

Title: Women of Color Academics of Social Work 2016 – 2017

Closing Report: Diversity Enhancement Grant

Applicant: Dr. Annie Isabel Fukushima, College of Social Work

Email: a.fukushima@utah.edu

Women of Color Academics of Social Work received the \$1,000 Graduate Diversity Enhancement Grant for the year 2016 – 2017. Women of Color Academics of Social Work (WoCASW) was formed in April 2016. The mission of the WoCASW collective is to support a thriving and intellectual community for women of color academics contributing to the field of Social Work. Through regular gatherings, professional development support and writing support across generations – faculty and graduate students - this group sees itself as increasing women of color retention in the university for both women of color faculty and graduate students through support and the creation of an intellectual community. The goal was to grow the group. Since August 2016, the Women of Color Academics of Social Work has facilitated the following activities:

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, WoCASW has grown to consist of 34 women of color 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). Due to the growth in the group, the group is now referred to as “Women of Color Academics.” Our growth was due to regular meetings that were dynamic, however driven by focused activities (in particular Items III, IV, and V).

II. Lunch meetings

On September 2, 2016, October 21, 2016, and February 24, 2017, Women of Color Academics met over lunch to informally discuss their experiences as women of color in the academy. During these lunch gatherings (which ranged from 10 to 15 individuals), doctoral students (who were the majority except at one lunch gathering, faculty outnumbered students) met faculty across campus. The goal of the lunch gatherings was to network face-to-face between women of color academics. To learn about each other’s research in an informal setting. And to build connections across affinities in research. Lunch provided from varying locations.

III. December Writing Retreat, 9AM - 5PM, Dec. 12, 2016. Location: Flynn Faculty Faculty Workshop Room Room 6500, Law School. (Report item d)

At the end of the fall semester, WoCASW met at the Law School for an all day writing retreat. The group comprised of nine doctoral students in the College of Social Work, one alumni from the College of Social Work, and two faculty members of the College of Social Work. During the writing retreat, facilitated by Dr. Fukushima, the group discussed writing challenges which included: Confidence, Getting Unstuck, Organization, Time, Writing Hangups/Successes. Dr. Fukushima facilitated the Pomodoro technique of writing (25 minutes of writing with 5 minute breaks). The students heard from guest speakers: Professor Christina Gringeri discussed “The 101s of the QEs and Dissertation” and Professor Lindsay Gezinski discussed “Publishing in Social Work; Publishing in Publish or Perish Climate.” Breakfast and lunch

were provided. Outcomes following this writing retreat included: two students passing their qualifying exams, two students successfully proposing their dissertation, and other students made success with coursework and other writing projects. Having students speak honestly about writing challenges, their writing needs (led to the Resilience & Time workshop), and actual writing and strategies was central to supporting students and faculty of color.

IV. Resilience & Time for Women of Color in Academia with Dr. Cindy Cruz. Location: College of Social Work.

Dr. Cindy Cruz is Associate Professor in Education at University of California, Santa Cruz. Dr. Cruz is also affiliated with Feminist Studies, Latin American and Latino Studies, and Critical Race and Ethnic Studies. Dr. Cruz's research interests in cludes US Third World and Decolonial Feminism, testimonio, education, violence, youth and LGBTQ communities. Dr. Cruz has received the 2012 Antonia I. Castaneda Prize, National Association of Chicana and Chicano Studies (Best New Article), 2012 Article of the Year, Queer Studies Special Interest Group, AERA, and was a Cornell University Provost's Academic Diversity Postdoctoral Fellowship, 2006-2008.

PhD students and faculty were invited to join Women of Color Academics of Social Work for a workshop on time management with Dr. Cindy Cruz. All participants learned to:

- Build skills on time management in academia
- Learned about embodied decolonial feminist practice and negotiating time, research, teaching and service
- Centralize the epistemology of the "Brown" body / Person of Color body as a site of knowledge to frame agency in academia

Actual handouts and time-management discussion was facilitated by Dr. Cindy Cruz. Two women of color faculty, ten doctoral students, and one master's student participated in the workshop. Breakfast was provided from Einstein's bagel.

V. Month of April: weekly writing among Doctoral Students

Women of color doctoral students met once a week on Fridays to write. Their writing sessions were during the month of April from 8AM – 10:45AM in SW 237.

VI. Closing Gathering: "Incompetent, Misfits and Angry" - Beyond Limited Images, Imagining Futures, May 3, 2017. Location: College of Social Work. (Report item c).

At this last lunch, Women of Color academics discussed the varying images that have shape our academic experiences. As a starting point we discussed the perception of women of color as "incompetent", "angry", and academic "misfits." These imaginings continue to reify women of color whose racialized and gendered bodies are seen as dangerous in academic spaces. We also discussed these images and how they impact our teaching, research, and service experiences. In many ways women of color, nonbinary and queer of color bodies are always read as killjoys in academic spaces. Rather than run from the spooks that haunt our academic experiences, Women of Color Academics contended with these images and how women of color have been able to survive, thrive, and quell (or maybe grow) the notion of their monstrosity to reconstitute the perceptions of their bodies, work, and actions to be legible as leaders, change makers, and innovators. In preparation, we read the following texts. This activity was central to addressing the question: What insights did this project allow you to gain regarding the retention and/or

professional development of historically underrepresented graduate students? Ongoing challenges for academic women of color and faculty are misperceptions of them that are deeply racialized and gendered. Lunch was provided from Mazza.

Recommended reading:

Chapter 28 and 29 from Presumed Incompetent <https://muse.jhu.edu/book/18279>

Feminist Killjoys - <https://feministkilljoys.com/>

Radical uses of Anger - <http://www.theroot.com/the-radical-uses-of-anger-all-white-women-are-not-the-1791727529>

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

The lunch meetings were incredibly successful, in that it brought together a community. However, it was clear that there is a need for the conversations to be focused and thematic. This allows for faculty to participate and collaborate with the group in ways that are strategic. The goal is to continue the group into the fall 2017 – spring 2018 academic year.

VIII. Publicity efforts

The publicity efforts were very 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.

IX. How Many graduate students benefited? 17 doctoral students in PhD programs in communications, education, culture and society, history, and social work.

X. Expenses – Full \$1,000.