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Are We in This Alone? Examining the Cost of Health & Wellness by Surviving the Neoliberal Academy for Multiple Minoritized Faculty

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ABSTRACT

This manuscript explores findings from a critical collaborative autoethnography conducted by two faculty members with multiple minoritized identities, and outlines some of the consequences of neoliberalism in the academy on health and wellness. The overarching goal of the study was to develop a deeper, more nuanced understanding of the ways institutions of higher education impact the health and wellbeing of faculty with multiple minoritized identities. Findings from the study highlight that academic socialization in the neoliberal university, and prioritizing academic success over wellness influence the psychological, physical, and emotional trauma some faculty members experience. Findings also indicate that faculty who invest in resistance as a vehicle for change encounter a dilemma because of the draining mental, physical, and psychological impacts of engaging in such resistance. As such, faculty in this study depend on mentors who care and advocate for them, and collaborations that foster community to help them survive and thrive in the academy.

Keywords: Multiple Minoritized Faculty, Health and Wellness, Neoliberalism, Autoethnography, Higher Education

INTRODUCTION

As research on neoliberalism in the academy increases (Darder, 2012; Gildersleeve, 2017; Giroux, 2008; Gonzalez & Núñez, 2014; Hurtado, 2020; Levin & Aliyeva, 2015; Marine et al., 2019; Museus & LePeau, 2019; Squire et al., 2018; Wright-Mair & Museus, 2021), there is a need to understand the specific impacts of not only neoliberal ideologies, but also the consequences of neoliberal environments on faculty, specifically those who hold multiple minoritized identities. Neoliberalism is a set of ideas and/ or logic that regards higher education as a vehicle for revenue generation and competition rather than a public good (Antonio, 2013; Darder, 2012; Giroux, 2008; Slaughter & Leslie, 1997). In this study, the researchers sought to unearth and expose the compounded negative effect the neoliberal environment has on the health and wellness of multiple minoritized faculty (e.g., Black, multiracial, women, immigrant, & LGBTQ+). Though faculty in the neoliberal academy may have pre-existing psychological stress and/or varying mental/physical health conditions, we posit that neoliberalism has further contributed to declines in health and well-being, which leads to a rise in mental health conditions among faculty members in the academy. While environments can mitigate risks to health and wellness, most institutions encourage faculty to prioritize the needs of the institution before their own, often at the expense of their health and wellness (Wolf-Wendel & Ward, 2006). This is especially pronounced for multiple minoritized faculty members.

The purpose of this paper is to uncover several pitfalls of the academy related to the success of multiple minoritized faculty and contribute to the literature on faculty health and wellness. Employing critical collaborative autoethnographic methods (Bhattacharya, 2008; Chang et al., 2013), we explored our experiences to uncover the cost of surviving the neoliberal academy, specifically focusing on the ways that academic culture is rife with hypercompetition, rigid metrics for success, and an absence of an ethic of care for health and wellness. While we as multiple minoritized faculty members have managed to survive in this environment, we have not always thrived. In addition to understanding our own complicity in perpetuating neoliberal metrics that were modeled to us during our academic journeys, we explore where the notion of merely 'surviving' the academy began. We use crystallization (Ellingson, 2009; Richardson, 2000) as a data analysis procedure to highlight how acculturation in the academy perpetuates cyclic trauma and illuminate how the stigma of mental health and wellness prevents normalizing these conversations. We also outline the lack of appreciation and support for the pace of the scholarly process, particularly for untenured faculty, and note the scars and wounds that endure post tenure throughout one’s academic career. We conclude with implications about current neoliberal academic environments and the sustainability of academic life for faculty members with multiple minoritized identities.

This study stemmed from conversations with our Ph.D. students about the writing process. We shared that we both suffer from varying degrees of anxiety, a condition more common in the academy than they realized. We pointed out that experiencing anxiety coupled with chronic illness was not rare among faculty members we know. We questioned why we were not talking and writing openly about faculty health and wellness and the traumatic effects of the academy on our bodies. Our conversations coincided with the publicized case of Dr. Paul Harris, a Black male counselor educator who was denied

tenure at the University of Virginia during the height of the Black Lives Matter movement (Watson, 2020), even after exceeding the outlined institutional metrics required for tenure and promotion. We explored the constant fear of being untenured, juxtaposed with the moving target of attaining full professorship. We asked ourselves if being a faculty member was worth it, and at what cost, especially in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and other social crises, including racial injustice and declines in mental health and well-being, during which academic expectations remained the same while workloads and additional demands increased drastically. During this time, service demands and administrator expectations—the least valued of tenure and promotion requirements—surged as a result of the crises. While our research expertise and time were critical to providing education, supervision, and consultation during this time, the academy refused to recognize our additional service as *high impact*. We, as well as many other academics, risk our personal wellness for an academy that continually dictates one-dimensional metrics as a measure of *true success*.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview of Neoliberalism

Over the past two decades, scholars have noted the variety of challenges plaguing the academic profession. Arguably one of the most prominent challenges facing higher education is the movement that institutions of higher education have made towards embodying and prioritizing values and behaviors that are driven by free markets (Darder, 2012; Olssen & Peters, 2005). Academic capitalism is the notion that over time, priorities of institutions of higher education shifted to match the needs of the market (Slaughter & Leslie, 1997). As a seismic shift, this monumental change resulted in more partnerships between higher education and industry and a drastic move away from education as a public good and a knowledge-producing entity (Kezar, 2004). Instead, education became deeply intertwined with corporatization and profit over everything else (Slaughter & Leslie, 1997). Neoliberalism permeates all universities regardless of institutional classification (e.g., public vs private, research vs. teaching) (Slaughter & Leslie, 1997). These neoliberal ideologies may, however, manifest differently based on institutional priorities, especially for obtaining tenure and promotion (Damasci & Hodges, 2012; Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004). Research details that these logics go beyond the policies and practices embedded in higher education institutions and extend into the cultures and behaviors of faculty members within these institutions (Levin & Aliyeva, 2015; Museus & LePeau, 2019).

In the new culture of the neoliberal academy, where the focus is more on market-like competition and not serving the public good (Darder, 2012; Giroux, 2008; Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004; Slaughter & Leslie, 1997), these behaviors may not be openly displayed by faculty, but they are in fact embodied by many faculty based on the hyper-individualized focus on gain and competition in order to succeed (Darder, 2012; Levin & Aliyeva, 2015). Throughout academe, faculty members seek recognition and advancement by engaging in competitive behaviors such as seeking prestigious grants, focusing on quantity of publications, and seeking employment at esteemed research institutions (Gonzales & Núñez, 2014). Most often, these behaviors for academics start in

graduate school, where students vie for admission to 'top' institutions which will prepare them for a competitive job or advanced graduate studies (Levin & Aliyeva, 2015).

During graduate studies, students learn through academic conditioning and socialization that in order to be competitive, one has to work with certain prominent scholars in their respective fields, publish at a high rate, engage in groundbreaking and innovative research, gain teaching experience, and win prestigious grants (Caretta et al., 2018). Moreover, a limited number of racially minoritized graduate students enroll in doctoral programs. Of those students, very few enter the professoriate (Johnson et al., 2007) despite efforts like the Holmes Scholar programs (Davis, 2016) and Preparing Future Faculty Programs (2004), a joint effort between the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) and the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U). Minoritized doctoral students in graduate programs report some of the barriers they navigate, including an inherently biased curriculum, preconceived assumptions about performance, toxic institutional cultures, blatant disregard, and intellectual co-opting by white peers and faculty members, all while experiencing extreme physical and social isolation (Gay, 2004). Further, as doctoral students work closely with professors, especially those with multiple minoritized identities, they witness firsthand the cyclic trauma many of these faculty members face in the neoliberal academy (Ieva et al., 2021).

For those students that go on to become academics, unsurprisingly, many develop attitudes and value systems that are deeply entrenched in neoliberalism, often feeding the vicious cycle of creating future academics who reproduce toxic neoliberal patterns and philosophies. Many of these patterns manifest in faculty behaviors that de-center active knowledge production and focus solely on the financial gain associated with research (Lorenz, 2012). As faculty work through systems of "surveillance, precarity, competitive individualism, declining morality, and consumerism" (Museus & LePeau, 2019, p.3), they are merely surviving, rather than thriving, in these institutional environments. In these cases, surviving the academy comes at a great cost to one's physiological and psychological well-being. This is acutely pronounced for multiple minoritized faculty who navigate varying personal intersecting identities while professionally trying to find solutions to advocate for equity (Wright-Mair & Museus, 2021).

Psychological Stress in the Academy

One of the direct outcomes of the neoliberal academy is the impact on the psychological and physiological well-being of faculty who operate under immense pressure to publish and produce new (fundable) knowledge (Gonzales & Núñez, 2014; O'Meara & Bloomgarden, 2011; Wolf-Wendel & Ward, 2006). In the context of the neoliberal academy, Fredman and Doughney (2012) found that there was low work satisfaction for academics compared to previous surveys (prior to the increased shift towards neoliberal logics), citing increased workloads, loss of control over their work, and poor leadership as some of the main reasons for decreased motivation and professional fulfillment. For multiple minoritized faculty, there are added stressors of receiving lower student evaluations, questioning of intellectual scholarship, experiencing constant microaggressions (Mobley et al., 2020; Quaye et al., 2019), being silenced, and not having access to supportive professional networks (Brown et al., 2020; Johnson & Bryan, 2017; Turner et al., 2008; William-White, 2011; Zimmerman et al., 2016). Many

of these experiences lead to negative internalization of performance that manifests both emotionally and physically (Bourabain, 2021; Dana & Griffin, 1999; Essed & Carberry, 2020). More specifically, these experiences lead to negative perceptions of self-identity, which can also interfere with work engagement, production, and motivation. It is no surprise that a lack of caring for oneself (body, mind, and soul) contributes to chronic illness, stress, and other conditions such as cardiovascular disease, depression, anxiety disorders, hypertension, substance abuse, gastrointestinal disorders, obesity, and substance abuse (Brennan & Moos, 1990; Levy et al., 1997; Shapiro & Goldstein, 1982; Treiber et al., 1993). Self-care matters to the preservation of humans and is crucial to our survival, yet within society and many professions, including those in the academy, there is little or no value for measures of self-care and wellness (Anthym & Tuitt, 2019; Quaye et al., 2019; Wolf-Wendel & Ward, 2006). Research outlines that navigating precarity and hypercompetition results in a major decline in health and wellness (Mountz et al., 2015). In fact, Mountz et al. (2015) contend that "the effects of the neoliberal university are written on the body" (p.1245).

The consequences of prioritizing the needs of the academy over oneself is that faculty members in academe struggle to be successful professionally, while simultaneously managing their own health and wellness (Wolf-Wendel & Ward, 2006). Huerta et al.'s 2017 study illustrates that graduate students' writing anxiety is heavily influenced by self-efficacy and levels of emotional intelligence; however, the research does not name the root causes of these fluctuating traits. We argue that the root cause is systemic, rather than just an individual deficit. Much of the anxiety and associated chronic illnesses experienced by graduate students and faculty members is fueled by the individualistic academy, which constantly leaves them worrying about employability, competitive advantage, levels of productivity, and their overall levels of accomplishment (Kloet & Aspenlieder, 2013). Early career faculty face this barrier as they navigate high levels of precarity in their roles and often become consumed by the impact of neoliberal measures of their success (Bone, 2020). Not surprisingly, a fundamental consequence of neoliberalism is how it makes faculty *feel* (Beer, 2016).

These feelings include shame, anxiety, and precarity which are not easy for academics to admit and/or work through (Gill, 2009), resulting in faculty constantly balancing the pressures of an unforgiving academy and a slowly depleting state of health and wellness plagued by shame and guilt for not living up to academic expectations (Gill, 2009; Mullings et al., 2016). Additionally, these emotions stem from a sense of feeling as if one is a failure, even when one is not actually failing, and a constant sense of inadequacy and worry about performance (Horton, 2020). This is even more pronounced for multiple minoritized faculty who constantly navigate several challenges unique to their identities (Turner, 2002). Multiple minoritized faculty report high levels of dissatisfaction and feelings of not belonging, achieve tenure and promotion at lower rates, and often leave the academy because of the toxic and harmful environments in which they are forced to operate (Anthym & Tuitt, 2019; Croom, 2017; Mengus & Exum, 1983; Tierney & Bensimon, 1996; Turner, 2002; Wijesingha & Ramos, 2017). Moreover, multiple minoritized faculty, and specifically those that are racially minoritized faculty, suffer from tremendous psychological harm due to presumed incompetence by many white faculty members (Niemann et al., 2020). Therefore, self-care as a coping mechanism and survival tool for multiple minoritized faculty is necessary and makes bold

statements that resist neoliberal expectations (Lorde, 1988). However, as Anthym and Tuitt (2019) posit, an already traumatized faculty member should not be responsible for mitigating the results of failed systemic shortcomings.

Support Structures for Navigating an Anxiety-Producing Academy

There is scant literature available documenting the experiences of faculty members managing health and mental health illness in academe. We suspect that most constituents within academe are hesitant to risk their own success by acknowledging that institutions of higher education contribute greatly to the mental, physical, and emotional decline of many within the academy (O'Meara & Bloomgarden, 2011). Thus, the literature on support systems for faculty who are negatively impacted by neoliberal environments is limited. The literature that does exist suggests that those who receive strong mentoring in graduate school and through tenure are somewhat better prepared to understand and manage neoliberal academic environments and the many consequences that accompany them (Oberhauser & Caretta, 2019).

However, access to mentors who provide holistic and equity-minded support (Griffin, 2019) is not always available. In fact, students and faculty who benefit the most from mentoring (i.e., first generation, multiple minoritized, and so on) often do not have a mentor or other support structures readily available to them (Turner et al., 2008). While mentoring provides a great structure for support to navigate the academy, it does not prevent or completely mitigate the psychological and physiological impacts of neoliberalism. Other research suggests that in addition to having strong mentors, psychological counseling, a long-term commitment to physical fitness (e.g., working out, yoga, swimming), and investing in spirituality and faith practices (Valente & Marotta, 2005) contribute to better management of stress, physical and mental health, and overall wellness (Sharma et al., 2006). A broader and more integrated approach to health and wellness in the academy is required to understand how faculty in particular often suffer silently from varying, multiple, and intertwined forms of distress.

METHOD

Situating Ourselves

Our positionalities as multiple minoritized faculty members heavily influenced our desire to conduct this research. This study provided an opportunity to understand more broadly how some faculty in the academy struggle to make sense of our own health and wellness, further exacerbated by a neoliberal academy. The first author, Raquel, identifies as a multiracial (her dominant identities are Black and South Asian), immigrant, heterosexual, woman. She was diagnosed with a debilitating auto-immune disease during her doctoral program. The second author, Kara, identifies as a white, LGBTQ+ woman. As we worked on this study, Kara was diagnosed with breast cancer and underwent a double mastectomy and chemotherapy.

Our identities and experiences are central to this work, and we often have wondered if we were alone in an academy ashamed and/or unwilling to discuss health, wellness, stress, chronic illness, and its effects on faculty in the academy. Since our illnesses were

both diagnosed during our academic journey, we were interested in exploring the intersections of our diagnoses and jobs as academics. It is ironic that we came to this study while advising a doctoral student we had in common on *their* anxiety and concerns about managing academic expectations and stress. What started out as an honest conversation with doctoral students evolved into a fascinating and informative study that allowed us to uncover the nuanced layers of our academic experiences and explore some of the compounded consequences we have both encountered.

Critical Collaborative Autoethnography

For this study, we employed a critical collaborative autoethnography. Collaborative autoethnography enables researchers to engage in a collective examination of individual autobiographies to understand a sociocultural phenomenon (Chang et al., 2013). Critical autoethnography is often used to explore the ways in which structures of power play out in the lives of participant researchers (Boylorn & Orbe, 2013). More directly, critical collaborative ethnography is utilized intentionally to bring about systemic change (Bhattacharya, 2017). Therefore, the neoliberal higher education system provides an appropriate and distinctive context in which the interplay of structures of power may have an impact on collective lived experiences, particularly for multiple minoritized faculty. More specifically, critical autoethnography incorporates three aspects of critical theory: "to understand the lived experiences of real people in context, to examine social conditions and uncover oppressive power arrangements, and to fuse theory and action to challenge processes of domination" (Boylorn & Orbe, 2014, p.20).

Our personal experiences exemplify how systemic harm, which is often overlooked by higher education stakeholders, can have a profound impact. Hence, our actions to engage in social justice and equity work and participate in this personally revealing (and intimate) study is our collective resistance. We therefore employ critical collaborative autoethnography as a disruptive tool of resistance to legitimize and elevate the voices of multiple minoritized researchers. Our commitment to being vulnerable helps us to better understand ourselves, each other, and our communities as we continue to disrupt normative discourse and simultaneously prioritize our healing, survival, and hope for a more humanized and vulnerable academy (Bhattacharya, 2017).

Data Collection & Analysis

After both researchers met with their common doctoral advisee, they met to discuss the possibility of a collaborative research project that would explore faculty experiences with health and wellness in the academy. From June 2020 to February 2021, the participant researchers met every 2-3 weeks for approximately 2 ½ hours. Sessions that took place over Zoom were recorded and transcribed. Each interview session began with a check-in regarding personal and professional life. Next, the participant researchers transitioned into specific incidents and experiences related to the research purpose, starting with exploring the roots of our own struggles with health and well-being. In a reciprocal manner, each of us allowed the other to comment, process, continue a line of challenging inquiry, and/or offer potential opposing views. The dialogue flowed naturally and went into more depth in each session and over time. The intent was to

explore our own conditioning and acclimation to the academy and understand how that impacted us personally and professionally, how we might perpetuate some of that learned behavior and norms with our own students, and what norms we may have rejected as a form of resistance.

Through the use of a qualitative technique known as crystallization (Richardson, 2000) for data analysis, four main themes emerged. Crystallization is multi-dimensional in nature and allows researchers to explore great depth, breadth, and richness in interpreting data without being constricted to interpretation in a specific manner. Crystallization allows for flexibility and allows for researchers to examine data through varied unfixed perspectives (Richardson, 2000). Scholars of qualitative methodology do not promote a "rigid, recipe like or formulaic approach to crystallization" (Ellingson, 2009, p. 4). Crystallization combines many forms of analysis and genres into a recognizable series of stories that allow for building an authentic account of a problem that is complicated by its own construction. Utilizing crystallization allowed us to incorporate our unique positionalities and vulnerabilities while simultaneously recognizing the complicated process that is involved in the development of knowledge (Ellingson, 2009). In this inquiry, the participant researchers realized the limitations of their perspectives, as they were only a partial description of the phenomenon. Yet their vulnerabilities and positionalities made them uniquely situated to describe how the academy inflicts trauma on multiple minoritized scholars.

The ways in which crystallization is manifested in this study include its primary principles (Ellingson, 2009). First, the study uses thick and deep descriptions to illustrate ways in which the academy perpetuates trauma in an academic context. Second, the study reflects knowledge production across several points along a qualitative continuum, that is, the researchers' process included the rhythmic nature of colleague dialogue, individual autoethnographic reflection, and creative composite narrative, which were intertwined to reflect the findings of this study. Third, we incorporated the use of creative genres (poetry and drawing) to tap into the emotional component of trauma, for a more in-depth understanding of the phenomena. Our stories represent one creative analytic approach to the study (Archibald et al., 2019). Fourth, crystallization requires the researchers to be fully aware of the impact their positionality has in shaping the interpretation of the phenomena. The researchers have described their role in the study throughout this manuscript and grounded points of discussion in the context of those identities. Finally, crystallization rejects the notion of a singular *Truth* and instead recognizes that truth is constructed (Ellingson, 2009) and influenced by power in an academy, where power is often perceived as being absolute.

RESULTS

In this critical collaborative autoethnography, we explore how faculty members navigate the consequences of neoliberalism in the academy, specifically with regards to their health and wellness. Findings highlight that the ongoing stress of neoliberal expectations contributes to an overall decline in health and wellness for faculty who identify as having multiple, layered, and intersecting minoritized identities. Our findings reveal four major themes: 1) Academic Socialization in the Neoliberal University (*sub-themes*: *academic conditioning and generational academic trauma, comparison and hypercompetition*); 2)

A Culture of Prioritizing Academic Success over Wellness (*sub-themes*: *physical and mental health, added stress of a pandemic*; 3) The Dilemma of Resistance as a Vehicle for Change (*sub-themes*: *challenging the system and disrupting the cycle*); and 4) Access to Sustainable Support Systems (*sub-themes*: *mentors who care and advocate*, *building community through collaboration*).

Academic Socialization in the Neoliberal University

Common to our experiences, and closely aligned with neoliberal values, is a long and seemingly lasting academic culture of socializing those in vulnerable situations—especially graduate students and early career faculty members—to the 'norms' of the academy. Academic socialization is heavily motivated by academic capitalism, defined as "institutional and professorial market or market-like efforts to secure external moneys" (Slaughter & Leslie, 1997, p. 8). The fundamental components of faculty life are heavily influenced by these driving market forces. Increasingly, the fundamental principles that encourage faculty to be curious teachers seeking to make a difference in the world through meaningful research no longer exists (Giroux, 2002). These market forces influence faculty behavior (Park, 2011) and much of the socialization that graduate students and early career faculty experience in the academy. This process of neoliberal socialization starts in graduate school and continues throughout academe, resulting in the academic conditioning of emergent scholars into a culture of hypercompetition.

Academic Conditioning & Generational Academic Trauma

Much of faculty socialization involves a type of academic hazing: perpetuating cycles of generational academic trauma and exploitation of graduate students and early career faculty members, labeled as 'typical' to the experience of an academic (Gardner, 2010). While tenured professors are also exploited, the severity and implications differ from that experienced by early career, untenured, and therefore more vulnerable faculty members. In our research, we found that academic conditioning was front and center to our academic experiences and was further exacerbated by the generational trauma passed down through our academic lineage (i.e., from doctoral advisor to graduate student). This conditioning was so deeply ingrained in the subconscious mind and practices of colleagues and peers that many were not even aware of what they were perpetuating. Kara, for example, describes being conditioned to think that the only respectable place of employment for an academic was a research-intensive institution (R1). She often has to revisit her reason for not being at an R1:

> Early in my doctoral program we were told, statistically, not all of us were going to make it. But all of us did, and we got great academic jobs. When I decided to take a job at a non-research-intensive institution, I was scorned. I call this the 'academic scorn' of not meeting certain specific academic expectations. Even though I had many accolades, I was asked, "You're going where?" And a part of me really had to stop and reflect…the reason I got into this was not to only do research, I got into this to really shape and mold people who impact kids' lives,

> so of course I'm going to go to a teaching institution where I can have a different kind of impact.

Raquel shares similar sentiments:

> The conditioning starts from day one, from the faculty in your doctoral program, to the advisor you work with, the number of publications you have or don't have, the research projects you are PI on, the classes you get to teach, the number of conference presentations, and of course the eventual prestigious tenure track job you are expected to secure at an R1. This is often the standard, and most definitely, you are scorned if you aspire to be anywhere else. It's as if you can only contribute and have an impact in one specific way. It's interesting how many of us consciously and unconsciously continue the patterns of the colleagues we worked closely with in graduate school, as well, though, and I think this is the generational piece of academic trauma... we oftentimes consciously and unconsciously perpetuate it even when we don't mean to.

We both agreed that the neoliberal expectations that are placed on many academics linger for many years. When discussing the generational academic trauma piece of this specific theme, we concluded that people who meant us well and demonstrated investment in our success were often complicit in academic scorn. Even those who encouraged us to apply to teaching-focused institutions often commented that our potential would be better served at research-intensive institutions, which would ultimately contribute to us being better academics. In these instances, neoliberal principles dictate the hierarchy of our academic institutions and the status of faculty who work within its template.

Comparison and Hypercompetition

Market-like behaviors drive faculty competition in a quest to secure external funding, prestigious grants, and other academic accolades. We found that hypercompetition was a driving force behind academic socialization, and unfortunately something we both have come to know intimately well. In our experiences, we acknowledge that there have been times when we have compared our academic success to others and felt immense pressure to keep overperforming in order to be successful. While this comparison is normalized in the neoliberal environment, it feels overwhelming based on our individual and collective motivations for being higher education and student affairs scholar-practitioners. Kara shares the complexities involved in operating in a hypercompetitive environment and explains that often these comparisons serve no other purpose than to make people feel badly:

> We behaviorally condition people to not feel good enough, no matter what they do, and we allow them to look at it and be measured by these metrics, which don't mean anything and don't indicate to me how well you know something.

Raquel discusses the difficulty of achieving outlined institutional metrics and navigating neoliberal pressures:

> It's constantly a game of navigating academic pressure, and just how much you can withstand, in addition to not feeling good enough ever, as well as being in environments where things are just thrown at you constantly. I've learned not all academics are created equally, and not all have the same cards dealt to us. But we never talk about or normalize this. So, when you are in a toxic academic environment with no support, no resources, untenured, no time, this looks very different from your colleagues at other institutions who have access to lots of time and resources.

In sum, we note that academic socialization and its variants (conditioning, generational trauma, comparison, and hypercompetition) are unfortunately not unique to just our experiences but are a seemingly necessary component to further strengthen and continue neoliberal principles in academic environments (Gardner, 2010). Perhaps it is also where many academics start engaging in destructive behaviors and experience a major decline in their health and wellness.

A Culture of Prioritizing Academic Success over Wellness

Academics often focus on their professional success, and in many cases, prioritize this external behemoth of success over their personal health and wellness. The literature on faculty health and wellness is concerning and points to a bigger systemic issue: an academic culture focused solely on accomplishments such as tenure and promotion (Gonzales & Núñez, 2014; O'Meara & Bloomgarden, 2011; Wolf-Wendel & Ward, 2006). Most of the literature on the decline of faculty health and wellness comes from countries outside of the United States; it is generated mostly from Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, and New Zealand. Neoliberalism is a fundamental part of higher education institutions in those countries, but scholars in those countries are acknowledging the pervasive problem and actively studying and challenging these systems that disproportionately impact faculty health and wellness. Interestingly, the disciplines highly focused on drawing attention to this topic are Geography and Sociology, while other disciplines like Business Ethics and Cultural Studies are also starting to examine this phenomena.

In this study, both research participants discussed approaches to academic success and realized through our conversations that we have both been complicit in prioritizing our career achievement over our own health and wellness, in line with the outdated western and neoliberal context in which we operate (Wolf-Wendel &Ward, 2006).

Physical and Mental Health

Many academics often cope and survive at whatever cost, even when it is detrimental to their own physical and mental health and wellness. Kara notes the difficulty involved in advancing an academic career, while acknowledging the negative physical and/or mental implications on her body. Kara explains:

> Sometimes I feel like I'm in this game and I get pulled in all these directions and I don't know how to say no because of what academic trauma says to you and [how it] programs your thinking. How do you say no to opportunities that are

> better for you professionally? For your vita? But not better for your overall productivity or mental health?

Raquel reflects that her academic success, while a demonstration of her hard work, is deeply influenced by subconscious messaging from neoliberal principles dictating *what* her success must entail. She notes that she has to consciously prioritize her health and wellness over checking academic boxes at an accelerated rate. Raquel explains:

> Academic success and productivity are embedded on such a subconscious level for me that I was not even mindful of it until I realized, wow, I'm perpetually exhausted and have become a workaholic. I have to really be intentional with making my health and wellbeing a priority; in fact, I just have to force myself to stick to a routine because for the last few years, my productivity is actually a result of a conscious regimented commitment to holistic practices (i.e. healthy eating, exercise, yoga) where I remind myself that in order to produce, I have to be alive and well.

The Added Stress of a Pandemic

Our study took place in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic, which undoubtedly impacted our already stressful academic lives and added new perspectives about our value in a neoliberal context. Even in the midst of multiple crises such as health and racial injustice, our institutions of higher education seemed to show more concern for the principles of neoliberalism than they did us. Kara explained the difficulty involved not just with our jobs, but also with juggling multiple responsibilities and being asked to do much more work than we did in the past, with limited resources and support, in addition to managing personal obligations. Kara highlights:

> It's a rough time to be a researcher, and I am really scared about the safety of everyone's mental health right now. Like in this moment of multiple crises occurring, I just feel like I'm so unhealthy because I'm working all the time, and I rarely see outside; I rarely exercise anymore. For me, as someone who borders K-12 but operates in higher education, this time has been extremely difficult (personally and professionally). Constant asks for service nationally to support those struggling in our nation's schools, but then not having the academy prioritize these same service engagements in faculty evaluations.

Raquel similarly discusses the additional workload as a result of the pandemic and the reluctance on the part of institutions and across the academy to recognize the burnout and increased stress of untenured faculty, especially those with varying minoritized identities:

> I think for many of us…our health and wellbeing, especially during the pandemic, is so severely compromised that [we] just do not have the bandwidth to do the kind of work that the neoliberal academy demands and expects of you. You add racial injustices to that, and for those of us doing work that seeks to advance social justice and racial equity, it's just exhausting day in, day out. For me, it is the constant feeling that I am operating in angst, and honestly, I've gotten to the point where I could not even open my email. I think this pandemic has really illustrated just how the academy truly feels about us–more than ever

> it's clear to me that the care of, and for, humanity is greatly lacking. The fact that, in the midst of a pandemic, institutions could actively add to faculty loads is deeply concerning. I think right now we are all in survival mode—but if we are being honest, who can function and be productive in survival mode all the time?

These comments point to a troubling trend across higher education of faculty being expected to take on copious amounts of work, with no incentive, reward, or expectation that it is balanced with personal self-care or time off. It magnifies the neoliberal culture deeply embedded within the academy. Our experiences, along with that of many of our colleagues nationally, highlight a problematic trend of prioritizing academic success at any cost; despite a global crisis, a sudden shift to remote teaching, working from home, taking care of children and other family members, working more with less, and trying to stay healthy, we were still expected to operate at full capacity.

The Dilemma of Resistance as a Vehicle for Change

Many faculty members with multiple minoritized identities engage in work that is not simply advocating for equity and justice in the academy, but also actively challenging predetermined definitions of academic success. Success for many of us engaged in this work entails a constant commitment to disrupting and engaging in resistance in order for change to occur. However, while this commitment is beneficial to long term transformation and paving a way for others, engaging in this constant resistance as a vehicle for change has major negative impacts on our minds, bodies, and souls (Anthym & Tuitt, 2019; Quaye et al., 2019; Quaye et al., 2020). Many of us see these acts of resistance as synonymous with hope of challenging a fundamentally flawed and biased system, but we wonder how much of ourselves we must compromise for real change to occur.

Challenging the System

Faculty from multiple minoritized backgrounds are not responsible for creating systems of oppression, but we are often depended on for solutions on how to effectively challenge the very systems that seek to steal our souls, causing a familiar tension multiple minoritized faculty often feel between wanting to disrupt oppressive systems and simultaneously manage the fatigue that comes from tokenization associated with disruption (Mobley et al., 2020; Quaye et al., 2019). In exploring some of the aspects of what we do to challenge the broader systems of neoliberalism in our academic lives, Raquel outlines:

> Pushing back on how we think about journal impact factor, for example, I had a faculty colleague tell me that a multicultural/ diversity journal was not "high quality enough." These journals are not low quality. They focus on issues impacting my communities and the communities I am trying to amplify—we have to shift the language and mindset in the academy… many of these high impact journals don't care about the work I'm doing. They don't want to hear

> about racism and racial equity. So how about we change our value system and the metrics by which we evaluate success?

Kara likewise discusses her concern for the existing academic reward and value system and outlines examples of how she uses her tenured status as a viable avenue for starting to create change:

> I'm always very confused as to why we don't have a reward system in the academy that allows you to veer off into a direction you love and find joy in and are good at…and get rewarded the same way as somebody else who brings in several grants or publications. This is what causes disparity and a range of emotions and comparisons for academics. If everyone [were] left to make choices and were supported and rewarded for their unique contributions, things would look very different. In my position, I push to value these things as a means of challenging an outdated and broken system.

These comments are examples of the engagement that is required to challenge neoliberal systems in an attempt to get other faculty colleagues and senior administrators to recognize the value in the work scholars like ourselves do. The comments also highlight why neoliberal institutional metrics are problematic, detrimental, and require intentional systemic disruption by those who have the power to do so.

Disrupting the Cycle

Dismantling neoliberal systems and disrupting vicious cycles require continued efforts, beyond challenging systems, for actionable change within the academy. Kara points out how quick she is to redirect folks who focus purely on her accolades. She mentions:

> I really ask that I not be defined by my academic success. At times I have had really good academic success, but I'm not defined purely by that. When people say to me they heard I accomplished specific accolades, I really encourage them to not compare themselves to me or anyone else; this is how the toxic cycle starts.

Raquel outlines that disruption takes many forms:

> I think I'm just learning to be okay, sometimes, with not writing…or producing. Honoring that I just can't do it today, maybe tomorrow, but not today. And then choosing what I write about, and where I publish–I'm intentional about my disruption across the board. So, what and how I write, writing in different yet meaningful, impactful, and accessible ways, and submitting to journals that prioritize equity work, whether they are seen as high impact or not, [are values I am trying to hold dear].

While we both have made a lifelong commitment to challenging and disrupting systems and cycles, we use this manuscript as an opportunity to highlight the cost of doing this work and the impact on our health and wellness.

Access to Sustainable Support Systems

Our interviews, conversations, and reflections indicate that support systems are fundamental to survival in the academy and our overall well-being. While these support systems are important, we recognize that many faculty members do not have access to meaningful or sustainable support systems or are merely utilizing support systems as mechanisms to navigate neoliberal environments. In our experiences, we have both relied on mentors and collaborative opportunities as avenues for successfully navigating academic environments and wellness. We include the word "sustainable" here to differentiate between support systems that are temporary and serve the purpose of solely supporting our academic agendas and not our overall well-being. While we acknowledge the benefits of more general support structures (and resources on campus) that help to advance our careers, we think it is important to point out that in our experiences, mentors who care and advocate for us and building community through collaborations have kept us anchored in our purpose, both personally and professionally.

Mentors Who Care and Advocate

Having access to mentors who are deeply invested in our overall success made a positive difference in our experiences in the academy. We found that having mentors who cared about our various lived experiences and identities, in addition to our scholarly work, made a tremendous impact on our personal and professional experiences. These mentors do not just care about how many publications we have or how many grants we receive. In fact, while these mentors supported our academic endeavors wholeheartedly, they almost always centered our humanity first, allowing us to feel a holistic sense of support for our overall health and well-being first, followed by our professional success. Raquel notes:

> Having mentors who understand me as a person, not just a scholar, makes a huge difference…they are able to offer support in ways that help me professionally and personally… these are not just people who guide me…but …who advocate for me across the institution, discipline, field, etc. They are people who are so invested in my personal and professional success that they are willing to go above and beyond (without me asking) to get me what I need to do well and be well. They truly see my overall success as their success, too.

Kara shares examples of experiences with mentors and the role they each played in her success:

> My mentor during my doctoral program opened my eyes to a world I knew I didn't want to live in: working and publishing all the time to prove your worth and ultimately becoming a workaholic. So, when I came to my institution, I created a world that was the complete opposite…without a formal mentor, although I craved mentorship…the person who supported me the most was my program coordinator. He championed every idea I had, as well as encouraged me to spend time not just working, but also being with my family. He had a way of prioritizing personal needs over professional needs and yet modeled how the

> work gets done. He also protected me from minutia that I didn't need to be aware of or engage in. His mentorship assisted me pre- and post-tenure. Evidence of the influence of his mentorship appeared once he retired. The ethos and balance changed, one I am still attempting to get back.

Having access to mentors was essential to shaping our personal and professional achievements; we found that those kinds of relationships were more rewarding than others we previously experienced that were focused on support for our academic lives only. We fear that for multiple minoritized faculty, some mentors may reinforce the prioritization of academic success over wellness. Instead, we posit that the greatest benefit to faculty, namely those with different minoritized identities, will be derived from long-term, sustainable mentoring relationships that prioritize the faculty member's overall health and well-being and not just academic success. We are concerned about those faculty members who do not have access to these types of mentors and worry that they are not okay.

Building Community Through Collaboration

Throughout this study, we reflected on how fortunate we were to be collaborating on this research together and to be working on projects we individually have with colleagues across the country and world. In fact, we often commented to each other that collaboration with other peers kept us grounded and well, during the COVID-19 pandemic especially. Often these collaborations were the only opportunity we had to interact with other colleagues after being quarantined and kept from our campuses during the COVID-19 pandemic. Collaborations in general have helped to replenish us and keep us in community with others who share interests, experiences, backgrounds, and identities. We have found that the community we have built through academic collaborations provides a meaningful vehicle for our health and well-being and helps in navigating treacherous academic environments in which we do not frequently work with others that have shared interests or backgrounds. Raquel posits that collaborations, while often scoffed at by the academy, are vital to her health and wellness:

> Collaboration has always fed me. It's the figurative and sometimes literal space where I can survive and thrive in community with others like me. Collaboration is always meaningful and many times, simultaneously, friendships organically develop prior to, or during these collaborative initiatives. These opportunities are frequently the very things that anchor me and allow me to be okay in an otherwise toxic academy.

Kara similarly discusses:

> I have always collaborated in multiple spaces on campus and across the country. I think collaborations over the years have helped me form friendships and bonds that become some of my closest relationships. Additionally, getting to explore other cities at conferences with some of the collaborators [has] added an element of changing scenery and adventure that I have come to rely on as part of my wellness and ability to thrive. Interestingly, the COVID-19 pandemic has spawned new collaborations centered in antiracist work, which looks completely

different, but assists me during a time that has become so difficult to thrive in—on so many levels.

Having access to support systems, and being in community with those with shared experiences, facilitates not just academic, but also personal, well-being and success for minoritized faculty members. However, through the lens of academic capitalism, collaboration is not always looked upon favorably (e.g., solo authorship for publication is valued more in the tenure and promotion process); in fact, the neoliberal academy prioritizes and rewards individualism in research and teaching. For faculty with multiple minoritized identities, being in community with others is essential, not just for survival, but also in order to be reminded of what matters most.

Below we include a poem and drawing (Figure 1) that we co-constructed as an artistic expression and summary of our findings, as well as a representation of how we make sense of some of our traumatic experiences in the academy. In alignment with crystallization, these creative expressions allow us to uncover unexplored trauma and work towards healing.

Battery on Empty

The Academy holds me hostage
Breaking free is impossible
Survival depends on the check
Committed to resistance at the expense of myself
Bright ideas, faculty wellness… not in line with the needs of the College

In the height of the pandemic
Neoliberalism reigns, controlling survival for the bottom line
Traumatized, (Re) traumatized, Exhausted
The ivory tower, holding the life support
Sucking our souls
Prioritizing output over wellness
We dream of thriving
Battery on Empty

Figure 1: Battery on Empty

DISCUSSION

The findings from this study not only add to the discourse on neoliberalism in higher education, but also contribute to the extant literature on the consequences of working in, and functioning within, neoliberal academic environments (Anthym & Tuitt, 2019; Quaye et al., 2020). These neoliberal principles create environments where faculty engage in behaviors that are often destructive to their own health and wellness, while potentially benefiting their academic careers and institutional prestige (Gonzales & Núñez, 2014; O'Meara & Bloomgarden, 2011; Wolf-Wendel & Ward, 2006). While more scholars are talking about and calling for a disruption and dismantling of neoliberal academic environments, there is minimal research exploring the actual damaging consequences of neoliberalism in relation to the health and wellness of faculty members, namely those who hold multiple minoritized identities (i.e., inhumane treatment of faculty, feelings of shame, harm as a result of resistance, and lack of meaningful relationships).

First, lack of concern for well-being translates to the inhumane treatment of some faculty at an early stage in their careers, starting in graduate school. The dark side of neoliberalism centers power and control, which is actively replicated through the structures in institutions to uphold hierarchies (Darder, 2012; Giroux, 2008). Our findings, along with the existing literature, demonstrate prevailing values of the academy including the need to achieve, produce, and build relationships with top-rated researchers (Slaughter & Leslie, 1997). Future collaboration with these researchers often yields the coveted tenure-track jobs, acquisition of prestigious grants, and numerous publications in high-impact journals, all of which are a part of the neoliberal regime (Gonzales & Nunez, 2014). These sought-after values drive hypercompetition between doctoral students, and therefore faculty, while setting the foundation for damaging behaviors (Darder, 2012) that contribute to the downward spiral of faculty health and wellness. Some of the damaging behaviors that we learn in the academy include academic hazing; weeding out

the ‘weak’ (i.e. people unable to complete the process); comparing accomplishments with those who excel in certain areas; and idealizing those who embody the one-dimensional, reductive definition of success. Creating a culture of hypercompetition within academic socialization breeds mistrust among all players and perpetuates the violence of neoliberalism, as pointed out by Gonzales and Nunez (2014). The themes from this study raise questions about the sustainability of academic careers within institutions of higher education that continue to uphold neoliberalism. A disturbing trend of faculty struggling with health and wellness is emerging and may continue to amplify in a post-COVID-19 world. This should greatly concern us all. In order for faculty to continue to occupy positions within the academy, it is important to create institutional environments that not only support healthy faculty lifestyles, but also promote and celebrate wellness proactively.

Second, the landscape of the neoliberal institution breeds feelings of shame, which prevent faculty and graduate students from admitting or disclosing a decline in psychological and physical health (Gill, 2009; Mullings et al., 2016). Shame bred by the inhumane nature of neoliberalism prevents many from acknowledging stress, ill health, and distress in their lives, especially because these are perceived as individual shortcomings rather than byproducts of a failed system (Esposito & Perez, 2014). Both authors found that the pressure to meet neoliberal academic metrics was relentless, despite the compounded stressors of multiple crises occurring, underlying health conditions, cancer treatment, and balancing familial responsibilities. These experiences are echoed by national trends within higher education; the academy prioritizes outputs and results, regardless of the challenging experiences many faculty face. Faculty should feel comfortable acknowledging and normalizing when they are not functioning at capacity and know they will be supported and not shamed for feeling this way. A decline in health and wellness is not always indicative of an individual failure, but can be associated with a larger systemic problem that continues to fail many academics, particularly those with multiple minoritized identities.

Third, the study demonstrates and extends the work of both Anthym and Tuitt (2019) and Quaye et al. (2020) on how some faculty (particularly those who identify as having multiple minoritized identities) who use resistance as a vehicle for change are especially harmed. An overextension of self is often required to effectively commit to disrupting and resisting neoliberal values, and as Quaye et al. (2020) discusses, engaging in resistance for transformation often has adverse effects on both personal and professional trajectories. For example, if a faculty member decides to resist and not publish their work in what is traditionally considered a “high impact” journal, their resistance can be a violation of what is considered *right* and *prestigious* in the tenure process. However, institutional stakeholders are often quick to encourage faculty to engage in resistance work that upholds an institution’s facade of equity and justice for all, but not support faculty advocacy for themselves (D’Andrea & Daniels, 2007). These competing messages reflect the inauthenticity of some institutional leaders and reveals a tragic flaw in neoliberalism: it is not concerned with the well-being of the very people who contribute to the prestige of an institution. Academic stakeholders should consider how they are accounting for, supporting, rewarding, and sustaining the additional labor that many faculty, primarily those with multiple minoritized and intersecting identities, extend in the name of transformation.

Lastly, neoliberal environments do not facilitate meaningful and sustainable relationships due to constant comparison to others and hypercompetition. Sustainable support systems are difficult to develop and maintain in neoliberal environments that have pre-determined terms and strict definitions of how those who have power can be present. Based on the experiences of the researcher participants, the moments of care and advocacy provided by mentors, and often peers, who shared similar identities and lived experiences helped to support their overall wellness, and by extension, their academic journeys. What existing research tells us is when care and support is absent, there is a major departure of faculty who seek what they cannot find at their present institution (Turner et al., 2008). Our study points out that in addition to departure, there is a great decline in the overall health and well-being of minoritized faculty members when there is not a culture of care present in the work environment. One finding in this study was the overwhelmingly positive impact of access to sustainable support systems through mentors or community built through collaborative opportunities. However, the researcher participants found that some mentorships throughout their careers were purely transactional in nature and served to reinforce harmful neoliberal norms of prioritizing academic success over wellness. We therefore advocate for mentoring relationships that consider and work towards supporting the overall well-being of minoritized faculty members and push against neoliberal expectations.

Implications

From this critical collaborative autoethnographic study, we learned that there are multiple ways in which faculty health and wellness can be negatively impacted by neoliberal academic environments. Our study encourages an understanding and appreciation of the experiences multiple minoritized faculty face in the academy and provides an understanding of the ways in which health and wellness are often non-existent or not a priority.

First, in regard to future research, given that our findings demonstrate a major deficiency in research on the consequences of neoliberalism on faculty health and wellness, extensive investigation on this topic is essential. As we see increasing evidence of how faculty health and wellness are being significantly impacted by the neoliberal academy, the trend will likely continue, especially after the massive impact COVID-19 has had on institutions of higher education and the people within them. Since faculty contribute to the development of research, teaching, and practice, it would benefit administrative leaders in the academy to understand more broadly how faculty with declining health and wellness struggle to fully perform and thus are disadvantaged. Additionally, it would be advantageous for researchers to also explore doctoral students' wellness, which can assist in breaking the cyclical trauma many of them witness and experience from faculty members operating from, and within, neoliberal principles and practices.

Second, future research should explore how higher education institutions can proactively challenge the broader neoliberal norms within the academy. A need also exists to understand, and perhaps reframe, the definitions of success and how they are reproduced in destructive ways through graduate student socialization. Our study highlights the need for more research that allows for broad (re) definitions of *impact* and

success for faculty beyond the neoliberal definitions we have come to know, accept, and over rely on in our appraisal of faculty value.

Third, our study reinforces the need for research that acknowledges, supports, rewards, and proposes new solutions for multiple minoritized faculty members who engage in resistance work that advances social justice, inclusion, and equity—values espoused by most institutions. Our study highlights that while faculty with multiple minoritized identities feel a sense of commitment to disrupting norms in order to bring about change, such work is often depleting and has adverse effects on health and wellness and capacity to perform well professionally.

Finally, research should seek to unpack the ways in which university leaders proliferate the practices of neoliberalism within institutions and examine how that affects multiple minoritized faculty members and their well-being. In order to understand how neoliberalism is deeply institutionalized, we recommend that researchers consider these implications in the context of how systems operate (individually and collectively). Higher education is one system in a societal context of larger interconnected systems (e.g., education, justice, health care) that works in tandem to support or hinder individuals and communities. One possibility for examining people-systems interactions toward change is to use Bronfenbrenner's (1979; Bronfenbrenner & Evans, 2000) Ecological Systems Theory (EST) to understand how individuals interact with and operate within these systems.

Regarding practice, support services for faculty members' well-being are largely outsourced through employee assistance programs (Sonnenstuhl et al., 2018), and in many cases, these services require referrals to off-site service providers. These can serve as potential barriers for faculty seeking immediate and long-term support for their health and well-being. To better serve the needs of faculty, we urge stakeholders within higher education institutions to commit to creating structures and initiatives on campus that cultivate a culture of well-being for minoritized faculty. For example, college-specific units, in conjunction with health and wellness centers, human resources departments, and other entities across the institution, can consider implementing long-term sustainable initiatives and/or centers or institutes that focus strictly on providing psychological and wellness support, especially for multiple minoritized faculty. This can demonstrate to the wider campus community that faculty well-being is in fact an institutional priority and can help to normalize conversations, discourse, and practices around health and well-being and actively seek to destigmatize the shame associated with declining wellness in minoritized faculty members.

Second, higher education leaders such as academic deans and provosts must work towards creating systems that do not penalize minoritized faculty members who refuse to conform to neoliberal and colonial systems (Grande, 2018). This includes minoritized faculty members who engage in research, teaching, and service in ways that are not traditionally valued by institutions of higher education. Leaders can strive instead to reward and recognize these faculty members and engage in collective refusal with them (Grande, 2018) by initiating structurally transformative changes that seek to address how different values can be centered, and work together with minoritized faculty to refuse various forms of exploitation that pervade the academy (Grande, 2018). This includes reframing how acts of refusal can potentially be perceived as being subordinate, as opposed to being regarded as a necessary requirement for institutional transformation.

Developing working groups comprised of faculty members across all academic ranks representing college units across an institution is a starting place to build coalitions that evoke change. Violent institutional systems can only be addressed by groups of people working together to create a "politic of refusal" that recognizes institutional shortcomings and explores viable alternatives that benefit those who are minoritized (Simpson, 2014, p. 12; Spade, 2020). Participating in this work can also allow graduate students and other faculty members to break the generational academic trauma cycle and unlearn traditionally ingrained academic value systems. Doing so would interrupt systems that ultimately jeopardize their health and wellness.

Third, institutional leaders should (re)prioritize and interrogate the academic outputs that are considered prestigious and engage in continuous reflexivity about the neoliberal and colonial metrics associated with the academy. One such practice is dismantling existing outdated tenure and promotion structures. The process of tenure, for example, was established to create a standard to identify/retain talent who actively contributed to knowledge production, but in virtually every institution, this was historically done by wealthy, elite, white men (Wilder, 2014). The academy has evolved and continues to evolve, but the tenure process does not accurately reflect the diversity of faculty; traditional practices over-value individual productivity and "hierarchies of worth and labor" (Grande, 2018, p. 61). It is not enough that educational leaders create environments for faculty to just survive; instead, campus environments, practices, and policies that are fundamentally focused on the health and wellness of the collective should take center stage and be a priority. Doing this "requires a commitment to engage, extend, trouble, speak back to, and intensify our words and deeds" (Grande, 2018, p. 61). A starting point for this work is at the department level, where there can be a revival and recreation of standards for evaluation. Colleges of Education especially can be trailblazers in this area, as these colleges/schools have typically always focused on human flourishing and can model new systems of evaluation that value the scope of work from faculty members with minoritized identities.

Lastly, it is important to note that because these issues are so deeply systemic there are no quick fixes to (re) create institutional environments, and thus it is unrealistic to declare a prescriptive framework for change. The range of trauma experienced by minoritized faculty members in these academic environments has both collective and individual dimensions, and mediation of trauma is complex, requiring people with power at all levels to commit to systemic overhaul. In fact, we recognize that even if individual institutions eliminate or even alleviate many of the pressures outlined throughout this paper, they will be present elsewhere (other institutions, academic conferences, and funding policies) because institutions exist in a larger social context influenced primarily by capitalist principles. We urge education stakeholders to consider what "academic work and well-being" would look like if they are valued and rewarded within an institution where administrators and faculty alike refuse neoliberal norms.

CONCLUSION

Neoliberalism continues to be pervasive across higher education, and more scholars today are documenting its destruction on those who occupy the academy, particularly for college and university faculty members who are held to strict neoliberal metrics and

expectations (Bell, 2019; Gildersleeve, 2017; Gonzales & Núñez, 2014; Hurtado, 2020; Levin & Aliyeva, 2015; Museus & LePeau, 2019; Squire et al., 2018; Wright-Mair & Museus, 2021). As we move towards understanding the many negative consequences of neoliberalism, we cannot ignore the blatant disregard for, and rapid decline in, faculty health and wellness. In order to address the far-reaching impacts of neoliberalism on faculty, stakeholders within higher education need to understand the ways in which faculty health and wellness are affected and understand their roles in developing and sustaining institutional environments that prioritize health and wellness. Our study calls for the provision of additional support structures and mechanisms that challenge normalizing neoliberal academic environments and the resulting negative manifestations in faculty life. This study should serve as a foundation to propel stakeholders in academe to start important conversations and move intentionally towards action planning that interrogates and addresses the necessary support for the success of healthy multiple minoritized faculty who thrive and not just survive in the academy (Wright-Mair & Museus, 2021).

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