

# Advancing in the Academy: The Promotion and Tenure Edition

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# Pushing Pause: The Impact of COVID-19 on the Progress of Black Women in the Professoriate

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## Introduction

- Prior to COVID-19, Black women were represented at disparate rates amongst those faculty who had attained the rank of Associate and Full Professor. According to the National Center for Education Statistics Black women held 3.8% of tenure-track positions and 2.3% of tenured positions (National Center for Education Statistics, 2018).
- COVID-19 has magnified existing inequities in the academy. Black women have confronted decisions about promotion and tenure with little support, mentorship, and guidance. Research indicates that faculty of color receive less social support than White colleagues (Ponjuan, Martin Conley, & Trower, 2011). The lack of racial justice and equity coupled with navigating a global pandemic makes the enigmatic process of tenure and promotion even more puzzling.

	Tenure-Track	Tenured	Professors	Associate Professors	Assistant Professors	Instructors
Black Women	3.8%	2.3%	1.6%	3.0%	4.0%	4.8%

Percentage of Black Women in Academic Positions and Tenure Status in the United States

## Study

- This qualitative study will investigate how Black women navigate the promotion and tenure process, particularly in the context of Covid.
- RQ1. What is the impact of COVID-19 promotion and tenure policies on the career progression of Black female faculty in the COVID-19 era?
- The study began with a survey questionnaire in early-August 2021, Spring 2022 marked the second phase commencement which included interviews, anticipated conclusion August 2022.

## Significance

As the pandemic will have lasting implications for women there is a call to action for the development of best practices regarding tenure and promotion portfolio preparation post COVID-19 and providing advocacy and support to Black women faculty.



MARINA SKOBLIAKOVA, GETTY IMAGES, ISTOCKPHOTO

## Potential Implications

- While the focus on representation is important, to engage in impactful and sustainable change, we must also confront and call for policy transformation.
- We continue to see an increase in diversified student demographics. These issues are critical and key to the future of student success and higher education.
- Strengthening the professoriate pipeline for Black women is not limited to recruitment but should also entail robust practices to support, mentor, and sponsor Black women once they find their academic homes.

# Initial Findings & Future Suggestions

Initial Themes + Supportive Strategies

## *Themes*

### **Mentoring**

A strong mentoring network has aided in a successful Promotion and Tenure journey

### **Representation**

A lack of diverse representation in leadership and on P&T committees contributed to barriers

### **The Need to Exceed**

Consistently feeling the need to exceed the minimum criteria- working twice as hard to receive half as much; leading to burnout.

## *Suggestions*

### **Strategic Support**

Curating support opportunities and networks

### **Early Support**

Engaging in support opportunities and networks EARLY in the professorship