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On the Subject of

***Seeking Solutions: Maximizing American Talent by Advancing
Women of Color in Academia***

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I am Dr. Suzanne Bennett Johnson, the 120th President of the American Psychological Association (APA) and APA's 14th woman president. On behalf of the Association, I am pleased to submit this testimony addressing APA's efforts to maximize American talent by advancing women of color in academia.

The APA is the largest scientific and professional organization representing psychology in the United States. We are also the world's largest association of psychologists, with more than 137,000 researchers, educators, clinicians, consultants, and students as members. Our mission is to advance the creation, communication, and application of psychological knowledge to benefit society and improve people's lives.

Over the past 40 years, the APA Council of Representatives (APA's governing body) has approved numerous resolutions and policy actions addressing discrimination and equal rights for women of color including: Discrimination Against Women (1970), Training to Include Women and Minority Groups (1988), Ethnic Minority Education (1993), Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity (1999), and the Resolution on Enhancing Diversity in APA (2005).

APA has also worked to ensure that women of color psychologists achieve equality as members of the psychological community, establishing within its governance structure boards and committees that focus on the issues and concerns of underrepresented groups, such as the Board for the Advancement of Psychology in the Public Interest, the Committee on Women in Psychology, and the Committee on Ethnic Minority Affairs. Moreover, APA governance groups often include explicit language encouraging nominations of women of color psychologists in Calls for Nominations for membership and/or awards.

APA membership divisions provide another vehicle for increasing the participation of women of color psychologists in academia. Divisions offer mentoring, networking, and leadership opportunities for women of color within APA. This is particularly true for The Society for the Psychology of Women (Division 35) and its four Sections: Psychology of Black Women; Concerns of Hispanic Women/Latinas; Psychology of Asian Pacific American Women; and Alaska Native/American Indian/Indigenous Women.

In 2006, the APA Central Office began developing a **Diversity Implementation Plan**, which entails an association-wide inventory of ongoing programs and mechanisms. The plan includes the following goals: to enhance the “welcomeness” of APA to diverse groups; to promote recognition of the value of diversity in APA policies, publications, and programs; to enhance access to, and encourage participation by, diverse groups in APA meetings and other activities; to expand support for diversity in the training of psychologists; and to promote diversity in psychological research and practice.

Within the Central Office, the Public Interest Directorate (PI) works to fulfill APA’s commitment to apply the science and practice of psychology to the fundamental problems of human welfare and social justice and to promote equitable and just treatment of all segments of society through education, training, and public policy. Within PI, the Women’s Programs Office, the Office of Ethnic Minority Affairs, and the Minority Fellowship Program Office house the majority of APA programming focused on women of color in academia.

Education and Employment Data on Women of Color

APA’s Center for Workforce Studies (CWS) is focused on collecting data on the pipeline and workforce in psychology and describing the field according to gender, race/ethnicity, age, employment activities and settings, and other relevant dimensions. We examined member profiles for 1987, 1995, 2003, and 2011. Over time, the proportion of women of color at Member and Fellow levels has increased. Particularly at the higher membership status of Fellow, women of color increased both in numbers (14 in 1987 vs. 149 in 2011) and percentage (1.3% in 1987 vs. 3.5% in 2009).

The biennial CWS Doctorate Employment Survey targets all recent doctorate recipients in psychology. We examined survey results from 1986 to 2009 (see Table 1 in the Appendix). In 1986, there were 123 (5%) women of color in the sample. In 2009, this number increased to 225 (18%). Between 1986 and 2009, there was an overall decline in full-time employment and an increase in part-time employment and post-doctoral fellowships, which is partly due to changes in the survey, as well as reflective of a general trend. This trend held true for women of color,

who reported employment status at the same rates as the total sample (i.e., 90% in 1986 and 68% in 2009).

The annual Psychology Faculty Salary Survey targets graduate psychology departments. Although the survey focuses on salary, it also includes information on rank and tenure. We examined survey results from the 1987-88 and 2010-11 academic years (see Table 2 in the Appendix). In 1987-88, 138 (2%) full-time faculty were women of color. In 2010-11, 576 (8%) full-time faculty were women of color. Women of color had the highest percentage of tenure-track positions but also the lowest percentage of tenured positions at each survey. There were more women of color in lower ranks (associate and assistant professor) than in higher ranks.

Challenges or Barriers Experienced by Women of Color in their Education and Professional Career Pathways

To more closely investigate the challenges and barriers faced by women of color in academia in their education and professional career pathways, we surveyed graduates of APA's Minority Fellowship Program (MFP). One respondent, now a faculty member at a university in the U.S., captures a common theme: "They (women of color) are celebrated as evidence of diversity in academia, but not protected in a way that will allow them to be successful in the long run." Other challenges and barriers mentioned included: isolation and exclusion; tokenism; lack of mentors, role models or support; work-life balance; student loan debt; unreasonable service expectations; course assignment segregation; and overt and implicit bias. These anecdotal responses mirror what we know from the literature (American Psychological Association, 1998; Kawahara & Bejarano, 2009; LaFromboise & Marquez, in press; Miles-Cohen, Twose, Houston, & Keita, 2009; Syed & Chemers 2011).

Programs and Resources Implemented by APA to Enhance Career Progression

APA has been committed to combating these barriers in order to maximize the talents of women of color in academia for decades. This commitment may be best demonstrated by our publication **Surviving and Thriving in Academia: A Guide for Women and Ethnic Minorities** (1998), our most comprehensive resource specifically created to help women and ethnic minorities maximize their talents in academia. This publication provides strategies for

seeking and selecting jobs, maximizing chances of gaining promotion and tenure, and identifying support strategies to overcome emotional and strategic challenges. Such guidance is supported by a robust array of APA programming.

APA Leadership Institute for Women in Psychology (LIWP) was established in 2008 to empower, prepare and support women psychologists as leaders to promote positive changes in institutional, organizational, and practice settings, as well as APA and State, Provincial, and Territorial Psychological Associations governance, and increase the diversity, number, and effectiveness of women psychologists as leaders. The LIWP Executive Committee is diverse, including four women of color. The 111 total participants have included 41 (37%) women of color.

Women in Academe: Two Steps Forward, One Step Back (2000)

(<http://www.apa.org/pi/women/programs/academe/taskforce-report.pdf>) explores the characteristics, roles, and status of women psychologists working in academic settings and documents the continued need for improvement in women's standing in academic institutions.

Minority Fellowship Program Psychology Summer Institute has served both advanced doctoral students and early career psychologists of color by providing educational, professional development, and mentoring experiences, helping participants develop a grant proposal, postdoctoral fellowship, dissertation, treatment program, publication, or program evaluation. All projects focus on issues affecting ethnic minority communities. Participants receive one-on-one mentoring, and attend seminars by expert faculty on selected topics such as grant writing, publishing, research, or service delivery. Since 2003, 74% of participants have been women of color (87 women in all). About 40% of the women of color participants have subsequently had one or more grants funded by federal agencies, private foundations, and other sources.

Resource Guide for Ethnic Minority Graduate Students (2010)

(<http://www.apa.org/pubs/books/ethnic-minority-guide.aspx>) advises students on strategies that will increase competitiveness when searching for a faculty position, such as securing a research and/or teaching assistantship and establishing a publication record.

APA Commission on Ethnic Minority Recruitment, Retention, and Training in Psychology (CEMRRAT2) Task Force Implementation Grants Fund (IGF) has served as a source for “seed funding” since 1999 to energize, empower, and support interested individuals, organizations, and educational institutions committed to enhancing ethnic minority recruitment, retention, and training in psychology.

Promoting Psychological Research and Training on Health Disparities (ProDIGS) seeks to increase the capacity of ethnic minority-serving postsecondary faculty and students to engage in health disparities research and training. Since 2003, ProDIGS has offered small grants and a program of professional development activities targeted to early career faculty to support research or program/curriculum development applications for federal or foundation funding.

Women Mentoring Women (WMW) is held annually during APA’s Convention and is sponsored by the American Psychological Association of Graduate Students (APAGS), which facilitates making connections with mentors and role models.

APA promotes diversity in psychological scholarly research and in the peer review process with programming to engage women of color psychologists at every stage of the **Editorial Pipeline**, from reviewing a manuscript to becoming a successful journal editor.

APA has initiated **outreach campaigns** to encourage more graduate students and junior scholars of color to join the association. APA offices actively seek and promote diversity through convention programming, summer institutes, workshops, and awards, which are presented during the annual convention and throughout the calendar year. These initiatives include: **Academic Career Workshops, Advanced Training Institutes, Leadership Conferences, and Social Networking Sites.**

Promoting Diversity in Science across the Legislative and Executive Branches

The APA **Government Relations (GR)** staff monitor federal legislation, as well as regulatory and other federal agency proposals, to promote the successful recruitment and retention of

women and ethnic minorities in careers in science. In addition, GR staff represent APA within the **Collaborative for Enhancing Diversity in Science**, a coalition with the goal of increasing collaboration among associations, societies, federal agencies, and private foundations in creating a more diverse scientific workforce. The coalition recently held a workshop, “Enhancing Diversity in Science: Working Together to Develop Common Data, Measures and Standards.” GR staff also coordinated APA’s response to the NIH Diversity in Biomedical Research Working Group on enhancing diversity throughout the various research career stages.

Key Policy Recommendations to the External Communities Represented at the Conference

- Improve the **collection and evaluation of empirical data** on women of color along the academic pipeline, with a special focus on career transition points. Collect and analyze **disaggregated data** by ethnicity, gender, and other key variables to identify core issues and inform policy more effectively.
- Identify, highlight, and reward **model programs and best practices** for maximizing talent of women of color in academia.
- **Encourage mentoring** of women of color by including protected time for mentoring in grants and contracts.
- Recognize psychology as a Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (**STEM discipline**).
- Offer financial support for the development of training materials for departments of psychology, including material for chairs and faculty that provide **explicit proactive guidance on how to promote a supportive and welcoming climate** for women of color in academia.
- Offer financial incentives for institutions and departments of psychology to develop comprehensive programs to address underrepresentation of women of color that include **curriculum development, programs to enhance access to role models and mentors, scholarship and fellowship funding, and changes in the institutional climate**.
- Highlight **innovative models that support women of color in academia as they navigate multiple roles and identities** (e.g., motherhood, wife/partner, and academician).

APA values the contributions of women of color psychologists. We remain committed to the continued development of organizational supports and mechanisms to increase education and training and to promote opportunities to maximize the talents of women of color in academia. Together with psychology departments, professional schools, institutions, policymakers, and our federal agency partners, we can further enrich our discipline, addressing the grand challenges of the future while more fully representing and utilizing the diversity of the scientific community.

APPENDIX

Table 1
Gender and Race/ethnicity of New Doctorate Recipients by Employment Status

	Employed		Post-doctoral fellow		Unemployed		Not Specified		Total
	N	%	N	%	N	%			
1986									
Total	2072	90.6%	159	6.9%	57	2.5%	--	--	2288
Women of Color	111	90.2%	6	4.9%	6	4.9%	--	--	123
2009									
Total	849	68.4%	294	23.7%	69	5.6%	29	2.3%	1241
Women of Color	155	68.9%	52	23.1%	12	5.3%	6	2.7%	225

Source: 1986 and 2009 Doctorate Employment Survey, APA Center for Workforce Studies

Table 2
Gender and Race/ethnicity of Full-time Faculty in Graduate Departments of Psychology, by Academic Rank

	Full Professor		Associate Professor		Assistant Professor		Lecturer, Instructor, no rank, not specified		Total
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
1987-1988									
Total	3488	49.0%	2084	29.3%	1375	19.3%	173	2.4%	7120
Women of Color	27	19.6%	35	25.4%	63	45.7%	13	9.4%	138
2010-2011									
Total	2794	38.3%	2025	27.7%	1876	25.7%	604	8.3%	7299
Women of Color	86	14.9%	185	32.1%	257	44.6%	48	8.3%	576

Source: 1987-88 and 2010-11 Faculty Salary Survey, APA Center for Workforce Studies

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