Work should not be killing us: Understanding the racial battle fatigue minefield for black women in higher education

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Racial Battle Fatigue (RBF) has been operationalized as the cumulative psychological, physiological, and behavioral effects of racial aggressions on individuals from marginalized groups. These micro-level and macro-level aggressions have been the focus of discussion and debate at historically white colleges and universities since the 1960s when equity in higher education became a national priority because of the civil rights movement and the introduction of Critical Race Theory (CRT). Faculty teaching in Library and Information Science (LIS) programs are not exempt from RBF. In fact, there have been several testimonials of bias and racism by LIS faculty who represent marginalized populations in recent years. Research on RBF, particularly during this current politically charged climate of hate and bias adds to our understanding of the ways in which racism, in various forms, affects Black women faculty. Applying CRT, RBF, and Black feminist theoretical frameworks, the purpose of this paper is to provide a follow up to "*Racial Battle Fatigue: The unspoken burden of Black women faculty in LIS*" which was published in the *Journal of Education for Library and Information Science* in 2019. It helps us to further understand the experiences of Black women faculty in higher education.

Keywords: Racial Battle fatigue, black feminism, critical race theory, LIS, higher education, black women faculty

1. Introduction

Since publishing, *Racial Battle Fatigue: The unspoken burden of Black women faculty in LIS* (Chancellor, 2019) five years ago, so much has occurred in the world. We have witnessed an insurrection on the United States Capitol by a mob of supporters of the former president, who vandalized, looted and spewed racist tropes. There has been surge of hate, racism, intolerance, and an outright attack on Critical Race Theory (CRT). From the killings of countless defenseless Black people by police officers to protests and rallies against Asian American hate, and mass shootings in a supermarket in Buffalo, New York and Robb Elementary school in Uvalde, Texas, and others. We have endured a global pandemic – COVID-19, amid a highly contagious respiratory virus that not only exposed racial and socio-economic inequalities, but it also allowed citizens who were home in quarantine to witness the murder of George Floyd by Minneapolis police officers.

It is unclear why protests to Floyd's death ignited a nationwide movement, especially since police brutality has been a contentious issue in the Black community

Table 1
Ethnicity and race of full-time LIS faculty, ALISE statistical report 2023

Ethnicity and race of full-time faculty in LIS	
American Indian or Alaskan Native	0.3%
Asian	15.4%
Black or African American	4.7%
Hispanic	2.7%
International	2.7%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	2.6%
Race or Ethnicity Unknown	12.6%
White	58.2%

since enslavement. Interestingly, there was no national attention given when Breonna Taylor, a young medical worker was murdered when Louisville police officers forced entry into her home and fatally shot her two months prior to Floyd's death. Four years after the murder of Floyd, police reform remains stagnant, and much has not changed. Data from 2017–2024 indicate that fatal police shootings in the U.S. have steadily increased (Statista, 2024). In 2023, there were 1,163 police shootings that led to fatalities. African Americans account for the highest rate among all ethnic groups with 6.1% of fatal shootings per million of the population per year between 2015 and May 2024 (Statista, 2024). The mistreatment and unprovoked killing of Black people by law enforcement have led to grassroots organizing like BlackLivesMatter and #SayHerName (Crenshaw et. al., 2015). The latter was created by the African American Policy Forum to highlight the gender-specific ways in which Black women are disproportionately affected by deadly acts of racial injustice. Racial tensions have escalated over the past five years, and African Americans are exhausted and beyond fatigued by the racism that is witnessed and/or experienced in their everyday life. In July 2024, the nation was once again traumatized when they watched a police-released video of a sheriff's deputy fatally shooting Sonya Massey, a 36- year- old Black woman who called 911 for assistance to what she thought was an intruder in her Illinois home (Johnson, 2024).

In academia, microaggressions, inequitable treatment, and outright racism often leads to trauma for Black women. It often is in the workplace where Black women are arguably most vulnerable. They are supervised by white men and women and junior faculty without tenure often wonder if speaking up about their experiences will jeopardize them receiving tenure. Black women faculty on the tenure track or up for promotion may also encounter the intersection of the burden of care and cultural taxation (Chesley & Anantachai, 2018). Cultural taxation is the weight placed on individuals from marginalized groups to educate others about their culture, experiences, and perspectives, often without adequate compensation or recognition. This phenomenon often leads to RBF with more severe consequences. The death of Lincoln University's Antoinette Candia Bailey is an example of the struggle some Black women experience in academia. Bailey who was a professor and vice president of student affairs died by suicide on January 8th of this year after being terminated after

accusing the president of the university of bullying, harassment, and discrimination. Although an independent investigator found the claims "unsubstantiated" Bailey documented in an email, which included screenshots of text communications, and web links alleging failed communications, a lack of professionalism and inappropriate behavior by senior administration. She also detailed grievances she had with the university president, claiming mismanagement and discrimination (Asmelash, 2024).

Two Black women university presidents – JoAnn Epps (Temple University) and Orinthia Montague (Volunteer State Community College) unexpectedly died in September 2023 due to what many of their colleagues believed was "the impact of chronic work stress, racism and sexism contributed to their untimely deaths given their unique roles as Black women at the highest level of leadership in academia" (Thomas, 2023, np). Harvard's first Black President, Claudine Gay, undoubtedly endured tremendous stress when she was confronted with fierce criticism on the university's response to the Hamas attack on Israel and a backlash to her congressional testimony that led to allegations of her academic integrity. She resigned in January of this year, just six months after being installed Harvard's 30th president. Last year's Supreme Court ruling which effectively ended race-based affirmative action in higher education along with the closure of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) offices on campuses across the nation, DEI efforts that often serve as a system of support for Black women faculty have been significantly diminished. Opponents of this law believe that the court's decision could make it illegal for private employers to consider race, sex, or other protected characteristics when making employment decisions. This could prevent diversity initiatives like reserving hiring or promotion slots for underrepresented groups (Martinez-Alvarado, 2023). With very few resources to assist Black women faculty experiencing stress at work, university administrators must actively prioritize and address these issues. This paper employs a multi-theoretical lens: Black feminist theory, Critical Race Theory and Racial Battle Fatigue to aid in our understanding of the experiences of Black women faculty.

Research on the experiences of faculty of color in Library and Information Science (LIS) is well documented in the literature (Weems, 2003; Cora-Bramble, 2006; Chou & Pho, 2018; Pho & Chou, 2017; Epps, 2008; Swanson, Tanaka & Gonzalez-Smith, 2018). LIS scholars (Ceja, et.al, 2017; Hill, 2019; Chancellor, 2019; Gibson, 2019; Colon-Aguirre, 2019; Cooke & Sanchez, 2019; Cooke & Kitze, 2021; Mehra, 2019; Irvin, 2019) have written about the challenges they experience. However, most of these works were not characterized as RBF, examined from a Black feminist context, or a critical race lens. Approximately, 2% of LIS publications contain terms related to inequality, and racism from underrepresented communities.

Anthony Dunbar (2023) reminds us that although there has been some progress made on CRT discourse within LIS scholarship, there is still much work to be done. Despite these efforts, LIS related research on Black women's experiences in higher education remains low (Mongeon, et al, 2021). Given the recent deaths of Black women faculty, the documented past of how Black women have been treated in higher education, including LIS, this paper fills a necessary void on this topic and contributes to a growing body of literature in this area.

2. Black feminism

To fully understand the Black American woman, one must begin with slavery, because it is where her existence in the United States was conceived and defined in that context. Black feminism arose during this era as a way for enslaved African American women to understand their position within a system of oppression-racism and patriarchy. Simply stated, "black feminism is an intellectual, artistic, philosophical, and activist practice grounded in black women's lived experience" (Peterson, 2019, np). Early feminist pioneer SoJourner Truth used her voice to represent an early expression of Black feminist tradition. Truth, a former slave delivered her renowned speech at the 1851 Women's Rights Convention in Akron. Ohio, known as, "Ain't I a Woman?" in which she highlighted the differences in the treatment of elite white women and working-class women of color. She further, "challenged the sexist imagery used by male critics to justify the disenfranchisement of women" (Crenshaw, 1, p. 153). Sadly, the disparity of treatment of virtually every other demographic including white women still exist today. However, Black women are hired and promoted more slowly, they are often the only woman of color in the room, and they usually experience a greater variety of aggressions than women of other ethnicities (Lloyd, 2020). They are also paid less than men and most other groups of women. Key findings from the 2020 American Association of University Professors (AAUP).

Data on *Full-time Faculty and Faculty of Color Snapshot Report* indicate that salaries of full-time women faculty are approximately 81.2% of men's and among tenured or tenure-track faculty members, women earn 82.4% of what men earn (Colby & Fowler, 2020). Although the report does not specifically provide data by race and ethnicity (neither does ALISE; who collects annual data on LIS programs), the authors, contend, "Given the lack of URM (underrepresented minorities) individuals at the higher academic ranks, particularly among women, we can infer the existence of a racial pay gap overall" (Colby & Fowler, 2020, p. 11).

As part of the feminist movement, the modern women's rights movement sought equal rights and opportunities for women worldwide. It advocated for their social, legal, political, and economic rights equivalent to men. There were multiple waves of movement. However, it was not until the late nineteenth century that efforts for women's equal rights coalesced into a conscious series of movements. The first wave began in 1848 with the Seneca Falls convention, which called for women's right to vote and equal treatment under the law. This wave eventually led to the ratification of the 19th amendment, granting women the right to vote and declaring that they had the same rights as men.

Unfortunately, this did not apply to African American women. Black women who faced even greater discrimination and marginalization in many areas of life, including workplace and voting rights, were often relegated to low-paying jobs, and Jim Crows laws prevented them from working in higher-paid jobs reserved for men. They were also excluded from many women's suffrage organizations and activities, and often marched separately from white women parades. Even after the 19th amendment gave

women the right to vote, white suffrage groups did not support Black women's efforts to fight discriminatory state laws that prevented them from voting (Bailey, 2022). Black women were not permitted to vote until the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Inspired by the civil rights movement and protests of the Vietnam War, the second wave of women's rights emerged in the 1960s and 1970s and focused on issues of equality and discrimination. Led by middle-class white women, these second-wave feminists advocated for ending sexual discrimination, equal pay and reevaluation of traditional gender roles. Black feminism evolved with the second wave of America's women's movement in the late 1960s, making the 1970s a defining decade for contemporary Black feminism (Bailey, 2022).

Significant strides towards equality for Black women was quite an achievement given that they were not seen as financial contributors to the household but rather as supportive spouses whose main role was to perform domestic duties. In the nineteenth century, opportunities to attain education were limited. Single Black women who were able to attend college and work outside of the home were *normal* schoolteachers – which was one of the only career options afforded to them at the time. Many Black women in the labor force were excluded from white-collar jobs due to racial and gender discrimination. By 1910, 84.7% of African American women worked in agriculture, domestic, and personal services (Greene and Woodson, 1930; Amott and Matthaei, 1996). Compared to other women in the United States, Black women have always had the highest levels of labor market participation. In 1880, 35.4% of married Black women and 73.3% of single Black women were in the labor force compared with only 7.3% of married white women and 24.8% of single white women (Banks, 2019).

Oppression, racism and sexism or what Kimberlé Crenshaw coins Intersectionality occurs when African American women become subordinate, and it is enforced by white and Black men as well as white women. She asserts, "Because of their interdependence, they combine to have a devastating affect beyond just racism and sexism independently. The experience of being a Black woman, then, cannot be grasped in terms of being Black or of being a woman but must be illuminated" (Crenshaw, 1989, p.151). Crenshaw (1989) describes this framework in her groundbreaking work, *De-marginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Anti-discrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics.* She conceptualizes "intersectionality" as the way multiple oppressions are experienced. She further asserts, "that each identity – being Black and being female – should be considered independently, but also for their interaction effect, while understanding that intersecting identities deepen and reinforce one another, and potentially lead to aggravated forms of inequality.

3. Critical race theory

As an analytical framework that examines existing power structures based on white privilege and white supremacy (UCLA, 2020), CRT provides a theoretical lens to

examine and understand the persistent racism underlying the social inequities that have been thrust upon Black people in the United States. It is a critical perspective for us to use as it highlights the role of race and racism in contexts where pervasive and overt forms of structural and interpersonal racism are not sanctioned by society.

CRT helps us to understand that the dehumanizing and killing of Black people are key aspects of a racialized America - a society that has institutionalized and normalized such behavior (Coates, 2015). It also offers insight into the experiences of Black women faculty. Specifically, how racist views may factor into perceptions of research interests, tenure and promotion decisions, course evaluations, opportunities for senior leadership and the like. Michael Nietzel (2024) reports on an unpublished study by Christiane Spitzmueller et al., that found that Underrepresented Minority (URM) faculty received 7% more negative votes in tenure and promotion committee decisions than their non-URM peers.

Inspired by leading thinkers such as Martin Luther King, W.E.B Du Bois and Malcolm X, CRT was first introduced during the civil rights era of the 1960s and draws from literature that sought to study and transform the relationship between race, racism, and power (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). It explores how the law and legal institutions function to perpetuate oppression and exploitation and can be further extended to shed light on unfair treatment of African American faculty by providing a foundation for understanding the historical racialized experiences of Black people in the United States (Aymer, 2016). CRT advances theoretical understandings of the law, politics, and other disciplines that focus on the efforts of white people to maintain their historical advantages over people of color. Furthermore, CRT considers the influence that white supremacy has had on the American mindset (Crenshaw et al., 1995; Crenshaw, 2011).

CRT is characterized as the following: 1) the primacy of racism and race in the United States; 2) a questioning of the notion of neutrality, objectivity, colorblindness and meritocracy in laws and social interactions; 3) questioning of ahistoricism of the racialized order; 4) a commitment to social justice; 5) the centrality of experiential knowledge; and 6) a multidisciplinary perspective (Crenshaw, 2011; Solorzano et al., 2000). A core principle of CRT is that racism is entrenched in American society and works to administer benefits and disadvantages to individuals through the construction of race (Bonilla-Silva, 2015).

Since 2020, CRT has been the object of extreme and often misguided, national debate. A leading critic of the theory is former President Donald Trump, who issued Executive Order 13950 on Sept. 22, 2020, just a few months before losing reelection. While the order did not name critical race theory per se, it attempted to challenge its underpinnings and sounded an alarm about its impact. The order purported to "combat offensive and anti-American race and sex stereotyping and scapegoating." It warned that some beliefs about racial and sexual identity were a "malign ideology ... now migrating from the fringes of American society and [threatening] to infect core institutions of our country." This ignited federal officials in conservative states to ban textbooks and curricula that involves race or racism. This presents tremendous

challenges for Black women educators who teach history, African American studies, critical studies, English, Math, etc.

Public institutions like universities often reflect existing trends in the larger society. "Despite the metaphor of the "ivory tower," universities have always intersected with the society in which they are domiciled and have, to a certain extent, changed with society, culminating in the contemporary post-modern university" (Siemens & Matheos, 2022). In fact, scholars have shown that the larger racial and sociopolitical environment has an influence on college campuses (Hurtado, et al., 1998; Stokes, 2020; Van Dyke & Tester, 2014). Race, sexual orientation, and religion are highly motivating factors for hate crimes on university campuses. According to a report from the National Center for Education Statistics:

> "Race, sexual orientation, and religion were the top three categories of motivating bias associated with hate crimes at postsecondary institutions in 2018. Approximately 80 percent of the total reported on campus hate crimes in 2018 were motivated by these three categories of bias. Race was the motivating bias in 43 percent of reported hate crimes (347 incidents), 1) while an additional 11 percent (88 incidents) were motivated by ethnicity. 2) Sexual orientation was the motivating bias in 22 percent of reported hate crimes (176 incidents); and religion was the motivating bias in 16 percent of reported hate crimes (128 incidents) in 2018. The other 9 percent of reported hate crimes were motivated by gender (39 incidents), 3 gender identity (33 incidents), 4 and disability (3 incidents)."
> (NCES Statistics, 2022).

Faculty and students of color who experience these crimes may also be victims of aggressive behavior such as verbal abuse, rude and disparaging comments, and outright disrespect and avoidance. Since Black women faculty make up a small portion of the academy, it is likely that many of them do not report or respond to the abuse for fear of losing their jobs or not earning tenure. Per the U.S. Department of Education, the overwhelming majority of full-time faculty in the United States identify as white: Caucasian professors account for 80%, Asian/Pacific Islander 11%. Latinx 3%, Black 2% and American Indian/Alaska Native and individuals of two or more races is 1% respectively (U.S. Department of Education, 2018).

4. Racial battle fatigue and LIS

Intended to offer a framework to better understand the racial experiences of people of color on predominantly white college campuses, the concept of Racial Battle Fatigue was first introduced by critical race theorist William Smith (2004). His research was initially conducted on Black men and women faculty, and later Black college students. Smith (2004) asserts that RBF can manifest physiological, psychological, and behavioral in nature, including but not limited to tension headaches, constant anxiety, ulcers, increased swearing and complaining, insomnia, rapid mood

swings, difficulty thinking or speaking, and social withdrawal (Smith, 2004; Yosso, & Solórzano, 2006). Fields of study are both social and epistemological entities - they are distinct knowledge enterprises based on certain forms of inquiry and theoretical perspectives, but they are also social ecosystems that present members with shared cultural norms and values. Library and Information Science emerged as a discipline from the 19th century professional training of library workers established normative practices from the beginning. The profession was founded in 1876 on the core principle of intellectual freedom, which is the First Amendment right that all library users to read, seek information, and freely speak. However, African Americans were not allowed in the library, and not everyone had freedom of speech without retaliation or losing their lives. In the era of Jim Crow, African.

Americans were not permitted to use public institutions like the library in many parts of the country and Black librarians were not fully integrated into the profession until 1964 when E.J. Josey's resolution forced the American Library Association to hold their southern state library associations accountable for not allowing membership to Black librarians (Chancellor, 2020). Although progress towards equity and inclusion was slow after the 1964 resolution, Black and other ethnic librarians continued to push for equality through establishments of ethnic caucuses, and eventually electing Clara Stanton Jones, the association's first Black president (Chancellor, 2024).

The profession was dominated by white men up until 1878 – when women started joining the library workforce (Rubin, 2016). Richard Rubin (2016) contends that, "by 1910, more than 75% of library workers were women" (p. 286). They continue to make up most library employees to date. As of June 2024, 83% of librarians were women (DPE, 2024). The core values of the library profession were not aligned with American culture in the 19th and 20th centuries. Despite the history and treatment of Black people, many of them chose librarianship as a career. In fact, the first of five total (Historically, Black, College and Universities) library science program was formed at Hampton University in 1925 (Ndumu & Chancellor, 2019); today, only North Carolina Central University School of Library and Information Sciences remains open.

Black librarians and educators continue to be a minority in the profession. According to the 2021 U.S. Bureau of National Statistics, there are only 7% Black librarians. Unfortunately, the percentage of Black LIS faculty is even smaller (ALISE, 2023). This historical context is important in understanding the racial challenges that the profession has grappled with since its founding. Perhaps it is this early history of elitism, racism and sexism that offers and explanation why the profession struggles with diversity, equity, and inclusion today. Black women are a crucial yet small proportion of Library and information science educators. According to the Association for Library and Information Science Education, the preeminent organization for LIS educators, these ethnic groups comprise of approximately 20% of full-time faculty (ALISE, 2023). Black faculty make up only 4.7% of its membership. The gender disparity is far more equal with 50% male and 50% female (ALISE, 2023). Unfortunately, Black women faculty are far scarcer. This trend among LIS faculty of color

mirrors what exists in other disciplines and stems from a long history of exclusion. It was not until the 1960s that northern universities began to provide a place for Black professors. Employment for Black women, faculty was virtually non-existent (Evans, 2007). Eliza Atkins Gleason was the first African American to earn a doctorate in library science from the University of Chicago in 1940 and was appointed dean of the School of Library Science at Atlanta University (now Clarke-Atlanta University) in 1941 (Malone, 2019).

At the turn of the 21st century, there were 176,485 tenured full professors at the nation's public and private research universities – 72% white men, 17% white women, 8%, men of color (Black, Hispanic, and Native American combined), and 2% women of color – combined (Evans, 2007). Black women faculty are critical to the LIS professoriate. The LIS academic community is not representative of the society it serves. As a field that prides itself on diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice, it is imperative that there is racial and ethnic representation of diverse populations and that they are treated fairly and equitably. Underrepresentation of Black women in senior university leadership such as provosts, deans, and program directors as well as inequities in salary, have all been discordant issues between male and female faculty. In LIS, the average salary for male assistant professors is $84,561 per academic year compared to $74, 659 for women (ALISE, 2023). Cathy Trower (2003) says that faculty of color experience unwelcoming and potentially hostile classroom environments in PWIs, which results in overt and/or covert racism including being stereotyped. They are often:

- Marginalized and find that their research is discredited, especially if it concerns minority issues;
- Bear a tremendous burden of tokenism, including feeling like they must be exemplars of their entire race and work twice as hard to get half as far;
- Feel obligated to represent one's race or ethnicity on multiple committees that help the institution, but not necessarily the individual, and to mentor and advise many same-race students – a huge hidden workload that goes unrewarded in the promotion and tenure system; and
- Suffer from negative, unintended consequences of being perceived as an affirmative action or target-of-opportunity hire

5. Strategies for minimizing racial battle fatigue

The AAUP (American Association of University Professors, 2019) as part of the 1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure seek to guarantee that educators will be Afforded academic freedom in their teaching and research pursuits – important components in Realizing the common good that education provides. However, given the current political climate, this presents many challenges for Black women faculty. For junior faculty, this could mean that they will not receive tenure because they may be sanctioned for using the CRT framework in the classroom

and or in their research. For tenured faculty, they may not be protected. Tenure is not simply a guarantee of lifetime employment, as commonly conceived.

Appointment to tenure is an unlimited academic employment that can be terminated for extraordinary conditions such as financial necessity or the discontinuation of a program. Tenured faculty can be forced out through coerced resignations, or extreme fatigue from battling constant racial aggressions.

Racial violence, police brutality, and discrimination are a part of everyday life. Educators of color are often asked by their white colleagues, "What should I do?" Or "how can I help?" While their intentions are well-meaning, their questions place the burden for solutions on those that are experiencing oppression. Black women faculty are often asked to put aside their own pain to address the concerns of white colleagues. To educate them can cause additional stress on educators of color as they continue to do their jobs and support their students.

University administrators and leaders should address the hostility and toxicity that educators of color often experience in the workplace. They must acknowledge that racism and sexism exist in the workplace and try to mitigate these experiences. This is a longstanding systemic problem for PWIs that have consequences beyond individual people. There needs to be further exploration into the role race and racism play in our pedagogical interactions. Perhaps Mary Douglas's (1986) theory grounded in social anthropology would be useful. She argues that it is important to understand how institutions function, and they are often slow to change. However, it is in the understanding of how an individual functions and operates within these institutions that lead to ways of useful thinking for how they function. In other words, if chancellors, provosts, deans and other leaders at colleges and universities, acknowledge and understand that RBF is a real concern that can affect not only faculty of color, but students of color, staff of color and generally everyone on campus. Protocols like zero-tolerance policies for racism and sexism can be put in place to mitigate micro aggressive behavior.

Consideration should be given to requiring all campus employees to participate in antiracism education like the requirements for university faculty and staff must do for Title IX Training that imposes procedural requirements on the way institutions of higher education train the individuals handling sexual misconduct and related policy violations. While these provisions will not eliminate this issue, it will send a message that it is a serious concern and the university cares about its community.

6. Conclusion

We are living in unprecedented times – as of the writing of this article, we are three months away from the presidential election that could result in the re-election of arguably the most polarizing figure in American political history. The former president built the Supreme Court's conservative majority that overturned Roe v. Wade; thereby eliminating a woman's right to have control of their own bodies. As a

contrast, for the first time in history, Vice-President, Kamala Harris (Democrat), will be the first woman of color of any major political party to be the nominee for President of the United States. If elected, she will represent shifting American demographics where the minority is increasingly becoming the majority. Vice-President Harris has already experienced tremendous sexism and racism; this will undoubtedly intensify throughout her campaign for presidency and election.

Many have been inspired by what Jarvis Givens (2021) calls "fugitive pedagogy" – where educators became resilient and developed covert instructional strategies and creative responses to the white opposition during enslavement and the Jim Crow era. LIS programs at HBCU institutions can be strong collaborators for a collectively rich presence in library education. Since there is only one remaining HBCU LIS school, perhaps LIS programs at PWIs could form a partnership for cross-cultural collaboration. Black women faculty deserve to work in an environment without fear of losing their jobs or their lives. Academic leadership must create safe spaces on campuses for Black women professors to network and to have a sense of belonging. Mentoring, access to counseling and encouraging mental health days are examples of strategies administrators can quickly employ to minimize the trauma Black women experience in their everyday work life.

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