



VIRTUAL
24HR NACADA CONFERENCE

Say My Name, Say My Name

Black women, Higher Education, and the Politics of Recognition



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Objectives

- Define recognition
- Identify ways that **lack of recognition** manifests for Black women
- Understand ways that lack of recognition can cause harm to **individuals and institutions**
- Explore solutions around improving recognition for Black women



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A Starting Point

The legacy of colonial violence inherent in institutions of higher education means our default position as university admin, faculty, and staff is to reinforce hierarchies of power. Unless and until we commit to learning and implementing practices that thoughtfully and forcefully disrupt unjust systems, we will continue to marginalize the experiences of racialized communities, both students and employees, who are most oppressed by our education systems (Allen & Madden, 2019).



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Say My Name, Say My Name

Say my name, say my name
 If no one is around you
 Say baby I love you
 If you ain't running game.
 Say my name, say my name
 You actin' kinda shady
 Ain't callin' me baby
 Why the sudden change?



Jerkins, F., Rowland, K., Daniels, L.A., Jerkins, R., Knowles, B., Roberson, L., & Luckett, L. (1999). Say my name. say my name. On *The Writings on the Wall* [compact disc]. New York City, NY: Columbia Records.



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Defining Recognition

Verb

1. identify (someone or something) from having encountered them before; know again.
 - identify from knowledge of appearance or character.
 - automatically identify and respond correctly to
2. acknowledge the existence, validity, or legality of.
 - officially regard (a qualification) as valid or proper.
 - show official appreciation of; reward formally.



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"We [Black women] have been as invisible to the dominant culture as rain; we have been knowers, but we have not been known. The paradox is central to what I suggest we call the Afra-America experience (Braxton, 1986)."



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Examples of Recognition

- Pronoun usage
- Timely feedback
- Clear Expectations
- Acknowledgement
- Attentiveness to the individual
- Scholarship/Monetary awards
- 1:1 Check-ins
- Caring (Mann& Dvorek, 2016; Freire, 2000)
- Keep Them Close (Jewell, 2018)



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Locating Black Women in H.E. History

- Slaves Codes (Hines, Hines, & Harrold, 2007)
- Service to Higher Education (Wilder, 2013)
- Learning/Teaching in Secret (Williams, 2005)
- Capital for H.E. institution building (Wilder, 2013)
- Philosophy of Education (Perry, 2003)
- Advocacy for public schooling/ access to higher education (Tutwiler, 2005)



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Locating Black Women in H.E. History

- Black codes
- Education for economic advantage
- Black women enter higher education to lead their community
- Explosive enrollment during early 20th century and continues
- Black women prominent in student-centered Student Services
- Black women continue to be "firsts" in several fields



Jones, T. B., Dawkins, L. S., Glover, M. H., & McClinton, M. M. (Eds.). (2012). Pathways to higher education administration for african american women. Retrieved from <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com>

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Tropes of Black Womanhood

Historical Tropes of Black Womanhood

- Mammy
- Sapphire/ Sassy
- Jezebel
- Strong Woman/ Superwoman
- Angry Black Women

(Patton & Haynes, 2018; Jones & Norwood, 2016)

Emergent Frames of Black Womanhood

- New Model Minority
- Black Girl Magic (Patton & Haynes, 2018)



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Why is Recognition Important?

- Formation of identity
- Identity and value distortion
- Damage (physical and psychological)
- Functions as a mirror for humanity



Taylor, C. (1994). *Multiculturalism: Expanded Paperback Edition*. Princeton University Press.

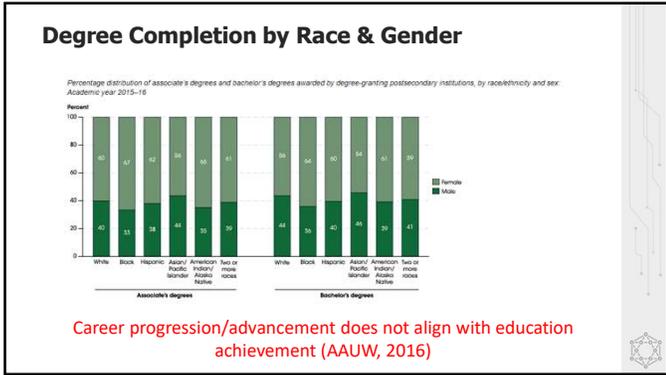
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But why is it political?

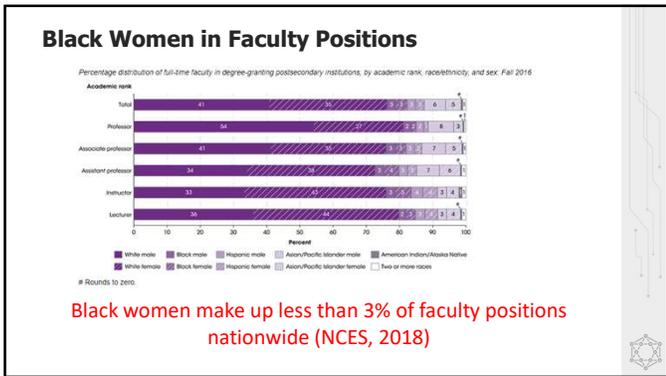
- Exposes our institutions motives
- Reveals the structures we are operating under
- Communicates what we value
- It informs our community and stakeholders of who has power.



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How do Black women experience lack of recognition in Higher Education?

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Student

"The assumption was that I was not trying because I did not attend office hours. What was really happening is that I got tired of defending myself and not being heard."

"I sat in a class and listened to a professor incorrectly introduce my country. When I attempted to add my knowledge to the conversation, I was quickly shut out. How can you teach me about my country? How can you tell me about my life? Your degree is not bigger than my citizenship."

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Staff

"I work part time in my current position. I am here two days a week. When do they schedule the office meetings, on the days that I am not here. When I attempt to get involved outside of my work hours [serving on a committee] this is often met with resistance. But they will use my name if it means positive stats."

"I walk tall and carry data, resources, always. Why? Because you can discount me but not the facts."

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Faculty

"I have a doctorate degree where my research is centered in [content area]and I was told that I am not qualified to teach in a department where no one has a degree in [content area]. When relaying this experience to my supervisor, she offered-I am sure that that is not what was meant. Maybe you just took it the wrong way? You might be feeling the pain of your degree."



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Findings

Regardless of position, institution, or status, common threads were found throughout all participants.

There was no way that the women could outwork lack of recognition. Traditional advancement structures were not necessarily lucrative for Black women.

This is not simply isolated in the United States, evidence of this behavior can be found globally (Rollock, 2019)

Similar themes found in this study are also found in the autobiographies of other Black women in higher education dating back to the 19th century (Perkins,1983; Coppin, 1913; Cooper; 1892)



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Community Solution Building



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Solution Building

- Listen to Black women
- Pass the mic/Amplify the voices/ issues of Black women
- Interrogate the history of your department/ institution
- Creating targeted resources for Black women student groups UNDER/WITH their guidance.
- Examining the hiring/ promotion of Black women faculty and staff.
- Consider the manner in which we craft and examine the contributions of Black women faculty members.



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<http://bit.ly/24hrEval>




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