

# THE BEAUTY AND THE BURDEN OF BEING A BLACK PROFESSOR

**Edited by** Cheron H. Davis, Adriel A. Hilton,  
Ricardo Hamrick and F. Erik Brooks

DIVERSITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

**VOLUME 24**

**THE BEAUTY AND THE BURDEN  
OF BEING A BLACK PROFESSOR**

# DIVERSITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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DIVERSITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION VOLUME 24

# THE BEAUTY AND THE BURDEN OF BEING A BLACK PROFESSOR

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**Adriel A. Hilton, PhD** is the Dean of Students and Diversity Officer in the Division of Student Affairs at Seton Hill University. He holds a Doctor of Philosophy in Higher Education from Morgan State University. He has held positions at Webster University, Grambling State University, Western Carolina University, Grand Valley State University, and Upper Iowa University. He has written extensively on the impact of diversity, affirmative action programs, and the persistence of minorities in higher education.

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**F. Erik Brooks, PhD** is the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs at Central State University. Most recently, he served as professor and associate director of the Centennial Honors College at Western Illinois University. He holds a Doctor of Philosophy in Public Policy and Administration from Virginia Commonwealth University's L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs. He has written extensively on public administration, American politics, and Black history.

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## ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS

**William Broussard, PhD** is a higher education executive, professor, and scholar with 20 years of experience at seven institutions. In his career, he has secured over \$20 million in private donations, grants, corporate sponsorships, and revenue generation. He graduated from the Louisiana Scholars College, with distinction, in 2000, and then went on to earn his master's degree and doctorate in Rhetoric, Composition, and the Teaching of the English Language from the University of Arizona in 2007. Broussard was a two-time all-American student athlete (football) and is enshrined in the College Football Hall of Fame as a National Football Foundation Fellow and Scholar-Athlete, and went on to earn research fellowships from the NCAA, University of Arizona, National Football Foundation, Louisiana Tobacco-Free Schools, and the Black Coaches Association.

A published scholar on institutional advancement, American-organized sport culture, composition theory, and HBCU executive leadership, he has published over six dozen articles, essays, and chapters and made over four dozen regional and national conference and keynote presentations. In addition to his scholarly work, his articles have appeared in *HBCU Digest*, *Diverse*, *Athletic Administration*, and *Education Dive*.

**Dominic Burrows, MS** is a graduate of FAMU with both Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Psychology. Hailing from the crystal seas of Nassau, Bahamas, Dominic was discovering his passion for helping others early in life. As a survivor of domestic violence, Dominic focused his research on how domestic violence affected minority communities specifically pertaining to African Americans. Currently, Dominic continues to work with thesis committee to publish his research. He also is employed as a case manager in Georgia where he is using tools he learned in his master's program and applying them to consumers mental health needs. His future goals include attending Georgia State University's Clinical-Community Psychology program and earning his PhD to continue his research around domestic violence.

**Altheria Caldera, PhD** is a teacher educator and qualitative researcher concerned with issues of educational equity and social justice. Her ultimate aim is to improve the academic outcomes of minoritized students by helping teachers become more adept at anti-racist and culturally sustaining pedagogies. She believes that race is the primary determinant of children's experiences in schools but strongly advocates for examinations of the ways in which racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, xenophobia, and classism are interconnected. To that end, she interrogates how race and language, race and gender, and race

and class impact the schooling of students of color. Dr. Caldera is a curriculum theorist whose book, *Woke Pedagogy*, is expected in early 2021.

**C. Dean Campbell, EdD** has served as Assistant Dean for Academic Services in The Graduate College at North Carolina A&T State University (NCAT) since 2012. He participates in leadership and management of the unit with a focus on developing strategic direction and managing the implementation of admission and enrollment activities to meet strategic services provided to students throughout their matriculation. Campbell is a member of the graduate faculty and teaches as an adjunct instructor in the NCAT School of Education's Adult Education master's program. He earned his bachelor's degree in Political Science from Yale University, master's degree in Higher Education Administration and Student Development from Boston College, and Doctorate in Educational Leadership-Higher Education Administration from the University of Southern California.

**Arie Christon, MS** earned a Master of Science Degree in Community Psychology with an emphasis on Black Psychology and Multicultural Mental Health from Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University (FAMU). He earned his Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology, with a minor in Business from FAMU. Arie has previous grantsmanship experience where he has secured funds and completed work on community-based interventions and education on medical marijuana. Mr. Christon has completed research presentations at regional and national conferences; in addition, he has completed several national, competitive research, and professional development fellowships. Mr. Christon's thesis entitled "*Internalized oppression, misorientation, and performance modifiers: The factors that influence ethnic student learning outcomes*" captures some of his research interests. He currently practices counseling psychology in Georgia, where he works toward licensure. Mr. Christon plans to earn a PhD and to move forward in opening a mental wellness/optimal development center.

**Levon Esters, PhD** is a Professor in the Department Agricultural Sciences Education and Communication at Purdue University. Levon serves as the Director of the Mentoring@Purdue (M@P) program which is designed to increase the number of women and underrepresented minorities (URMs) receiving advanced post-secondary STEM-based agricultural and life sciences degrees in Purdue's College of Agriculture. Levon also serves as a Senior Research Associate at The Rutgers Center for Minority Serving Institutions. Levon is a nationally recognized scholar on mentoring, equity, and diversity within the STEM-based agricultural and life sciences disciplines. His research focuses on issues of educational equity and access of URM students with a concentration on the mentoring of Black graduate students; STEM career development of students attending Historically Black Land-Grant Colleges and Universities; and educational and professional mobility of Black graduate students and faculty. Levon is among a few Black scholars in the United States conducting research in these areas, and has been able to serve as a role model for Black graduate students who are committed to broadening participation of URMs in the Ag+STEM disciplines. In 2019, Dr. Esters was

recognized as the Faculty Mentor of Year by the Institute on Teaching and Mentoring (Sponsored by the Southern Regional Education Board).

**Cassidy Ferguson, MS** is an alumna of Florida A&M University earning her Bachelor's of Science in Psychology and a Master's of Science degree in Community Psychology. Ms. Ferguson recently was chosen among 12 other counselors to receive a certification focused on Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy through the Emory School of Medicine in Atlanta, GA. She has obtained her Associates Professional Counselor License, as she actively works in counseling and strives toward earning her PhD in Counseling Psychology.

**Marybeth Gasman, PhD** is the Samuel DeWitt Proctor Endowed Chair in Education and a Distinguished Professor at Rutgers University. She serves as the Executive Director of the Samuel DeWitt Proctor Institute for Leadership, Equity, and Justice and the Executive Director of the Rutgers Center for Minority Serving Institutions. Before joining the faculty at Rutgers, Marybeth was the Judy and Howard Berkowitz Endowed Professor in the Graduate School of Education at the University of Pennsylvania. While at Penn, Marybeth also served as the founding director of the Penn Center for Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs). Her areas of expertise include the history of American higher education, Minority Serving Institutions (with an emphasis on Historically Black Colleges and Universities), racism and diversity, fundraising and philanthropy, and higher education leadership. She is the author or editor of 25 books, including *Educating a Diverse Nation* (Harvard University Press, 2015 with Cliff Conrad), *Envisioning Black Colleges* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007), and her newest book *Making Black Scientists* (Harvard University Press, 2019 with Thai-Huy Nguyen). Marybeth has written over 250 peer-reviewed articles, scholarly essays, and book chapters. She has penned over 450 opinion articles for the nation's newspapers and magazines and is ranked by *Education Week* as one of the 10 most influential education scholars in the nation. Marybeth has raised over \$23 million in grant funding to support her research and that of her students, mentees, and MSI partners. Marybeth serves on the board of trustees of The College Board as well as Paul Quinn College, a small, urban, historically Black College in Dallas, Texas. She considers her proudest accomplishment to be receiving the University of Pennsylvania's Provost Award for Distinguished PhD. Teaching and Mentoring, serving as the dissertation chair for over 80 doctoral students since 2000.

**Erin Wiggins Gilliam, PhD** is an associate professor of History at Kentucky State University. She holds a Doctor of Philosophy in American History specializing in African American and Southern History from the University of Kentucky. Her dissertation focused on the rich history of black education and historically black colleges in Kentucky. This research has catapulted her invested interest in discovering and revealing the rich historical contribution of African Americans and their contribution throughout the Commonwealth. As an educator and advocate, it is my goal to ensure that the African-American perspective is included in the narrative and helps to address societal issues of race and class.

**C. Douglas Johnson, PhD** leverages his educational, applied, and lived experiences to facilitate active learning geared to enhance personal and professional development. Equipped with degrees (and practice) in accounting, human resources, and industrial/organizational psychology, Dr. Doug engages in competency development with students and serves in the community to affect the quality of life for its citizenry through educational leadership development efforts. He strives to inspire social action and transformation, while serving as a voice for those living in the shadows of society. He is an active community leader serving/served in roles and on boards of organizations whose missions align with his objectives (e.g., Leadership Gwinnett, Children's Healthcare of Atlanta Gwinnett Community Foundation, Collins Hill High School (CHHS) Local School Council, CHHS Orchestra Booster Association, Gwinnett County Public Schools Community-Based Mentoring Program, Family Promise of Gwinnett, Lawrenceville-Duluth Alumni Chapter of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Incorporated). He is committed to the development of the next generation of leaders as evidenced by his work as a Professor of Leadership and Management at Georgia Gwinnett College (GGC), his research, mentoring, volunteerism, and being an active father. He has received recognition for his achievements in research, student engagement, service, and teaching, having previously been named GGC's Teacher of the Year.

**Carlos J. Minor, EdD** currently serves as a middle school guidance counselor in Metro Atlanta. He holds a bachelor's degree from Xavier University, a master's and an educational doctorate from Clark Atlanta University.

**Robert T. Palmer, PhD** is chair and associate professor in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies in the School of Education at Howard University. He is also a faculty affiliate for the Center of Minority Serving Institutions (CMSI) at Rutgers University. His research examines issues of access, equity, retention, persistence, and the college experience of racial and ethnic minorities, particularly within the context of historically Black colleges and universities. Dr. Palmer's work has been published in leading journals in higher education, such as *The Journal of College Student Development*, *Teachers College Record*, *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education*, *Journal of Negro Education*, *College Student Affairs Journal*, *Journal of College Student Retention*, *The Negro Educational Review*, and *Journal of Black Studies*, among others. Since earning his PhD in 2007, Dr. Palmer has authored/co-authored well over 125 academic publications.

**Rochelle Parrish, MS** earned a Master's of Science degree in Community Psychology from FAMU. She is interested in research about race, self-concepts, psychological adjustment, and mental health as it relates specifically to the African-American population. Rochelle intends to use her research to come up with solutions to eliminate inequalities across all context and socio-economic statuses. Her Master's research entitled "Examining the Impacts of Psychosocial and Non-cognitive (i.e., student-faculty interaction and perceive faculty support; outcome expectations; and self-concepts) factors on, and as potential predictors of educational outcomes" highlights some of her research aims. She is currently a

part of a research group studying “Self-Efficacy, Grit, and Mental Wellness,” practices mental counseling, and strives to obtain her PhD in psychology.

**Angelique Reed** earned a Bachelor of Science in History with a minor in education from Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University. After graduating, she joined the Teach for America Organization where she was a teacher who was focused on expanding opportunities for the kids in her classroom. After seeing the need for these kids in these classrooms, she returned to FAMU to pursue her Master’s degree in Community Psychology. Her numerous roles include teacher, community organizer, panel participant, researcher, graduate research assistant, teaching assistant, and departmental assistant. Her research interests encompass student self-concepts, identity, and the relationships of psychosocial factors that influence psychopathology with a focus on cultural implications.

**Alishea Rowley, PhD** is a Licensed Clinical Mental Health Counselor (LMHC), an Associate Professor and Program Coordinator in the Counselor Education program, Department of Education Leadership and Counseling at Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University. She earned a PhD in Counselor Education and Supervision from North Carolina State University, a Master of Science in Counselor Education with an emphasis in School Counseling from the University of Central Florida and a Bachelor of Science in Psychology with a minor in Secondary Education from Florida A&M University. Dr. Rowley has a certification in Guidance and School Counseling in Florida and Georgia. She is committed to training a diverse group of counselors to be multiculturally competent and committed to social justice and advocacy. Dr. Rowley is a qualitative researcher with a focus on racial and feminist identity development in African American women and mental health issues in multicultural communities.

**Erica R. Russell, PhD** is a Licensed Psychologist and Associate Professor of Psychology at Norfolk State University. She obtained her graduate and terminal degrees from Howard University in Counseling Psychology with a subspecialty in clinical child and family work. As an undergraduate, she majored in Psychology and minored in African-American Studies and Criminal Justice at Old Dominion University. Before her work in higher education, she enjoyed a diversity of professional experiences in varied settings (i.e., community agency, practice, and school). Currently, Dr. Russell teaches African-American Psychology, Developmental Psychology, and Careers in Psychology at her second HBCU. She serves as a faculty advisor and mentor to undergraduate psychology students and integrates her passion for mentorship, mental health awareness, and culturally relevant pedagogy into the delivery of her FACE IT Initiative.

**Renee Simms, JD** is an associate professor of African-American Studies and contributing faculty to English Studies at University of Puget Sound. She also teaches fiction and nonfiction in the Rainier Writing Workshop, the MFA creative writing program at Pacific Lutheran University. Renee’s research interests include black women’s fiction, black feminist theory, community writing pedagogies, and the intersections of law and literature. She is a recipient of a NEA

creative writing fellowship, as well as fellowships from Ragdale, Bread Loaf, and Vermont Studio Center. Her debut story collection, *Meet Behind Mars*, was a Foreword Indies Finalist for Short Stories, and was listed by *The Root* as one of 28 brilliant books by black authors in 2018.

**Novell E. Tani, PhD** is an Assistant Professor of Psychology at Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University (FAMU). He earned his BS in Psychology and Master's degree in Applied Social Sciences, with an emphasis on History, from FAMU. He holds an MS and PhD in Development Psychology from the Florida State University (FSU). His research interests include teacher perceptions, teacher-student interactions, students' self-concept/self-efficacies, micro- and macro-level factors that impact academic success. Dr. Tani has worked in various higher education settings before coming to FAMU. He has been awarded graduate directive status within FAMU's College of Sciences, Arts, and Humanities. As a faculty member within the Department of Psychology, he aids in the mentorship of undergraduate and graduate student research/theses surrounding the academic development of students of color.

**Ronald W. Whitaker, II, EdD** is the Culturally Responsive Pedagogy Assistant Professor of Education at Cabrini University. In this role, he is intentional about incorporating culturally responsive tenets into Cabrini's undergraduate and graduate educational programs. At Cabrini, he also serves as the Assistant Dean in the School of Education, Director of District and School Relations, and the Director for the Center for Urban Education, Equity, and Improvement (CUEEI). His research interests include integrating culturally responsive pedagogy into higher education teacher education and educational leadership programs, culturally responsive programming and practices for African-American males, the psychology of racism and white supremacy, genuine diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts within organizations, intercollegiate athletics, and integrating Black Church spirituality and theology into African-American education discourse.

**Janelle L. Williams, PhD** is the Associate Dean of Graduate & Continuing Studies at Widener University and a Visiting Scholar in the Rutgers Graduate School of Education. As a researcher and practitioner, Dr. Williams's scholarship investigates college choice and enrollment patterns at historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs), contemporary approaches to address challenges facing HBCU enrollment, and the experiences of Black women in higher education through critical qualitative inquiry. Her most recent work explores the factors that influence the enrollment of Black undergraduates who chose to attend HBCUs and has been highlighted by the *Center for Minority Serving Institutions*, *Diverse Issues in Higher Education*, *MSIs Unplugged*, *The HBCU Times*, *The New York Times* and *LA Times*. In addition, Dr. Williams has been an invited panelist and presenter discussing topics relating to her research at national and international conferences. A first-generation college student, Dr. Williams, is a proud graduate of Cheyney University of Pennsylvania, America's oldest HBCU.

**Steven C. Williams II, MS** earned a Master of Science Degree in Community Psychology, with an emphasis on Black Psychology and Multicultural Mental Health from FAMU. He earned his Bachelor of Science degree in Economics, with a minor in Business from FAMU. Previously, Steven has worked for Fortune 500 companies where he held several analytical positions in the finance sector while supporting the goals of company shareholders. Mr. Williams' research focus is on financial literacy, capital identity, academic performance, and micro- and macro-level factors that influence socio-economic status. His plans include earning a PhD where Steven will conduct in research that will continue to empower underserved communities in Economics and Psychology.

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## FOREWORD

In 2020, a mere 6% of college and university faculty across the United States were African American. This percentage is not growing for a number of reasons, but the most salient reason is systemic racism. Racism takes place within colleges and universities in graduate and undergraduate admissions, in faculty hiring, and in the day-to-day operations of college campuses in the form of micro- and macro-aggressions toward African Americans. *The Beauty and the Burden of Being a Black Professor* offers the perspectives, research, stories, triumphs, and challenges of a wide cross-section of African- American faculty. The book serves as both a mirror to the academy as well as a place of solace and motivation for future African-American faculty. Although the various authors detail the trails they have been through and the racism—both systemic and personal—they remain hopeful and most of all, supportive of those who follow in their footsteps. They demonstrate the ways that they navigate minefields and provide a roadmap for new scholars.

Under the editorial leadership of Cheron Davis, Adriel Hilton, Erik Brooks, and Ricardo Hamrick, the authors in this book explore issues relating to high-faculty turnover rates, the pursuit of tenure, discrimination and racism, gender, the Historically Black College and University environment, adjunct faculty, mentoring, learning, and research. Although these are issues that other books explore, one of the unique aspects of this edited volume is that each chapter is written with an African-American voice. These voices carry and represent the very personal and passionate experiences of a diverse group of African Americans and are bolstered by evidence and original research.

One of my favorite aspects of *The Beauty and the Burden of Being a Black Professor* is the way that the authors weave personal experience, dialog, narrative, and reflection together with rigorous qualitative methods. They also understand that context is essential to understanding the experiences of faculty. They challenge our notions of both Predominantly White Institutions and Historically Black Colleges and Universities. All too often in higher education research and especially research related to faculty roles and experiences, the voices of faculty are left out and numbers are left to representing them.

I was also struck by the inclusion and voice of Black women as they explain how they navigate the professoriate. They are intent on helping other Black women and ensuring that new scholars understand the need to support one another and that much motivation and success can come from the relationships with other Black women and the community that these relationships provide.

Although this edited collection can be heartbreaking and difficult to read at times—because of many and profound examples of personal and systemic

racism—it is vitally important and needed, especially in the current context of academe. Unfortunately, far too many White colleagues are focused on diversity and inclusion, but they ignore the essential task of dismantling the systems that reinforce racism for their Black colleagues. I am hopeful that reading this book will get under my White colleagues' skin in ways that will move them to make change at the same time that it empowers my African-American colleagues.

It's an honor to read this collection and I hope that all those reading it will be inspired to support one another, dismantle systems that hurt others in full daylight and in the dark, and respect the contributions of African Americans to academe.

Marybeth Gasman  
Samuel DeWitt Proctor Endowed Chair  
in Education & Distinguished Professor  
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# BLACK PROFESSORSHIP: THE BEAUTY AND THE BEAST

Cheron H. Davis, Adriel Hilton, Ricardo Hamrick  
and F. Erik Brooks

*Beauty and the Beast* is a beautiful story about the birth of love and its capability to transform the way you look at the exterior of others. Like most, the moral of this fairytale lies in Beauty's realization that the outer appearance means nothing when compared to true love, which eventually transforms the Beast into a handsome prince. As the story goes, a young girl, named Beauty, lived with her father and two sisters in a tiny house. The two sisters were both grieving for the former beautiful life of privilege their father lost when his fortune was taken away. However, Beauty embraced her status and tried her best to help her family. One day, the father was presented with an opportunity to regain his fortune. In her humbleness, Beauty maintained that she was happy with their life; however, the father persuaded her to tell him what she wanted from the recovered fortune. In the end, Beauty asked for a single rose. On his way home, the father got lost and wandered into a castle where he saw a beautiful rose garden. And as he picked just one of them for Beauty, a terrible Beast called out to him. The Beast spared the loving father's life under the condition that the father would send one of his daughters to the castle to be Beast's bride. Beauty sacrificed herself and went to live in the castle with the Beast, who took great care of her although she admitted that he was unsightly. When Beauty threatened to leave, the Beast chose to starve himself to death rather than live without her. Not wanting him to die, Beauty agreed to marry him, and Beauty and the Beast lived happily ever after.

Like many other fairytales, the happily ever after is deeply infused with a moral lesson – Beauty was able to see the value in someone whose outward appearance was less than appealing. The same can be said about the Academy, especially to emerging scholars. While we are presented with visions of grandeur and elitism entering the higher educational spaces as newly minted specialists in our areas of study, oftentimes we find ourselves in situations much like Beauty's whereby the attractive aspects of the job are weighted with unforeseen challenges

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beneath the surface. Racism. Homophobia. Ageism. Gender biases. And yet we persevere, particularly those Black professors who recognize the value of our work and presence within these learning spaces. We persist because we recognize the importance of our roles in the futures of minority students enrolled in these institutions. The duality of the tale *Beauty and the Beast* highlights the critical eye with which we, as Black professors, evaluate our roles in these spaces – it is indeed a beauty and a burden.

“Another uppity ni\*\*er. Calling a ni\*\*er a professor is like calling White Black and Wet Dry.” The preceding words were found in a 2018 *Chronicle of Higher Education* article titled, “The Ugly Truth of Being a Black Professor in America.” The words were a part of a barrage of racist venom spewed in response to Emory University Philosophy Professor, George Yancy’s penning a 2015 op-ed piece in the *New York Times* where he discusses race and what it means to be in a society created for White people. It has been well chronicled that African-American professors have experienced a long history of inequities and inequalities within the academy and other scholarly spaces. According to 2013 data from the National Center for Education Statistics, just 6 percent of full-time faculty members were Black. In a 2015 article titled, “The Plight of the Black Academic” in *The Atlantic*, Adia Harvey Wingfield discusses the salient challenges of being a Black professor and the paradox of maintaining productivity in particular at a predominately White institutions.

In noted American historian, scholar, and public intellectual, John Hope Franklin’s 1963 essay, *The Dilemma of a Negro Scholar*, he described the difficulties of being an African-American intellectual who seeks to be successful in a chosen discipline and the intersectionality of improving the African-American community and society in general through academic work. Franklin wrote, “It is of course, asking too much of a Negro scholar to demand he remain impervious and insensitive to the forces that seek to destroy his dignity and self-respect. He must therefore, be permitted to function as vigorously as his energies and resources allow in order to elevate himself and those of his group to a position where they will be accepted and respected in the American social order.” Many African-American professors and public intellectuals continue to grapple with this twoness of being a Black professor and a public intellectual as they navigate academia.

A faculty member’s academic life rests upon three pillars of duty. The pillars are teaching, research, and service. Depending on the type of university by which the faculty member is employed, the balancing of these three responsibilities may differ based on the mission and institution type. Often a Black professor’s duties go beyond the aforementioned pillars to take on the role of role model and activist. The following chapters aim to assist future academics in deconstructing academia and preparing for future careers. Future academics will learn how to launch their careers, stay productive in research, teaching, and service, and avoid the malaise that often besets new academics.

The lyrics of the song *Beauty and the Beast* beautifully illustrates the juxtaposition between the beauty of Black professors’ service to institutions of higher learning and the beast-like challenges they face in these spaces. The following

chapters feature bold narratives highlighting the beauty and the burden of being a Black professor in higher education.

**William Broussard's** *Hazard Ahead: The Impact of High Executive Turnover Rates on African-Americans Navigation of the Professoriate at HBCUs* using [Warde's \(2009\)](#) use of phenomenological and qualitative analyses employed in "The Road to Tenure: Narratives of African American Male Tenured Professors" focuses on five African-American males at various stages of the professoriate, with substantial tracts of those tenures at HBCUs, who encountered significant executive turnover. The interviews with faculty brought light to ways that presidential turnover and constant flux in leadership at fragile institutions leads to predictable outcomes with regard to retention and tenure-track advancement, as well as provide a snapshot on the myriad ways African Americans must often adjust their career paths in order to pursue professorial employment at institutions often thought of as the most likely to support their efforts to earn tenure.

In **Ronald Whitaker's** essay *The Spook That Sat by the Ivory Tower: A Scholarly Personal Narrative of a Black Man's Tenure-Track Journey in the Academy*, he embellishes themes from the film and novel *The Spook Who Sat By the Door* to disclose how he navigated pseudo-diversity initiatives within higher education, and his experiences of being viewed as an exemplar Black male (*token*) by colleagues, while simultaneously remaining committed to his explicit research focus pertaining to exemplar practices and programming for Black boys and men. While the author does not advocate for physical violence (*as depicted in the film*), he is using the training received in academia to declare war on the pernicious educational system that continues to intentionally miseducate ([Woodson, 1933](#)), Black boys and men.

**Robert T. Palmer** and **Janelle L. Williams** pen a poignant piece that draws on their varied experiences as first-generation college students and scholars in higher education. The goal of the chapter entitled *PhD to Professor: An Open Letter to A Young Scholar* is to provide insight into how minoritized students, particularly those who identify as Black, Black American or African American, can successfully navigate the dissertation process, be competitive on the faculty job market as newly minted PhD's, and navigate the tenure and promotion process. One perspective follows the traditional (tenure-track) teaching, research faculty career progression. Another perspective suggests creating your own path, considering administrative roles, research appointments, and non-tenure-track teaching roles. The implications and lessons shared in this chapter would be beneficial to all students as they embark upon similar trajectories in their professional and academic careers.

In *May the Work I've Done Speak for Me: Tenure and Promotion*, **C. Douglas Johnson** uses a brilliant narrative to highlight his experiences with the tenure and promotion processes at two different institutions on his academic journey. In order to achieve tenure and promotion, an academician must demonstrate productivity and persistence in the midst of uncertainty. While there are policies in place to guide the tenure and promotion processes, at most institutions the policies are written in a professionally vague manner such that "The Committee," made up of senior faculty, has sufficient leeway to make a decision deemed most appropriate for all parties involved, including the junior faculty member under

consideration. After providing some personal background information, Johnson transitions to a discussion of his decision to exchange a coveted, tenure-track position for a long-term contract at a newly established, state college with an opportunity of being promoted to the highly esteemed rank of full professor. While the requirements and processes vary from institution to institution, and for tenure and promotion, the angst and anticipation generated can be fairly consistent, providing insights that may also prove beneficial for those who serve on the committees or make administrative decisions about said processes.

**Carlos Minor**, in his essay entitled *My Time in the Academy: A Cautionary Tale*, offers a riveting and honest account of his time spent in higher education. Dr. Minor tells a tale filled with racism, mistreatment, micro- and macro-aggressions, as well as disengagement during his tenure at midwestern institution. He filed a massive complaint that he believes he won in many aspects but may never gain employment in academia again. With this chapter, the author hopes to help other Black male academics to avoid the pitfalls and mistakes he made.

Women of color face a unique challenge that includes combating societal stereotypes and the pressure balancing interpersonal and professional roles. Historically, African-American women have balanced intersectional identities in the presence of oppressive structures with grace and success. In academia, these intersectional paradigms can add to the research concluding the lack of representation in women of color at the associate professorship level and in administration (Croom, 2017; Liu, 2011; Perna, 2001). The lived experience of **Alishea Rowley** in *Unstoppable: A Black Woman's Journey Through the Professorate* is especially beneficial in providing a view of the challenges Black women have with deconstructing academia and the consideration of the advancement of their career goals.

Based on central tenets of Black feminist thought, *A Dialogue Between Sisters* by **Altheria Candelera** and **Renee Simms** aims to share advice with Black women entering the professoriate based on their experiences as early career faculty members who came to the profession later in life. They share ways by which they were impacted by the marginalization, discrimination, and isolation many Black women academics face. Moreover, the chapter illustrates how they resist and respond to these factors. This narrative combines stories with poetry to convey their lived experiences as Black women who took different roads to academia, and serve in differently situated institutions, but who now face similar experiences.

In *Two Worlds: A Black Woman Scholar at a Diverse Historically Black College*, **Erin W. Gilliam** returns to her alma mater, Kentucky State University, as a faculty member. After attending the University of Kentucky, a predominantly White institution, to pursue her graduate studies, Gilliam recounts the racial micro- and macro-aggressions experienced during her matriculation at the University of Kentucky. After earning her terminal degree, Gilliam returned to her alma mater with the goal of serving students in ways in which her mentors and professors influenced her. Her narrative paints the realistic picture of the diversity that exists at HBCUs and how even in her return, she was once again “on her own.”

**C. Dean Campbell** uses a qualitative approach to delineate ways in which one may construct meaning as an adjunct professor. In *Adjunct Faculty Professional Identity: An African-American Postsecondary Administrators Part-time Teaching Narrative*, he develops a cultural interpretation of adjunct teaching that provides an alternative view of professional socialization to counter the ongoing challenge of increasing the number of Black faculty in higher education. In doing so, three themes from the data (ideal worker as adjunct, historical role models, and clinical value of course content) suggest the identity of part-time faculty is situated in personal, professional, and cultural experiences.

In *Mentorship Made the Difference: My Journey to an Unexpected Destination*, **Erica Russell** reflects on her journey to becoming a licensed psychologist who is a first-generation graduate and a Black woman on the tenure track. In the face of obstacles, Russell says that mentors and their mentoring have made the difference in the quality of her career trajectory. This narrative includes discussion of “Mentoring Moments” (what Russell calls the “Mentors in my Mind”), The Council (key players and relationships), “Jumping in the Deep End” (being open to something new, being “in search of” looking to fill the gaps in knowledge through formal mentorship opportunities), and “Practicing What I Preach” (building the network and using resources to further one’s career and to develop students). She shares key moments, relationships, and experiences that may light the pathway for scholars and junior faculty traveling similar roads.

Continuing the theme of mentorship, **Novell E. Tani** in *I Am Because We Are, Not Just Mentoring, but a Collaborative Approach to Faculty and Student Development* not only shares the importance of mentor–mentee relationships but also demonstrates it by sharing the pen with several of his mentees – **Steven C. Williams, Rochelle Parrish, Dominic Burrows, Cassidy Ferguson, Angelique Reed, Haleem Brown, and Imelda Theodore**. This chapter highlights a component of collaboration that is often under shadowed in the educational setting – faculty and graduate–student partnerships. Given the lack of resources and infrastructural elements that often plague HBCUs in comparison to other institutions, faculty members inadvertently and unconsciously establish partnerships with advanced undergraduate and graduate students. Without the assistance of young, emerging scholars, tenure-earning faculty may struggle with maintaining a healthy work–life balance. Moreover, forging strong partnerships with mentees aids in faculty and student development alike. This essay encompasses the views, experiences, and perceptions of a young, tenure-earning faculty member. Additionally, past and present graduate students provide insight on perceptions of faculty–student interactions and their subsequent development as scholars, researchers, and clinicians.

Finally, **Cheron H. Davis, Novell E. Tani, and Arie Christon**, in *Using a Cross-Disciplinary Teaching Approach to Attenuate the Void: Building Educators and Researchers at a Historically Black College/University (HBCU)*, outline their efforts and process of implementing a collaborative course redesign. The authors developed the novel assignment as a way by which to create multiple opportunities for students to participate in co-curricular writing activities. Moreover, the cross-curricular integrative writing approach implemented by the instructors of these courses (the authors) provided students enrolled in the Colleges of Education and

the College of Social Sciences, Arts, and Humanities a unique opportunity to become actively engaged in a multidisciplinary approach to learning. The collaborative research assignment entailed two major objectives; the developed project was to a) improve elementary education preservice students' lesson plan writing and implementation proficiency and b) develop emerging psychology students' ability to produce and implement an action-based research project within the realm of Social Psychology. Throughout the essay, the authors describe how this teaching approach aids in faculty and student development, leads to deeper understanding of the tenure-earning elements of teaching and service via peer-collaboration, and highlights the scanty resources that create pitfalls for affording students opportunities to develop as researchers.

These authors share their insights, their lived experiences, and their unfiltered stories as a service to emerging scholars. Not only do they share the beautiful roses in their journeys but they also laid themselves on the proverbial thorns of transparency and scholarship in order to bring to fruition the beauties and the burdens of being Black professors. And while these authors represent a broad mix of educational fields and career trajectories, we do not intend this to be a comprehensive treatment. The truth is, there are considerable risks when scholars commit to candor regarding the pitfalls that exist within the Academy. There are many, many stories that have yet to be told. We salute the courageousness of the contributors to this text as we hope that this work inspires fearlessness in breaking down the proverbial *fourth wall* of the Academy for future scholars. The burden of Black professorship is real, but the beauty exists in our ability to encourage others on this journey. May these stories serve as inspiration, motivation, and a call to duty for other Black professors. And may you, the reader, better understand the beauty *and* the burden of Black professorship.

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# HAZARD AHEAD: THE IMPACT OF HIGH EXECUTIVE TURNOVER RATES ON AFRICAN AMERICANS' NAVIGATION OF THE PROFESSORiate AT HBCUS

William Broussard

## ABSTRACT

*This chapter will focus on Warde's (2009) use of phenomenological and qualitative analyses employed in "The Road to Tenure: Narratives of African American Male Tenured Professors" and focus on five African Americans at various stages of the professoriate with significant tracts of those tenures at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) which encountered significant executive turnover (i.e. more than two executive resignations/terminations in a 6.5 year period, equaling twice the national average according to the American Council on Education's 2017 study "The American College President"). The interviews brought light to ways that presidential turnover and constant flux in leadership at fragile institutions lead to predictable outcomes with regard to retention and tenure-track advancement, as well as provide a snapshot on the myriad ways African Americans must often adjust their career paths in order to pursue professorial employment at institutions often thought of as the most likely to support their efforts to earn tenure.*

It is not hyperbole to suggest that the opportunities available for African Americans seeking tenure-track professorships are fading as quickly in the early twenty-first century as they emerged in the twentieth century as higher education institutions integrated faculties. In fact, as some scholars note, tenure, and the

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aspects of liberal education which it diminishingly embodies, is already a thing of the past (Taylor, 2010; Warner, 2018; Wilson, 2010). The most macabre estimations of tenure have been offered most recently, with expatriated scholars describing it as a “project ... (that) might be over” (Kay, 2019) and that the idea of college faculty has all but been discarded by an institution that is more prone to servicing the needs of late capitalism than ever before (Childress, 2019). While universities introduce expanded measures to recruit more diverse faculty and assign additional resources to carry out cabinet, state legislature, and board-level commitments to the same, dwindling state resources and expanding administrative mandates and compliance have not yielded positive results in the past decade. A 2016 study conducted by the [National Center for Educational Statistics \(NCES\)](#) shows that 6% of the total number of full-time professors (any rank), instructors, and lecturers at American colleges and universities were African Americans, and only 5% earned the rank of professor, associate professor, or assistant professor. According to [Tillman \(2001\)](#), that figure has only increased marginally, up from 4.9% of all full-time instructional faculty, nearly two decades ago. What these numbers suggest is that the emergence and near ubiquity of programs and initiatives to address growing the numbers of ethnic minority faculty – particularly African Americans – at American colleges and universities has been an expensive and unsuccessful project for over 20 years in higher education.

One of the reasons growth has been slow as [Tillman \(2001\)](#) points out in her study of mentorship at predominantly white institutions (PWIs) is same race mentorship yielded significantly better retention of African-American faculty than mixed-race mentorship. Recent coverage of the plight of African Americans seeking tenure at PWIs, including profiles of the sundry indignities they face ([Chatelain et al., 2019](#)), and the denial of opportunities for their entire careers ([Harris, 2019](#)) suggest the same. The lack of African-American faculty at PWIs suggests minority-serving institutions (MSIs) with a focus on serving the needs of minority students and a larger slate of ethnic minority professors, and might offer a safer harbor for emerging PhD’s and lecturers looking for opportunities to serve and receive assistance toward achieving their professional and pedagogical goals and tenure.

Earning tenure at an Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) brings another unique set of challenges both structural and cultural. While there is certainly a larger presence of African-American faculty at HBCUs, according to data on the Integrated Postsecondary Educational Data System (IPEDS), as of 2013, 52% of instructional faculty at PWIs are African Americans ([Wheeden, 2016](#)). Unfortunately, the diminishing presence of African-American faculty at HBCUs who can provide mentorship limits the potential opportunity for growth even in the sector that seems most apt for growth in the African-American professoriate. As opportunities disappear for white and Latino/a/x faculty members at PWIs, more and more enter the HBCU tenure-track market, making the opportunities for African-American faculty scarcer. Diminishing resources due to reductions in state funding at public HBCUs and small endowments struggling to support reduced enrollments at private HBCUs translate into