

the Post-Soul South (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014); “Forum: What’s New in Southern Studies, And Why Should We Care?” *Journal of American Studies* 48: 3 (August 2014): 691-733.

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DWAYNE MACK, ELWOOD D. WATSON, AND MICHELLE MADSEN CAMACHO, EDs. *Mentoring Faculty of Color: Essays on Professional Development and Advancement in Colleges and Universities* (Jefferson, North Carolina: MacFarland and Company, Inc., 2012). 220 pp., \$45.00 paper.

Looking back at my graduate school years, the most vital mentorship I received came in the form of sometimes brutal, but often measured honesty from a small set of trusted advisors and advanced graduate students. Their guidance was critical to my journey because they talked openly about the obstacles they faced in navigating work/life balance, spoke candidly about dealing with unsupportive colleagues, and relayed freely the challenges they encountered in their attempts to gain legitimacy as academics or scholars-in-training. In short, much like the earnest insight shared by the authors of *Mentoring Faculty of Color: Essays on Professional Development and Advancement in Colleges and Universities*, they avoided clichés and other platitudes—they “kept it real.”

In this timely collection of first-person essays, underrepresented faculty and administrators discuss their personal experiences on the road to achieving tenure. Each author effectively links their own ethnic identities to the broader “how to’s” to achieving the benchmark moments central to their professional development. Indeed, an important strength of the collection is the breadth of issues that they address along the way. Getting tenure is not just about publishing—and this is especially the case for Faculty of Color. Notably, they must also develop effective teaching strategies, deal with disrespectful or discriminatory attitudes by students, colleagues, or administrators, and serve as the “diversity” go-to person for campus and community events.

One of the greatest strengths of this collection is its attention to action and honesty. Judith Liu’s open letter on how to succeed in academia is an excellent example of raw insight that combines strategies for professional success while not losing your soul along the way. In outlining how to avoid the three Ds—depression, disillusionment, and despair—common attributes for academics—she advises to be cognizant

of time and avoid giving the short shrift to family and friends. Junior faculty are often more susceptible to the time trap of committee work. We will feel obligated, she tells us, especially when it comes to being asked to be part of a diversity-based committee. Instead of immediately responding yes or no, explain to all those who ask that you must first clear this request with the department chair. This strategy gives you the opportunity to pause and think about whether or not this service commitment is doable given your schedule.

Work obligations and circumstances are also shaped by gender. Michelle Camacho's essay tackles the cultural contradictions that Women of Color mothers face in academia—some departments are welcoming spaces for pregnant women or women with small children and others are not. However, this is not where the challenges end. Broader college and university institutional structures, in her words, “fall short” when it comes to dealing with the intersections of motherhood, race, and the tenure track. Notably, she cites a Cornell University study that found that by adding that a job candidate has a young child led to the perception that the applicant was less competent than childless interviewees. Such judgments are not only compounded by race, but also translate into significant wage differentials. Hidden workloads and microaggressions abound—when Women or Men of Color seek out or make the case for flexible family-leave, they are often viewed as demanding special privileges. Women must learn to live in the “mommy closet” and censor frank discussion about the difficulties and joys associated with motherhood.

I learned a great deal from the advice offered in this collection. There is something very empowering about knowing that you are not alone with your anxieties, and in some cases, your experiences. That said, I wondered about the often under-recognized intersections of race, mental health, and academic life. Perhaps this lends itself to an entirely different project, one that might have been addressed in a formal conclusion that identified areas that merit closer attention. Another blind spot relates to a discussion of the experiences of queer Faculty of Color. What are some of the distinct challenges they face? What advice might senior faculty offer in the job search process and then later on the tenure track? These points, however, do not take away from the strengths, timeliness, and importance of the collection—critical insight that will undoubtedly help countless scholars-in-training better manage their journeys through academia.

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