

# Increasing Pathways to Leadership for Black, Indigenous, and other Racially Minoritized Women

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Résumé de l'article

Les postes de direction au sein des établissements postsecondaires demeurent généralement inaccessibles aux femmes, et plus particulièrement aux femmes noires, autochtones et d'autres minorités raciales. Dans cet article, nous soutenons que les voies d'accès à des postes de direction, en particulier en ce qui concerne des approches critiques non traditionnelles et non normatives qui découlent du fait que les femmes noires, autochtones et d'autres minorités raciales se trouvent dans une situation épistémique différente, constituent un bon premier pas vers le démantèlement progressif des cultures des milieux de travail universitaires eurocentriques et androcentriques qui sont normalisées et que l'on gère comme des entreprises. Ce genre de réforme est un travail préliminaire essentiel pour parvenir à une plus grande équité et inclusion dans les établissements universitaires. Soulignons que nous parlons ici d'un grand nombre de changements importants qu'il est nécessaire d'apporter pour adopter une première réforme indispensable, en parallèle avec une transformation plus radicale que nous devrions promouvoir continuellement ensuite (Dryden 2022; Patel 2021). Nous proposons donc des initiatives que les universités peuvent prendre pour remédier à certaines des exclusions et des inégalités les plus courantes liées au genre, à la race et à la classe sociale que l'on retrouve dans des milieux de travail universitaires, et ce, en reconnaissant que les établissements universitaires, qui ont démontré une prédilection pour la cooptation et le rendement, peinent à procéder à une véritable réforme, et encore plus à entreprendre la « transformation » et la « décolonisation » que l'on confond souvent, à tort, avec la réforme. En nous appuyant sur la recherche institutionnelle, nous décrivons en détail les engagements que doivent prendre les organes directeurs, les changements à apporter aux processus décisionnels des universités, l'importance de disposer d'une infrastructure de collecte de données rapide et transparente, ainsi que d'autres changements institutionnels nécessaires pour améliorer le recrutement, l'embauche et le maintien en poste du corps professoral et des dirigeants universitaires noirs, autochtones et issus d'autres minorités raciales. L'ensemble de ces pratiques constitue une réforme préliminaire qu'il est nécessaire d'adopter pour pouvoir mettre en place de véritables pratiques d'inclusion.

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*Special Section:*  
*Mis/classification: Identity-based Inequities in the Canadian and Global Post-secondary Context*

# Increasing Pathways to Leadership for Black, Indigenous, and other Racially Minoritized Women

by Maki Motapanyane and Irene Shankar\*

**Abstract:** Leadership positions within post-secondary institutions (PSIs) remain elusive to women generally, and to Black, Indigenous, and other racially minoritized women in particular. In this paper, we argue that pathways to leadership—particularly non-traditional, non-normative, and critical approaches that can come from the differently situated epistemic positioning of Black, Indigenous, and other racially minoritized women—are important as beginning steps towards progressively dismantling standardized Eurocentric, androcentric, and corporatized academic workplace cultures. This type of reform is essential preliminary work in the process toward greater equity and inclusivity in academic institutions. Note then that we are writing of a significant amount of substantive change needed to enact crucial initial reform, in tandem with, and beyond which we should continuously push for more radical transformation (Dryden 2022; Patel 2021). As such, we propose initiatives that universities can take to address some of the common gendered, racialized, and class-related exclusions and inequities evident in academic workplaces. This is in acknowledgment that academic institutions, having demonstrated a predilection for the co-optative and performative, are barely able to reform meaningfully, let alone engage the “transformation” and “decolonization” with which reform is often confused and erroneously conflated. Grounded within institutional research, we detail the commitments required from governing bodies, the changes necessary in academic decision-making spaces, the need for timely and transparent data collection infrastructure, and other institutional changes required to enhance the recruitment, hiring, and retention of Black, Indigenous, and other racially minoritized faculty and academic leaders. Together, these practices constitute

preliminary reform necessary to create opportunity for more meaningful practices of inclusion.

**Keywords:** gender, race, class, leadership, inclusion, reform, post-secondary institution, academia

**Résumé:** Les postes de direction au sein des établissements postsecondaires demeurent généralement inaccessibles aux femmes, et plus particulièrement aux femmes noires, autochtones et d'autres minorités raciales. Dans cet article, nous soutenons que les voies d'accès à des postes de direction, en particulier en ce qui concerne des approches critiques non traditionnelles et non normatives qui découlent du fait que les femmes noires, autochtones et d'autres minorités raciales se trouvent dans une situation épistémique différente, constituent un bon premier pas vers le démantèlement progressif des cultures des milieux de travail universitaires eurocentriques et androcentriques qui sont normalisées et que l'on gère comme des entreprises. Ce genre de réforme est un travail préliminaire essentiel pour parvenir à une plus grande équité et inclusion dans les établissements universitaires. Soulignons que nous parlons ici d'un grand nombre de changements importants qu'il est nécessaire d'apporter pour adopter une première réforme indispensable, en parallèle avec une transformation plus radicale que nous devrions promouvoir continuellement ensuite (Dryden 2022; Patel 2021). Nous proposons donc des initiatives que les universités peuvent prendre pour remédier à certaines des exclusions et des inégalités les plus courantes liées au genre, à la race et à la classe sociale que l'on retrouve dans des milieux de travail universitaires, et ce, en reconnaissant que les établissements universitaires, qui ont démontré une prédilection pour la

cooptation et le rendement, peinent à procéder à une véritable réforme, et encore plus à entreprendre la « transformation » et la « décolonisation » que l'on confond souvent, à tort, avec la réforme. En nous appuyant sur la recherche institutionnelle, nous décrivons en détail les engagements que doivent prendre les organes directeurs, les changements à apporter aux processus décisionnels des universités, l'importance de disposer d'une infrastructure de collecte de données rapide et transparente, ainsi que d'autres changements institutionnels nécessaires pour améliorer le recrutement, l'embauche et le maintien en poste du corps professoral et des dirigeants universitaires noirs, autochtones et issus d'autres minorités raciales. L'ensemble de ces pratiques constitue une réforme préliminaire qu'il est nécessaire d'adopter pour pouvoir mettre en place de véritables pratiques d'inclusion.

**Mots clés:** genre, race, classe, direction, inclusion, réforme, établissement postsecondaire, milieu universitaire

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policies and, programs. Dr. Shankar is the current (2022-2023) President of the Canadian Sociological Association.

\*The co-authors' names are listed in alphabetical order. However, this article stems from an anti-racist feminist collaboration and equitable partnership.

## Introduction

### *Disparities in Academic Leadership*

Women are glaringly under-represented in the leadership structures of many Canadian and American post-secondary institutions (PSIs) (AWA 2019; Cukier et al. 2021; Silbert et al. 2022). Over the past twenty years, women leaders in American PSIs have remained near or at 30 percent, with a slight increase of 4 percent since 2011 (Bartel 2018). The UK statistics are just as dire, with only 17 percent of chancellors and principals identifying as women (Beer 2015; Manfredi et al. 2019). Similar under-representation of women in leadership is present in India, Australia, Hong Kong, and European nations (Aiston and Yang 2017; Catalyst 2020). Political scientist Malinda Smith's examination of the U15 Group of Canadian Research Universities found that 100 percent of provosts and VP academics were white, and 66.7 percent identified as male; 80 percent of presidents were white, and 86.7 percent identified as male; 92.2 percent of deans were white, 32 percent identified as female, and only 7.7 percent were a visible minority or Indigenous person (male and female combined) (AWA 2019). There is a stark absence of women with disabilities, trans and non-binary persons, and racially minoritized women<sup>1</sup> within leadership positions (Wilson-Kovacs et al. 2008; Hamilton-Page 2021).

In the United States, racially minoritized people account for 17 percent of college and university presidents, and women of colour hold only 5 percent of leadership positions (ACE 2018; Crandall et al. 2017). These statistics indicate a downward trajectory in relation to senior positions for Black, Indigenous, and racially minoritized women within academia (Khan et al. 2019). While there has been an increase in registration and graduation rates of Black, Indigenous, and racially minoritized women at undergraduate and faculty levels, our numbers significantly decrease as we go higher up the leadership chain, leading to our almost complete absence in PSI leadership (as indicated in the AWA 2019 graph below). Thus, university leadership positions are primarily held by white men, with an increasing representation of white women within the ranks (Long 2022)—a phenomenon that Dr. Malinda Smith (2010) has aptly termed the diversification of whiteness (ACE 2018; AWA 2019; Johnson and Howsam 2020; McChesney 2018; Whiteford 2020).

Graph 1: Canadian Universities - U15 Leadership Pipeline 2019



Reproduced with permission from Dr. Malinda Smith

This leadership lacuna for racially minoritized women is facilitated by the intersections of racial, gender, and economic inequality (Khan et al. 2019; McChesney 2018). Specifically, institutional exclusion and discrimination is enacted through resistance to diverse leading styles and prioritization of a very narrow and ethnocentric model of leadership, racist and gendered discrimination in pay and promotion, disproportionate mentoring and service commitments, and the cloning effect—where white men (and increasingly white women) are inordinately recruited and mentored for senior posts (Beer 2015; Khan et al. 2019; Mainah and Perkins 2015; Puwar 2004). Black women are also more likely to be read as lacking the ‘right’ temperament for leadership due to racist stereotypes of Black women as angry, volatile, and/or difficult to work with, particularly those who challenge academia’s racist and exclusionary practices (Neimann 2012; Collins 2000; Puwar 2004). As sociologist Nirmal Puwar aptly states, “Bodies do not simply move through spaces but constitute and are constituted by them. Thus, it is possible to see how both the space and the normative bodies of a specific space can become disturbed by the arrival of Black and Asian bodies in occupations which are not historically and conceptually marked out as their ‘natural’ domain” (2004, 32).

Racially minoritized women are also more likely to be tokenized, underestimated, excluded, and deemed to lack credibility/knowledge (Chance 2021; Collins 2000; Mainah and Perkins 2015; Puwar 2004; y Muhs et al. 2012). Moreover, faculty from marginalized groups tend to be overextended due to greater mentoring and service demands, which leads to greater burnout and exhaustion rates (Ahmed 2021; Griffin and Reddick 2011), all of which have been further exacerbated by the pandemic and continuation of state-sanctioned anti-Black<sup>3</sup> violence (Njoku and Evans 2022). Not only is much of the cur-

rent academic terrain detrimental to the career advancement of racially minoritized women into leadership positions, but the disproportionate (multiple) demands and resulting exhaustion also present serious challenges to equity and retention within presently held positions (Bhopal, Brown, and Jackson 2018; Kelly 2022). Within leadership positions, racially minoritized women find themselves undermined, discredited as biased, and tasked with managing institutional risk and public image (Ahmed 2012; Chance 2021; Kelly 2022; Puwar 2004), often to the detriment of the transformative change with which they are tasked. The white colonial and corporatized operation of academia continues to privilege the expertise and experiences of white administrators (Arday and Mirza 2018; Maylor 2018). As explained by Puwar, authority is naturalized for those who are unmarked by race (white bodies), while racially minoritized individuals are over-determined and defined by their racial identity, constructing us as unqualified “in terms of whom and what [we] represent” (2004, 64). Accordingly, racially minoritized women, diversely othered as foreign elements in many academic institutions, come up against a wall that, in Sara Ahmed’s words, represents “the sedimentation of history into a barrier that is solid and tangible in the present ... a barrier that remains invisible to those who can flow into spaces created by institutions” (2012, 175).

Despite decades of writing, data, and research on the explicit marginalization of racially minoritized women in academia, there has been little foundational change (Ahmed 2012; Griffin 2016; Hull et al. 1982/2015; Moraga and Anzaldúa 1981/2021; Njoku and Evans 2022). In 2017 Frances Henry and a group of fellow researchers of demographic patterns who focused on racially minoritized faculty in Canadian institutions asked, “whether institutions seem ready to accommodate not only their presence but also their scholarship, pedagogy, service inclinations, and cultural and social capital shaped by their communities” (302). The team examined “what life is like for racialized and Indigenous faculty members in universities shaped by neoliberal individualism, merit, competition, and entrepreneurship” (Henry et al. 2017a, 302).

These remain pressing questions today. As universities talk of transformation and decolonization,<sup>2</sup> the leadership and the institutional priorities continue to centre Eurocentric administration and curriculum, positivist research, and corporatized workplace cultures that are res-

istant to meaningful inclusion and change (Douglas 2022b; Patel 2021). In this context, equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) are operationalized as a business product. There is still scant attention to the racial discrimination, violence and micro-aggressions faced by racially minoritized faculty and students within universities (except for the unconscious bias training that is itself an industry). Nor is attention given to the inequitable workload and working conditions, including the expectation that racially minoritized faculty and staff transform academic institutions without adequate support or resources, while experiencing the brunt of the institution’s failures, nor to the superficial deployment of EDI strategies, which tend to prioritize liberal programming, optics, and tokenistic or cluster hiring into status quo academic culture and operation.

We were moved to write this paper in response to the unreflective adherence to Eurocentric administration, operational standards, and curriculum in PSIs, and the infuriating strategic commodification of EDI to mask the continued enactment of aggressions and discrimination against racially minoritized faculty, students, and staff. As tenured academics, with leadership experience fraught with many of the challenging dynamics described in existing literature, we are well acquainted with university structures and their limitations. Informed by our own subject positions, research expertise, and data from extensive institutional research (both existing literature of the field, as well as institutional surveys, data collection and reports with which we have been involved), we provide an intersectional feminist analysis of post-secondary leadership, with suggestions for concrete reformative measures.

### ***Why Name Reform?***

In writing this paper, we have asked ourselves, is it not a betrayal of decolonization to name reform as the current state of things and present options for improving conditions relative to the reality of the current landscape, rather than speaking of radical transformation? Leadership composition by way of meaningful and truly diverse inclusion is one key factor constituting a baseline for improvement to the dire material conditions experienced by racially minoritized faculty right now, and it forms an important part of an infrastructure that could present openings for more transformative change. We have seen the negative role of EDI-promoting Eurocentric, corporate-focused leadership in enacting veto over meaningful

change. As two tenured faculty members, with considerable experience within academia, we remain skeptical of universities' claims to decolonize while being firmly entrenched in neoliberal and colonial structures.

Universities continue to engage in exploitative labour practices by hiring faculty on teaching contracts that are devoid of stability, appropriate income, or retirement benefits (CAUT nd; Santos 2016). For instance, Chandra Pasma and Erika Shaker's (2018) study found that more than half of all faculty positions within Canadian universities are contract positions, with 80 percent of these positions being part-time. Women and racially minoritized academics are over-represented as contingent faculty (Abawi 2018; Navarro 2017).

Similarly, in Canada, while PSIs have readily adopted implementation of land acknowledgements, and email signatures abound with such statements, there remains a considerable gap in meaningful community outreach and in addressing the role that PSIs play in neo-colonialism— (Indigenization strategic plans notwithstanding) (Douglas 2022a; Monture 2010; Tuck et al. 2010). The conference organized by the Canadian Association of Cultural Studies (CACS) (October 27-30, 2022) themed, "Another University, Now," and asking, "What if the university was rebuilt with an explicit agenda to centre the lives of the oppressed?" (CACS 2022), is an important and encouraging critical intervention in present practices. What would it mean to see perspectives from this vantage point begin to infuse the highest decision-making spaces of the university, in a manner that is different from and disruptive of leadership diversity as just another, in the words of this call for papers, neoliberal "managerial class"? We speak of reform because this is the accurate language for the steps currently taken within many academic institutions promoting EDI; and we propose improvements as necessary to substantive progressive change.

The use of accurate language is important. Using a language of decolonization to speak of basic equity-oriented reform acts as a barrier to transformation by presenting the bare minimum, continuing gaps and exclusions, and performativity as radical metamorphosis. It is a sure means of pre-emptively averting decolonization. It is in naming and addressing things as they are, including our placing of the course of action identified here as also in the context of reform, that we "hang on to the hope of transformative change" (Thobani 2022a, 3).

Leaders have a key role in workplace culture, working conditions and institutional mandates (Arday and Mizra 2018; AWA 2019; Kelly 2022). We have seen how a simplistic approach to diversity in the highest decision-making bodies of the university, such as the Board of Governors, fails to disrupt the Eurocentrism and neoliberalism of business as usual. Inclusive leadership necessitates diversity, not only in gender and ethno-cultural background, but also in epistemology, including class consciousness and an appreciation of knowledge production as the pursuit of a truly diverse cultural and intellectual commons (Alcoff 2001; Collins 1986; Crenshaw 1989; Mills 2007; Mohanty 1988; TallBear 2014; Wylie 2012). We recognize that change and diversity in leadership can still legitimize colonial processes and, as such, may be utilized by colonialist institutions to further delay and derail transformation. We are also aware that colonial institutions have a long record of appropriating and utilizing measures instituted by scholar activists as legitimization tools (Ahmed 2012; Fadda and Olwan 2022; Thobani 2022b). Nonetheless, in the face of (mis)appropriation and utilization of "diverse leadership" for further legitimization of colonialist and exclusionary practices, we should not relinquish the immediacy and efforts to improve the workplace for racially minoritized women currently in the university (students, staff, and faculty).

Since academia as a whole is proving to be detrimental to our health and wellbeing (Douglas 2022a; Nash 2019), strategies of survival are essential (Ahmed 2017). Indeed, as "space invaders," the reaction to our presence is often dissonance and violence, compelling us to develop and enact immediate survival strategies (Puwar 2004). Kecia M. Thomas's (2013) phrase "from pet to threat," regarding the experiences of Black women in academia encapsulates this reality well. It is precisely for these reasons that we are not solely asserting the need for greater representation of racially minoritized women in leadership, but also calling for a change in the institutional understanding of and approaches to leadership.

Currently, many historically marginalized and under-represented people who enter leadership find the position to be incredibly hostile and detrimental to their overall health and welfare (Douglas 2022a; Kelly 2022). Thus, strategies to "diversify leadership" must also include changing the conditions of leadership itself so that it becomes a less volatile and damaging place for those that take on these positions.

This paper provides concrete strategies that universities can employ to create pathways for racially minoritized women to assume positions of leadership in meaningful and effective ways, as well as suggesting approaches that build an infrastructure that is more conducive to equity in concrete terms.

## **Strategies for Representative & Inclusive Leadership**

The glaring absence of racially minoritized women in leadership has continued despite proclamations on the part of PSIs of equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI), which allow institutions to look like they are enacting equitable practices without the continued resource allocation, policy changes, or power-sharing that actually clear a path to meaningful change (Ahmed 2012 and 2021; Smith 2010). Without diversity (in cultural, epistemic, class and other positionings) in perspectives from racially minoritized women at the table, the concerns and issues pertinent to Black, Indigenous, and other racially minoritized people in academia continue to be overlooked and universities continue prioritizing performative measures put forward by public relations offices and their legal counsel.

As explained by Patricia Hill Collins, the exclusion of Black women from leadership has resulted in the “...elevation of elite White male ideas and interests and the corresponding suppression of Black women’s ideas and interests...” within academia (2000, 7). This prevailing exclusion of racially minoritized women from leadership positions requires institutions to examine the business-as-usual practices and assumptions surrounding definitions of leadership, established mentorship methods, and normalized routes to leadership.

Are understandings of leadership broad enough to include and support different leadership styles and philosophies, or are they centred around one particular (traditionally “masculine,” Eurocentric) epistemic and cultural set of expectations? Are there multiple routes and opportunities for preparing and mentoring a diverse group of emerging leaders within the institution? Is EDI-oriented succession planning strategically and broadly incorporated within the institution? Tailoring programs and leadership development to the particular needs of specific career stages is additionally advised (Laver et al. 2018). For instance, during the early career period racially minoritized women typically grapple with heavy research, teach-

ing, and service loads as they make their way through the tenure-track process, including a disproportionate load of mentoring and support of students of colour on campus and engagement in EDI advocacy and service, work-life balance and parenting, forming social and academic networks while navigating chilly workplace climates, and identifying and securing mentorship opportunities. Despite having more expertise and skills dealing with the aforementioned realities, mid-career faculty still confront the stubbornly persistent structural barriers that produce the gaps in leadership we highlight in this paper.

In this following section, we present four features and accompanying recommendations in the building of effective infrastructure to support the recruitment, hiring, and retention of racially minoritized women into academic leadership. We stress the importance of anti-racist, intersectional feminist practices that are open to the viewpoints and challenges of the margin(alized) when those perspectives come into the status quo centre (hooks 1984/2014). Our recommendations are predicated upon stable funding and resources, and workplace culture in which commitment to a diversified leadership and faculty and staff is absorbed into core operations, lessening vulnerability to suspension or termination in times of austerity.

### ***1. Governance***

Stemming from pressure to address the prevailing lack of diversity and the exclusionary climate of academia, PSIs have created EDI policies and implemented diversity committees, and composed strategic plans and mission statements that express EDI as important components of institutional identity, values, and mandates. As we have argued thus far, these plans, mission statements, and committees often function to sustain the optics of equity, diversity, and inclusion, rather than generating substantive change. They uphold a PSI branding/marketing strategy designed to signal inclusive spaces, which itself can serve as the very basis on which progressive transformation is deflected and deferred (Ahmed 2012; Dua and Bhanji 2017). For instance, in Canada, one hundred universities and colleges maintain membership with Universities Canada, a consortium of post-secondary institutions committed to EDI by way of seven inclusive excellence principles (Universities Canada 2017).

It is worthy of note that these seven principles articulate EDI goals at a visioning level, without clear directives, such as hiring metrics, pay equity self-assessment, or modes of recourse, along with accountability for delivery shortfalls. Such approaches—accounting for the diversity of institutional context—are symptomatic of the aforementioned challenge of discursive/rhetorical keenness coupled with budgetary squeamishness. Metrics and explicit targets that allow for regular periodic review of progress are instrumental to making concrete progress. Additionally, administrative and resource support for EDI-aligned disciplines and areas of study (e.g., Africa and Diaspora Studies, Equity Studies, Indigenous Studies, Race and Ethnic Studies, Women's and Gender Studies) strengthens recruitment and retention of racially minoritized women, who are often present in greater numbers in these academic locations.

Equity related leadership know-how (knowledge, experience, and effectiveness with equity implementation) is a key component of successfully enacting equity and a persistent limitation in many academic institutions. Recruitment and retention of leaders from demographically under-represented and non-traditional—in status quo terms—groups in leadership, racially minoritized women in particular, is a core means of mobilizing concrete institutional commitment to equity through targeted strategic practice, and forms part of a larger platform of implementation that consigns stable, consistent funding and resources to institutional diversification.

This is a symbiotic approach in which demonstrated commitment through proper resource allocation, along with recruitment and retention efforts, serves to increase the probability of attracting and retaining a diverse leadership pool. Retention may be addressed by growing institutional infrastructure, including policy, administration, curriculum, programming, services and social supports and effective community outreach and community relationships. The establishment of an effective governing policy outlining institutional commitments to address multiple and intersecting axes of exclusion, specifically, via recruitment, hiring, and retention of racially minoritized women is of fundamental importance to sustainable, long-term implementation of equity, including at the highest academic, administrative, and leadership levels. Strategic plans should go beyond broad vision and value statements to include details of practice and execution, including targets and timelines where appropriate.

Too often, there is a disorganized approach to the implementation of complementary commitments such as equity, Indigenization, and internationalization. This fosters confusion, lack of coordination, and even a sense of competition between these areas, particularly in the context of fiscal austerity. Racially minoritized women, who are especially implicated in the success of such initiatives, yet largely absent in their administration, are first to have their positions terminated when they are present and are particularly vulnerable where instability and lack of coordination frame institutional goals. As such, university governance must demonstrate inclusive awareness and practice that is attentive to multiple factors, including local and global considerations (Caruana and Ploner 2010) as permutations of the factors listed above. A critical assessment of the norms of leadership (ethnocentrism, androcentrism, class, style) is also key, and as we discuss in the following section, it can be undertaken through a commitment of practice (demonstrated through detailed and transparent annual reports regarding practices undertaken and their effectiveness) for those university administrators with authority and power to create pathways to leadership.

## ***2. Commitment of Practice***

Structural and interpersonal acts of racism remain realities of post-secondary institutions (Ahmed 2012; Dua and Bhanji 2017). EDI anti-bias training is a common administrative response to internal critiques and grievances highlighting the aforementioned reality, and has been shown to be ineffective in changing workplace culture and material conditions (Dobbin and Kalev 2018). Sociologists Frank Dobbin and Alexandra Kalev found that, “despite the poor showing of anti-bias training in academic studies, it remains the go-to solution for corporate executives and university administrators facing public relations crises, campus intolerance and slow progress on diversifying the executive and faculty ranks” (2018, 49). Anti-bias training involves short-term awareness-raising and educational programming that can take the form of online modules or in-person sessions. These are often provided as one-offs and sometimes offered at recurring intervals. This programming is focused on attitudinal change as a means of making workplace culture more amenable to the presence of members of historically marginalized groups. As implied by the word “training,” this type of programming also suggests a stage of training completion upon which the individual has been officially “trained.” The trained individual leaves the



workshop with a certificate documenting their “knowledgeable” status, or is able to signal their newly trained status via a mention on annual reports or on their curriculum vitae. This status of completion becomes a *fait accompli* to which the trained individual may gesture for the purpose of promotion and/or service in decision-making spaces.

It is not difficult to see how voluntary or mandated participation in such programming could lead to opportunistic performativity, resentment, and re-entrenchment of bias (subsequently even harder to address under the guise of having been trained in anti-bias), and ineffectiveness due to the overarching focus on attitudes and feelings over material commitments. In fact, and arguably, the focus on feelings and attitudes acts as a convenient distraction and deterrent from substantive change that requires serious resource commitments, power sharing, and collective governance. Though it could be argued that the latter does not happen without the former, the pattern has been that the latter happens very little despite the preponderance of the former. Given this reality and as academics who are particularly invested in seeing the effective implementation of equitable working conditions, we are much less concerned with “what’s truly in a colleague’s heart” than with a principled and clear institutional commitment to equitable workload, salary, benefits, and procedures for evaluation, promotion, and meaningful inclusion in decision-making. Focused on these conditions, a commitment of practice involves implementation-focused skills acquisition and practice orientation for academic administrators, faculty, and community. This should be available to members of hiring, promotion, and other appointment committees, including the highest-ranking university administrators and boards. Models for implementation, setting targets, evaluating progress according to clear metrics, and instituting accountability measures are all important components of a practice of commitment to equity.

Intersectional feminist frameworks (Collins 2000) have much to offer in this regard. For instance, from this body of work comes a linking of attitude and practice that is focused on change implementation requiring attention to the various ways that stereotypes of racially minoritized women shape and distort committees’ understandings and evaluation of our applications, presentations, and overall candidacy for leadership positions. Moreover, practical mechanisms are needed for dislodging these stubborn practices, as well as accountability meas-

ures that target their prevalence. In fact, there are systematic barriers in place for those of us who are situated within intersections of marginality-barriers that impede recognition of our leadership styles and exclude us from leadership opportunities (Martimianakis 2008). A commitment of practice in this sense should be vetted by knowledgeable professionals within PSI (such as faculty members from aligned fields). Leads of such initiatives can be selected from the faculty pool of those with research and/or teaching expertise, and those with a track record of effectively working on institutional reform. These faculty members must be adequately supported and compensated for their labour.

### **3. Data Collection**

Demographic data, workplace climate surveys, and data on pay equity, promotion, and tenure are regularly collected by the university but rarely publicly circulated (Henry et al. 2017b). Furthermore, the quality, type, and reach of the data are often inconsistent. For instance, at one of the authors’ institutions, demographic data on faculty and staff appointments have been the purview of the Human Resources office, which has delineated its search and data organization along the wo/men gender binary. Given the higher numbers of women occupying lower-level staff, adjunct, and tenure-stream positions in PSIs (Henry et al. 2017b), the overall numbers when presented along this simplistic gender binary may indicate that women employees at the institution outnumber men, but this is an inaccurate picture of their locations relative to sites of security, rank, decision-making, or authority; nor is it any measure of their level of influence, participation and inclusion. Moreover, such data presentation fails to make visible the persisting ethnocentrism and demographic over-representation of white people in many PSIs. Results of a 2019 survey by Universities Canada based on responses from eighty-eight universities present the separated categories of “women” and “racialized people,” indicating that while progress has been made for women (mostly white) in senior leadership positions (consistent with Smith’s research) (AWA 2019), “racialized people are significantly under-represented in senior leadership positions at Canadian universities and are not advancing through the leadership pipeline. While racially minoritized people account for 22 percent of the general population, 40 percent of the student body (both undergraduate and graduate), 31 percent of doctoral holders and 21 percent of full-time faculty, we comprise only 8 percent of senior leaders at

Canadian universities” (Universities Canada 2019, 10). Here we have an example of the helpful application of some disaggregation in data collection, yet simultaneously, the lack of an intersectional framework, which perpetuates the too common erasure of racially minoritized women in equity planning and implementation.

Inadequate data collection and the aforementioned lack of circulation allow PSIs to invoke plausible deniability (Douglas 2012). These reports should be disseminated to the university and the wider community, which will allow both university members and the public to gauge the effectiveness of the institution’s EDI policies. Disaggregated data collection informed by an intersectional feminist analytic framework is crucial to the effective implementation of anti-racist practices. Each year, PSIs should publicly and transparently address how they have worked to close the gaps indicated in the data. This creates an opportunity for PSI community members to more clearly see and speak to the gaps and problems, and be able to respond in a manner that targets commitments of practice.

#### ***4. Recruitment and Hiring***

Hiring is a cornerstone of redress and taking steps toward truly diverse, pluralistic, and effective practices of inclusion and equity implementation. It is important to see this integration across the institution, including the highest leadership levels where demographic homogeneity has remained strikingly persistent. Targeted recruitment and selection methods vary, where they exist at all beyond the general employment equity statements that accompany job ads. Indeed, successful recruitment often manifests in the context of explicit calls—a job posting asking for particular experiential knowledge, ethnocultural identification, as well as professional training—for instance, in cluster hires related to Indigenization efforts. In this way, equity and the prioritization of racially minoritized women candidates do not remain simply statements of broader principle in the job advertisement, but also a priority of practice in the hiring process by way of targeted recruitment criteria. A strong commitment to equity in hiring entails consulting with and ensuring the participation of experiential and subject experts on campus (racially minoritized faculty and those in equity-oriented disciplines), and doing so with just compensation and recognition for the ways that the racially minoritized faculty on many university campuses

are inequitably tasked, over-committed and over-worked in relation to equity initiatives.

Early stages of the hiring process can be a symptom of arising points of tension. For instance, the requirement of statements about candidates’ commitment to EDI as part of the application package raises the question of whether Indigenous or Black cluster hires are exclusively predicated on candidates who ascribe and align themselves with the neoliberal EDI vision of the university. Is simply being an Indigenous or Black academic with expertise in a particular discipline/area sufficient basis on which to meet the institution’s mandate to engage in historical redress? Or is every candidate who is considered within the realm of “diversifying the institution” also required to tie themselves to the labour of EDI as a precondition of employment? Rather than requiring such statements from candidates, it is arguably more appropriate for the institution and hiring committees to provide candidates with a document outlining the steps and concrete measures taken to build an infrastructure and workplace that demonstrates thoughtfulness and preparation for the diversity that the institution is seeking to attract and create. Demographic and aggregated data collection, consistent reporting of the results of recruitment, short-listing of candidates, and hiring should be standardized across the institution and compiled as part of the regular data collection and dissemination mechanisms of the university. This serves as a route to establishing accountability measures for persisting gaps and inequities.

Considering the adjunctification of academe, and the prevalence of women and racially minoritized faculty in the “lower-rung” academic positions, racially minoritized internal candidates should be actively supported and encouraged to apply. Additionally, universities must seriously commit to tracks for permanency and security for such candidates. It is well known that as internal candidates, adjuncts and academics on temporary contracts are seldom selected for tenure-stream positions (Bose 2022; Muzzin and Limoges 2008); these positions more often go to outside candidates. There are numerous factors that play into this reality, one of which is the constraint that heavy teaching workloads, as a means of piecing together a living income, place on publication records. But this pattern of overlooking internal part-time or limited term candidates happens often in the case of competitive internal candidates (Davis 2017; Faucher 2015).

Moreover, universities will use cluster hires as an excuse for this continued practice, thereby addressing one inequity at the expense of another. Unions and faculty associations have not necessarily been helpful in this regard, and in some cases, have exacerbated the problems, either treating the concerns of part-time and adjunct faculty as fringe and/or failing to adequately bargain for security and good working conditions for these academics, or, as in a recent case, playing an active role in the de-skilling and labour exploitation of racially minoritized women faculty (Bose 2022; Khan 2021).

Numerous resources are now available online that guide preparedness for recruitment, interviewing, hiring, and post-appointment support under the rubric of equity, diversity, and inclusion. For instance, the American Psychological Association's online guide, "How to Recruit and Hire Ethnic Minority Faculty," provides a thoughtful compilation (American Psychological Association 1996). The Canada Research Chairs Program (Government of Canada) guide, "Equity, Diversity and Inclusion: A Best Practices Guide for Recruitment, Hiring and Retention" (Canada Research Chairs 2018) also provides a detailed list, although it was compiled on a general basis and not with the specific aim of increasing the numbers of racially minoritized in academic leadership. Guidelines such as these, tailored to the institutional context, should be made available to hiring committees and updated regularly in conjunction with a committed anti-racist practice engaged and demonstrated by university leadership and members of hiring and promotion committees.

## Conclusion

The underrepresentation of racially minoritized women in senior academic leadership and from the domain of academic leadership development remains a reality in the post-secondary sector. The glass ceiling, gendered pay gap, and motherhood tax, among other biases and forms of workplace discrimination to which women are subjected, are intensified in the case of racially minoritized women. In addition, there are the following contributing factors in recruitment, retention, and leadership gaps within PSIs: practices of evasion and hindrance in hiring, promotion, and upward mobility; racist stereotyping, tokenization, and damaging workplace culture; and ineptitude and failure to adequately address consequent experiences of isolation and alienation, as well as the res-

ulting exclusion, retreat, and departures of racially minoritized women.

Academic leaders play an integral role in shaping institutional culture, the working environment, and the inclusive learning environment for students. In the absence of racially minoritized women from the highest decision-making spaces, particularly those holding alternative and marginalized perspectives and epistemic positions, issues germane to faculties' working and students' learning conditions will continue to go unaddressed. Moreover, racially minoritized women scholars' academic trajectories must have the opportunity to proceed unhindered by racialized, gendered, and class-based discrimination.

The absence of racially minoritized women in leadership persists despite, as a cursory survey of Canadian university strategic plans and mandates will attest, PSIs' claims of being inclusive and committed to equity, diversity, and inclusion principles.

As racially minoritized women faculty members in Canadian universities, we are cognizant and carry the weight of persisting challenges to equity within PSIs. Progress in diversifying academic leadership has been made with an increase in appointments for white women in overwhelming contrast to the continuing under-representation of members of racially minoritized groups (Universities Canada 2019). As stated by Dr. Malinda Smith, VP provost of equity and diversity at the University of Calgary, despite public commitments and statements on racial justice, the leadership and knowledge gap has only gotten wider during the pandemic (Smith 2021). Moreover, recent cluster hires and appointments of racially minoritized academics into senior management positions in EDI, which as a whole do not meet the threshold of a critical mass (Joecks et al. 2013) for upper administration, are admissions into workplaces that are still largely Eurocentric, neoliberal, and masculinist in orientation and operation. EDI senior administrators still have a layer or two of predominantly white veto power above them, which is the problem against which we write here; and there is the added consideration of recruitment and hiring conventions for such roles.

What are the expected and lauded signifiers of thought, articulation, and practice? What kind of pushing and to what extent can one push within the bounds of biting the hand that feeds them? Stories abound of the harsh realities faced by these academics and administrators as

they navigate these still hostile and stubbornly resistant spaces (Kelly 2022).

To address the systematic erasure and absence of racially minoritized women from leadership positions, we have provided a few concrete approaches. Rigorous critical examinations of institutional and workplace culture, shared governance and power among a truly diverse group of people, and a commitment of practice as exemplified in data collection and recruitment and hiring, are important components of being critically responsive to pressing current issues of concern in academic communities. Implementation of these strategies forms the ground from which universities can move beyond performative tactics and empty equity statements to much-needed change, meaningful inclusion, and leadership opportunities for racially minoritized women.

## Endnotes

1. Black, Indigenous, and other racially minoritized women are all under-represented within leadership positions and as such, there is some common ground on the basis of which we can commiserate with each other's experiences of exclusion and discrimination. All the same, there are discriminatory practices and modes of exclusion that are particular to Black and Indigenous women. In this paper, when discussing overarching and collective experiences, we have utilized the broader term of racially minoritized women and in other places we have written specifically about experiences of Black and/or Indigenous women within academia. There is insufficient literature attending to the granularity of racialization as it relates to the experiences of women facing exclusion and marginalization in Canadian academe. Experiences of and data regarding racially minoritized women tend to be aggregated together by researchers and thus, information about specific groups is still sparse. Our discussion particular to Indigenous and distinct groups of racially minoritized women is somewhat limited by sparse literature and data.

2. Decolonization is used here to refer to the goal of dismantling the colonial and now neo-colonial rules/codes, hierarchies, and modes of power consolidation, and the prioritization of colonial knowledge and practices embedded within higher education. It involves attention to the realm of the psyche as it is shaped by the aforementioned elements, and to the importance of cultural, political, and economic self-determination.

3. Anti-Black racism comprises structural and interpersonal practices that are discriminatory towards people of African descent according to their particular histories and locations in the rubric of European colonization and racial constructions past and present. These are historical and ongoing societal racist practices that deny people of African descent social, economic, and political opportunities as well as permitting the enactment of structural and interpersonal violence.

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