

The Paradox of Faculty-Student Interactions

Meera E. Deo

Grace, a law professor and participant in the Diversity in Legal Academia study, gushes that she enjoys a “fabulous” relationship with her students.¹ She declares, “I love my students as a general matter. I always have.” After almost a decade in legal academia as one of the few women who are multiracial law professors in the country, Grace has enjoyed “really wonderful” interactions with students at various schools at which she has taught. She looks back at her earliest days of teaching and notes that the students could have responded to her in any number of ways, noting, “Here I am, a practitioner. I’m a person of color. I’m a woman. I look younger than I am.” But she “didn’t know enough to be even concerned about how the students are going to see me.” She is grateful that she created “very close relationships with the two large [doctrinal] classes that I taught” that first year and has continued to maintain close relationships with students.

At times, the connections she forged with students created extra duties for Grace, who was especially close with students who were members of various student organizations. She had “the most contact” with students of color who would approach her to discuss “feeling alienated amongst the student body.” In class, too, Grace’s students are comfortable enough with her and the respectful environment that she cultivates to be “really honest about their feelings,” even occasionally expressing what may be generally unpopular opinions (including

Meera E. Deo, J.D., Ph.D is Professor of Law at Thomas Jefferson School of Law. The author thanks Kristen Tiscione and Melissa Weresh for organizing the 2019 AALS Discussion Group on gender inequity in legal academia, where remarks related to this essay were first presented. Each of the incredible speakers from that session, many of whom are included in this collection, provided contributions to and motivation for this work. Kale Sopoaga, Brittany Nobles, Jillian Kates, and Eva Kobi provided outstanding research assistance. Particularly insightful and helpful feedback came from: Lisa Ikemoto, Osagie Obasogie, and Angela Onwuachi-Willig.

1. The Diversity in Legal Academia (DLA) project is the first formal empirical study of American law faculty covering professors at all stages of their careers and with an intersectional (raceXgender) focus on women of color. The findings presented in this article are drawn from qualitative data from the study, in the form of actual quotes from law faculty participants, using pseudonyms. More information on DLA data and methods are provided in Part I, *infra*. Greater detail is available in the Appendix of MEERA E. DEO, *UNEQUAL PROFESSION: RACE AND GENDER IN LEGAL ACADEMIA* (2019).

saying things like, “[Racial] profiling is reasonable and rational, and why shouldn’t we do it?”).

In spite of these close relationships, Grace receives occasional pushback from particular students. Overall, her student evaluations have been strong, although she notes, “I do get the random comments from students, like, ‘Professor Grace doesn’t like white people,’ as an example.” She says she believes this is because she includes broad racial context in class and encourages students to share their perspectives, whatever they may be. Early in her career, a white male student created an especially appalling situation in class during a classroom conversation about rape. In response to a question that Grace asked him (she later realized, “so he must have planned this”), the student “pulls a noose from under his desk, holds it up, and says because he’s well hung,” creating a tense sexual and racial environment for the entire class, as well as trivializing rape and undermining Grace’s authority. While Grace found it particularly “shocking,” it turned out that she did not have to directly intervene; instead, “the rest of the class put him in his place” and elicited an apology on their own. Although she quickly recovered and the rest of the semester continued without incident, she notes, “I am certain that would have not have happened to another professor,” a white male professor especially. As a young woman of color on a faculty comprised primarily of “older white male professors,” Grace recognizes, “I’m certain that [the students] feel differently when I’m teaching.” She adds, “I’m sure our classrooms are different,” and to confirm this, “students have mentioned that to me, how different [their] class is.”

Grace’s paradoxical experience is common among the few women of color in legal academia, as demonstrated by empirical data from the Diversity in Legal Academia (DLA) study. Most have strong positive relationships with students from all backgrounds. In fact, this accessibility can result in service overload, with constant student meetings and events that are rarely acknowledged or rewarded by colleagues or administrators. Furthermore, the few students who push back in the classroom and on course evaluations not only drain the energy and effort of their female professors of color, but also shroud the learning environment in tension and negativity.

This essay discusses the paradox of student-faculty interactions, beginning with strong connections and reviewing both service overload and pushback. The first part covers basic statistics on law faculty, to illustrate the paucity of women of color in the profession. Background literature drawing from Critical Race Theory and specifically covering intersectionality and privilege is especially useful in framing these experiences. The DLA study is also introduced here, to provide a clear understanding of the methodological approach for this mixed-method project and the data that were collected. Part II of this essay presents empirical data from the DLA study focused on women of color faculty arranged around three themes: 1) strong relationships with students; 2) service overload;

and 3) pushback on evaluations. The essay concludes with solutions to improve the experience for women of color faculty and legal education overall.

I. Framing the Findings

A basic understanding of both the pertinent literature and the relevant data is instrumental in reaching a true appreciation for current challenges in legal education. To grasp the contours of the student-faculty paradox explored in this essay, this section presents statistics on both law faculty and students as well as the little empirical scholarship that exists on faculty diversity and inclusion.

A. Background Data and Literature

According to the most recently published data from the Association of American Law Schools (AALS) in 2009, there are just 771 women of color in legal academia, representing roughly 7.0 percent of the 10,965 individuals who work in some capacity as teachers of legal education.² As a point of comparison, AALS statistics show that 860 are men of color (7.8 percent), while 5090—46.4 percent of all law professors—are white men; whites as a whole comprise a whopping 71.4 percent of all law teachers.³ American Bar Association (ABA) statistics are similar, indicating that women of color comprise 9.6 percent of all law professors, compared with 47.9 percent who are white men.⁴ These figures include not only tenured and tenure-track faculty, but also those with short- or long-term contracts, all adjuncts, visiting, clinical, legal writing, and library faculty—regardless of their status of position. In this sense, the underrepresentation is actually understated if we were to consider solely tenured or tenure-track faculty, where women of color are even less likely to be included.

In spite of these glaring disparities, little empirical research has investigated their causes or the experiences of law faculty of color. Before now, no formal empirical study has centered women of color, collecting survey and interview data to understand the professional and personal experiences of this underrepresented group. Two foundational publications from over thirty years ago set the stage, while two newer publications brought greater attention to the challenges facing women of color faculty. Together, these publications lay the groundwork for the data presented in this essay.

In 1986, the University of San Francisco Law School hosted a symposium featuring the handful of faculty of color teaching throughout the United States

2. The AALS does not host the data anymore. Tables and analysis using previously published AALS data can be found in articles relying on DLA data, including Meera E. Deo, *The Ugly Truth about Legal Academia*, 80 BROOK. L. REV. 943, 962 (2015) (citing Am. Ass'n Law Schools, 2008-2009 AALS Statistical Report on Law Faculty: Race and Ethnicity, AALSFAR.COM, <http://aalsfar.com/statistics/2009dlt/race.html>).
3. *Id.*
4. The data presented here are from 2013, the year that data were collected for the empirical study guiding this essay. It is not much different today. ABA statistics are available online at: *Law School Faculty & Staff by Ethnicity and Gender*, https://www.americanbar.org/groups/legal_education/resources/statistics/statistics-archives/.

at that time and publishing their identity-based and experiential scholarship in a special volume.⁵ Together, those articles highlight not only a lack of numerical representation in legal academia, “documenting how few faculty of color and female faculty existed in the legal academy,” but also “the challenging qualitative experience of the few legal academics of color and women in legal academia.”⁶ Three years later, pioneering law professors of color Derrick Bell and Richard Delgado published findings from the first documented national empirical study of law faculty of color.⁷ Their study revealed a litany of trials for the few people of color who held appointments in law schools, ranging from discrimination in hiring and promotion to hostility from colleagues and students, and even a lack of basic academic support.⁸ The authors deemed it “unlikely that relief will come soon,” yet hoped that “recognition of the magnitude of the problem may one day spur the search for constructive responses.”⁹

Decades later, the plight of underrepresented faculty was again brought to the forefront through two widely different projects. In the path-breaking volume *Presumed Incompetent*, a series of authors explores how race, class, and gender shape academia across the disciplines.¹⁰ The book consists primarily of narrative essays, though empirical research is also included, providing a rich and deeply personal account of the challenges facing underrepresented faculty in various fields. Together, they reveal that a hostile campus climate and institutional bias are pervasive throughout academia.¹¹ Also in 2012, law professor and statistician Katherine Barnes together with law professor and anthropologist Elizabeth Mertz published their first set of findings from a national empirical study of tenured law faculty.¹² Their data revealed specifically that white male faculty are more likely than female faculty to see the tenure process as fair.¹³ The authors

5. See, e.g., Derrick Bell, *Strangers in Academic Paradise: Law Teachers of Color in Still White Schools*, 20 U.S.F.L. REV. 385 (1986); Rachel F. Moran, *Commentary: The Implications of Being a Society of One*, 20 U.S.F.L. REV. 503 (1986); Roy L. Brooks, *Life After Tenure: Can Minority Law Professors Avoid the Clyde Ferguson Syndrome?*, 20 U.S.F.L. REV. 419 (1986).
6. Meera E. Deo, *Looking Forward to Diversity in Legal Academia*, 29 BERKELEY J. GENDER L. & JUST. 352, 367 (2014). For a detailed exploration of these themes, see *id.* at 367-70.
7. Richard Delgado & Derrick Bell, *Minority Law Professors’ Lives: The Bell-Delgado Survey*, 24 HARV. C.R.-C.L. L. REV. 349 (1989).
8. *Id.* at 357-63.
9. *Id.* at 369.
10. PRESUMED INCOMPETENT: THE INTERSECTIONS OF RACE AND CLASS FOR WOMEN IN ACADEMIA (Gabriella Gutiérrez y Muhs, Yolanda Flores Niemann, Carmen G. Gonzalez & Angela P. Harris eds., 2012).
11. For a thorough exploration of these themes in the book, see Deo, *supra* note 6, at 372-75.
12. Katherine Barnes & Elizabeth Mertz, *Is It Fair? Law Professors’ Perceptions of Tenure*, 61 J. LEGAL EDUC. 511 (2012).
13. *Id.* at 516-17 (revealing that 35 percent of women of color professors found the tenure process unfair, compared to 12 percent of white men).

also discussed a number of negative themes that are pervasive throughout the legal academy, from a challenging campus culture to broad-scale implicit bias.¹⁴

B. New Data

With this earlier literature in mind, I created the DLA study.¹⁵ This project empirically investigates the experiences of law faculty utilizing a raceXgender lens to specifically explore intersectional challenges and opportunities for law professors at all stages of the career. The DLA sample consists of ninety-three tenured or tenure-track law professors at AALS-member and ABA-accredited law schools. Through a novel target sample approach, participants were specifically selected to generate a sample that was broadly representative along multiple domains, including: race/ethnicity, gender, tenure status, leadership status, region of the country, selectivity of the school, and more.¹⁶ All participants first completed an online survey that asked basic demographic questions (e.g., tenure status), as well as those related to experiences (e.g., interactions with faculty), preferences (e.g., ultimate career goal), and attitudes (e.g., overall career satisfaction). I then conducted an individual in-depth interview with each research subject, covering a range of issues involving the personal and professional trajectory, from faculty hiring to leadership interest as well as relationships with students, colleagues, family, and friends.¹⁷ I analyzed the quantitative data using Excel and Stata, while Atlas.ti software was used for qualitative data analysis following a detailed coding scheme.

Although the DLA sample is limited to tenured and tenure-track faculty teaching “podium” or “doctrinal” courses, many of the challenges noted in this essay are shared by those teaching legal writing or clinics (whether or not tenured/tenure-track), as other formal surveys have indicated for some time.¹⁸ In fact, this research has implications not only for law professors and law schools, but also for those seeking to make improvements in other academic disciplines, in various realms of legal practice, and for working professionals more generally.

Diversity and inclusion are especially important in legal education. The Law School Survey of Student Engagement (LSSSE), which houses perhaps the largest database involving law students, regularly surveys students about the range of their experiences. Data from that project and others reveals that exposure to diversity improves students’ critical thinking, increases their satisfaction with

¹⁴. *Id.* at 522-24.

¹⁵. DLA received a formal certificate of exemption from Western IRB (on file with author).

¹⁶. For more details on DLA methods, see MEERA E. DEO, UNEQUAL PROFESSION: RACE AND GENDER IN LEGAL ACADEMIA app. (2019).

¹⁷. *Id.* (reproducing the full survey instrument and interview protocol).

¹⁸. The Center for the Study of Applied Legal Education (CSALE) began collecting surveys of clinical legal education in 2007 (more information available at: <http://www.csale.org>). The Clinical Legal Education Association (<https://www.cleaweb.org>) also promotes relevant research and dissemination.

law school, and enhances leadership skills, among other qualities.¹⁹ When we have diversity not just among students in the classroom, but even among those at the podium in the front, opportunities for exposure to new ideas increase further. Stifling this diversity through negative experiences or interactions that affect the broader campus climate affects not only underrepresented faculty of color, but the legal education endeavor as a whole. Similarly, understanding and ameliorating challenges can result in positive outcomes for all involved.

II. Exploring the Paradox

Data from the ninety-three participants in the DLA study is synthesized, analyzed, and presented here to explore the paradox of faculty-student interactions. The actual experiences of faculty are presented in this section, using detailed quotes from individual participants in the DLA study and using pseudonyms to protect anonymity. On the one hand, female faculty of color rave about their students, acknowledging how much they appreciate their hard work and enjoy the vast majority of student interactions. Yet this deep engagement leads to service overload, where female faculty of color are so accessible and open to students that they have little time for the research that is required for advancement. Furthermore, in spite of overall positive interactions, the few (generally white male) students who push back against women of color professors taint the experience overall, taking valuable energy away from teaching, service, and research priorities.

A. Positive Interactions

As a rule, “the vast majority of faculty enjoy positive relationships with students.”²⁰ This is true of how white faculty and faculty of color alike characterize interactions with students from all backgrounds and also how students characterize their relationships with faculty. According to a recent LSSSE Annual Report, a full 93 percent of students from all backgrounds believe their instructors care about their success in law school.²¹ In addition, over three-quarters (76 percent) of law students note that they enjoy “positive relationships” with faculty members.²²

Professors appreciate their students too. As a Middle Eastern professor named Zahra says, “The students are really smart, and I enjoy interacting with them.” Many women of color professors see student interactions as the highlight of their days and their careers. Martha, a Latina law professor, notes that students are “the best part of the job, really,” while a Native American

19. LAW SCHOOL SURVEY OF STUDENT ENGAGEMENT, LOOKING AHEAD: ASSESSMENT IN LEGAL EDUCATION (2014), http://lssse.indiana.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/LSSSE_2014_AnnualReport.pdf.

20. DEO, *supra* note 16, at 56.

21. CHAD CHRISTENSEN & MEERA E. DEO, 2018 LSSSE ANNUAL RESULTS: RELATIONSHIPS MATTER 5 (2019), <https://lssse.indiana.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Relationships-Matter.pdf>.

22. *Id.*

professor named Laura notes that her “relationship with students is one of the best parts about the job.” Especially because there tend to be few women of color on each campus, students from all backgrounds seek them out to create lasting bonds. Imani, a Black scholar, also appreciates that she is “very close to the students,” and especially the Black students on campus who likely see her as a role model and source of inspiration. Some students purposefully seek out individual faculty members throughout their law school careers, as with an Asian American professor named Aisha who boasts, “I have my groupies and they follow me from class to class.” Many female faculty of color who participated in the DLA study are proud recipients of teaching awards, not only those decided by colleagues or committees, but also ones that students themselves vote on. Hannah, a multiracial professor, “was voted on by the third-year class for the Outstanding Professor of the Year,” which felt particularly “amazing” even after winning a separate teaching award a few years earlier that had been determined by a faculty committee.

B. Service Overload

Because female faculty of color are seen as accessible and approachable, and because they genuinely enjoy interacting with students, they tend to spend a significant amount of time on this one aspect of the job. For students, creating connections with faculty may seem like an integral part of law school. For instance, a majority (53 percent) of women students spend less than five hours per week engaged in social or leisure activities; slightly more than half (51 percent) are running on empty, sleeping less than six hours per night.²³ Nevertheless, women students (51 percent) are more likely than men (40 percent) to use email to frequently communicate with faculty, and also more likely “to engage in ongoing and frequent conversations with faculty and other advisors about career plans or job search activities.”²⁴

This high level of interest in meeting with faculty creates extra service obligations for faculty of color, whom “[s]tudents of color and white students alike report [as] more accessible than whites,” and for “female faculty [who] tend to engage students more than male faculty.”²⁵ Not surprisingly, the service contributions that women of color faculty make to students extend far beyond the classroom and exceed what most of their white and male colleagues invest. As a Black professor named Kayla says, “I bear the disproportionate impact, the brunt, of service to students of color.” Many women of color faculty not only hold frequent meetings with individual students, but also advise student groups, serve on diversity committees, and participate in student-led events on campus. A multiracial professor named Jane is representative in that she

23. MEERA E. DEO AND CHAD CHRISTENSEN, 2019 LSSSE ANNUAL RESULTS: THE COST OF WOMEN’S SUCCESS 10 (2019), <https://lssse.indiana.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/LSSSE-AnnualSurvey-Gender-Final.pdf>.

24. *Id.* at 6.

25. Meera E. Deo et al., *Struggles & Support: Diversity in U.S. Law Schools*, 23 NAT’L BLACK L. J. 71, 87 (2010).

prioritizes students ahead of other commitments, noting that while she has set office hours, she also meets with students at other times that are convenient to them: “It wasn’t that they couldn’t make my office hours, they just wanted to meet with me privately.” Students tend to be more comfortable with faculty who initiate context in the classroom; previous research has documented how women of color faculty are more likely than their white male colleagues to include even sensitive real-world topics to help elucidate what can be otherwise abstract black letter law.²⁶ This gives students another opening to seek them out. For instance, a multiracial professor named Haley notes, “I get a lot of women coming into my office complaining about sexual harassment, stalking, or domestic violence they are experiencing.” They confide in her more than in her white male colleagues because Haley discusses these real-life issues in her first-year course, while some other faculty teaching criminal law do not. Many women of color professors genuinely enjoy participating in service work with students. Gabrielle appreciates as “an opportunity” the time she spends with students, and especially enjoys the privilege “to mentor African American students,” who must remind her of herself. It is her choice to “spend a lot of time,” and the investments she makes in the students, she notes, “are personally rewarding for me.” Yet while women of color pick up the slack to spend extra time with students, their colleagues are using the time this frees up for them to work more diligently on research, writing, and publishing—the very things that most schools prioritize for tenure, promotion, and even financial reward.

C. Pushback on Evaluations

Furthermore, while the vast majority of women of color law professors enjoy positive interactions with the vast majority of their students from all backgrounds, they nevertheless experience pushback from the few that perhaps presume them incompetent and expect the professor to prove her worth or value. This can have truly devastating effects for women of color applying for tenure or promotion, as many who are not awarded tenure are told their denial is based on deficient student evaluations.

Virtually every woman of color in the DLA sample recounted receiving student evaluation comments over the course of her career that had nothing to do with teaching, but instead exhibited hostility toward women of color in positions of authority and focused on the professor’s personal appearance, physical style, and even dress, hair, or mannerisms. Annie, a seasoned Asian American professor, continues to endure her share of negative evaluation comments, including some that are illogical and others that are laced with raceXgender bias. For instance, she shares, “I had two students this semester who wrote, ‘She teaches too many Supreme Court cases,’” though it would be impossible to teach her first-year doctrinal course without including numerous Supreme Court cases. She recalls another comment stating, “‘She flips her hair over her shoulder too much.’ And actually I’m not a coquettish person. I really don’t know how to

26. Meera E. Deo et al., *Paint by Number? How the Race and Gender of Law School Faculty Affect the First-Year Curriculum*, 29 CHICANA/O-LATINA/O L. REV. 1, 32-33 (2010).

flirt. And I think this student was interpreting me as being flirtatious." The sexualization of women of color professors, including misinterpreting classroom body language from a female Asian American professor as flirtatious rather than seeing her as the scholar that she is, perpetuates the presumption of incompetence.²⁷ Furthermore, women of color deemed "unattractive" are also more likely than white women or men from any background to be penalized on evaluations. Carla, a Latina, laughs this off, noting, "I know my hotness factor is low [laughing], but that's another element on which I get graded: Am I 'attractive.'" Yet this can have serious effects on a career trajectory when less-than-stellar evaluations are used to prevent advancement for women of color professors.²⁸

A Latina professor named Lola was denied promotion based on what her dean called "polarized" student evaluations. Lola recalls that these evaluations included "some racist, mean comments," including ones that were "really inappropriate," and "very personal [as well as] unrelated to my teaching," and with no constructive criticisms or suggestions for improvement. A Black professor named Trisha also received evaluations that included "inappropriate personal comments about my appearance." Sometimes the comments veer from simply inappropriate to outright offensive. A Black professor named June recalls from early in her teaching career: "I remember this statement: 'I know we have to have affirmative action, but do we have to have this woman?'" Clearly, there is nothing June or other women of color can learn from these

27. This student perception may draw from media-promoted stereotypes of Asian American women as sexy and submissive. See, e.g., CHRISTINA B. CHIN, MEERA E. DEO, FAUSTINA M. DU CROS, JENNY JONG-HWA LEE, NORIKO MILMAN & NANCY WANG YUEN, *TOKENS ON THE SMALL SCREEN: ASIAN AMERICANS AND PACIFIC ISLANDERS IN PRIME TIME AND STREAMING TELEVISION* (2017), <http://www.aapisontv.com/uploads/3/8/1/3/38136681/aapisontv.2017.pdf>.
28. White women and other non-traditional/marginalized faculty have some similar experiences with extra scrutiny given to their physical appearance in the classroom. A white lesbian named Sydney has had her share of comments about her style. One in particular stands out: "I was younger, female, and gay. So my evaluations included mean things about . . . the way that I dress: 'She makes herself gender neutral and that's offensive.'" Many scholars have noted the racial and gender effects of student evaluations, including Sylvia Lazos, *Are Student Teaching Evaluations Holding Back Women and Minorities?: The Perils of "Doing" Gender and Race in the Classroom*, in *PRESUMED INCOMPETENT: THE INTERSECTIONS OF RACE AND CLASS FOR WOMEN IN ACADEMIA* 164 (Gabriella Gutiérrez y Muhs, Yolanda Flores Neimann, Carmen G. González, and Angela P. Harris, eds. 2012); Linda Greene, *Tokens, Role Models, and Pedagogical Politics: Lamentations of an African American Female Law Professor*, 6 BERKELEY WOMEN'S L.J. 81 (1990-1991); Daniel S. Hamermesh & Amy M. Parker, *Beauty in the Classroom: Instructors' Pulchritude and Putative Pedagogical Productivity*, 24 ECON. EDUC. REV. 369 (2005); William Arthur Wines & Terence J. Lau, *Observations on the Folly of Using Student Evaluations of College Teaching for Faculty Evaluation, Pay, and Retention Decisions and its Implications for Academic Freedom*, 13 WM. & MARY. J. WOMEN & L. 167 (2006); Meera E. Deo, *A Better Tenure Battle: Fighting Bias in Teaching Evaluations*, 31 COLUM. J. GENDER & L. 7 (2015).

student evaluations and also nothing helpful they provide June's colleagues in terms of evaluating her teaching effectiveness.

III. Looking Forward

There are both individual strategies and structural solutions that faculty, administrators, and policymakers should apply to unravel the paradox of student-faculty interactions and create a more equal profession for law faculty from all backgrounds. A Black professor named Susan applied an individual approach to counter what she considered "abysmal" teaching evaluations. She recalls students "called me racist [simply because] I talked about race and from their perspective talking about race meant that you were racist, you shouldn't be talking about that." She developed a strategy to offset the student evaluations:

I invited all of my colleagues to come and sit in on my classes unannounced as often as they would like, [saying,] "Come any time, come unannounced, you can have access to all of my syllabus, course materials, everything, just come any day, multiple times, as many people as wanna come. I don't have a problem with it."

Susan was willing to forgo prior notice of who would attend on which day (a common courtesy extended to faculty being observed) because she "didn't want them to say, 'Oh, well, you knew we were coming so you prepared extra well,'" as an explanation for why her colleagues gave her "excellent evaluations" far surpassing those she received from the students. While Susan "wanted everybody" from her faculty to attend her class, she sought out "people who had the reputations of being the most critical of teaching when they observed. I wanted those people, and I got them." Her individual strategy for success paid off. Susan asserts, "I'm confident that having that as the counterbalancing narrative in my tenure file was the only way I got promoted."

While these individual strategies can mitigate some damage, they are not sufficient. With structural challenges creating and sustaining the paradox of student-faculty interactions, only structural solutions can truly counteract them. First, law schools should recognize and reward service—by providing financial compensation for going above and beyond expected duties or those required equally of all faculty, or with a trade-off for scholarship or teaching if some focus more on serving students than others. Melissa, a Native American professor, reminds us that "there definitely has to be recognition for all the many roles often women of color play in the law school," especially because so many women of color faculty are deeply invested in "the advising and the retaining students role, [which] is completely undervalued, and the role modeling is another big one." From her perspective, many institutions follow a model where "the law school is viewed as a commercial venture or status-creating machine." As a result, faculty who see it as their personal mission "to genuinely care and support this next generation of lawyers aren't in line with what the majority of the faculty think the law school is." Those investing in students are therefore less likely to be rewarded for the time, energy, and effort spent on this extra service. Cindy,

an Asian American professor, proposes tying financial rewards to service related to students and other extra committee responsibilities, to parallel the way that many schools connect bonuses to scholarship; she asks, “[W]hen we’re doing this kind of work, why don’t we get compensated for it in the way that writing an article that lands at *Yale Law Journal* gets compensated?” Creative solutions like these are needed to clearly demonstrate a commitment to the service burden disproportionately carried by female faculty of color.

Furthermore, administrators should take the lead in educating faculty, staff, and even students about the effects of both overt and implicit bias in the classroom and beyond. Certain students who have never before seen a woman of color in a position of authority over them may push back against female faculty of color or rely on a presumption of incompetence to make them prove their worth. To ensure greater equality in the classroom and elsewhere on campus, administrators can hire experts to conduct trainings with students so they can understand how to vigilantly attend to their own behaviors in class, and also teach faculty and staff how to recognize and counteract bias. Marisol, a Latina professor, has seen from experience that students push back because they think “they can get away with it.” She believes that when students challenge female faculty of color, it is incumbent on the administrators and faculty at the school to “recognize that students may be pushing you in a different way because you’re a female or you’re a person of color or you’re both.” When the law school as an institution “allows them to do that without looking at the ‘why,’ then you have a lot more problems I think than if you have an institution that will support you and listen to you to determine [why this happens].” Marisol wants all scholars to recognize that if women of color professors are not in line with what the students expect, students may punish these faculty with unfair comments on evaluations. When faculty colleagues and administrators read these biased evaluations, Marisol suggests we ask ourselves what exactly the evaluations measure: “Do your evaluations suck because you suck as a teacher or is there something else going on?” If we ignore this critical intervening question, and avoid reaching a reasonable response, Marisol is correct that people of color will continue to “get hired, but then they’re not supported and people don’t try to understand what other things are going on and how we can we protect this person so they can grow as a teacher and a scholar and get tenure in the future.”

Finally, schools must create campus environments that are conducive to respectful teaching and learning. Many DLA participants suggest that schools focus on diversity not only at the hiring stage, but throughout the career trajectory. As an Asian American professor named Vivian notes, “[P]eople have to deal with their own institutional bias and their own subconscious bias” to create a culture of inclusiveness on campus. Because the campus is both a place of study and a workplace, it should not only follow the basic laws that govern both sectors, but also institute and enforce norms involving appropriate behavior and expression. Schools must create and seek compliance with the supportive policies necessary to sustain women of color professors and keep them on the path to success. Grace perhaps explains it most clearly and succinctly:

Value [women of color professors] the way you value the white male colleagues. Treat them in that same way, give them the space to do scholarship versus spend all this time to do service. Understand evaluations . . . are subjective and affected by race, gender, [and] sexual orientation.

This is the best way forward for a diverse and inclusive legal academy.