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Unwritten: young women faculty in educational leadership

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Abstract

Purpose – As women professors of educational leadership who are involved with feminist research and the preparation of k-12 women leaders, the authors came to the realization that while they have dedicated their professional lives to advancing women leaders in the k-12 environment, they have neglected women like themselves, particularly young women, in the academy.

Design/methodology/approach – The authors utilized biographical narrative inquiry to allow readers a window into their lives as young women faculty in departments of educational leadership and extended this to advocate for changes in university climates for women.

Findings – The authors analyzed their narrative data to develop strategies for young women faculty in educational leadership that include: action-oriented mentoring; the valuing of home and person; living within gender, age, and skin; and celebration of youth and womanhood.

Originality/value – This paper is an emergent approach to understanding and facilitating social justice and diversity in higher education based on four young women professors' attempt to find a creative and feminist outlet for the expression of their experiences in the academy. Little to no research exists outside of informal personal reports on young women's experiences in the academy and, thus, is the impetus for the paper.

Keywords Women, Academic staff, Education, Leadership, Narratives

Paper type Research paper

Unwritten: young women faculty in educational leadership

I am unwritten, can't read my mind, I'm undefined
I'm just beginning, the pen's in my hand, ending unplanned (Bedingfield *et al.* (2004)).

As women professors of educational leadership who are involved with feminist research and the preparation of k-12 women leaders, we came to the realization that while we have dedicated our professional lives to advancing women leaders in the k-12 environment, we have neglected women like ourselves, particularly young women, in

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the academy. In our struggle to give voice to k-12 women leaders, we have remained unheard ourselves and began to question why we spend enormous amounts of time pushing limits for other women and fail to do the same for ourselves. This paper is an emergent approach to facilitating social justice in higher education based on four young women professors' sharing of our experiences in the academy. We utilize biographical narrative inquiry (Sanders-Lawson *et al.*, 2006; Shields and Edwards, 2005) to allow readers a window into our lives and make meaning of our stories through a feminist approach. We conclude the paper with ideas and suggestions for young women professors and universities to facilitate academic contexts that celebrate diversity and social justice.

Understanding male privilege and women's oppression in the academy

According to an American Association of University Professors (AAUP) Faculty Salary and Distribution 2003-2004 Fact Sheet, women account for only 38 percent of faculty nationwide. They are most well-represented at community colleges and least represented at doctoral institutions. Among full-time faculty, women are disproportionately represented at lower ranks and least well represented among full professors. Minority women faculty are even more scarce (Wyche and Graves, 1992).

Professional and personal superwomen

> I break tradition, sometimes my tries, are outside the lines.
> We've been conditioned to not make mistakes, but I can't live that way … (Bedingfield *et al.* (2004)).

Although women are expected to adopt the same working patterns as men (Loder, 2005), they are expected to do so under time and "ideal worker" constraints (Mahitivanichcha and Rorrer, 2006) while also being deemed as responsible for family issues (Hochschild, 1989). The division of labor is discouraging for women (Newton *et al.*, 2003) as they are expected to achieve a sense of balance on their own, and many report having trouble balancing increasing work and family responsibilities (Ward and Wolf-Wendel, 2004). Furthermore, according to Cubillo and Brown (2003), women head teachers in the UK reported that their "self-realization appeared to be at cross purposes with their concerns over future domestic status; that is, their 'marriageability'" (p. 286). However, while the requirement to juggle multiple subjectivities and roles is frustrating, many women are raised to live up to these expectations that are enforced by significant others in their lives as well as themselves. Madsen (2007) found that women university presidents found challenging and difficult situations in childhood as precursors to their success. They learned to thrive on competition, obedience, and new knowledge.

Women faculty are less likely to have children compared to women in professions such as law and medicine (Cooney and Uhlenberg, 1989) and only 31 percent of current women faculty have children (Perna, 2001). In their study of women faculty at research institutions with young children, Ward and Wolf-Wendel (2004) found that women participants considered the timing of having children as they keenly watched the tenure clock. Having children made them more efficient and put work into perspective for them, but required them to practice the art of satisficing (Simon as cited in Ward

and Wolf-Wendel, 2004), the act of making decisions and taking actions that are "good enough," but not the best. Wolfinger *et al.* (2008) found that family and children account for the lower rate at which women obtain tenure-track jobs and receive tenure once they have them.

Chilly campus climate

> Reaching for something in the distance,
> So close you can almost taste it … (Bedingfield *et al.* (2004)).

In addition to the struggle of managing their numerous subject positions as wife, mother, caregiver, educational leader, etc. (Grogan, 1996), Sandler and Hall (1986) reported that the climate for women at many higher education institutions is "chilly." Riger *et al.* (1997) confirmed this finding and reported that the proportion of women in the department is related to perceptions of the environment; departments with fewer women are seen by female faculty as more hostile environments.

Women identify overwhelming workload as a problem more frequently than men (Kochan *et al.*, 1999) and receive less support for child care and domestic responsibilities (Myers and Ginsberg, 1994). Acker and Feuerverger (1996) interviewed women faculty members of education and found that their feelings of disappointment in regard to faculty life were related to the inequitable reward system in academic life, feelings of an unequal division of labor, and an expectation that women will take greater responsibility for the nurturing and housekeeping side of academic life.

While the above literature highlights issues on a generalizable scale to all women faculty, little to no research exists outside informal personal reports on young women's experiences in the academy and, thus, is the impetus for what follows.

Feminist research and design of the study

> Drench yourself in words unspoken … (Bedingfield *et al.* (2004)).

Starting research from women's lives allows for more adequate descriptions of lived realities (Harding, 1991). Knowledge is grounded in human experience, and because women are found in every race, class, and culture, feminist research must start from all women's lives (Harding, 1993). We designed an emergent study that allowed us to gain voice through a biographical narrative format (Sanders-Lawson *et al.*, 2006; Shields and Edwards, 2005). According to Safarik (2003):

> Because higher education organizations are essentially people and because these individuals bring their own personal and professional backgrounds to their interpretation of organizational life, narrative approaches may be particularly useful (p. 419).

We wrote our narratives on our own and shared them with one another for feedback and to understand more about one another as people both inside and outside of the academy. We analyzed our narratives to determine when and how the category of gender has been most significant in our lives as women professors and to identify areas where redefinition is needed. We strove to produce knowledge that is emancipatory and politically focused (Bloom and Erlandson, 2003).

Who are young women professors of educational leadership?

Live your life with arms wide open … (Bedingfield *et al.* (2004)).

What follows are our narratives. We offer our voices with the desire of uplifting ourselves, coming to know ourselves and one another better, and allowing others a window into who we are and what we have experienced as young women professors of educational leadership.

Whitney's story

I grew up in a family that was, and is, a nurturing and supportive environment. My parents encouraged me to be whoever I wanted to be and do whatever I wanted to do (hence, I was the only girl on my childhood soccer team while also the "girly" type who was on homecoming court and participated in a pageant … I love my five-inch heels, running shoes, bare feet, and ugg boots equally). I never aspired to be a professor in the academy. I taught kindergarten and first grade for several years, but this came fairly easy to me. So, I attended school at night after long days of teaching to attain a master's degree in leadership because becoming a principal seemed like the next step. Unfortunately, I did not find the k-12 environment accepting of someone who didn't fit the traditional administrator "mold" (i.e. I was told I would never make it because I did not have serious enough hair) and decided to pursue a doctorate while I decided what to do.

My pursuit of a doctorate opened up a new way of thinking and approaching the world. I was encouraged by my mentor and dissertation chair, Margaret Grogan, to pursue a career in higher education, something I had never really considered before. She played a prominent role in my readiness for a role in the academy and an even more significant role in the development of my self-confidence. She buffered me when I wanted to conduct research on women in leadership when this was not acceptable. I was selected to attend the David L. Clarke seminar in spring 2001 at AERA in Seattle, WA and met Danna Beaty, one of the only young women I'd crossed paths with at leadership conferences. We formed a kinship that has served to nurture and support both of our careers and personal lives.

I secured my first university faculty position at Georgia State University immediately after receiving my doctorate. In February 2003, about six months into my new career, my brother was in a car accident in Virginia and sustained a traumatic brain injury. For the rest of the academic year, I flew back and forth between Richmond and Atlanta to fulfill academic and family duties. After 100 days, many spent around the clock at the hospital with my brother, I made the decision not to return to GSU. While several people told me leaving the academy after only a year would ruin my career, it struck me as odd that anyone would think I was really concerned about my career at that point. If you had one opportunity to bring a person back to life, would you walk away?

For the next two years my family and I took on the major responsibilities for my brother's rehabilitation (this meant round-the-clock responsibilities that left no room for the academy). In 2005, my brother's recovery progressed to the point that I could return to the academy. After dropping everything for two years and doing nothing but focusing on my brother's recovery, my self-confidence in regard to my work had plummeted. I was not sure I fit in any more (actually, I was not sure I had ever had in

the first place). Margaret's mentorship through that time was crucial to my academic survival. I secured a position at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia (but commuted from Richmond to share caregiving duties for my brother) and held this position from 2005-2007. I was able to play a role in bringing Karen Crum onto the faculty during that time. She and I developed a kinship, have collaborated on numerous research projects and serve as a support network to one another professionally and personally. It was about this time that I met April Peters at UCEA in San Antonio and formed a connection with her as well.

I joined the faculty at Virginia Commonwealth University in fall 2007 in an attempt to bring my work and home lives back into balance (or at least into the same city). I received tenure in the summer of 2009. I am extremely proud of the academic work that I have accomplished despite living in a constant state of family crisis.

However, that is not to say that I have not been frustrated with some of my experiences in the academy that have included:

- Writing papers with older male colleagues, having done the bulk of the work, and then being told our names as authors should be presented in alphabetical order because everyone knows when names are listed alphabetically, it means the contributions from authors were equal.
- Making countless suggestions in meetings only to be ignored and then have the male colleague sitting next to me repeat my suggestion and be told it is an amazing idea.
- Having to experience the first question I'm asked by students in courses be "Do we have to call you Dr Sherman or can we call you Whitney?"
- Having been told by an older male student that when I wear pants, I do not look very professional.
- Having to hide in a colleague's office from a hyper-sexual male colleague who made countless visits to my office.
- Having a male colleague go from office to office to campaign against my "worthiness" in the academy because we disagreed on an interview candidate.
- Being told by a female colleague that my shoes make me look like a hooker.
- Being screamed at by a male student who said that because I'm a woman, I can't take his brand of intellect.
- Being expected to carry more than my fair share of the load in more than one of the departments I've worked in.
- Being called "Whitney Spears" as a joke behind my back (Get it? Britney Spears) … the list goes on.

Despite all of the roadblocks I have experienced along the way, I am honored to have the opportunity to influence the field of educational leadership and recognize the privileges I experience as a professor in the academy.

Danna's story

In the summer of 1998, I began work on a doctoral degree in educational leadership, intending at that time to pursue a high school principalship. It was then that I met Anita Pankake, a professor in the educational leadership program and a woman that

would become perhaps the single most influential individual in my professional career. She had entered into a research collaboration with the district for which I worked. I became one of the practitioner research partners on the project and began to write, travel and present with her. During this period, I applied for various secondary principalships. I had a small child and believed myself to be placebound by my spouse's business. Unfortunately, the area in which I resided at the time had concerns regarding a young female as the high school principal. Questions regularly encountered in interviews were such as: "What will you do with your child when you have extra-curricular duties?" or "Do you plan to have any more children?" When my district opted to hire the uncertified head football coach, I decided that perhaps I needed a change of pace. With Anita's encouragement, I left my district job and went to the university to work on my dissertation full-time and serve as a research assistant.

Although I initially went to work at the university as an assistant editor for a research journal, I began to take on other responsibilities such as teaching and program director for a foundation. In the spring of 2001, I traveled to Seattle for the David L. Clark Seminar. My research was on women administrators and during the seminar, participants were grouped with other doctoral students with similar research interests. As fate would have it, one of the women in my group was Whitney Sherman whose mentor was Margaret Grogan. My interest in her work initiated a lengthy discussion on women in leadership. Whitney and I were close in age and discovered that we had many common interests, including our desire to enter the academy. Although I gained a great deal of knowledge from the Clark Seminar, the thing that I treasure the most is the friend and colleague that I gained in Whitney. Our friendship has been a great source of strength for me as I have journeyed through personal and professional trials.

I graduated in the fall of that year, continuing to teach as an adjunct and to look for positions in both the public schools and with local universities. The opportunity arose for me to take an Ad Interim Assistant Professorship with my degree-granting institution. It was a good opportunity for me to get some experience as a full-time member of the academy while I developed my research agenda. One year turned into three years. Every year seemed to have a new position open in the department. I applied, was a finalist, yet never was hired in a contract position. I was always offered the one year position again, but always for less money and a new course to develop – or revamp – and teach. In 2005, I decided I would no longer be place-bound. I applied with several state institutions and took a job 250 miles from my home.

My family life had never been ideal. My parents married very young and under difficult circumstances. I was the eldest of three and spent a great deal of time with my maternal grandparents, who were paramount in my personal and academic development. I believe my strength and courage come from my years spent with them. My spouse came from a very influential family in the area and my in-laws believed themselves entitled to direct the course of our lives. My mother-in-law had severe addiction issues and this, and other things, had a profound effect on my family. When I accepted the new position, I bought a new home, packed up my old one and moved myself and my two boys to begin a new life. My husband chose to stay in our previous town and came to visit every other weekend. This was supposed to be a temporary arrangement and he would eventually move to be with us; however, that never happened. In April of 2007, my mother called to tell me that she and my dad were

getting a divorce. I spent the next year basically functioning for her. As I watched her go through this process of grief, I began to see myself in a very similar light. I was in an emotionally empty relationship and asked myself, "what are you doing? Is this the example you want your children to see?" For all intent and purposes I was already a single mother. I filed for divorce. Moving forward is difficult and is often like swimming upstream, but in standing still I was being swept away.

I am a stronger individual today because of the adversities I have faced and overcome in my life. I was granted tenure and promotion in September 2009. This was a huge accomplishment for me. I still find it difficult at times to manage my roles as teacher, researcher, colleague, friend, mother, daughter, etc. Yet, I love my students and my research. I receive great joy from my children and my work. At this point in my career, I aspire to be a more innovative instructor, a more reflective scholar, a stronger role model for my children, a mentor to other young women, a faithful friend and a woman who is true to herself and what she values in life.

Karen's story

I believe a lot of who I am today can be attributed to my upbringing. I grew up in a two parent household with one older brother. My parents were always very supportive and encouraging – instilling in me the belief that I can do anything. Both my parents are retired educators.

In addition to my mother and father, my grandmother was very influential in my life. Her death was very difficult for me and not a day goes by that I do not think about her. My grandmother had a profound impact on me and influenced who I have become. She was a strong woman, but incredibly supportive of her family. My grandmother would listen to me for hours and give sage advice that helped steer my decisions. I can recall her talking about her work before she had children at the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics (NACA) – the predecessor of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). She was so proud of her time there and I always thought it was so sad that she was not able to continue working there, which seemed to be her passion in her younger days. At the time, I could not figure out why she could not have a family and work at the same time. Now I understand discriminatory and generational barriers that prevented women from achieving their own professional goals.

I always knew that I wanted to work in education. At the age of 16 I started working at the school board office and continued there after school and in the summers during my college years. When I graduated from college, I was offered a middle school mathematics job. I had no formal mentoring to speak of during any of my teaching years and struggled my first year to make it through. On top of teaching, I was taking two graduate courses a semester for my master's degree. I finished my master's degree and at the age of 25, became the youngest assistant principal in my school system. I had no formal mentor.

I completed my EdD while I was an assistant principal and applied for positions in higher education. Working in higher education is what I have always wanted to do. It's been an interesting, stressful, rewarding, and sometimes rocky experience working as a faculty member at a university. I was pregnant my first year and delivered in January. I did not take maternity leave and was off for only three days. I spent two days in the hospital, another day at home recovering, and went back to answering

e-mail and responding to students the next day. I resumed teaching two weeks later. While my university adheres to the family medical leave act, I have been told that it is highly frowned upon to request time off from the "tenure clock".

As in my previous two positions in education, I had no formal mentor assigned to me to help me navigate the very new and incredibly different world of academia. I was fortunate to be colleagues with Whitney Sherman who provided mentoring, guidance, and support that helped me get to this point in my personal and professional development.

I feel at times that I am an outsider pushing into a "good ol' boys club". On several occasions I have been told by a male supervisor that he and other administrators had been discussing something revolving around my work, with resulting decisions. I am frustrated by this and feel that if I am going to be "discussed", then I should be given the courtesy of being a part of a conversation involving me and my future work.

I am not the same young, timid, and perhaps idealistic, individual who started out in academia. Even after my short years here at my current institution, I think I have finally found my voice and am able to better speak up for myself and stand up for who I am and what I believe in.

I have struggled to find a balance between my professional and personal life. As a mother of two young children, I feel like people expect me to be everything to everyone. I am very focused on being a professional success, but I do not want this to be at the expense of the relationship between myself and my children. I have to work at odd hours, late at night, early in the morning, so they will not have to be "stuck" in daycare for hours on end. As a professor, my job gives me the flexibility to do this, but it also means that I do not have the chance to have any other outside hobbies or activities. I am still trying to find the balance between work and family. I am not sure there's a perfect solution.

April's story

My journey to the academy is punctuated with experiences of being underestimated and discriminated against based upon race, gender, perceived socio-economic status and age. It is also punctuated by parents who emphasized success. My mother is a college educated teacher. My father is a child of the segregated south and a retired laborer. They emphasized that I was not to be just as good (as the White students), but that to gain my rightful recognition, I had to be better. My father often pointed out that society counted two strikes against me as a Black female.

These lessons propelled me to make several decisions in my route to success. First, it was important that I go to college and beyond. Second, the college I chose was important. I made decisions to get my degrees from some of the most highly ranked institutions of higher learning in the country. In order to be successful, I felt compelled to get as much education as I could, stopping only when I obtained a terminal degree. These choices laid the groundwork for my subsequent professional decisions.

My first job after graduating from college was sixth grade teacher. I chose to become a Teach for America teacher and serve in an under-resourced school. As the youngest teacher in my school, I received mentoring from the Teach for America staff, but very little mentoring from colleagues within my school. I went on to earn a Master's degree in school social work because I felt it was important to have a better grasp of how to handle social issues my students faced.

Upon graduating with my MSW, I helped start a charter school where I served as Dean of Students. I had the opportunity to collaborate with extremely professional, conscientious instructional leaders who forever influenced my approach and perspectives about education. At that point, I decided I wanted to get a PhD in educational leadership and attended The Ohio State University.

While my personal goal was to get my degree and remain a practitioner, the goal of the program was to develop students into researchers who would become university faculty. I did both. After graduating, I became a high school principal in a school I started. At the time I was appointed, I was the youngest sitting high school principal in the district. After serving in the district for three years, I made a career transition to the academy.

Navigating through this as an African American female under 40 has been challenging. I have felt more alone in the academy than in any other profession. While as a principal you may be the only leader in a building, theoretically, everyone has the same or similar interests. Conversely, in the academy, colleagues' interests are varied and the environment promotes isolation and exclusivity.

Patricia Hill Collins suggests that one of the challenges faced by African American females is "surveillance" – being intensely observed. As a new faculty member, I remember several instances of feeling like I was being "watched" by colleagues and weathered comments about how I wear my hair, how I dress, how early or late I was at the office and where I parked in the faculty lot. As a former principal, I was used to people watching what I did regarding decision making or personnel issues, but not regarding personal issues such as where I choose to work (at home or in the office) or what I wore to work. I was puzzled and hurt by these comments. I was extremely uncomfortable with being "watched" in these ways and, as a result, I took great care to keep my private life private and not to get too close to colleagues out of fear that someone would use personal information against me.

I have also struggled with university structures. One example of such a challenge is student evaluations. In speaking with other African American female colleagues, I learned that we are often rated differently from other colleagues by students. At times, we are spoken to differently as well and not afforded the same level of respect. This example was crystallized for me when I was a part of a group of three other young, early career faculty. The group was composed of two males, another female and myself. I was the only person of color in the group. During one of our meetings, the other female member of the group brought up the subject of how we, as new faculty, should ask students to address us in class. She had been asked by her students what they should call her. The males in the group specifically stated that they had asked students to call them by their first names and students had insisted on addressing them with a title (Dr or Professor). Conversely, both women felt we were being subtly challenged by students.

My research focus on women in leadership and the support that they receive or lack has been fueled by my personal experiences. Throughout my career, I have found support and mentoring in unexpected places, but have lacked it in places where I had the expectation of support. Thus, I have learned valuable lessons in the academy as a young, early career, African American female scholar. I use these experiences as a lens through which to conduct research as I continue to make my way through the academy.

Writing the unwritten

> Today is where your book begins,
> The rest is still unwritten (Bedingfield *et al.* (2004)).

This project gave us a reason and the space not only to give voice to our experiences, but to bring enablers (see Philipsen, 2008) and enabling processes to the light. We analyzed our narrative data and drew common elements from our stories together to develop strategies for the young women who follow us. We recognize that this project offers the experiences and perspectives of only four young women professors, so we encourage readers to view our strategies and suggestions as a way of beginning discussions and action-oriented behaviors in educational leadership departments. We also encourage other women faculty to share their stories to include more voices in what we hope will become an ongoing data collection process.

Action-oriented mentoring

One of the most important strategies for increasing the number of women faculty in educational leadership is through the "paying it forward" action of mentoring – one-on-one matching between women graduate students and faculty inside and outside their programs. This must be explicit and women faculty should lead the effort. According to Madsen (2007), the most identified influential individuals in her study of women university presidents were other women. Mandatory university and department support for travel and professional development for women graduate students to network and gain experiences with faculty from across the nation in preparation for future faculty roles might also be provided. However, it is not enough to simply recruit and prepare women to become faculty. It is vital to pair this with strategies for helping women experience success once they have secured a position by providing both formal and informal mentoring for young women faculty members to ensure that one way or another, a good match is made between a noted scholar and a new scholar.

The valuing of home and person

Another personal and political strategy for supporting women in higher education is to provide them opportunities to move seamlessly between their competing home and professional roles. Universities might provide on-campus childcare during all hours and days that faculty are required to work and teach. Institutional flexibility should be the mainstay for those who care for children. However, we argue for the broadening of the conception of family and childcare to include the caring for aging parents or family members who require extensive emergency and ongoing care. The above strategies should radiate from university policies that indicate value for women's work at home. As such, institutions might commit to the regular review of the traditional tenure process and clock. While we have all managed to, or are managing to, successfully negotiate the tenure process under traditional expectations, we believe a frequent review of this process would be beneficial to ensure policies are not outdated or discriminatory.

Living within gender, age, and skin

As we analyzed our narratives, one of the most disturbing themes that emerged was the regular occurrence of hurtful comments or actions directed toward our gender, age, and/or race. Thus, we advocate for mandatory gender and cultural sensitivity

awareness professional development (and ensuing policies) for all faculty and students that sets the tone for all in regard to what behaviors are and are not acceptable. In regard to compensation, one of the most harmful things experienced by women in the academy is the financial devaluing of their work solely based on their gender. Institutions should work to combat this by implementing an annual review of productivity for men and women faculty that is tied to merit raises so that women are equitably compensated. In short, institutional efforts (efforts defined as actions, not lip service) need to become the norm to equalize salaries for men and women faculty.

Celebration of youth and womanhood

As we considered our individual narratives and thought holistically about our experiences, we talked about informal, personal advice to other young women who might follow us in the path to the university setting. We close with this advice in hope that women will celebrate and value themselves to the extent that it pushes them to challenge unwelcoming contexts and chilly climates at universities so that social justice and diversity will become realized and the norm rather than the exception:

- *Be yourself*. Do not be afraid to speak up for yourself, but recognize the unique dynamics within your own university structure.
- *Seek advice from the women who came before you*. Know the stories of other women, so that you are more prepared.
- *Advocate for yourself*. Do not apologize for who you are and the things you have and will accomplish. Promote yourself and actively network yourself.
- *Confront and combat discrimination*. Address conflicts and discrimination with colleagues, students, and university structures directly. If you fail to name a problem, all you can hope for is the status quo.
- *Live your life along the way*. While the tenure process can encourage you to forget that you have a personal life (or ignore it), make sure that you live your life. Life is short and in the end, how many articles you publish will matter very little.
- *Celebrate the things people told you would never happen*. Celebrate the unique gifts that you bring to the academy, thank the people who have helped you get there, and strike a match to the memories of those who tried to keep you down.

Although the push for gender equity began generations ago with the veteran women who came before us and started chipping away at glass ceilings, we, as young women in the academy, are still engaged in the struggle. Our purpose for this paper was to enlighten the men and women among us who take for granted the role and struggle of women who desire to make a difference in the personal and professional lives of themselves, their students, their colleagues and the future generations of educational leaders. We share the trials and triumphs of the journey by writing the unwritten and freely discussing our experiences in the academy to facilitate awareness, and, most importantly, thoughts and actions for change.

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