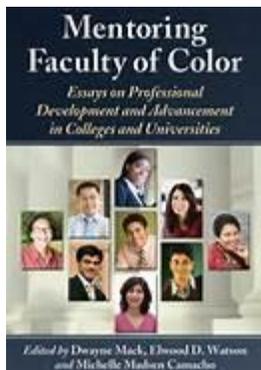


Professional Book Review

Mack, D., Watson, E., & Madsen Camacho, M. (Eds.). (2013). *Mentoring Faculty of Color: Essays on Professional Development and Advancement in Colleges and Universities*. Jefferson: McFarland & Company. 211 pp., ISBN-13: 978-0-7864-7048-8 (pbk). \$45.00

Reviewed by Liza Ann Acosta, North Park University, Chicago



This collection of essays is a welcome addition to the limited choices available to junior faculty of color in the humanities and sciences seeking guidance in their tenure and promotion process at small liberal art colleges, comprehensive universities, and research universities. The themes explored in the essays touch on issues and common experiences facing minority faculty on U.S. American campuses today: balancing academia and parenthood, dealing with sexism and racism, defending the legitimacy of one's research and scholarly interests in environments that devalue our fields of inquiry. However, *Mentoring Faculty of Color: Essays on Professional Development and Advancement in Colleges and Universities* is not only about sharing stories of struggle, survival, and success, but about offering its readers practical advice and proven strategies that served its authors well. In today's rigid and racialized academic world, the authors of these essays reassure the reader that there is hope of finding professional fulfillment and self-realization in a slow-changing academic climate.

The book offers valuable insights to multiple audiences. Administrators will find information about the struggles that faculty of color may be facing at their individual institutions and advice on how to promote a more supportive environment. Tenure-track minority faculty in any discipline will find clearly outlined, pragmatic suggestions on how to build a sane academic life. Even the non-academic reader, unfamiliar with the complexities of university tenure and promotion, will find the process demystified.

The essays address the significant challenges that arise as faculty of color advance through the tenure track. Some of the essays focus primarily on how to achieve tenure in different types of universities: liberal arts colleges, faith-based institutions, regional comprehensive universities, and research universities. The personal stories shared in these essays illustrate and reinforce the sage advice given in them. Tom Otieno's piece, for instance, covers all bases. It gives an overview of successful strategies in the areas of evaluation traditionally required for tenure: teaching, service, creative/scholarly work, and the ever elusive collegiality. In addition, Otieno identifies the roadblocks to faculty success and attempts to "sensitize the majority population about the unique challenges faced by faculty of color" (p. 27). A similar essay by Judith Liu provides advice on learning about departmental and campus dynamics for a smoother transition into tenure procedures. Mark Pottinger and Dwayne Mack explore their own experiences as Black males earning tenure at liberal arts colleges. Pottinger emphasizes an alignment of institutional mission and service, while

Mack describes his struggle to remain true to his identity while teaching at a predominantly White institution. Identity and collaborative research figure prominently in Juliet McMullin's piece, an excellent exploration of interdisciplinary work, liminal identity politics, and handling the publication expectations in fields that traditionally discourage collaborative engagement.

Several essays focus on the particular challenges of female faculty of color. Robin Means Coleman explores the biases of student feedback and how to cope with the assumptions students make about women of color. She refers to a study done in 2004 in which "83% of students interviewed reported having different standards for female and male instructors, with students, across genders making explicit their higher expectations for women" (p. 47). Tasneem Khaleel and Alyssa Garcia add their voices to the exploration of women's challenges in being viewed as valuable colleagues and their research and leadership taken seriously at previous institutions. Khaleel and Garcia take on tokenism and academic ethnocentrism, while Toni Griego Jones offers suggestions for organizing and networking successfully to "produce the best case for promotion and tenure" (p. 116) to counteract the damaging effects of stereotypes. Her overview of the Minority Women Faculty network is inspiring and motivates the reader to seek out ways to build solid support networks as a solution to the isolation produced by the lack of mentorship programs. Michelle Madsen Camacho tackles motherhood and tenure. She cautions the reader to consider institutional fit, to work against stereotypes, and to publish strategically. Similarly, Jacqueline B. Temple, Yer Thao, and Samuel Henry share personal stories to illustrate their struggle in "fitting in" their own research and teaching expertise in places where minorities' identified accent, use of language, and teaching styles are construed as "the common sense confirmation of clearly apparent inferiority" (p. 141).

The concluding three essays address promotion to full professor, practical advice to produce an effective curriculum vitae, and denial of tenure. Elwood D. Watson emphasizes the importance of collegiality and the cultivation of relationships in the success of the promotion application. His words also encourage us to focus our energy more intensely on research. Angela M. Nelson reviews the importance of the curriculum vitae (CV) in our professional life, cautions us about the role of social media in our CV, and includes a template as well as a helpful list of categories and verbs to use in the document. Finally, Andrea Smith provides a moving account of the denial of her tenure at her first job in spite of a long list of publications, excellent external reviews and teaching evaluations. Instead of managing a life without family relationships, community work, and even fun, she states, "we must deconstruct the logic of the academic industrial complex to see how it has needlessly trapped us into thinking that we must choose between academia and having a life" (p. 198).

The larger question posed by the book is this: "If this need for mentoring is so pervasive, then why are institutions so lacking in the structured implementation of mentoring programs?" (Garcia, p. 78). The book demonstrates the need for mentoring programs in institutions lacking one or, if they exist, the need to specifically address the needs of underrepresented faculty. We still may not understand why this need is not being aggressively addressed, but what the book does successfully is encourage potential mentors and administrators to re-evaluate mentorship programs and to provide

tenure candidates with inspirational stories and concrete ideas to implement in their professional development plan.

Encouraging, full of good advice and strategies, and practical for both mentors and mentees, this collection is a must-read for all faculty of color entering or already in academia.