



**Title: Women of Color Academics 2017 - 2018**

**Closing Report**

Applicant: Dr. Annie Isabel Fukushima

Email: a.fukushima@utah.edu

Women of Color Academics received the \$1,000 Graduate Diversity Enhancement Grant for the year 2018 – 2019. Women of Color Academics originally formed in April 2016. WoCA is a collective of doctoral students, researchers, and scholars at the University of Utah. The mission of WoCA collective is to support a thriving academic community for womyn/womxn/women of color and indigenous womyn/womxn/women academics. Through regular gatherings professional development support and writing support across generations – faculty and graduate students – this group sees itself as support retention of diverse people in the academy. WoCA is a thriving community due to the generous support during 2017 – 2018 from the University of Utah’s Graduate Diversity Enhancement Grant, Office for Equity & Diversity, Undergraduate Studies, the English Department, Gender Studies, Ethnic Studies and the College of Social Work.

I. Growth in Membership (Report item a and b)

In its early founding, Women of Color Academics consisted of faculty and doctoral students in the College of Social Work (4 faculty members and 11 students). Since the founding, the WoCA list-serv has grown to consist of 88 faculty and students from varying departments at the University of Utah: Communications, Education, Culture & Society, English, Environmental Humanities, History, Law School, Social Work, Sociology, and Theatre (with some of the faculty also jointly appointed in the Division of Ethnic Studies and Gender Studies).

II. Community Support

As a means to create diverse communities, it is essential that community is fostered. During the 2017 – 2018 academic year, WoCA organized three social events. On September 25, 2017, WoCA launched with an “Encuentro: Women of Color Academics” gathering, where WoCA members discussed year-long events and activities. To foster community amongst WoCA’s members convened on November 18, 2017 for a brunch at Zest. Individuals shared stories of life and work in the academe. It was promoted as a space where members were invited to “bring a visual or material object to use in [their] introduction... [to share the] story behind the object... [their] research and any research or teaching struggles that [they were] facing that [they] would like to receive a hive mind support from. Or successes [they] would like to share with the group.” On January 25, 2018 an informal networking opportunity occurred at Bourbon house, “Women of Color Academics Networking: Networking, Supporting, Thriving Across Generations of Academics.” And as a means to celebrate allies and the diverse communities in WoCA lives, on May 9, 2018, WoCA convened “WoCA+MoCA and Allies End of Year Celebration.”

III. Writing Support

During the 2017 – 2018 academic year, WoCA organized two writing workshops and one writing retreat.

On October 27, 2017, Drs. Diana Leong (Department of English and the Environmental Humanities Graduate Program) and Kya Mangrum (Department of English) facilitated “WoCA: “Getting Unstuck” --



A Guided Writing Workshop.” The workshop facilitated 1) How to identify the various types of “stuck,” 2) exercises to address each 3) (Un)structured writing time.

On January 19, 2018, Drs. Noel Volt (History) and Marie Sarita Gaytan (Sociology) facilitated the second writing workshop, “Women of Color Academics Writing Workshop.” The workshop provided a place for WoCAs to discuss motivations, successes and writing strategies. Writing pomodoros were facilitated and folks left the writing workshop having written.

The writing retreat was an incredible hit. Dr. Annie Isabel Fukushima collaborated with Dr. Hokulani to organize the daylong gathering at Red Butte Gardens. Dr. Hokulani Aikau (Gender Studies and Ethnic Studies) co-facilitated the retreat with Dr. Karla Erickson (Grinnell College). In addition to writing prompts and food, the writing retreat included a welcome of an Aloha Circle (facilitated by Dr. Hokulani Aikau) and healing activities, which included Yoga with Dr. Erin Castro (Education, Policy & LEadership, Breathing activity with Dr. Karen Tao (Educational Psychology), and closing with Dr. Hokulani Aikau.

#### IV. Research Support

The WoCA collective seeks to create a supportive space for WoCA to succeed in research. Therefore, on December 12, 2017, Drs. Danielle Olden (History) and Annie Isabel Fukushima (Ethnic Studies) facilitated a grant writing workshop, “Step Towards Success: WoCA grant writing & fellowship workshop.” The workshop walked participants through the logistics of grant writing, opportunities, and also the emotional/mental impacts of grant writing.

#### V. Professional Development

Previous WoCA gatherings prioritized research, writing, and community. Therefore, a new development in WoCA during the 2018 – 2019 year was the facilitation of a workshop, “WoCA on the Job Market.” The workshop was facilitated by the Assistant Vice President of Workforce Planning for Human Resources, Mary Anne Berzins, in collaboration with faculty, Drs. Maile Arvin, Nicole Julia Giannella, and Paula Smith. The workshop covered where to look for jobs, how to prepare an application, what to expect after the application is submitted, and timelines for success.

#### VI. What aspects could have been improved? Are there any plans to continue?

WoCA continues to bring a diverse group of WoCAs across campus. Challenges are the snow-ball method of inclusion. Due to the complexity of what it means to be “women” and a person of color, the group seeks to invite individuals through list-services.

WoCA will continue in 2018 – 2019 academic year. It is clear that important aspects of WoCA gatherings included the brunch, writing retreat, and professional development support for students on the market. Other activities will be facilitated by faculty facilitators based on interest.

#### VII. Publicity efforts



The publicity efforts were effective. Publicity was done through emails and personal emails of invitation. The goal was not to have hundreds of women of color, but to build intimate and critical spaces. The group meetings ranged from ten to fifteen participants. This was dynamic enough. If the group is to have a larger event, it will require more collaborations with public relations staff.

VIII. How Many graduate students benefited? 88 WoCAs are women of color – 50% of the group's participants are graduate students.

IX. Expenses 2017 – 2018: \$1,251.15