win at all costs at some schools, conflict with the goal of academics.

Her students examine the changing face of intercollegiate athletics and the long-reaching consequences for athletes in both revenue-generating and non-revenue-generating sports. Of primary importance is that individuals are not exploited and all student-athletes have genuine opportunities to earn their degrees.

Advocacy

Meyer is on the board of directors of the Women's Sports Foundation and the National Women's Law Center. She has two articles related to college athletics due to be published in the coming months. One is about sexual assault and athletes in college and the other is on antitrust and a possible antitrust exemption for the National Collegiate Athletic Association.

"I get great satisfaction in talking to my students about how I've influenced them and how they use critical thinking skills that I teach in developing public policy solutions in the sports arena and beyond," she says. "Several students have said as a result of my class they're going on to law school, where they hadn't been seriously thinking about it prior to taking the class." Other students are planning careers in college sports administration and professional sports.

She encourages her students to find solutions by reviewing all the pros and cons every stakeholder has in a particular problem or issue. Sometimes, they role play and develop solutions as a group. On college campuses, it's important for students to put themselves in others' shoes to appreciate the complexity of the situation at hand. The best solutions are often reached through collaboration.

Student-athlete activism is on the rise, particularly around issues such as Black Lives Matter. Meyer says while results may not be immediate, starting an open and frank conversation is the beginning of progress. She mentions programs such as the University of Notre Dame's women's basketball team, which wore "I Can't Breathe" T-shirts and did not face penalty, thanks in part to the support of coach Muffet McGraw.

"It's really important that coaches and athletic directors not focus on some technicality, like 'That's not a school uniform that you have on,' and they let the athletes appropriately express their opinions about these hot-button issues," says Meyer.

"The last few years, we've seen many more individual athletes and athletic teams step up and take a position," she adds. "I'm a huge believer that sport, activism and social change are on the right course."

Meyer: "The sports world isn't much different than society in general when it comes to equity. When will women obtain equality in society?"

Ongoing Title IX Issues

As a girl, Meyer had been a competitive swimmer, but her swimming career came to an end at the 1972 Olympic Trials. She fell short of qualifying for the U.S. Olympic Team headed to Munich because there was limited intercollegiate swimming for women at the time. She had to decide between continuing to train, at her own expense, in the hopes of making the 1976 Olympic Team or going to college. She chose the latter.

Today, there are unquestionably many varsity sports available for women at the college level, but there are also institutions that are not in Title IX compliance even 45 years after its passage.

While a lot of institutions have Title IX coordinators, they tend mostly to focus on sexual assault. Meyer says there needs to be somebody at every institution that is responsible for being vigilant about gender equity issues in sports. It's then up to individuals to bring Title IX violations to the attention of athletic departments and initiate legal action where warranted. Being actively involved—be it in protests or simply raising the conversation—is a step in making Title IX fully effective.

"The sports world isn't much different than society in general when it comes to equity. When will women obtain equality in society?" she adds. "It all is moving in the right direction although not as directly or fast as I would like. But, I'm optimistic we will achieve [gender equity], if not in my lifetime, hopefully at least in my daughters' lifetimes." ■

—LE

Women on the Move, continued from page 7

- **Dr. Mary Stromberger** becomes associate dean of the Graduate School at Colorado State University, in addition to being a professor of soil science at the school.

- **Robin Thompson** moves from director of financial aid at Pitzer College CA to director of financial aid at Pomona College CA, beginning May 1.

- **Kim Tobin** becomes VP for university advancement at Colorado State University, beginning July 1.

- **Krystal Toups** moves from director of grants for the University of Texas Health Science Center to assistant vice provost for the Office of Sponsored Projects and Research Compliance at Rice University TX.

- **Sarah Wake, JD**, moves from assistant provost and Title IX coordinator at the University of Chi-

cago IL to associate general counsel at Northwestern University IL.

- **Dr. Nefertiti Walker** becomes director of diversity and inclusion for the Isenberg School of Management at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, in addition to her previous duties as an assistant professor of sport management at the school.

- **Dr. Lynda Welage** moves from dean of the College of Pharmacy at the University of New Mexico to dean of the College of Pharmacy at the University of Minnesota, beginning July 31.

- **Madelyn F. Wessel, JD**, moves from university counsel at Virginia Commonwealth University to university counsel and secretary of the corporation at Cornell University NY, beginning May 8.

- **Christine Wilda** moves from senior VP for administration and finance and treasurer for the University of Massachusetts System to associate chancellor for compliance at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

- **Dr. Margaret L. Williams** moves from dean of the College of Business and Public Administration at the University of North Dakota to dean of the Jerry S. Rawls College of Business at Texas Tech University.

- **Dr. Kathy Yadrack** becomes associate dean in the University of Southern Mississippi's College of Health, in addition to her previous duties as professor of nutrition and food systems at the school. ■



South Dakota State University

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South Dakota State University is conducting a global search for its next Vice President for Research and Economic Development. The Search Committee invites letters of nomination, applications (letter of interest, full resume/CV, and contact information of at least five references), or expressions of interest to be submitted to the search firm assisting the University. Review of materials will begin immediately and continue until the appointment is made. It is preferred, however, that all nominations and applications be submitted prior to April 7, 2017. For a complete position description, please visit the Current Opportunities page at <https://www.parkersearch.com/sdsu-vpr>.

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The Same Old Situation: A Personal Essay About Sexual Harassment in the Academy,
continued from page 3

success, particularly in the face of the system's sexist and racist traditions.

Had I quit after I'd been repeatedly harassed, John—and patriarchy, overall—would have won.

I'd never let John have such satisfaction. 

Dr. Jennifer Cote (drjencote@gmail.com) is an associate professor of history at the University of Saint Joseph in Connecticut, where she teaches courses on the American past. Her own study focuses on gender, science and professionalism in the early 20th century, and she is a weightlifter in her spare time.

An Activist for Students: A Profile of Dr. Sara Goldrick-Rab, continued from page 6

Publicity: A Blessing and a Curse

After the media storm in Wisconsin, Goldrick-Rab believes there is such a thing as bad publicity. "Publicity for your work is both a blessing and a curse," she said, admitting she used to tweet 30 to 50 times a day, but now it's only three to five times.

"I don't have room in my life or a desire to do more than that," she said. "I don't have as much to say in that media."

The upside was that the backlash did open up her

work to those who are willing to fund it. Students have reached out and want to work with her. She wants to continue mentoring as well as build a network of people who are studying similar topics.

Goldrick-Rab doesn't deny that her life takes a lot of strength and commitment. "If you're going to work this hard at it, then it better be that you wake up in the morning and you're glad you're working on it," she said. "It's completely legitimate to have a job where you go to work and come home."

When asked what advice she would give to other women, Goldrick-Rab was quick to respond. "Get over the fact that everyone has to like you or that life is a popularity contest. It's not.

"Women are obsessed with what people think of them," she said. "I'm there to get the work done." 

—MLS

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Robertson Curates Educational History,
continued from page 8

this moment in history, Robertson sees this as an exciting time. Informed by her studies of the challenges Bethune faced and how she interacted with everyone from local leaders to U.S. presidents, Robertson feels prepared to implement what she's learned by organizing and spreading knowledge.

"My role is to produce scholarship and also to train others to become purveyors of history," she says. "I'm also responsible for making sure that my students leave my class not only with facts, but also with inspiration and strategies." 

—LE

WIHE Interview: Breaking Through the Boys' Club at NACA, *continued from page 9*

volunteers in particular, leading with compassion and authenticity are two valuable characteristics to possess.

DA: Women have and will continue to carry and nurture every aspect of the total college student experience, from admissions to residence halls to classroom[s] to graduation. Our engagement oppor-

tunities [for] students are unparalleled and especially meaningful.

Simply put, Geraldine Ferraro once said, "Some leaders are born women."

As a graduate of the Bennett College for Women, our nation's oldest historically black college for women, from our Belle's Creed, I learned that:

*Because I am woman,
Strength, wisdom, and compassion are my gifts.
Because of my faith,
I have the courage to move mountains.
Because I am a Phenomenal Bennett Belle,
I am a leader prepared to shape the future.
Whatever I can envision,
I can achieve.*

I carry that message daily and humbly accept that charge as the first African-American woman elected to serve as chair of the NACA board of directors. Given this awesome responsibility, I am poised to bring an awareness and perspective that will demonstrate, celebrate and highlight the uniqueness in how campus activities professionals work with and connect to our students as peers and colleagues, and professionals in general. 

—AM

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Director of Events (Intercollegiate Athletics)
Program Director (Behavior Community Sciences)
Director (Center for Leadership & Civic Engagement)
Sr. Director of Development (USF Health Development)
USF Connect Grant Program Dir. (Research Foundation)
Assistant Vice President of Supplier Diversity
Director of Design and Construction
Assistant Vice President (Admin Svcs.)
Director of Development (MCOM)
Business Development Administrator (National Academy of Inventors)

FACULTY POSITIONS:

College of Public Health
Assistant, Associate, Full Professor (Health Policy Management)
Assistant Dean (Teaching Innovation & Quality Enhancement)
Assistant/Associate Professor (Global Health) (2)
Assistant Professor (Community & Family Health)
College of Arts & Sciences
Assistant Professor (Psychology) (USF St. Petersburg)
Assistant Professor (Psychology)
Professor/Associate Professor (Health Economics)
Assistant Professor (Functional Materials Chemistry)
Instructor of Philosophy
Instructor – History (USF St. Petersburg)
Assistant Professor (Classics)
Assistant Professor (Forensic Anthropology)
College of Behavioral Community Sciences
Director (School of Social Work)
Associate Professor

College of Education

Assistant Professor (Science Education K–8)
Full/Associate Professor (School Counseling Coordinator)

College of Global Sustainability

Dean

College of Medicine

Assistant/Associate Professor (Neurosurgery)
Assistant Professor (OB/GYN)
Assistant Professor (Pediatric Pulmonology)
Professor (Heart Institute - Cardiology)

College of Engineering

Associate/Assistant/Full Professor (Cybersecurity CoE, Global Environmental Sustainability, Chemical & Biomedical, Computer Science and Engineering, Industrial and Management Systems)

College of Business

Professor & Director, Lynn Pippenger School of Accountancy

College of the Arts

Research Associate Professor (FL Center Community Design & Research)

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- (2) contact The Office of Diversity and Equal Opportunity, 813.974.4373 ; or (3) call USF job line at 813.974.2879.

USF is an equal opportunity/equal access/affirmative action institution, committed to excellence through diversity in education and employment.

Don't Accommodate Me

When I was teaching at a university—which I did for 12 years—I never considered seeking disability accommodations. (My disability is invisible, by the way—to those I've not disclosed to, my disability is imperceptible as a disability.)

Even though I have a disability that would be legally recognized, one that costs me a great sum of money to treat each year, and one that takes a great deal of effort to manage, I would never have considered reaching out to my institution's human resources department for accommodations.

Why not?

As I've written about before, colleges and universities seem far more inclined to serve students with disabilities than faculty and staff with disabilities. Part of this stems from the legal forces at play. Students and faculty are protected by different laws, which means that schools must comply with different legal pressures. Students are protected by a whole host of laws designed just for them. Faculty, on the other hand, are protected by different laws—the same laws that protect any other employee in any other job.

It's fine, of course, that the legal protections for disabled faculty and staff are the same as for any other disabled employee at any other job, except that—everywhere—these legal protections are generally poorly enforced and difficult to access.

Mere Compliance

Moreover, disabled people in academia (like disabled people in any profession) face profession-specific challenges. Our colleagues struggle to avoid ableism. Attending academic conferences is almost always a challenge. The particulars of the academic job market—the conferences, the campus interviews—are challenging for disabled faculty. Furthermore, an institution's compliance with disability employment law rarely ensures the eradication of these profession-specific challenges.

What does it mean when an institution states that they will "comply" with disability law? Think about what that word means. It means that they will do only what they must, and only because they are forced to. Compliance means that, really, they wish you wouldn't come to them and ask them to accommodate your needs as a person with a disability. It means that the onus is on you, the disabled person, to force an institution to comply.

Instead of requesting accommodations, I've spent my entire career forcing myself to do the accommodating, to fit myself around the parameters of my working conditions. And I'm hardly the only one. In a recent issue of *Profession*, the Modern Language Association's professional magazine, a group of disabled scholars reacted to the 2012 American Association of University Professors (AAUP) report on disability, "Accommodating Faculty Members Who Have Disabilities." For those interested in ways forward for faculty and staff on university campuses, the essays, titled "Faculty Members, Accommodation, and Access in Higher Education," are a great place to start.

Privacy Invaded

Susan Ghiaciuc, a professor at James Madison University and contributor to the essay collection, described officially disclosing her multiple sclerosis to her employer. She writes that she "felt like an amateur actuary preparing a predictive model of my life to protect my employer against future loss." She had to provide lots of private information, including doctor letters and more. "That this thorough burden of proof seemed legitimate didn't make it feel any less stressful or intrusive." Indeed, she writes that "the documentation I was required to provide once I disclosed my disability made me feel that I was being forced to put my various symptoms on display for public examination." Ghiaciuc argues that this hurdle will surely cause other academics to avoid disclosure.

The invasion of privacy Ghiaciuc describes is precisely why I never sought accommodations. I did not want my medical records in the hands of a revolving door of strangers in human resources. I did not want my diagnosis, my symptoms, my history, to become the property of my employer—especially when I knew, as both a lawyer and a veteran of academia, that no effective changes would be made.

Burden Misplaced

Brenda Jo Brueggemann, a professor at the University of Connecticut and another contributor to the essay collection, puts her finger on the problem: "[The AAUP report] overindividualizes (yet again) the person with a disability as the problem, the burden, the issue. Stigma, disclosure, risk, the academic environment—all these are missing from the document." When the onus of righting disability wrongs in the workplace is on the disabled person, you have a problem.

This onus includes, for example, having to reveal highly personal medical information, as Ghiaciuc described—a process that everyone takes for granted as "just the way it is," legally, and as a way to avoid fraud. This fear of fraud reveals a presumption about disabled people, including disabled students, that all ableds must confront: that disabled people are fakers and malingerers, or milking the system for handouts. And this fear of fraud has a terrible side-effect: rather than screening out fakers, it keeps out disabled people who are afraid to submit themselves to an inquisition.

When Brueggemann mentions "stigma," "disclosure," and "risk," she takes on issues that attach to asking for disability accommodations, and how seeking accommodations, for some of us, seems like a really bad trade. In the context of higher education, giving up our privacy just might not be worth it. (Again, I'm writing from the privileged position of a person whose disability is invisible. Not all disabled people have the choice I had to not disclose.)

When Brueggemann talks about stigma, disclosure, and risk, she's talking about risking stigma by putting your disability at the center of your identity. You risk becoming no longer you in the eyes of others, but rather disabled-you. And for many in higher education, that risk is just too high. ■

—KRG

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Adding Validation Theory to Your Professional Toolbox

In 1993, Vincent Tinto published his seminal work, *Leaving College*, where his theory of student attrition was first espoused. In short, Tinto's theory argues that when students are not able to integrate into the college environment, whether socially or academically, they are more likely to drop out.

For many higher educators and institutions, Tinto's theory is the primary theoretical foundation upon which their retention work rests. Reliance on Tinto assumes that if institutions do a better job of helping students to achieve both academic and social integration, they will be more likely to persist and graduate. However, Tinto's ubiquity is both a blessing and a curse to the higher education community. It's as if his bright star has eclipsed all others in our theoretical universe.

Another View

During my graduate program in higher education, I was lucky enough to be illuminated by another star: the work of Laura Rendón. Her theory of student validation is one of my guiding professional paradigms. It's what I like to call a "back-pocket theory" because I use it so often. But since leaving graduate school almost a decade ago, I've never heard a fellow higher educator discuss Rendón's validation theory. It's as if Tinto is the first entry in our theoretical dictionary, and we stop reading on page one. This does a disservice not only to our own professional development, but also to the students that we serve.

Validation theory was first discussed by Rendón in 1994 and was expounded upon in a more recent article, "[Revisiting Validation Theory](#)." In her research, Rendón found that for the new-traditional student (first-generation, low-income, students of color, etc.), validation from caring adults on campus was critical to their academic success. Within validation theory, students must first feel validated in their identity as college students before they can begin to integrate to their campuses. Focusing first or solely on integration misses a critical step for many of our students. Validation must come first.

What Is Validation?

To validate is to tell a student that they belong on a college campus. It contextualizes their experiences as important, worthy, and interesting. It uses those experiences as frameworks for the introduction of new learning. Validation celebrates and infuses students' diverse cultures into the curriculum, the advising center, and even the cafeteria menu. In my own teaching, validation often comes down to saying, "You can do this and I am going to help you. You are meant to be a college student. You belong here." The list of ways to validate our students goes on and on. Conversely, the possibilities for invalidating them are almost infinite.

Recognizing Invalidation

Invalidation asks, with a deep sigh of resignation, why our students aren't more engaged. It calls them lazy and unmotivated when they fail to meet their assignment deadlines. It says things like "Students have a right to fail." Invalidation cuts programs that support students. It relies heavily on nonbenefited adjunct faculty, who often have less time and fewer resources to encourage students than their full-time counterparts. Invalidation says there is no money for that first-generation mentoring program when there is money—it's just being spent on other invalidating line items. We invalidate our students by providing information without inspiration and then wondering why they leave.

Leadership Matters

The lack of discourse on this theory and its relegation to the shadows speaks to a fundamental lack of understanding about the needs of our new-traditional students. As a leader on your campus, consider taking a validation inventory of yourself and your department. To begin, assess what theories your team is using to guide

their work. As Kurt Lewin famously said,


"There is nothing so practical as a good theory." Read and discuss Rendón's work before taking a closer look at your validating (or invalidating) programs and policies. Don't forget to ask your students if they feel validated. Consider going beyond your student population and look at ways in which your faculty and staff

from diverse backgrounds do or don't feel validated on your campus.

Engage Through Validation

Here are some other practical ideas to put this theory into action:

- Mentoring programs for students, faculty and staff from diverse backgrounds
- Professional development programs for faculty and staff to teach the importance of validation
- Communication and marketing plans developed with validation theory in mind (e.g., "You can do this and we are going to help you")
- Weaving validation theory into the culture of the decision-making process on your campus (i.e., considering validation in budget meetings and strategic planning).

One of the most inspiring parts of Rendón's findings is that students' lives were often transformed by just one caring adult who was willing to reach out and build a human connection to validate that the student had the potential to succeed. If just one person on your campus begins to apply this theory, change will happen. Imagine the potential of creating an entire campus filled with caring faculty and staff who are reaching out daily to validate all learners. 

—KC

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Breaking Silence, Standing Firm

I started Rebecca Solnit's *The Mother of All Questions* (Haymarket Books, 2017) on International Women's Day, March 8, which was also the Day Without a Woman protest/strike organized by the national Women's March organization. The organizers encouraged women to take the day off from labor at both work and home. If women couldn't afford to take the day off, we could wear red, not shop and, if we had to shop, choose women- and minority-owned businesses for our purchases.

Even though I can pretty much dictate my own schedule most weeks (a rare privilege that most women don't have), I couldn't take the day off. Upcoming travel intersected with my deadlines for *WIHE*. I had articles to edit and write, a column that wouldn't write itself and an event where 19 second graders dressed up and gave speeches as famous Americans. I helped my daughter's class with their research and speeches for two weeks, so I wanted to attend. I told myself that editing a feminist newsletter was an act of solidarity, and it is. But it didn't feel like enough.

"Tour Through Carnage"

Missing the strike bothered me, so I picked up Solnit's newest book as another act of solidarity.

The Mother of All Questions is an explicitly feminist book that looks closely and carefully at the consequences of patriarchy. It's a "tour through carnage," an examination of the damage left in patriarchy's wake. Yet, it is also a hopeful book, "a celebration of liberation and solidarity." Her focused examination of violence never dims her hope that our world can become better than it is now. This, I believe, is Solnit's superpower: confronting violence and trauma, the ugliness of our world, while remaining hopeful that we, through activism, interventions and resistance, can change the world. This ability is why I return to Solnit's books again and again and again. Patriarchy might structure our lives, but Solnit consistently shows that we can resist, fight back and make change. Her books show that we have a chance, if only we decide to take it.

Breaking Silences

Her essays consider the ruinous effects of patriarchy not just on women's lives, but on *all of our lives*: women, men, children and all of the folks "who are challenging the binaries and boundaries of gender." *The Mother of All Questions* is a book I think all of you should read immediately.

The title essay alone is worth the price of admission. It's a sprawling essay that moves from Virginia Woolf and inappropriate questions to the impact of cultural conceptions of motherhood on women who have or don't have children to the common silencing of women to rape culture to masculinity to the danger of silence and the

power of speaking up. There are also essays on the toxic masculinity of the internet and everyday life, men who explain *Lolita* (1955), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's bizarre guidelines about alcohol consumption for women, the radical power of art, and the effects of categorization and discrimination.


In *Men Explain Things to Me* (2014), Solnit considered how women are silenced, which is a thread she picks up again and expands in this book. She writes, "Silence is what allows people to suffer without recourse ... [a]nd the history of silence is central to women's history." She insists again and again that the ability to speak and be heard is essential to human rights. If a culture silences women, then that culture doesn't consider women to be fully human. Silence "was the historic condition for women," and now, Solnit finds power in the women who refused to keep quiet. Their broken silences have led to dramatic changes in how we understand rape, domestic violence and sexual harassment.

Standing Firm

Like in *Men Explain Things to Me* and *Hope in the Dark* (2005, 2016), Solnit offers up sharp cultural analysis of this moment we happen to inhabit, with attention to where we've been. She can see where things stand now and show how much progress we've really made, if it doesn't seem

like we've made any. She writes, "I'm old enough to remember the ugly old world before there was recourse for domestic violence, acquaintance and date rape, and workplace sexual harassment ... old enough to have seen the world change because of insight and organizing and intervention." And the world does change, the more we voice and name the oppressions we are forced to bear. Speaking up is a feminist act, and Solnit wants us to speak up more and stand firm in our opposition to patriarchy.

As I finished reading *The Mother of All Questions*, I read Gail Collins' "[A Girl Stands Firm on Wall Street](#)" column about the bronze statue of a little girl installed in front of the charging bull in downtown Manhattan. Despite the well-deserved criticism of the statue as a sign of corporate feminism, I'm drawn to "Fearless Girl" with her hands placed confidently on her hips as she stares down the bull. She's standing firm. She's unruffled while facing a creature that could easily trample her. There's a lesson here about women facing the patriarchy, looking directly at a force that wants to annihilate you. What would happen if we all became unafraid and unmovable? What if we all took up Solnit's call to speak out against patriarchy? That would be the beginning of a different world.

Until next month, 

—KJB

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